

"sticky" to the touch. These phenomena were due to the bituminous and saline exhalations of the mysterious waters at our feet. We approached them, not without feelings of awe; for was it not in their depths that "the wicked cities of Pentapolis,"—Sodom, Gomorrah, etc., etc., etc.,—lay buried?

Our guide, Frère Benoit, pointed out to us, as far as tradition (?) enabled him, the sites of these several hot-beds of iniquity, and then directed our gaze towards "Mount Nebo," whose summit was just being tinged with the glint of the rising sun, and from whose heights poor Moses saw the Promised Land and then died,—having been doomed to exclusion from it, after having conducted the Israelites to its borders, and despite his forty years of sacrifice in leading them thither,—all because he showed a seeming lack of confidence (Numbers, XX. 12.) in executing one of God's orders regarding them.\* But we were, one and all, engrossed with "*La Mer Morte*," and for the moment paid little heed to the good Brother's explanations. Some of our party contented themselves with looking at it from a distance; others, I among them, bathed their hands in it; and one, more venturesome than

the rest, disported himself upon its briny bosom. Had I dipped my extremities into a basin of mucilage, the effect could not have been more gummy than it was. Ugh! The very recollection of the sensation thus created sends a shiver through me! Nevertheless, I clutched a handful of pebbles from beneath its surface, and added them to my stock of "mementoes." Our daring swimmer tried to dive, but all in vain; the waters being so resistant, that this aquatic feat is impossible. He got a dose of brimstone sulphur, potash and of the seven other ingredients which, our American chemist, Mr. Lynch, tells us, enter into its composition, and he hastily emerged, coughing and sputtering in a way little becoming the solemnity of the surroundings. Leaving him to scale the salty incrustation that adhered to his cuticle, we set about gathering "Dead Sea Apples." When at their best (as they then were), these are of a very dark-brown color, and are not unlike a large horse-chestnut. The Holy Scriptures allude to this "fruit" in the following words: "*She (Wisdom) delivered the just man, who fled from the wicked that were perishing, when the fire came down upon Pentapolis: whose land, for a testimony of their wickedness, is desolate, and smoketh to this day, and the trees bear fruits that ripen not, and a standing pillar of salt is a monument of an incredulous soul.*"—(Wisdom, X. 6, 7.)

If by these closing words of the Wiseman, Lot's wife is designated, it is needless to say that we did not see the traditional "pillar"; though objects all around the Dead Sea are so covered and coated with a saline deposit, that one can easily imagine how that unfortunate woman—struck by the hand of God and rooted to the earth because

\* NOTE—Mount Nebo, the site of Moses' death, 1451 before Christ, is also famous as the place where the prophet Jeremiah hid in a hollow cave "the tabernacle, and the ark and the altar of incense." Some prying persons who saw him do this, followed him, and wished to mark the spot, but could not find it. Thereupon the Prophet blamed them, saying: "*The place shall be unknown, till God gather together the congregation of the people, and receive them to mercy. And then the Lord will show these things, and the majesty of the Lord shall appear, etc.*" (II. Machabees, II. 5. to 8. inclusive.) Frère Lievin de Hamme, in his excellent "*Guide to the Holy Land*," states that there are the ruins of a Christian church on Mount Nebo (called by the Arabs *Djaba' Nabou*), the columns whereof, thrown to the ground, all point in the same direction. This church existed as far back as A. D. 385, and was, doubtless, erected by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great.