

their only companions the wild birds that fly about the ravine. The place must be seen to be realized; no pen can give an impression of its weirdness, of the awful ravine over which it hangs, or of the solitude which surrounds its terraced walls. The evening was rapidly gathering as we wound down from the convent to our camp in the valley of the Kidron, and right glad were we, after the novel experiences of the day, to see the white tents pitched ready for our reception, and to partake of the excellent dinner that our cooks had provided for us.

The following morning we crossed the ravine, wound along the side of the opposite hills till we reached their summit, and soon



THE VALLEY OF THE JORDAN.

had one of the finest views in Palestine immediately before us. Away in front, in the distance, stretched the long wall of the mountains of Moab, with Mount Nebo in full view, to the right flashed the waters of the Dead Sea, while far away in the dim distance to the north, a hundred miles or more, gleamed the snowy peak of Hermon, and at our feet lay the Jordan Valley, a bright line of foliage showing the course of the river. An hour or two more brought us to the shores of the Dead Sea, and several of us, myself included, were soon testing for ourselves its far-famed buoyancy, by a plunge in its cool waters. I can bear unqualified testimony as to the extraordinary buoyancy of its waters. It is not easy to swim, it is not easy to sink—indeed I