

# THE DEAD SEA AND THE JORDAN.\*

From "Notes of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," Etc.

Prepared Especially for the Carmelite Review,

—BY—

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**T**O be roused from a profound slumber at 2 a. m. after having made a toilsome journey under a blazing sun during the whole of the previous day, would not, under ordinary circumstances, be hailed with satisfaction by the exhausted traveler. But there is nothing "ordinary" about a *pilgrimage*; and so, one is ready for everything (*paratus ad omnia*!), and takes everything as it comes.

These were my sentiments as I heard Brother Benedict's irrepressible bugle sounding and resounding throughout the solitary corridor of the "Hotel Gilgal" at Jericho during "the wee sma' hours" of the night, and I got up mechanically and resignedly from my downy couches as did the rest of our party, *resp.* Second thought, however, put fresh life and animation into

my wearied frame: *We were going to the Dead Sea and the Jordan!* Was not this enough to make one forget stiff joints and aching limbs?

A hasty toilet, a cup of "black coffee," and we were off. Down, down, down, our carriages rattled in the pitchy darkness, whilst our drivers uttered successively, from time to time, a peculiar cry (doubly weird to our unaccustomed ears, under the circumstances,) which was meant to do duty both as a note of warning on some danger-point being reached, and as a "make-sure" on the part of the leader of our cortege that none of his brother jehus were asleep. Back and forth, this cry was passed until dawn;—interrupting our comfortable little dozes with an uncomfortable start until we grew familiar with it; whereupon Morpheus claimed us as his willing votaries without further ado. At last a sudden reining up, with an accompanying jolt, told us instinctively that the first objective-point of our matutinal excursion had been reached. Glancing from the windows of our vehicle, we beheld, stretched out before us like a mass of molten lead, the Dead Sea. The atmosphere was heavy but quite clear; a strange, oily, slimy, mephitic-like element was noticeable in the air about us as we set foot on the sandy beach, and in a little while we beheld our clothing taking on a whitish hue and becoming very

\* NOTE—Apropos of my remarks on the "Rose of Jericho" in my last letter, the following beautiful verses, which have just met my eye, will be of more than ordinary interest:—

## THE SEPULCHRE IN THE GARDEN.

What though the Flowers in Joseph's Garden grew  
Of rarest perfume and of fairest hue.

That morn when Magdalene hastened through  
Its fragrant, silent paths,

She caught no scent of budding almond-tree;

Her eyes, tear-blinded still from Calvary,

Saw neither lily nor anemone—

Naught save the Sepulchre.

But when the Master whispered "Mary," lo!

The Tomb was hid; the Garden all ablow;

And burst in bloom the Rose of Jericho—

From that day "Mary's Flower."

—John Finley, in Harper's Magazine.