

Lebanon in a large fountain near the town of Hasbelya. From this gushing fountain it runs off in the size of a small river or mill stream due south some twelve or fifteen miles, when it emerges into the marsh of the Huleh, ten or twelve miles above the lake of the same name known in Jewish history as the waters of Merom. At the head of this plain and two or three miles to the left of the stream from Hasbelya, another fountain of equal volume gushes out from the crater of an extinct volcano called Tell-el-Kady which marks the site of the ancient city of Dan or Laish. The stream from this fountain runs south, parallel to the one already described, and unites with it in the marsh above the lake. East of Tell-el-Kady, distant about three miles, is Paneas or Banias, known in the Gospels as Casarea Philippi. (Matt. 16: 13-20; Mark 8: 27-30; Luke 9: 18-21.) Just above this town a third fountain flows out from the brow of a lofty rock. This stream, after passing through the town, turns to the west into the great marsh and then south toward the lake. Before reaching the lake the three streams unite, and discharge themselves through one channel into the natural reservoir. From the mountains of Galilee, west of Huleh, several other fountains send off copious contributions to augment the waters of the Jordan. The great marsh above the lake is eight or ten miles square, and affords pasturage for immense herds of sheep and goats, and droves of camels, cows and buffalo. The lake is funnel shaped, about seven miles broad at its northern extremity, and tapering down to an apex at its outlet, at the distance of six miles. It varies, however, in extent at different seasons of the year. The waters are very shallow and covered to a great extent with aquatic plants. At Jacob's bridge, one mile below the outlet from Huleh, the Jordan, while flowing with a swift current, is about eighty feet wide and four deep. Below this it sinks into a deep gorge and rushes rapidly on to the lake of Gennesareth or the Sea of Galilee, making a descent of 637 feet in its course of ten miles from lake to lake. The Waters of Marom is about six feet above sea level.

From the lake of Gennesareth to the Dead Sea in a straight line the distance is only about sixty miles. But in its course the river so unfolds and doubles its channel by frequent windings as to run a course of two hundred miles. In this wonderful course from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea the Jordan dashes over twenty-seven frightful rapids and makes a perpendicular descent of one thousand feet. The channel of the river is deeply embedded between opposite terraces running nearly parallel to each other, at the distance of from three to five miles. The terraces present sometimes perpendicular cliffs, sometimes steep precipitous banks from the commencement of high rounded knolls, conical hills and rocks, thrown together in wild confusion which rise irregularly as they recede to the highlands of the central chain of Palestine on the west, and to a higher series of mountain heights on the east beyond Jordan. Between these terraces the river, which is from seventy-five to one hundred feet in width, and six and eight feet in depth, rolls on through its endless sinuosities and contortions, a chafed and angry tide of water, sometimes turbid, sometimes clear, sometimes swift, sometimes slow, leaping down frequent and fearful rapids, and dashing from side to side of the narrow bed in which it is imprisoned, "as if struggling to burst the barriers by which it is confined, and save its sacred waters from being lost in that sea of death below." The entire dis-

tance from the highest source of the Jordan to its outlet in the Dead Sea is, in a direct line, not more than one hundred and twenty miles, in which distance it makes a descent of about two thousand feet.

I spent between one and two hours in and about the river Jordan, whose banks are fringed with trees and bushes of different varieties. We then started on our return trip to Jericho, distant about six miles. About two-thirds the way up we passed within a short distance on our right of an ancient cromlech situated on the north side of the Wady-el-Kelt wash, which is supposed to be the site of the ancient Gilgal; it is about two miles southeast of modern Jericho. In Gilgal (Joshua 4: 19, 20) the Israelites erected twelve stones (or according to Joshua 4: 9, in the midst of the Jordan itself). In A. D. 723 Willibald found a wooden church here. On the other hand it is questionable whether the Gilgal of 1 Sam. 7: 16; 11: 14, 15, was situated here, or in another locality to the northwest of Jericho. In the time of the Crusaders a church stood here enclosing "twelve stones;" and the spot was then known as Gilgal. Gilgal was situated on the frontier of Judah and Benjamin. About a mile and a half east of Gilgal is Kasr el-Yehud (castle of the Jews), also named Der Har Yuhanna (monastery of St. John). It is situated about a mile west of the influx of the Wady el-Kelt into the Jordan. Here are found the remains of a monastery of St. John which was in existence as early as the time of Justinian, and, according to tradition, was erected by the Empress Helena over the grotto where John the Baptist dwelt. It was restored in the 12th century; a number of vaults, frescoes and mosaics are still visible. A Greek monastery now occupies the site.

