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ARTICLE IV.

RECENT EXPLORATIONS OF THE DEAD SEA¹

By Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, New York.

SOME three years ago, the religious world was electrified by the announcement that a French traveller had discovered the ruins of the Pentapolis on the shores of the Dead Sea. Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, Admah, and Bela or Zoar, were severally identified; not by conjectural sites approximated from the testimony of ancient writers, and from the geographical features of the country, but by visible ruins of unmistakable antiquity, marked by tradition and by names preserved through all the changes of language, as the very site of the catastrophe of Siddim. Startling as was this announcement, the recent discoveries of Layard and Botta at Nineveh and Babylon, and the continued success of explorers in Egypt, had prepared the public mind to credit it. The religious press generally accepted it as a most valuable contribution to Biblical geography and archaeology. An English journalist, in an almost ecstatic frame of credulity, exclaimed: "There is something strangely awful in the idea of these living monuments of Divine vengeance, yet remaining after six and thirty centuries, with the actual marks of the instrument of their overthrow still visible upon their blasted ruins." An American geographer placed the Pentapolis upon his map of Palestine in accordance with these discoveries, and expressed his own enthusiasm in the remark that "the disinterment of Nineveh may be of more importance in its results to the historian and the antiquary, but as a matter of feeling, it is of small moment compared with the discovery of Sodom and Gomorrah."²

¹ *Voyage autour de la Mer Morte et dans les terres Bibliques*, Exécuté de Décembre 1850 à Avril 1851, par F. De Saulcy, Ancien Élève de L'Ecole Polytechnique, Membre de l'Institut. Paris, Gide et J. Baudry, 1853.

Narrative of a Journey through Syria and Palestine in 1851 and 1852, by C. W. M. Van De Velde, Late Lieutenant Dutch R. N., Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1854:

² Coleman.

While this general credence was given to the discoveries of Mons. De Sauley, the voice of scepticism was also heard in various quarters, questioning his assertions upon different grounds, according to the temperament and education of the objector.

1. An objection to the reality of these discoveries was found in the popular belief that the cities of the plain were submerged at the time of their catastrophe. So general is this belief, that most persons would be surprised, on reading critically the narrative in Gen. 19: 24, 25, to find that it gives no intimation of the swallowing of the guilty cities by the sea after they had been destroyed by fire. Maundeville expresses the current belief of his age upon this point, when he says: "Into that sea [the Lake Dasfetidee or the Dead Sea], by the wrath of God, *sunk* the five cities, Sodom, Gomorrah, Aldama, Seboym, and Segor, for the abominable sin that reigned in them. But Segor, by the prayer of Lot, was saved and kept a great while, for it was set upon a hill, and some part of it still appears above the water; and men may see the walls when it is fair and clear weather."¹ Even Dr. Robinson seems to countenance this belief by the conjecture that the southernmost bay or elongation of the Dead Sea covers the site of the ruined Sodom;² and Lieutenant Lynch tells us that "the inference from the Bible, that this entire chasm was a plain sunk and '*overwhelmed*' by the wrath of God, seems to be sustained by the extraordinary character of our soundings."³ But no such belief was prevalent in the time of Josephus, who says of the land of Sodom: "It is said that, owing to the impiety of its inhabitants, it was consumed by lightning; and accordingly vestiges of the divine fire, and some faint remains of five cities, are still discernible."⁴ Neither the text of Genesis (19: 24, 25), nor any subsequent reference in the Bible to that catastrophe, makes mention of any other agency than that of fire in the destruction of the cities of the plain. The report that ruins of these cities can be traced above ground may, therefore, be credible, notwithstanding the popular belief that the cities and the plain on which they stood were submerged by a lake formed or enlarged after their overthrow.

The theory based upon the researches of Burckhardt, that the Jordan once emptied itself through the southern Ghôr into the

¹ The Book of Sir John Maundeville, Chap. IX.

² Researches, II. 601 seq.

³ Narrative, p. 378.

⁴ Bell. Jud. IV. 84.

Gulf of Akabah, and that the Dead Sea was formed by some great natural convulsion at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is now generally abandoned. To one who simply traces the Ghôr up from Akabah, without any comparison of levels, this theory appears plausible; and it looks so reasonable upon the map, that we are loth to give it up. But Dr. Robinson exacts this of us, as one among many tributes to his more careful observation. He was the first to notice that the waters of the northern part of the Arabah flow northward towards the Dead Sea, as do also the waters from the high lands of the desert even south of Akabah. His mature opinion is that "the configuration of this region, in its main features, is coeval with the present condition of the surface of the earth in general, and not the effect of any local catastrophe at a subsequent period. [The measurements of Thornton and Herapath, since made, show that the highest level of the Arabah is 800 feet above the level of the ocean, while that of the Dead Sea is 1300 below it, making a rise of 2100 feet to the highest point between the Dead Sea and the Elanitic Gulf.]¹ . . . The bed of the Dead Sea is only a portion of the Ghôr or great valley, which here retains its usual breadth, and does not spread out into an oval form or to a larger compass, as is the case around the lake of Tiberias."² Dr. Robinson supposes that there always existed, in the "well-watered" plain of Sodom, a lake of sweet water, which received the Jordan and the streams of the surrounding country, north and south, and which, after the destruction of Sodom, was enlarged by the submersion of that part of the Dead Sea which now forms the southern bay. It is conjectured that the waters then had some subterranean outlet to the sea. This is hardly tenable.

