

Achan and his family suffered the death penalty by stoning as we read in the Book of Joshua.

After early breakfast a smart hour's ride brought us to the DEAD SEA, the greatest marvel in nature, I think. Much of the mystery in which the Dead Sea seems to be shrouded, arises from its proximity to the miraculously destroyed cities of the plain mentioned in the 19th chapter of Genesis. There is no warrant for the popular belief that the site of these overthrown cities is now covered by the Dead Sea. Genesis agrees with geology in proving that the "salt sea" existed ages anterior to the catastrophe by which the guilty cities were destroyed in the time of Abraham. The Dead Sea is forty-six miles in length and between nine and ten miles at its greatest breadth. It occupies a deep basin well-nigh four thousand feet lower than Jerusalem. Steep, precipitous, limestone cliffs rise up 1500 feet high from its western shore, while those on its eastern side attain the still greater height of from 2000 to 2500 feet. The water near the shore is almost transparent, and shades off to a greenish hue at greater depths, but it is exceedingly bitter and nauseous to the taste. In consequence of the large quantity of mineral salts which it holds in solution, its buoyancy is so great that I found on experiment that I could not sink in it. Though the Jordan and the Amon, and many less known torrents pour into it from all sides, so great is the evaporation that they are seldom able to make any perceptible difference in the elevation of the water. Turning away from its shores and shaping our course northward we next rode five miles over mounds and hillocks encrusted with salt, and reached the far-famed Pilgrim's Bathing Place in the Jordan. This is believed to be the place at which the Israelites crossed over from the Plains of Moab under the leadership of Joshua, and at which again early Christian art represents John the Baptist pouring the baptismal water on the head of our Saviour. The water I must confess had a dingy clay colour, not by any means inviting, but we all bathed in it, and then partook of a hearty repast that was spread for us by our attendants under the shade of the oleanders and tamarisks, and tall reeds that grow luxuriantly on the margin of the sacred river. Away we then

rode full seven miles to the Fountain of Elisha which is situated on the western margin of the plain, nearly two miles north of Eriha. This was by far the most trying part of the journey. The heat was very oppressive, overpowering. The thirsty air seemed to extract every drop of moisture from my system until my tongue began, literally, to cleave to the roof of my mouth. But I was soon able to slack my thirst by a copious supply of pure, refreshing water from the actual fountain which Elisha healed in the days of old by casting a cruse of salt into it. The Jericho of Old Testament times was in the near neighbourhood of this never failing fountain. Situated thus at the base of the Judean hills, favoured with a beautiful supply of water, and surrounded with its beautiful palm groves, no wonder the citizens said to Elisha, "the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth." But a huge mound of ruins in which I saw broken pieces of pottery, now marks the site of the once celebrated city. The palm trees have all disappeared and in their place I saw thickets of the *Spina Christi*, the thorn tree of Palestine, of which it is said the crown of thorns which pierced our Saviour's brow was made. I also saw a few specimens of the tree which bears the so-called apples of Sodom to which the bard of Erin refers in the familiar lines—

"Like Dead Sea fruits that tempt the eye,  
But turn to ashes on the lip."

But with loyalty to Christ, and under a righteous government this great plain of the Jordan, now comparatively a desert, would soon again become what it was in the old time—"as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar." As it is, on the day after we took this brief survey of the wonderful region, we retraced our steps to the city of the Great King, bearing away with us life-long memories of *the Dead Sea and its neighbourhood*.

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Christ is rich in Mercy! He is the riches of the glory of the gospel, and with Him are durable riches and righteousness. Every child in His family shall have a rich, a glorious, an incorruptible and eternal inheritance among the saints.