

gives evidence of being "well watered every where." On the south it is bounded by the Dead Sea. We pitched our tents by the modern village of Jericho, which consists of thirty or forty huts of the most miserable description. The governor or chief of the village came to welcome us, and sat down with the people who came with us round a fire which they lighted near our tents. They continued talking in a lively manner till a late hour, and then most of them slept together upon the ground. We partook of a frugal repast in one of our tents, and after a season of social worship, retired early to rest.

*November 1.* Rose early and had our morning worship, and breakfasted by candle-light. At day-break we mounted our horses and directed our course toward the Jordan. The air was balmy and the sky perfectly clear. A few light clouds only skirted the eastern horizon, just sufficient to increase the beauty of the scene. When the morning star was "melting away into the light of heaven," and the sun was preparing to "come forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber," we all felt, as we rode over the plain, the inimitable beauty of that eastern sky. The mountains of Moab, or of Arabia, as they are sometimes called, are astonishingly even and uniform in height. They stretch from north to south as far as the eye can reach, like a wall of immense height, skirting the eastern edge of the plain of Jordan. You search in vain for Pisgah, or any other summit. There is none discernible from this distance. No peak rises prominent above the rest. A slight undulation only appears in the top of the range "as if," in the words of Chateaubriand, "the hand of the painter who drew this horizontal line along the sky had trembled in some places."

In two hours and a half we reached the banks of the Jordan. Its deep, muddy, rapid stream is quite concealed by high banks, and by the trees, bushes, and reeds which skirt them; so that we did not see it until we were actually upon its banks. Here we rested a few minutes at the place where, according to tradition, our Saviour was baptized. We bathed in the stream and drank of its waters, which were excellent. Its breadth here is not more than fifteen or twenty yards, and its greatest depth about eight feet. Its current is so rapid that in swimming across we were carried down a distance greater than the breadth of the stream. After gathering a few shells from the river, and plucking a few leaves of flowers from its banks, we re-mounted and proceeded towards the sea. Our road diverged from the course of the river, bearing to the southwest. It led us across a part of the plain which was perfectly barren, and which it would seem must at times be covered with water.

*Dead Sea—Means of Protection—Convent of St. Saba.*

In one hour and twenty minutes we reached the shore of the Dead Sea, the sterility of

which, as well as the desolate appearance of the mountains on either side, on which no habitation of man appears in any direction, seemed designed as a remembrance of the divine vengeance so awfully inflicted on the inhabitants of this once fertile and beautiful valley. The surface of the lake presents nothing remarkable in its appearance, except the slightness of the ripple caused by the wind. This is owing to the great specific gravity of the water, in which the human body is incapable of sinking. I made the experiment repeatedly while bathing in it, and found it impossible to thrust the whole body under water. While standing erect in the water, the head, shoulders, arms, and part of the breast remain above the surface; and I found on thrusting myself downward with my whole force, at the same time exhaling as far as possible all the air from my lungs, that I could sink only to my chin. One of my companions who had never before been able to swim, was here unable to sink. The sensation produced by this heaviness is very peculiar, and by no means unpleasant. The taste of this water is much more disagreeable than that of common sea-water, as the latter is than common water slightly brackish. Besides its unequalled bitterness, it has a peculiar pungency, and leaves a burning sensation in the mouth, and even upon the skin of the face and hands. This water when analysed yields about one-fourth its weight in various salts, viz., soda, magnesia, muriate of lime, and sulphate of lime; and these foreign ingredients, if chrysalized at a heat of 108° Fahrenheit, amount to forty-one per cent. of the whole weight of this wonderful liquid, which, notwithstanding this fact, is as clear as fresh water. We saw no fish, and but a few dead and sea-worn shells, which had doubtless floated down from the Jordan, since they belonged to the same species with those which we found in the river.

A part of our company returned to our last night's encampment at Jericho, and another part, consisting of the gentlemen who had joined us the evening before at Jericho, and myself, took another route towards Jerusalem, leading through the region anciently called the Wilderness of Engedi. We proceeded from the northwest angle of the sea in a direction a little south of west, and were about an hour in crossing this part of the plain. Before reaching the mountains we descried among the bushes a company of men on foot, and turned somewhat out of our way to ascertain who they could be. We found, to our surprise, in this desolate region, so far from the habitation of man, a dozen strangers unarmed, not one of them acquainted with the language of the country, without a guide, and all alike ignorant of the road they were to travel. They were Jews from Russia, and their inquiry was, Which is the way to the Jordan? I told them the direction and the distance, and we parted from them, our Arab