Lieutenant Lynch has revived the hypothesis that the Jordan once flowed through the Arabah to the head of the Elanitic Gulf. He regards the entire chasm of the Dead Sea as a sunken plain; or rather as "two submerged plains, an elevated and a depressed one; the last averaging thirteen, the former about *thirteen hundred* feet below the surface."³ He also makes a suggestion relative to the southern Ghôr, which is worthy of examination: "Between the Subbok [which enters the Jordan about twelve miles from its mouth] and this sea, we unexpectedly found a sudden break-down in the bed of the Jordan. If there be a

¹ This is above the highest level of the Jordan.

² *Researches*, II. 218.

³ *Narrative*, p. 378.

similar break-down in the water-courses to the south of the sea, accompanied with like volcanic characters, there can scarce be a doubt that the whole Ghôr has sunk from some extraordinary convulsion, preceded most probably by an irruption of fire, and a general conflagration of the bitumen which abounded in the plain. I shall ever regret that we were not authorized to explore the southern Ghôr to the Red Sea."¹ We, too, shall ever regret that we were not suffered to ascend the Ghôr from the Red Sea; but border wars, and the audacious impositions of Sheikh Hussein, defeated this part of our plan. There is need of a thorough exploration of the Arabah by a well-appointed scientific commission. As yet, we see nothing to impeach the hypothesis of Dr. Robinson, confirmed as this is by the barometrical measurements of Thornton and Herapath; and no such proof of the common theory of the submergence of the cities of the plain as would preclude the possibility of finding their ruins above the water. Further research *may* substantiate that theory by geological facts.

Lieut. Van de Velde attempts to harmonize the several theories concerning the catastrophe recorded in Gen. xix. in the following manner: "It appears, from soundings, that the Dead Sea, from the Jordan to the large peninsula on the south-eastern side (called by the Arabs, El-Lisan), is an immense bowl, rather more than fifty English miles long, and in the middle 1300 feet deep; that the remaining, or southern, part is an inundated plain, in extent about ten miles long, at the deepest only thirteen feet, while in some places it can even be forded. The peninsula just mentioned has, by its elevated position, been saved from the inundation. The geological formation of the mountains around the Dead Sea gives undoubted proof of a most overwhelming revolution, effected by subterraneous volcanic action; but this must have been in a very early period in the history of the now habitable globe. The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah has nothing to do with this. The southern extremity of the Jordan plain, as described in Gen. xiii. must, when Lot took up his abode in it, have had a lake, extending probably over the northern part, and comprising about three-fourths of the present Dead Sea. The Jordan watered and irrigated the plain of Siddim, lying to the south of the lake, which thus, from the tropical atmosphere of this sunken valley, showed a vegetation rich and glorious ' as

¹ Narrative, p. 379.

the garden of the Lord.' That this water was perfectly sweet is self-evident, for otherwise it would have spread, as it now does, death and desolation all around it. In the middle of the valley lay the four doomed cities — Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim; within sight of Sodom, and, according to Gen. 19: 15—23, at the furthest an hour's distance, was Zoar. An hour's distance from the present ruins of Zoar upon the peninsula, in a westerly direction, that is, in the middle of the valley of Siddim, the now inundated plain, the wicked city must have stood, and her sisters at no great distance from her. Fire descended from heaven and kindled the combustible matter with which the earth was filled. The cities and all their inhabitants, the grass of the field, — the whole plain perished in the flames. The consumption of the layer of bitumen under the trodden ground made its level sink several feet. The water thus obtained free access to the plain, and the site of the doomed cities was covered forever. The tremendous shock given by this catastrophe to all surrounding nature probably stripped the Salt Mountain of the loose earth with which it must at that time have been covered; for the salt would otherwise have destroyed the whole of the vegetation of the vale of Siddim. The Salt Mountain, however, being once uncovered, every shower of rain must have washed down a considerable quantity of salt into the sweet water basin, which would always be increased as long as the Salt Mountain remained."¹

The worthy Lieutenant has thus woven together with some ingenuity the soundings of his brother officer, and the conjectures of Dr. Robinson. His use of the terms "plain" and "valley" is somewhat obscure; but his meaning is, that, in the upper part of the great valley or basin lying between the mountains of the Dead Sea, was a lake of sweet water *through* which the Jordan flowed as it now flows through the lake of Tiberias, or as the Rhone flows through the lake of Geneva; that in the lower part of this basin was a valley or an undulating plain, watered by the river issuing from the lake, where were situated the doomed cities; and that the depression of this plain, consequent upon the volcanic action by which the cities were destroyed, occasioned an enlargement of the lake, forming what is now the shallow southern bay of the Dead Sea.

There is enough of plausibility in this theory of submergence

¹ Syria and Palestine, II. 120-122.

to lead us to receive with caution a professed discovery of the ruins of the Pentapolis. But, since the Scriptures make no mention of such submergence, it cannot be alleged as a final objection to the reality of Mons. De Saulcy's discoveries.

