

vehicles and continued on our way to Jericho.

After riding quite a distance, and at a grade which verified in all its literalness the text: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," our guide brought our carriages to a standstill, and invited us to scale the eminence which towered above the roadside on our left,—a veritable mountain of white chalk, honey-combed with suspicious-looking caverns, and so cut up into ridges by the torrential rains which fall betimes in that region, as to make its surface anything but pleasant or safe for pedestrianism. From the summit of this height we had a view of the river "Carith," which hundreds of feet below rushes on towards the Jordan, and whose waters were the beverage of the Prophet Elias during his sojourn in these parts. ("And the word of the Lord came to him—Elias the Thesbite—saying: Get thee hence, and go towards the East, and hide thyself by the torrent of Carith, which is over against the Jordan. And there thou shalt drink of the torrent: and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord: and going, he dwelt by the torrent Carith, which is over against the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the torrent." (III. Kings, XVII. 2-6). This is truly a weird spot, a profound solitude, unbroken save by occasional caravans or by bands of marauding Bedouins; and we would have felt ill at ease but for our mounted escort of these same children of the desert, armed as they were to the teeth and looking savage enough to frighten away even their own kith, some of whom loomed up on the

horizon from time to time, only to disappear, however, as mysteriously as they had come, on receiving the signal that our convoy was under the protection of the sheik of their tribe, resident in Jerusalem,—an aegis which no Bedouin would think of violating. One object of special interest which claimed our attention on this halt was an ancient monastery, now inhabited by Greek schismatic monks, and which for picturesqueness surpasses anything I have ever seen of a similar character. Across the torrent mentioned above, and midway up the perpendicular wall of rock, which rises to a great altitude on the side of the valley opposite that on which we were standing, we beheld this marvellous structure clinging, as it were, to the precipitous surface, and apparently inaccessible. But a closer inspection with a powerful field-glass showed it to be resting upon arches upheld by columns some fifty feet in height, the entrance to the cloister being effected, we were told, by means of an invisible stairway leading from the vale below to its first floor. A reflection naturally suggested by this and similarly placed religious institutions of the "Orthodox" Church—some of which crown the summits of mountains, whilst others are in the depths of forests, and still others on islands in the sea—is, methinks, that, whatever may be said of the interior spirit, etc., of those who inhabit them, their rigorous adhesion to the idea of monasticism as expressed by the Greek word *monos*, or *monachos*, i.e., solitary, retired, *et al. sim.*, is all that could be desired even by such fliers from the haunts of men as a St. Paul the first hermit, or a St. Anthony the Abbot. Having seen all that was to be seen in this wild, romantic spot, we clambered down the rugged sides of the chalky