

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XL. No. 46

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 17, 1905.

46 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

The Rock of Moses.

On either side of the ridge, which embraces both Horeb and Sinai, there stretches a wady, or vale, from the plain of er-Rahah.

The western wady, the Leja vale, is a 'cul de sac,' its southern extremity being shut in by Mount Catherine, which, by the way, is noted for the chapel of that saint upon its summit, its fine pastures and fragrant herbs, and is clothed from base to top with a luxuriant vegetation. The gorge of Leja, as its name denotes, is filled with huge masses of rock

trous cries of the people fashioned the golden calf; the seat of Moses; and, most interesting of all, half-way up the valley there is still pointed out the rock which Moses struck with his rod at the bidding of Jehovah, and from which water flowed forth miraculously to quench the thirst of the people and allay 'the chiding of the children of Israel,' who said, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' (Exodus xvii., 5-7.) There is, unfortunately, not the slightest foundation for the last of these legends; the red block of granite, with its twelve mouths called the 'twelve tribes,' is

about twelve feet high, and of an irregular shape, approaching to a cube, which the monks in the neighboring convent concur with the Arabs in pointing out as the rock which Moses struck with his rod. . . . Down its front, in an oblique line from top to bottom, runs a seam of finer texture, having in it several irregular horizontal crevices, somewhat resembling the human mouth, one above another. They are said to be twelve in number, but Dr. Robinson could only make out ten. He did not think them artificial, but belonging rather to the nature of the seam in which they are found; but it is possible that some of them have been enlarged by artificial means. The seam extends quite through the block, and is seen at the back, where also there are similar crevices, although not quite so large. The rock is a singular one, and, doubtless, was selected on account of that singularity, as the scene of the miracle, without regard to the historical probabilities of the case. There are some apertures upon its surface from which the water is said to have issued; they are about ten in number, and lie nearly in a straight line around the three sides of the stone, and are, for the most part, ten or twelve inches long, two or three inches broad, and from one to two inches deep; but a few are as deep as four inches.



THE ROCK OF MOSES AT THE BASE OF SINAI.

that have dropped into it from the overhanging precipices of the Sinai range; but notwithstanding this fact and its narrowness, it is very far from being a desert. Of all the valleys it is the most richly provided with springs; and not only is it fed from the highest mountains, which are of course the best supplied with snow, but it has the further advantage of being less exposed on the north to the drying and scorching heat of the sun. It is so healthy that it has been suggested as an excellent sanatorium for sickly citizens of Egypt; and it is not unfruitful or terribly desolate, for at or near the Convent of the Forty Martyrs, or el-Arbain, there still exists a popular grove, along with olive-trees, figs, pears, apples, apricots, yellow plums, almonds, lemons, oranges, and other honored members of the vegetable world, which speak more of a paradise than a desert.

The Leja gorge has other objects of interest, if we may give credit to the legends of the district, and have the credulity of ordinary pilgrims; for example, the spot where Aaron in his weak submission to the idola-

only one of many similar masses of rock that have fallen from the cliffs above, and two other points tell with irrefutable severity against the idle story—viz., that the vale of Leja can at no time have suffered from lack of water, and that Rephidim, where the miracle occurred, lies altogether out of the locality of this peculiar stone. As the gigantic block has been for ages wondered at by pilgrims as the miraculous memorial of Massah and Meribah—it has a certain interest for us, and our readers will willingly scan for a moment the clear and full description of it given by Dr. Kitto.

'It is therefore so elevated a valley that it would be indeed miraculous were there no water in or near it. This valley is very narrow and exceedingly stony, many large blocks having rolled down from the mountains which overhang it. Upon the whole, there is not in the entire neighborhood of the mountains a spot more unlikely to have been the scene of the miracle. However, in a space where the valley is about two hundred yards broad, there is an insulated block of red granite

The Reading of a Young Minister.

(The Rev. David Burrell, D.D., LL.D., in the 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

A young pastor of my acquaintance in a Western city has recently shown me a list of his book purchases. On taking the pains to analyze it I find an easy explanation of a good many things in the life and character, mental and spiritual equipment and ministry of this young man.

He is a Bachelor of Arts, a graduate of one of our well-known Theological Seminaries, a candidate for the degree of Ph.D., and 'par excellence' a scholar 'abreast of the age.'

He informs me that he regards it as a matter of supreme importance that a minister should be 'abreast of the age.' Now there might be room for a difference of opinion just there, but it is scarcely worth while. What I wish to call attention to particularly is his blundering and ineffective way of trying to reach the desired end. He has provided himself with pretty much all the output of the publishing houses on theological and allied lines of controversy. His library shelves, which I have looked over, are filled with the latest scientific, philosophical and religious books. He makes a point of reading the literary reviews and makes his purchases accordingly.

And he is a voracious reader. He spends two hours every forenoon in devouring these volumes, a habit which he characterizes as 'study collateral with his ministry.' I observed a lamp-stand by the head-board of his bed and James's 'Religious Experience' beside it; from which I infer that he gathers poppies as well as more fragrant and stimulating flowers from his literary garden. In my early ministry I consumed books in the same way, and regarded it as necessary to my keeping 'abreast of