2. A second and perhaps a more weighty objection to the validity of these discoveries is made upon historical grounds. It is said that history informs us of no nation at that early period resident upon the borders of the Dead Sea, capable of erecting monuments of such solidity that their remains could be traced at this day. But to this it may be replied, that Hebron, in nearly the same latitude with the Pentapolis, was built before the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; and that the unquestioned site of Abraham's sepulchre is an evidence of the perpetuity of monuments even in Palestine. The huge bevelled stones of the wall that surrounds the Haram which encloses the original cave, may date from the time of Solomon, and answer to the description of Josephus;¹ while the tomb itself, could we gain access to it, would probably show traces of a much higher antiquity. Arculf saw at Hebron only the ruins of the ancient city.² The pyramids of Egypt, and some of the temples that yet remain in that country, were built before the time of Abraham; and some of the remains of Nineveh bear an equal antiquity. The preservative qualities of the climate have favored the one, and the accumulation of mounds has secured the other; neither of which causes would exist to the same extent on the shores of the Dead Sea. But Irby and Mangles long since professed to have discovered the ruins of Zoar; and Robinson and Smith, and Lynch agree in the genuineness of that discovery. If Mons. De Saulcy has not discovered Sodom and Gomorrah, he seems to have discovered, upon the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, remains of Moabitish masonry, and bas-reliefs of great antiquity. We must, therefore, admit the possibility of the existence to this day of the ruins of the Pentapolis which Josephus believed to exist in his time. Josephus, however, seems to have reported the "faint remains" of the five cities from hearsay, and not from personal inspection.

3. An objection to which we attach more weight than to either of the preceding, is, that these ruins which Mons. De Saulcy so readily found, have never before been discovered. Those careful observers, Robinson and Smith, passed over the very spot

¹ De Bell. Jud. IV. 9, 7.

² Travels, Bohm's edition, p. 7.

where he discovered the ruins of Zoar and of Sodom, and saw there nothing but the remains of a small Saracenic fort. We ourselves, though not upon an exploring tour, passed over the site of Gomorrah as given upon De Saulcy's map, without the least suspicion that in the debris of mountain torrents piled along the north-western shore of the Dead Sea, this enterprising traveller had found the remains of a city which our imagination had buried at the southern extremity of the sea. Many other travellers have had a like experience.

But this objection is by no means conclusive against De Saulcy's discoveries. Almost every careful explorer of Palestine has added something to the geography, the topography, and the archaeology of the country; and yet much remains to be done. EUSEBIUS and JEROME have given us the topography of Palestine as understood in their day. The BORDEAUX ITINERARY is little more than a list of names and distances, with a detailed description of Jerusalem. The brief memoir of ARCULE's travels in the seventh century, is straightforward and precise, and is but little tinged with the superstitions of the age. The only note which this bishop makes of the Dead Sea is in the following terms: "Arculf found the waters of the Jordan of a yellowish milky color, and observed that they preserved this color to a considerable distance, after they flowed into the Dead Sea, where he also witnessed the way in which salt was obtained from the waters of the latter."¹ The book of SIR JOHN MAUNDEVILLE,² which, like the travels of Rabbi BENJAMIN OF TUDELA, two centuries before, excited a fresh thirst for pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is chiefly remarkable for its excessive credulity. It adds but little to our stock of geographical knowledge. We have already quoted its hearsay mention of the ruins of Zoar. LA BROCCQUIERE describes customs and institutions rather than places; but his allusions to the topography of the countries through which he passed, are so just, and his descriptions so graphic and so truthful, that it is to be regretted that he did not explore Palestine more thoroughly. MAUNDRELL was the first of the earlier travellers in Palestine who followed his own eyes regardless of tradition; who made measurements of places, distances and monuments, and carefully recorded *what he saw*, even though this were in direct contradiction of previous travellers

¹ Travels, Belin, p. 8.

² Written in the first half of the fourteenth century.

and of the popular belief. Thus he confutes, from personal observation, the common tradition that birds cannot fly over the Dead Sea; and also the exaggerated stories of the buoyancy and other marvellous properties of the waters. His cautious reference to the supposed ruins of the Pentapolis, is worthy of being quoted entire.

"Being desirous to see the remains (if there were any) of those cities anciently situate in this place, and made so dreadful an example of the Divine vengeance, I diligently surveyed the waters as far as my eye could reach; but neither could I discern any heaps of ruins, nor any smoke ascending above the surface of the water, as is usually described in the writings and maps of geographers. But yet I must not omit what was confidently attested to me by the father guardian and procurator of Jerusalem, both men in years, and seemingly not destitute either of sense or probity; viz. that they had once actually seen one of these ruins; that it was so near the shore, and the waters were so shallow at that time, that they, together with some Frenchmen, went to it, and found there several pillars and other fragments of buildings. The cause of our being deprived of this sight was, I suppose, the height of the water."¹

The following paragraph would have conveyed a salutary caution to our too credulous countryman, Lieutenant Lynch, whom even the enthusiastic De Saulcy refuses to follow in his identification of Lot's salified wife. "On the west side of the sea," continues Maundrell, "is a small promontory, near which, as our guides told us, stood the monument of Lot's metamorphosed wife; part of which (if they may be credited) is visible at this day. But neither would the present occasion permit us to go and examine the truth of this relation, nor, had the opportunity served, could we give faith enough to their report to induce us to go on such an errand."

