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of course these mountain peaks and val-
leys have been encrusted with legends and
shrines, but somewhere here within a little
circle of 30 miles took place many of the most
important transactions of human history in
closest contact with God. The announcement
of the Covenant, the manifestation of God's
presence, the giving of the Ten Command-
ments, and the setting up of the Tabernacle
are events that loom large in the history and
the destiny of the race. Here among the in-
describable beauties and grandeur of these
granite mountains Moses laid the foundations
of a civil code and instituted a complete form
of religious worship.

It is no accident that the promulgation of
the Divine Law, the fundamental principles
of all the best moral and legal systems of the
world, are linked with the oldest geological
formation of our planet. There is a magnif-
cent correspondence between the granite cliffs
of Sinai and the unchangeable walls of moral
truths.

The Inhabitants of Sinai

The Peninsula of Sinai is a desert in which
its dwindling inhabitants wander in search
of food and water. All told the Bedouin do not
number more than 600 souls. They are di-
vided into four main tribes; are headed, not
ruled over, by sheikhs who represent their
followers before the government and who act
as judges and referees in the never-ending
disputes. These Bedouin dwell in miserable
tents, which are always pitched in lonely val-
leys and away from the routes of passers-by.
When travellers enter the Peninsula the news
is spread by means as mysterious as the wire-
less, and hungry fellows with their lean camels
hasten from every tribe and wrangle for days
and even weeks over the right and privilege
to share in the transport of the traveller and
his outfit.

Our group of 16 was led by Sheikh Ham-
madi. He was a wide-awake fellow and got
about as much work out of such raw material
as any one could have expected. Their habits
of life, their never-ending and tireless powers
of conversation, their dress, their food, their
preparations for the night within the circle
of their camel harness around a little fire was
a fascinating subject of study.

The Peninsula must always have been thin-
ly populated because so scantily supplied with
water and means of subsistence. The present
population would average only one person to
every two square miles (compare Switzer-
land with 200 to the square mile, New Jersey
with 250, and Oklahoma with 10), and they
live largely on supplies from Egypt and the

proceeds of escorting Greek pilgrims to Sinai.
Politically they now belong to Egypt. They
are tent dwellers even though they do build
rude stone huts at certain of the oases where
they gather for a month at the time of the
date harvest. It is not too much to say that
the only permanent habitations in all the Pen-
insula are the fortress-monastery at Sinai and
its dependency at Tor, on the Red Sea, and
these are occupied by Ionian Greek monks.

The route from Suez to Sinai is a nine
days' journey on camels. Travellers usually
make a short half day to the Wells of Moses,
the first oasis four hours beyond Suez. Then
follows a waterless tract of three days' jour-
ney to Elim, and no one ever making this
trip will fail to realize what was meant by
the oft-repeated request to Pharaoh that the
Children of Israel be allowed to go a "three
days' journey into the wilderness" with their
wives and children and their cattle to sacri-
fice. Elim with its wells of water and palm
trees, unchanged to this present day and with-
out human habitation, was the first possible
stopping place after the edge of the desert
had been crossed.

Turquoise Mines Worked 4,500 Years Ago
Two days beyond Elim we visited the
famous turquoise mines of Megnara, where
the Egyptians mined as early as the Fourth
Dynasty (2500 B. C.), more than 4,500 years
ago, and left a curious collection of rock carv-
ings and tablets which have been of priceless
value in their bearing upon Egyptian chronol-
ogy. It was a wild desert valley in which
the poor convicts worked under the lash. The
mines at various elevations above the floor
of the valley were dug into the mineral-bear-
ing strata sometimes for hundreds of feet. At
least two unsuccessful efforts have been made
in modern times by foreigners to reopen these
mines and some of the Bedouin are still at
work digging and searching in a primitive way
for the bits of green malachite which they
offer for sale in Suez and Cairo.

Two days beyond the mines carried us
to the oasis of Firan, rightly designated "The
Pearl of Sinai," the most fertile tract and one
of the most interesting spots in the whole
Peninsula. This will be treated of in a special
article at a later date and illustrated with
a unique series of photographs.

The Monastery of St. Catherine

Our camp in the Oasis of Firan was at
an elevation of about 2,100 feet, and in the
following two days we crossed the watershed
beyond Wady Sahab, at an elevation of 3,000
feet, and made a slight descent before our
last climb over Nagb el-Hawa (4,900 feet) to
the Plain of er-Rahah, which most scholars
have regarded as the camping place of the
Israelites while waiting for the giving of the
Law. The two panoramic views from the
upper end and the centre of the plain with
Jebel Musa or the mountain of the Law, tower-
ing in the centre of the picture, are among
the most sublime mountain prospects in the
world. This is the mountain that was envel-
oped in clouds and lightning reverberating
with thunder, a mountain that could be touch-
ed, while Moses tarried on its summit and
the people waited below. And just to the left
of this peak, Jebel Sufsa, is the valley of the
Deir, in which stands the monastery of St.
Catherine, the goal of our long journey and one
of the most fascinating places in human history.

