

came full of shrubs and tufts of herbs, shut in on each side by lofty granite ridges, with rugged, shattered peaks, a thousand feet high, while the face of Horeb rose directly before us. Both my companion and myself involuntarily exclaimed, "Here is room enough for a large encampment."

Reaching the top of the ascent, or watershed, a fine broad plain lay before us, sloping down gently towards the S. S. E. enclosed by rugged and venerable mountains of dark granite, stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges of indescribable grandeur; and terminated at the distance of more than a mile by the bold and awful front of Horeb, rising perpendicularly, in frowning majesty, from twelve to fifteen hundred feet in height. It was a scene of solemn grandeur wholly unexpected, and such as we had never seen; and the associations which at the moment rushed upon our minds were, almost overwhelming. As we went on, new points of interest were continually opening to our view.

On the left of Horeb a deep and narrow valley runs up S. S. E. between lofty walls of rock, as if in continuation of the S. E. corner of the plain. In this valley, at the distance of near a mile from the plain, stands the convent; and the deep verdure of its fruit trees and cypresses is seen as the traveller approaches—an oasis of beauty amid scenes of the sternest desolation.

At the S. W. corner of the plain the cliffs also retreat, and form a recess or open place extending from the westward for some distance. From this recess there runs up a similar narrow valley on the west of Horeb, called el-Leja, parallel to that in which the convent stands; and in it is the deserted convent el-Arba'zin, with a garden of olive and other fruit trees, not visible from the plain. A third garden lies at the mouth of el-Leja, and a fourth further west in the recess just mentioned. The whole plain is called Wady er-Rahah: and the valley of the convent is known to the Arabs as Waddy Shu'eib—that is, the valley of Jethro.

Still advancing, the front of Horeb rose like a wall before us; and one can approach quite to the foot and touch the mount. Directly before its base is the deep bed of a torrent, by which, in the rainy season, the waters of el-Leja and the mountains around the recess pass down eastward across the plain, forming the commencement of Wady esh-Sheikh, which then issues by an opening through the cliffs of the eastern mountain—a fine broad valley, affording the only easy access to the plain and the convent.

As we crossed the plain, our feelings were strongly affected at finding here so unexpectedly a spot so entirely adapted to the scriptural account of the giving of the law. No traveller has described this plain, not even mentioned it, except in a slight and general manner; probably because the most have reached the convent by another route, without

passing over it: and perhaps too because neither the highest point of Sinai, (now called Jebel Musa,) nor the still loftier summit of St. Catherine, is visible from any part of it. The extreme difficulty and even danger of the ascent, was well rewarded by the prospect that lay before us. The whole plain er-Rahah lay spread out beneath our feet, with the adjacent Wadys and mountains; while Wady esh-Sheikh on the right, and the recess on the left, both connected with and opening broadly from er-Rahah, presented an arena which serves only to double that of the plain.

Our conviction was strengthened that here, or on some one of the adjacent cliffs, was the spot where the Lord "descended in fire," and proclaimed the law. Here lay the plain where the whole congregation might be assembled—here was the mount that could be approached and touched, if not forbidden—and here the mountain brow, where alone the lightnings and the thick cloud would be visible, and the thunders and the voice of the trumpet be heard, when the Lord "came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai."

We gave ourselves up to the impressions of the awful scene; and read, with a feeling that will never be forgotten, the sublime account of the transaction and the commandments there promulgated, in the original words, as recorded by the great Hebrew legislator.—*Robinson's Bib. Researches.*

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH.—It is impossible to read with any measure of attention the early inspired records of the Christian Church without perceiving that that Church was essentially a *Missionary Church*,—that its members regarded themselves, and wished to be regarded by others, as almoners of the Divine bounty—as stewards of the manifold grace of God—as agents and instruments in the hands of their common Lord and Master, for carrying out His purposes of mercy to our world. None, with the New Testament in his hand, can gainsay or resist the conclusion that the Christian Church was then, and is intended in all ages to be, "the light of the world,"—the medium through which "the truth as it is in Jesus" is to be exhibited to the attention of mankind, and the sanctifying and saving influence of the Gospel to be universally diffused. What we call "a missionary spirit" is not so much an accompaniment of Christianity as Christianity itself; and were this spirit to become entirely extinct in any religious community, the epithet of *Christian* would then be wholly misapplied. It would be a misnomer; it would be like speaking of