The travels of NIEBUHR and BURCKHARDT inaugurated a new era in our topographical knowledge of the East, toward which POCOCKE had already marked the transition from the vagaries of the Middle Ages. Prepared for travel by the careful study of history and archaeology, fearless of danger and patient of fatigue, accurate in observation and cautious in induction, these travellers introduced that methodical exploration of the East, in

¹ Bohn's edition, p. 454.

which the watch, the compass, the measuring tape, and the barometer, are the constant accessories. It is nearly a century since Carsten Niebuhr, at the instance of the Danish government, undertook that remarkable journey through Arabia, before whose perils and privations his four associates sunk within a year, leaving him to prosecute alone not only his favorite geographical researches, but every department of scientific observation and discovery with which the expedition was charged. Yet those who have followed in his track have found little occasion to question his judgment or to rectify his conclusions. He gave to our geography of the Eastern world its first tangible and reliable shape, and mapped out the field so well that his successors have done little more than to fill up the outline. It is to be regretted that the charms of a young orphan lady so won upon the heart of this indefatigable traveller, that, at the age of forty, he abandoned a meditated journey to the interior of Africa, and settled down in a quiet old town of Holstein. Yet to the love of that same young orphan lady the world is indebted for the Niebuhr of history; and, though Africa might have been explored but for her charms, the topography and history of Rome might have remained to this day a region of inexplicable myths. The father inspired the son with a zeal for those historical and geographical studies that rendered him the most acute and accurate of historians.

The untimely death of SBETZEN prevented the world from reaping the fruits of his valuable labors.

BURCKHARDT, who followed to some extent the track of Niebuhr nearly half a century later, is still a high authority upon the geography of Arabia and Syria. His successful entrance into Petra fired the zeal of oriental travellers; and what he accomplished adroitly and in disguise, is now a pleasure trip for ladies and gentlemen from England and the United States.

LABORDE, whose discreet analysis of local and historical facts is equalled only by his reverential regard for the letter of the inspired record, made some valuable additions to our knowledge of Arabia Petra, especially in his *Commentaire Géographique sur L'Exode et les Nombres*, published in one folio volume in 1841, with several beautiful maps.

LEPSIUS, also, has contributed something to the geography and the geology of the same region. Yet, even after Arabia Petra and Syria had been opened as daily routes, and had been traversed by many acute and scientific explorers, it remained for our

own ROBINSON to identify Rephidim and to designate *er-Raha* as the camping ground of the Israelites at Sinai instead of the *Wady Sebayah*, and *es-Sufafeh* as the Sinai of the law, instead of Serbal, Catharine, or the Gebel Mousa of tradition; while he was the first traveller who brought every tradition to the test of sober history, who measured every object by line and compass, and gave us an authentic map of Palestine. But Robinson's map has been corrected in some points by later discoveries; and both the author himself, and others who have followed in his steps, have since identified localities marked doubtful, and have added others before unknown. Discoveries in Palestine have not, therefore, reached their limit; and the fact that none of Mons. De Saulcy's predecessors ever stumbled upon the ruins of the Pentapolis, is not conclusive that those ruins are not just where he asserts them to be. It may be that our French discoverer is only a more fortunate pupil of the school of Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Laborde, Lepsius, and Robinson, and not merely another knight-errant of the Middle Ages.

Having thus set aside, or at least abated, the presumption against Mons. De Saulcy's discoveries, from the theory of submersion, the absence of historical testimony and monuments, and the silence of preceding travellers, we proceed to examine those discoveries by internal evidences, by known facts of history and topography, and by the testimony of a subsequent traveller who had the benefit of De Saulcy's own map.

We propose first to test Mons. De Saulcy's discoveries by the internal evidences of his own narrative. For a tour of exploration in Palestine, there is need of a certain preparation by study, of certain elements of personal character, and of certain physical and local conditions, that are seldom combined in one person or party. One must be well-versed in the history and antiquities of the country; and, by a long and diligent study of maps and travels, of sacred history and geography, and of such authors, ancient and modern, secular and ecclesiastical, as allude to the geography and topography of Syria, must have made himself familiar with points already ascertained, and have marked out such inquiries as are most worthy of his attention. Without an intelligent plan of operations, based upon extensive and accurate research, no explorer can look for success in Palestine. Chance may throw some discovery directly in his way; but no valuable contributions to knowledge can be expected from fugitive and

desultory efforts, or from expeditions of discovery originated upon the ground without the advantage of previous study and of a settled plan. To find any place in Palestine one must know beforehand about where to look for it; otherwise, he will waste time and patience upon fruitless excursions, and will be imposed upon by lying guides. But, on the other hand, this preparation and planning should not extend to the pre-occupation of the mind with a theory which upon the ground might invent or torture facts to prove itself true. The requisite here, is the careful preparation of a candid, judicious, well-balanced mind.