About the middle of the fourth century
when the Byzantine Christians began the ex-
ploitation of the holy places the Peninsula of
Sinai was peopled by anchorites and coenobites
who were bound by a common monastic rule.
Traces of their occupation are found in all the
mountain valleys dating from the massacres
which attended the Saracen invasion. The only
spot in the Peninsula which was not sub-
merged in the advancing tide of Islam is the
monastery of St. Catherine, which thus be-
comes interesting as a relic of those early
Christian centuries.

This picturesque monastery standing in a
sublime valley of the Sinai group occupies the
site of a fort built by the Emperor Justinian
in 527 A. D. It is a hoary pile of old buildings,
entirely enclosed by a high wall, on one side of
which toward the mountain a few old rusty
cannon still do sentinel duty. A lower wall en-
closes the adjoining delightful gardens which
have been wrung by incessant toil from the
rocky mountain side below. The fortress-
monastery has witnessed many a thrilling
event in history, has witnessed many an at-
tack and siege, and bears the marks inside and
out of its stormy history.

The present entrance for all purposes, after
the traveler has been admitted to an outer
courtyard, is a low door with two sharp turns
within the passageway and capable of being
barricaded successfully against the most de-
termined invader. At the first sign of dan-
ger this door is still closed and partially walled
up, and then the only means of entrance and
exit is the windlass, 2½-inch rope, and the
basket which is let down from a portcullis on
the high wall towards the north. This primi-
tive elevator is in good working order and is a
grim reminder of the strenuous conditions of
life through all the passing centuries.

Its Famous Library

The monastery is now a pilgrim shrine of
the Greek orthodox church and under the pro-
tection of Russia is safe from molestation. Out
of its now famous library came the "Codex
Sinaiticus," easily the most precious of all
Bible manuscripts in existence. It was dis-
covered by Tischendorf, a German scholar in
1844, and dates from the fourth century. Alex-
ander II. of Russia succeeded in purchasing
this priceless manuscript and it was carried to
St. Petersburg in 1869.

The kindly monks, now about 30 in num-
ber, are all Ionian Greeks and live under a
very severe monastic rule. The accommoda-
tions of the monastery are sorely taxed by the
bands of Russian pilgrims, sometimes 100 in

number, which come from Suez once or twice
a year.

The main church is an early Christian ba-
silica containing a wealth of detail and sym-
bolism of intense interest to the archaeologist.
The oldest part of the structure is undoubtedly
"The Chapel of the Burning Bush," said to
mark the spot where God appeared to Moses.
All visitors are obliged to remove their shoes
before entering. The dim light scarcely re-
veals the wealth of porcelain, chased silver, fres-
co, and handsomely wrought lamps.

A ray of the sun is said to enter this sanc-
tuary once a year only, gaining admis-
sance through a cleft in the mountain ridge on

the opposite side of the valley. With a fine
sentimentality the monks have erected a large
cross on the mountain ridge, so that the
shadow of the cross must touch this site of
the Burning Bush once a year, and the ridge is
called The Mountain of the Cross.

Behind the church is the well from which
Moses is said to have watered the flocks of
Jethro, and where he met his future wife.

The Mountain of the Law

But the great shrine is the ascent of Jebel
Musa, the Mountain of the Law, which rises
2,350 feet above and behind the monastery.
The pilgrimage steps, said to be 3,000 in num-
ber, are broken at many points, but still form
an impressive ascent to the noble mountain
top. There is a shrine to the Virgin Mary and
a chapel to the Prophet Elijah on the way up.
At one narrow passage still exists a gateway
where pilgrims formerly made final confes-
sion before being allowed to tread the way to
the summit sacred to Moses, and made fore-
ever holy by the giving of the Law.

The view from the top is wild and impos-
ing beyond the power of any pencil or camera.
The other peaks of this Sinai group cut the
heavens in every direction, a tangle of smaller
mountains and valleys lie almost at one's feet,
while far beyond in clear weather a bit of the
Red Sea and the greater part of the Gulf of
Akaba are visible. On the way down a detour
can be made to the traditional cleft connected
with the giving of the law, through which we
get a splendid view of the Plain of er-Rahah,
where all the Children of Israel could have
stood within full view of the Peak Ras Sufsaf
and have heard, from its lower slopes, the hu-
man voice of the Law-giver cutting through
that wondrous desert air.

