

occurrences to be of very old date. In 1599, Har- rant de Holchitz de Polschitz was obliged to visit Mounts Sinai and St. Catherine, accompanied only by some Arabs, none of the monks daring to attend him through fear of being molested or made prisoners by the Bedouins.

In order to complete my pilgrimage, it was necessary that I should ascend Mount Sinai. None of the Monks were disposed to accompany me; they lent me therefore one of their Arabian servants, a sort of Helots among the Bedouins, to be my guide, as well as to carry the provisions which were necessary for this fatiguing journey. I fastened myself to the rope, and the windlass being turned round, I was gently deposited at the foot of the walls. The rope was rapidly drawn up again to assure the poor monks that they were perfectly isolated in the midst of their hostile desert.

The window, which is the only entrance,—the cord, which is the only communication with the external world,—give to the whole of this building a grave and solemn appearance. When I was drawn up by means of this machine, I felt the same impression as if I heard the creak of the hinges of a large door which closes on the visitor who enters through curiosity a state prison. This peculiarity appears to have existed from the time when the monks were obliged to protect themselves from the repeated hostilities of the surrounding Arabs. Har- rant de Polschitz, in 1598, and M. Monconys, in 1647, entered the convent by the great gate: but the superior of the Franciscans, in 1722, was hoisted through the window. Sandy, who, in 1619, entered by the iron door, speaks also of a window through which alms were usually dispensed to the Arabs: it is probable that, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the latter had forced the gate, and from that period the window before appropriated to alms was used for the admission of strangers.

Mount Horeb forms a kind of breast from which Sinai rises. The former alone is seen from the valley, which accounts for the appearances of the burning bush on that mountain, and not on Sinai.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush."

Our course towards the summit of Sinai lay through a ravine to the south-west. The monks had arranged a series of large slabs in tolerably regular order, which once formed a convenient staircase to the top of the mountain. The rains, however, have disturbed them, and, as no repairs had been for a long time attended to, the stairs were in many places in ruins. Just before reaching the foot of Sinai, immediately after quitting Horeb, the traveller sees a door built in the form of an arch; on the key-stone of the arch a cross has been carved. A tradition, preserved by the monks, and repeated by many pilgrims, informs us, that a Jew, having been desirous of ascending Mount Sinai, was stopped by an iron crucifix, which prevented him from pursuing his way; and that, to remove the enchantment, he had baptized himself at the head of a stream which runs into the ravine. An affecting custom used to take place near this door: one of the monks of the convent employed himself there at prayer, and heard the confessions of the pilgrims, who, when thus nearly at the end of their pilgrimage, were not in the habit of accomplishing it until after they had obtained absolution.

We passed another similar door before arriving at a small level spot, whence we discovered the summit of Mount Sinai, and the two edifices which surmount it. The nearest building is the chapel of the con-

vent, the farther one is the mosque. In the distance of the design is seen the chapel of Elias in ruins, and in the fore-ground the fountain and the cypress, which give some degree of animation to these rocks, whose grandeur is entirely lost by being compassed within so limited a space. The superior of the Franciscans found two cypresses and three olive trees in this place, but the cypress alone still survives.

We climbed with difficulty to the top of Sinai, resting at each cleft or salient part of the rock, to which some traditions have been annexed by the inventive faculty of the monks, who have communicated them to the Arabs, always ready to listen to narratives of this description. Arrived on the summit, I was surprised by the briskness of the air. The eye sought in vain to catch some prominent object amid the chaos of rocks which were tumbled round the base, and vanished in the distance in the form of raging waves. Nevertheless, I distinguished the Red Sea, the mountains of Africa, and some summits of mountains which I easily recognised by their shapes: Schominar being distinguishable by its rounded masses, Serhal by its shooting points, and Tih by its immense prolongation.

I visited the ruins of the mosque and of the Christian church, both of which rebuke, on this grand theatre of three religions that divide the world, the indifference of mankind to the creeds which they once professed with so much ardour.

Miscellaneous.

EXTRAORDINARY DELIVERANCE.

THE author of "Tremaine" seriously vouches for the truth of the following remarkable narrative:—

At the memorable dinner at Mr. Andrews', which I have just mentioned, his story naturally recalled many others of the same kind; and one voluble gentleman, who had a greater range than accuracy of memory, asserted that Sir Evan Nepean, when under-secretary of state, had been warned by a vision to save the lives of three or four persons, who, but for this appearance, would have been hanged through Sir Evan's neglect.

You may well suppose we did not give much credence to this; but knowing Sir Evan very well, I informed him of what he was charged with, and begged him to tell me what the ghost said. "The gentleman," said he, good humouredly, "romances not a little; but what he alludes to is the most extraordinary thing that ever happened to me."

He went on to tell me that one night, several years before, he had the most unaccountable wakefulness that could be imagined. He was in perfect health; had dined early and moderately; had no care—nothing to brood over, and was perfectly self-possessed. Still he could not sleep, and from eleven to two in the morning, had never closed an eye. It was summer, and twilight was far advanced; and to dissipate the ennui of his wakefulness, he resolved to rise and breathe the morning air in the Park. There he saw nothing but sleepy sentinels, whom he rather envied. He passed the home office several times, and at last, without any particular object, resolved to let himself in with his pass-key. The book of entries of the day before lay open upon the table, and in sheer listlessness he began to read. The first thing appalled him: "A reprieve to be sent to York for the coiners ordered for execution for the next day." It struck him that he had no return to this order to send the reprieve; and he searched the minutes but could not find it. In alarm he went to the house of the chief clerk, who lived in Downing-street, knocked him up,