

met occasionally, as at Dan, or En-Gedi, and other spots, distinguished by the word "Ain," which means an eye, and then a "spring," as the shining eye of the locality. But the great body of the rain sinks through the upper rocks to a bed of hard impermeable limestone underneath, over which it rushes in a great subterranean river toward the south and west, coming out in some places, at Ascalon, close to the seashore, while at most it runs beneath the sea till the rocks somewhere reach the surface. To dig wells anywhere on the seacoast plain, therefore, secured water easily, and enabled Abraham and Isaac to get supplies for their flocks wherever they encamped. The abundance of water on the plains is noticeable, indeed, even now; the orange groves of Jaffa being watered abundantly by wells from which the water is raised by oxen, and the hamlets by small water-wheels turned by the feet. The slope of the strata at Mount Ebal explains the barrenness of the southern side of that hill contrasting so strikingly with the fertility of Gerizim, which faces the north. The water on Ebal flows to its north face, which is as fertile as Gerizim.

Palestine has always, in historical times, been without flowing streams, at least in the hills, tho some cross the coast plains, and the Kishon, usually a very insignificant current, winds along the foot of the range of Carmel. The Jordan, or "Descender," is of no use in its sunken course, and never had a town on its banks, or a boat on its course, for it runs in a deep cleft, twisting so constantly down a bed of rocky shelves that no boat could live on its waters. The Dead Sea, thirteen hundred feet below the Mediterranean, and about thirty-eight hundred below Jerusalem, is so salt, by evaporation, that it also has never had a town on its shores, while its exceptional depression creates a torrid heat on the open district at its north end, famous as the site of the cities of the plain and of Jericho, which leads to its yielding all the productions of the tropics, the necessary water being supplied by copious springs from the foot of the hills of Judea. Climbing the steep track of nearly four thousand feet ascent, to Jerusalem, about thirteen miles off, the rich fertility of the Jordan oasis is exchanged for a panorama of bare rounded hills, which could only be utilized for cultivation by narrow terraces, laboriously built on their slopes, as at Bethlehem. Some small valleys indeed are fertile, but they are insignificant in the landscape.

Judea, in fact, is one of the most barren of lands, and must always have been so, and this accounts for the vast emigration to all parts from it, even in Bible ages. South of Jerusalem, notwithstanding occasional glimpses of green in the hollows, and wider stretches of cultivation at Bethlehem and Hebron, the country is, for the most part, a stony desolation known on the east side, by the Hebrews, as *Jeshimon*, "the Horror." Below Hebron, the Negeb, or "dry land," begins; the South Country of Scripture, a region very waterless and fit now only for pasture, tho, at least in Roman times, improved by