

lamare where I was born, and there are moments when I forget that I am in the Orient.

It is really the sun of Italy that bleaches these far away sails and traces paths of light and fire on the waves disturbed by the breeze. It is even the same lapis-lazuli sky, lined here and there with grey and white.

But when my eyes rest upon the broad pathway, Italy fades away and the Orient reappears. Caravans defiling slowly to the rocking step of camels along the great roads that lead from Tyre, Sidon and Damascus; camps of Arabs, who pursue their nomad life across the desert; shepherds driving their flocks along the slope of the mountains; Jews draped in wide showy tunics, their women veiled and carrying great amphoræ upon their heads, coming to draw water at the public fountains — everything reminds me that I am far away from Rome.

Vale, November 5th, Year of Rome 780, Magdala.

II

THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN

CAIUS OPPIUS TO TULLIUS

I HAVE just returned from a trip along the Jordan, as far as the Dead Sea, on the east side, crossing the mountains of Peræa. It is very much wilder than the left bank and infinitely more picturesque. The Dead Sea and that of Genezareth are like two great vessels filled to the top with the same liquid;