Next to this qualification, a good knowledge of the Arabic language is indispensable. Even the ordinary traveller will fail to identify many well-known places and to enjoy many Biblical associations, if he have not at hand a list of modern Arabic names corresponding with the ancient Hebrew or Greek names of the Scriptures. For the benefit of such travellers — of course the scientific explorer will not look to us for suggestions — we would recommend a plan which will ensure the identification of all known Biblical sites, and the full enjoyment of the associations pertaining to each. It is out of the question to transport a library for reference upon the backs of mules, as one journeys in Palestine. Even a single work, like Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, can be carried only with much inconvenience. Yet one should have before him upon the ground the results of all scientific research in Biblical geography and archaeology. Accordingly, we prepared, in advance, a synopsis of the *Biblical Researches* and of other standard works, with a skeleton of routes, and an alphabetical index of names, ancient and modern. We also prepared an alphabetical list of all places in Palestine mentioned in the Bible, with the reference to each appended in abbreviated characters. With this manual in hand, and with Kiepert's map, which gives the Arabic as well as the Hebraistic and Greek names, we first ascertained, from guides and attendants, the modern names of places along our route, then turning to the map or the synopsis, found their Biblical or other ancient representatives, and then from our manuscript geographical concordance recalled, and thus enjoyed to the full every association of every place upon the spot where it belonged. At evening a few books of reference were consulted, the Bible references were read in their connection, the memoranda of the day were written out, and the programme of the morrow's route was examined in detail.

Thus we never had to regret that we had passed a place without recognizing it, or had failed to recall, at its appropriate time and place, any incident or allusion of the Bible. But without a vocabulary of the modern Arabic names of ancient Biblical sites we should often have failed to identify such sites, through the ignorance of our guides. This episode may be of use to future travellers, who, like ourselves, shall merely enter into other men's labors, with no preparation or qualification for a tour of discovery. And it may even fall to their lot, as it did to ours, to correct Kiepert's map on some insignificant point, and, on boasting of the discovery, to find that Dr. Robinson had given it to the world some months before!¹

One who would explore Palestine to advantage must have a sufficient knowledge of Arabic to render him entirely independent of an interpreter in his inquiries of the people of any place or district.

It is equally important that he should understand the Arab character; avaricious and self-willed, yet tractable under kindness, and easily subdued by decision; cunning to detect the weak points of a traveller, and, in the hope of gain, to follow up his bent with all manner of deception. Few travellers in the East succeed in gaining the confidence of their Arab attendants, or in making themselves anything more than objects of prey to men whose trade is to rob by lying and extortion. Laborde, who was with the Arabs long enough to comprehend their character, observes that "they commonly are extremely accommodating with respect to questions addressed to them. Ask an Arab: Is this mountain called *Marah*? He will answer Yes, to satisfy you. But ask him *what* it is called, without seeming to wish for one name rather than another, and he will tell you its true name, or, which is a greater mark of confidence, he will profess that he does not know."² Many a traveller has been imposed upon by the ready deceitfulness of an Arab guide.

But, to guard effectually against the tricks of those upon whom he is dependent as his guides or escort, the traveller should maintain uniform kindness, mildness, and decision; never giving way to petulance, nor betraying anxiety or fear; never falling into a passion, but always wielding the calm invisible power of law, which even the Bedouin feels in the heart of the desert.

¹ *Annals.*

² *Commentaire Geographique*, p. 84.

The explorer should allow himself ample time for his work, and should so accommodate his plan to the seasons that the weather shall be favorable to out-door life. It is the misfortune of even the best researches in Syria, that they have been made in extreme haste, and in circumstances unfavorable to personal comfort and safety. An example of this was given in a late number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in Dr. Robinson's valuable account of his excursion for the identification of Pella. For want of time, he was obliged to take one of his most important bearings (*Jabesh Gilead*) upon the authority of his guides, and then to consult his safety by a rapid and fatiguing march to the object of his search, and thence to the western bank of the Jordan.¹ In the present unsettled state of the country, its leisurely examination by a scientific corps is hardly to be expected. But a corps sufficiently large to ensure safety, untrammelled by the usages of the country with respect to day's marches and places of encampment, and having ample time and resources at command, might render a service to sacred geography which can hardly be accomplished by the most careful collocation of the observations of individual travellers.

It only remains for us to add that the explorer in Palestine should be penetrated with a profound reverence for the Bible. Free from superstition, from dogmatism, and from credulity, on the one hand, he should be equally removed, upon the other, from indifference, levity, or unbelief with regard to the records and the teachings of the Scriptures. A devout and reverent frame is becoming in one who would explore the lands of the Bible; lands whose grand and unique interest it is to have been associated with the sublimest scenes in the history of redemption.

