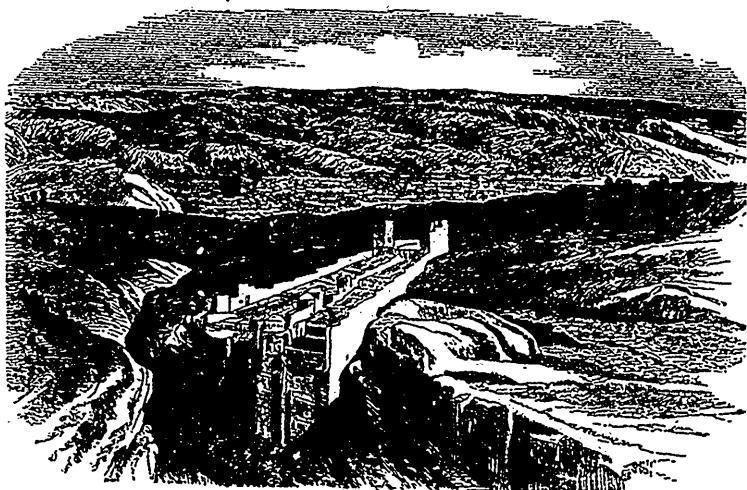


miles in every direction, and as we crossed the table-land we could see over them to the right the Dead Sea and the hills of Moab, and, at one point, catch a glimpse of the white tower on the summit of the Mount of Olives, far away to the left.

As we left the table-land and began to descend toward the Dead Sea, our path was rough and steep in the extreme. There was one bit which I shall never forget. The path skirted a deep ravine, and was a simple track among loose stones and over uneven rocks, worn in some places perilously smooth and slippery. A single false step, a single slip or stumble, and horse and rider would probably roll together far down the mountain side. It



CONVENT OF MAR SABA.

was a ride to test the nerves of an accomplished horseman, and, be it remembered, it was my first day in the saddle.

As we rode down the last bit of steep hill we caught sight of the Convent of Mar Saba which we were to visit before camping. It is a most extraordinary place, its massive buildings, erected on the edge of one of the wildest and most desolate ravines in the world, far away from any other human habitation, save the black tent of the wandering Bedouin. Mar Saba, or St. Saba, is a saint held in high honour by the Greek Church, who came here in the latter part of the fifth century, and dwelt thus apart from his fellows, until his reputation for sanctity gathered round him a number of followers. From that day to the present, an unbroken succession of monks have made these wilds their home,