Beyond Sinai the route of the Exodus, with-
in the Peninsula, is fixed beyond a peradven-
ture by the configuration of the valleys, the
one or two well-known locations and the water
supply. We left the monastery by the Wady
esh-Sheikh which we followed as far as the
tomb of Neby Sahib, accounted by the Bedouin
as one of the most sacred spots in the Penin-
sula. Palmer attempts to identify this Bedouin
saint with Moses himself, and there are many
considerations which bring this within the
realm of possibility.

Turning out of Wady esh-Sheikh through a
side valley, we soon reached a divide beyond
which the country changed instantly.

A wide plateau showed signs of vegetation,
where grazed hundreds of camels and thou-
sands of sheep, lambs, and she asses. The
whole skyline took on a softer, smoother look,
and the sides and bases of the mountains lost
the sharp, forbidding aspect of Sinai. We had
passed suddenly from the granite into the lime-
stone formation, and a day later we had
dropped from 5,100 feet, at Sinai, through the
Wady Saal, to 2,600 feet, at Wady Shukaa, and
pitched our tents among the beautifully col-
ored, sandstone cliffs. From its elevation it is
plain that these sandstone strata on the west
side of the continuation of the Arabian arch
of the same age and origin as those which form
the glory of Petra. Here we made one of our
most fascinating desert camps beside a huge
mass of crumbling sandstone, and realized
what "the shadow of a rock in a weary land"
must mean in the scorching heat of summer.

Hazeroth, Where Miriam, Sister of Moses, Was Stricken with Leprosy

Three hours beyond this camp we had one
of the most thrilling experiences of our jour-
ney. After a tiresome stretch over sandy
plains and winding among weird sandstone
cliffs and crags, we rode up a long slope to-
wards a break in the limestone hills and sud-
denly looked down into one of the most beau-
tiful and romantic nooks of the Peninsula.

It was the oasis of Ain Hudherah, the He-
zeroth of the Exodus (Num. 11: 35-12: 16)
where Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses
because he had married a Cushite woman.
Here Miriam was stricken with leprosy and
"shut up without the camp for seven days and
the Children of Israel journeyed not till
Miriam was brought in again." It took us
fully half an hour winding back and forth
among the deep sandstone ravines before we
emerged on the yellow and white sands and
entered the oasis through a beautiful natural
gateway.

Outside the cutting for some 30 feet, is a
deep, open cutting for some 30 feet,
and then begins the gardens where a deaf
and dumb Bedouin watched the few spots
sown with wheat, turning the stream from
place to place until it was lost in the drifts
of pure white sand. Because of the two groups
of palms it would almost seem that there was
a double fountain, or some sort of a tunnel
which carried the precious water across the
strip of sand that lies between the two groups.

The weary traveler coming upon this de-
lightful nook may forget the sight of this wonder-
ful oasis here. At least four possible roads con-
verge here. The one we followed from Sinai
and the one we took northward to Akaba, and
two others up into the desert plateau above,
one of which leads straight to Suez and the
other to Gaza on the borders of Palestine.

Between Hazeroth and Ezion-geber lie the
still unsolved portions of the problem and
route of the Exodus. After reaching the shore
of the Red Sea, they turned northward, and
for 38 years roamed about the neighborhood of
Kadesh. Into this Wilderness of the Wander-
ing, explorers are now penetrating from the
north, the west, and the south, and a few years
hence we shall have as good maps and details
of it as we have of the other sections of the
route.

Our plan carried us down from Hazeroth
through a series of sublime valleys to the
shore of the Gulf of Akaba, at Nuweiba, where
we met another surprise in the shape of an
Egyptian fort built about 16 years ago, when
the boundary question between Egypt and
Turkey was causing friction. It stands in an
oasis of palm trees which fringe the shore of
a beautiful little bay. The building is about
200 feet square and a well of good, but brack-

ish water in the courtyard. Five years ago it
contained some 200 soldiers of the Egyptian
army, but after the settlement of the boundary
in 1906, it was left in the charge of two for-
lorn guards, who hoist the Egyptian flag daily
and waylay passers-by for tobacco and with
messages to their families in Akaba.