If, now, we inquire as to the qualifications of Mons. De Saulcy for his mission, we find him by no means wanting in those general scientific acquirements, or in that special knowledge of Biblical geography and antiquities, which are indispensable for such an undertaking. His work, though given to the world in the loose form of a journal, exhibits marks of scholarship and an intimate acquaintance with the literature of his subject. It is a little strange, however, that he should have been ignorant, as he confesses, of the history of Masada, and oblivious of the prominent

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, No. XLV. p. 136.

events of the Jewish war; so that it did not occur to him when on the spot, that Josephus had described the place, or that it had any historical celebrity. Yet, on the whole, Mons. De Saulcy did not visit Palestine without preparation; nor did he go without a definite purpose. But unfortunately that very purpose, so patent in his journal, impairs our confidence in his accuracy and judgment, and gives to his every conjecture the appearance of a foregone conclusion. Mons. De Saulcy is bent upon making discoveries, with a zeal that rejects or depreciates the labors of his predecessors, and that excites by turns the wonder, the merriment, the anger, and the cupidity of his guides, attendants and guards. For example, upon the every-day route from Beirût to St. Jean D'Acre, in a district as thoroughly explored by Rev. W. Thomson and other missionaries as any county of New York or New England was ever canvassed by circuit-rider, home missionary, or travelling agent, he finds ancient cities as numerous as the mile-stones of the old Roman road. In the earliest stages of his journey, he makes the following entry: "Instinctively, and somewhat also through a spirit of contradiction, and in order not to travel like common tourists, whom their guides conduct like luggage from one point to another, whenever our guides declare that there is nothing to be seen at such a spot and that it is better to go on,—we stop and examine, and we almost always succeed in making some interesting discovery."¹ Mons. De Saulcy's principle was a good one, but his extraordinary bent for discovery often led him to crude and hasty decisions. Thus on p. 63 we read: "At a very little distance south of Sarfent [or rather, as Robinson reads, *Strafend*, the ancient Sarepta], is a considerable rising ground, covered with ruins, and called by the Arabs Kaisarieh. It is, therefore, certain that there formerly existed here a *Cæsarea*, of which no mention is made, that I know of, in ancient authors." Again, he insists on having "discovered" between Sidon and Tyre, in the modern '*Adlân*, "a very important locality," which, from the magnitude of the adjacent necropolis, and the style of its sarcophagi, he identifies as the site of *Ornithon*, upon which the *Mutatio ad Nonum*—the relay station at the ninth mile-stone mentioned in the Bordeaux Itinerary—was superinduced. Rejecting the fact that Pococke, Thomson and Robinson had suggested that the "small city"

¹ Tome I. p. 46.

Ornithon of Strabo may have been at 'Adlân, and the conjecture that the tombs were "an ancient *Laura* of monastic cells," he exaggerates the size of the ruins, and then adds with emphasis: "là donc, je le répète, a dû exister une opulente cité phénicienne."

About two hours from Acre he goes into raptures over a round hillock, which he takes to be an artificial mound. "It is fifteen or twenty *mètres* high; its base is covered with rubbish; and in looking at it, I cannot help thinking of the mounds of Niveveh. Who knows if trenches well conducted would not lead here, as at Khorsabad, to important discoveries?" But from this sudden ecstasy, Mons. De Saulcy suddenly collapses to the matter-of-fact observation: "Be that as it may, this enormous mound bears the name of Et-Tell-Kisan, and a little fountain, the Ayn-et-Tell, is situated in front of it toward the plain of Acre."¹ In this spirit Mons. De Saulcy pursues his journey. A heap of stones, a mound of earth, the fragments of a sarcophagus, the least analogy of orthography or of sound between a modern Arabic and an ancient Hebrew name, at once puts him upon the track of some important discovery; and he bends the text of Scripture and of ancient authors to confirm his sudden hypothesis. In this frame of mind it is not surprising that Mons. De Saulcy should have discovered the cities of the plain all marked by indubitable signs. But this zest for discovery early makes one distrustful of our author as a guide.

Mons. De Saulcy had a good knowledge of the Arabic tongue, and was thus in a measure independent of guides; but his knowledge of the Arabic character, in the earlier part of his journey, was not sufficient to protect him from the rapacity, the cunning, and the imposture of the redoubtable Sheikh Abu Daouk. He evidently travelled with a large letter of credit, and dispensed piastres most freely. His guides were not slow to detect his passion for ruins, and they humored his credulity in that direction as their surest warrant for backshish. Timidity or credulity led him to believe the exaggerated reports of danger that Arabs always make when offering their professional services as guards; and, where other travellers have gone and returned in safety, with two or three attendants, Mons. De Saulcy moved with an armed guard of twenty or thirty men. This was somewhat

¹ Tome I. pp. 64, 72.

expensive; but it accorded with the ideas of "*la grande nation*," and it adds somewhat to the dignity and the importance of the expedition. Mons. De Saulcy is, we believe, the only traveller who has ever shamed the conscience of a Bedouin by offering him an excess of gold. Said Mr. Mashullam of Wady Urtas: "I have heard the Bedouins say that he [Mons. De Saulcy] even forced more gold upon them than they could with a good conscience accept, and I assure you that the conscience of a Bedouin is a wide one, when the question comes to be of piastres."¹