The ride from the Jordan to Jericho was an unpleasant one to me on account of the excessive heat. Though I had left all my spare clothing at the Roman hospice, where we started out in the night, and only sufficient on to afford proper covering, I perspired as I perhaps have never perspired before. The hot weather which I had recently experienced in the tropics was as nothing compared to the heat that oppressed me in the valley of the Jordan. At 10:30 a.m. we reached Jericho, and immediately sought protection against the hot rays of the sun under the beautiful grape-vine bowery which covered quite a square in the garden of the hospice. But even under the thick foliage, the heat was most oppressive until the middle of the afternoon, when a gentle, cooling breeze commenced to blow from the north. On our morning tour, or visit, to the Dead Sea and the River Jordan, we had traveled about fifteen miles, including extra distance when we were lost, and our route described a sort of a triangle.

After resting in Jericho about five and a half hours, waiting for a cooler atmosphere, we started out on our return trip to Jerusalem; and we arrived at the Olivet House about 11 p.m., tired and fatigued, but glad indeed to get back from the "burning regions of the lake of fire and brimstone," as the country around the Dead Sea might appropriately be called during the hot summer months.

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### THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT

Having crossed the great American desert as often as any other man ever has in the last forty years, I thought a few lines would not come amiss to the readers of the "News."

A man traveling from Salt Lake to California would pronounce it all a desert from the Wasatch to the Sierra Nevada mountains. The great desert

commences on the north at the Idaho line, and extends to Old Mexico. This expanse of sterility is at least 600 miles wide. This great space is dotted with mountains that must have been islands in the great water age. These mountains, and ranges of mountains, contain mineral of all kinds. It is here that the mining camps are located. These mountains are all surrounded by valleys from ten to sixty miles wide. The water is situated in the mountains, consequently it is just that distance to water. There is once in a great while an oasis. The water is not of the best at any time, and it grows poorer the farther south one goes. I and others that have traveled this sterile country almost doubt that little geography story about this mundane sphere of ours containing one-third land and two-thirds water. It is all land here.

The Desert and much-to-be-dreaded spot lying west of the Great Salt Lake is what I want to speak of just now. The greatest length is about 160 miles. The width varies from 60 to 125 miles, excepting the Fish Spring flats on the extreme south end. These are only about four miles. This desert is as level as a floor, excepting a few sand hills here and there and two mountains, Newfoundland and Granite, with Wildcat just running into it like a promontory. All three of these places contain minerals. The Granite will make a great camp, with its lead, copper, gold and some silver.

There is no vegetation on the Desert, except a small salt weed that grows here and there. The islands, or mountains as they are now called, have several springs of pure water that were unknown in emigration days—Granite having seven; Newfoundland has nineteen.

The first account we have of any one traveling across this never-to-be-forgotten desert was in 1846 by the ill-fated Donner party. They passed to the south of the Salt Lake, and through where Grantsville now stands into Skull Valley, where they camped for a few days at what is known as the Kanaka ranch. It was here that a messenger overtook them from Jim Bridger, begging them not to attempt to go across the Desert but go around to the north. This message they heeded not, but started across to the round mountain known as Pilot's Peak. The atmosphere is so clear and deceptive that it looked to them (as it does now) only a few miles to the other side. I am not certain but they may have seen one of those beautiful mirage lakes that are so often seen on clear bright days. At all events they had mostly ox teams, and it being ninety miles, they were on the road many days and nights. The teams were unhitched about twenty-five miles from Pilot's Peak and driven into water. The people that went with them were so exhausted that they lay down to sleep, and the Indians stole their stock. Other men came to see what had become of their comrades, awoke them and they went in search of the stock. Some of them they got back but enough were lost to retard their travels. The rest of the history of the ill-fated Donner party is given in their being belated and perishing in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Ever since 1846 people going to California have crossed this desert more or less. Many years ago there was the northern route explored, known as the Goose Creek and Humbolt road, about on the line of the Central Pacific railroad, but the Indians, being so bad, many of the small parties have, from time to time, hazarded their lives going across at various points of this valley of death. The most noted was the Hastings party of which there is no history left to tell the tale of their suffering. It seems that in the early 50's