Two days' ride along the shell-strewn shore
carried us to the boundaries of Egypt as fixed
in 1906, after the sharp encounter between
Great Britain and Turkey, when Great Britain
put her fleets in motion and notified Turkey
that if the Turkish troops then within the dis-
puted territory were not removed at a certain
date there would be war. After the withdraw-
al by Turkey a commission marked the bound-
ary by erecting a line of stone and steel pil-
lars from below Akaba on the gulf across the
desert to the Mediterranean Sea at el-Arish.
The first of these pillars stands on a high bluff,
100 feet above the sea, beyond the little fort-
ress-crowned Island of Pharaoh, and is visible
for many miles overland and far out at sea. It
is a mute but impressive token of the power
which, from its island home, controls so much
of the blue waves and the winding shores of
the habitable earth. Beyond this line of pillars
we entered the Turkish empire and an hour
later struck the Egyptian caravan route which
takes the straight course across the Peninsula
from Suez to the Akaba arm of the Red Sea.

Egypt Is Left Behind

For two days and more we had been look-
ing over the water from Africa into Asia, and
now we were approaching another turning
point in our pilgrimage. Nothing could have
been more beautiful than the sunlight playing
over those quiet waters and upon the barren
mountains beyond, into which as yet no Chris-
tian travelers have ever been allowed to go ex-
cept by stealth. We swung round the head
of the Gulf and across the utmost extremity of
the Jordan Valley rift and entered the town
of Akaba. It is a beautiful spot—seen from a
distance—because of its oasis-like clusters of
palm trees and the shimmering seat at their
base.

But the town itself inside is wretchedness
and filth personified. Rain seldom falls here
and the dirty inhabitants drink from brackish
and almost putrid wells. The old castle or
caravansary is half in ruins and the other
houses are mouldering mud heaps. If one
heavy rain ever came these houses would
crumble into complete ruin in a few hours.
The people are desperately poor in their per-
sons and characteristics, having lived like
leeches on the Egyptian caravans to Mecca for
centuries.

For us, however, the town was a memorable
camping place. It marked the successful close
of our journey across the Peninsula. The com-
mander of the Turkish troops handed us tele-
grams that brought us into contact with the
modern world again. Only fifteen minutes be-
fore our caravan of 22 slowly moving camels
came around the seashore and into the shadow
of the palm trees another caravan of 18 horses
and mules, led by two fine soldiers from Beer-
sheba and riding swift camels, dropped their
burdens at the same spot. They had made a
journey of 19 days down from Beirut, via
Sidon, Tyre and Jaffa, to Beersheba, and then
across the wilderness to meet us at Akaba.
They brought us a fresh supply of provisions
and charcoal, and two boxes of oranges from
the groves at Jaffa and, best of all, letters from
home. There was great joy in the camp that
night.

The next day we dismissed the cameleers
and started them back to their desert tents
about Sinai, while we took up the more fami-
liar journey over the fourth section of the route
of the Exodus. A guard of twelve horsemen,
seven foot-soldiers, and our two soldier came-
leers from Beersheba, accompanied us over the
rough and almost waterless valleys to Maan
and Petra. We pitched our tents in Edom,
Moab, and the Land of Gilead, at the Arnon,
at the Jabbok, and then at the Jordan. Our
last climb was up the slopes of Judea, and when
we entered the earthly Jerusalem, the city of
David, the city of its Greater King, it seemed
as though we had lived through all ancient
history, so freighted were our memories with
the events and scenes of the desert and the
Exodus.

NO NEED TO RUSH

If we may credit a Princeton lecturer, re-
ported in the Washington Star, the late Mr.
Cleveland was disposed to have a little fun
at the expense of those Americans to whom
life is devouring and incessant activity.

"Mr. Cleveland," said the lecturer, "had no
sympathy with the rush and hurry that our
business men so complacently affect, no sym-
pathy with the lunch-table telephone, with
the letter phonograph, and with train and boat
dictation."

"Don't rush so," Mr. Cleveland once said
to me. "Lightning might do a great deal more
if it wasn't always in such an awful hurry."

EASILY EXPLAINED

Seymour—I wonder why Foxley, when he
goes out walking with his wife, always makes
her keep at his left side.
Ashley—He's deaf on that side.

"A wise lawyer is a silent man; the fewer
unnecessary questions he asks, the better for
him," says Senator Root. "A little girl taught
me this early in my practice. Her widowed
mother came often about the settlement of her
estate. Sometimes she brought her daughter,
a beautiful girl of ten with red curls. One morn-
ing after a long conference with the mother, I
noticed that the child seemed uncomfortable;
she evidently thought I was paying too much
attention to her mother, I patted her on the
head and said:

"You are a beautiful girl. Don't you want
to come to my house and be my little girl?"
"She answered very decidedly: 'No, I don't."
And I don't want mother to, either."



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EOPHILES

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