The prevailing temper of Mons. De Saulcy himself does not propitiate the reader toward him as a trustworthy traveller. Petulant toward his fellow-travellers, tyrannical toward his servants, in an ill humor with the weather, the roads, the moukris, or whatever may disappoint his present plan, at times irreverent and boisterous, at times devout to the verge of superstition, timid and reckless by turns, he fails to inspire confidence as the leader of so responsible an expedition. The tricks of a horse bring down his maledictions upon the beast, and provoke his ill humor at the patient Abbé who rides the unruly animal.² He throws a cup of unsavory coffee into the face of his cook.³ He makes free use of Arakeé, and experiments with the poisonous *hachish*.⁴ He is filled with passion at the wretched pack-mules.⁵ He excites cupidity by an extravagant backshish, and then bids the recipient "go to the devil," because he asks for more.⁶ He invokes the same personage when in trouble at Karak,⁷ but recognizes God as one whose help may be needed in an extremity. He chokes his rage while in the power of the Sheikh,⁸ and parts from him at last with cursings upon his head. At Hebron he gets into a towering rage at the destruction of two preserved birds by a prowling cat.⁹ In short, Mons. De Saulcy appears in his journal as a peevish, impulsive, reckless man; the very antipodes of Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Laborde, and others of his predecessors, whose self-control, urbanity, and dignity of character, at once inspire our respect, and win our confidence. An English critic has aptly characterized his work as "a rattling and discursive journal which grates harshly against an English ear."¹⁰

¹ Van De Velde, II. 19.

² Tome I. p. 97.

³ Ib. p. 110.

⁴ Ib. p. 130.

⁵ Ib. p. 149.

⁶ Ib. p. 270.

⁷ Ib. pp. 352-354.

⁸ Ib. pp. 378-382.

⁹ Tome II. p. 111.

¹⁰ Stanly in London Quarterly Review.

While Mons. De Sauley exhibits none of the spirit of true reverence, his credulity with regard to sacred places borders upon superstition. On descending to the subterranean grotto at Nazareth, absurdly chosen as "the chamber of the Annunciation," he breaks forth into the following rhapsody: "I pity with all my heart whoever can enter such a place without experiencing a lively emotion; for it seems to me impossible but that his want of emotion is feigned. If some travellers have the unfortunate notion of boasting that they have felt amid such scenes nothing of deep emotion, I am content to place them with those vain-glorious sceptics who imagine themselves wanting in dignity, unless they tax with absurdity whatever transcends their haughty reason. This, however, is a fault of youth; and one who, at twenty, ridicules whatever nearly or remotely borders upon a religious belief, will one day run to the opposite, and believe more than he once rejected. To resume; I avow openly and without hesitation, that, on entering this venerable cave, I was moved to tears; some years ago, I might have been ashamed to acknowledge this; but, at the age which I have reached, I deem myself happy in having changed my opinion in that respect. No doubt in the confession I am about to make without reserve, I shall render myself ridiculous in the eyes of many — but I care little what the world may say of it — I had a strong desire to carry away with me some detached particles from the walls of this holy cave; I obtained them, and have distributed them to my good mother and to other friends, all of whom are simple-minded enough to prefer this humble souvenir to the most precious jewels which I could have brought them."¹

In a similar spirit he visits the traditional places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. His unquestioning credulity reminds us of the devout pilgrim knight Bertranden de la Brocquière, in the middle of the fifteenth century, who saw all wonders, yet wondered not at anything he saw.

He tells us that in Palestine tradition is worthy of the highest respect, and then implicitly receives the routine of traditions at Bethlehem; the chambers of St. Jerome and St. Paula; the apartment occupied by Joseph during the Virgin's delivery; and the place of the manger where the Saviour was born. His only question is, whether the Greeks, as alleged, were guilty of the

¹ Tome I. p. 76.

sacrilege of stealing the silver star that once marked the spot where the Saviour laid.

We have already spoken of Mons. De Saulcy's easy credulity with regard to Arab promises and representations. One or two examples may here be in point, on the eve of his departure for the Dead Sea. He sometimes appears half conscious that he is the victim of deception, and he certainly gains some profitable experience of Arab character. But on the whole he is well-pleased with himself, with his bargains, and with the "noble" Sheikhs by whom he is systematically duped. Having bargained with Sheikh Hamdan, of the Thâamera tribe of the Bedouins, for an escort at the exorbitant rate of twenty piastres a day for each horseman and fifteen for each footman, with a backshish of a thousand piastres where two hundred would have sufficed, he naively records the following specimen of his confidential intercourse with the lords of the desert: "Before allowing our brave Sheikh to take his leave, I asked him what sort of presents we should take in order to gratify such of his colleagues as we might meet, and thus to make them our friends. The list was made out as follows :

Black abayas (cloaks),	6 or 7	Tobacco for smoking,	10 okas (30 lbs.)
White do.	6	Pipe-bowls,	100
Pairs of red boots,	12	Powder, 15 lbs. shot,	10 lbs.
Arabian turbans,	20	Sewing needles,	500

We thought that with these we should propitiate (*apprivoiser*) all Arabia Petra. A pleasant illusion of short duration."¹

After such confidences with the Sheikh, we are not surprised to find that worthy gentleman, at the close of the first day's journey, coming to Mons. De Saulcy with a dubious and anxious air that excites inquiry. His solicitude proves to be solely on account of his distinguished friend, whom he had deliberately contracted to escort in safety with a guard of eight men. Since Mons. De Saulcy has opened his purse so liberally for the casual demands of the journey, the "brave" and "noble" Shiekh already regrets that he had not palmed off upon him a larger number of his own retainers at twenty piastres a day. So he says: "Thou hast many loaded mules; the sight of which will not fail to excite the covetousness of the Bedouins whom we may meet.

¹ Tome I. p. 128.

They must kill us all before they touch a hair of thine; but we are too few to maintain a proper watch day and night, and to defend thee, if need be, against the attacks which are likely to be made upon thy caravan. If you do not double the number of men, horse and foot, who go with me, it is plain that we shall all perish. Now that I have warned thee, do as thou wilt." Mons. De Sauley could see but one answer to this question. He authorized the Sheikh to double the escort, and received the gratifying assurance that the extra-guard (who no doubt were quite within reach) should be on hand the following morning.¹

The absurdity of such a method of negotiating with the Bedouins will occur to every traveller of ordinary shrewdness, who has had dealings with any of their tribes. Except where there is an express stipulation through the consuls, they begin their negotiations with travellers with exorbitant demands from which they expect to abate at least thirty and often fifty per cent; and when they have concluded a contract, they address themselves alternately to the generous sympathies and the personal fears of the traveller in order to regain, in the form of backshish, or of extra pay, what they have abated of the original demand. Lieutenant Van de Velde travelled over much of Mons. De Sauley's route in the vicinity of the Dead Sea under the protection of the same Sheikhs and guides who accompanied that gentleman. These insisted at first that he would need a guard of twenty-five armed and mounted Bedouins, but finally pledged themselves to conduct him in safety with a guard of four persons, two on horseback and two on foot. From 2500 piastres they came down to 400.² This sum the rapacious Abu Daouk attempted to double when he had the traveller fairly in his power, but the firmness and calmness of the Lieutenant quite baffled his purpose. Indeed, Lieut. Van de Velde, who carried economy to the verge of parsimony, and then suborned prayer and providence to do the office of piastres, carried with him no presents and bestowed little backshish; yet, with respect to the main objects of his journey, he fared as well as did his lavish predecessor. In all our personal negotiations with the Bedouins, we uniformly razeed our dragoman's list of necessary presents of at least one half its original dimensions, and contrived to keep both purse and authority in our own hands.

¹ Tome I. p. 146.

² Vol. II. p. 63.

These general observations have a direct bearing upon the value of Mons. De Saulcy's alleged discoveries. We have not sought to disparage the claims of Mons. De Saulcy by an invidious comparison of his personal qualifications with those of other travellers. It is evident that he entered upon his career of discovery under circumstances peculiarly fitted to lead him to the results he has announced to the world; having a theory to verify; being of a sanguine temperament and given to hasty conclusions; with a mind easily excited by its own fancies and misled by the cunning of others; and committing himself to the guidance of a shrewd and covetous Sheikh, with that charity which "hopeth all things" and "believeth all things," though not that which "vaunteth not itself" and "is not easily provoked." With this insight into the personal characteristics of our traveller, we attend him to the southern shore of the Dead Sea, and witness the ecstasy of his first discovery.

On the morning of the twelfth of January, 1851, we are rounding the base of Jebel Usdûm, the Salt Mountain, between the mountain and the sea.

"At fifty-nine minutes past ten, we pass directly by a hillock fifteen metres in diameter, covered with large rough stones that look as if they had been burnt, which have evidently been, the Lord knows when,¹ part of a round building which commanded the very shore of the sea. The sea is but thirty metres to our left, and the side of the mountain is but twenty metres on the opposite hand. The sight of this ruin strikes me forcibly, and I very naturally think of Sodom. I question Abu Daouk: 'What is that?' 'Qasr-Qadim' (an ancient castle), he replies. 'And its name?' 'Redjom-el-Mezorrhel' (the heap of overthrown, or rather, fallen stones).

"For myself, I cannot have a doubt, that I have before my eyes the ruins of a building which was anciently a part of Sodom. The Sheikh, Abu Daouk, is very explicit on this point. When I ask him: 'Where was the town of Sodom?' 'Here,' he replies. 'And was this ruin a part of the accursed city?' 'Sahibh!' (certainly). 'Are there other ruins of Sodom?' 'Nâam! Fih kherabat ktir' (Yes, there are many such). 'Where are they?' 'Hon, oua hon!' (there, and there), — and he points to the extremity of the Salt Mountain we have just rounded, and to the plain planted with acacias, which extends to the foot of the mountain toward the Wady Zuweirah.

"Most unfortunately, it is now too late to return to view these ruins even for a moment. But one good warning is worth two;² and, as we shall return

¹ *Dieu sait quand*; De Warren translates this reverent and scholarly phrase by the polite circumlocution: "at some remote and unascertainable period."

² This phrase is equivalent to "forewarned, forearmed."

here in a few days, I promise myself to keep a better look out, and to see what are the ruins of which our brave Sheikh has advised me. Indeed, I am not sure but that I take more pleasure in knowing that on my return I shall behold the ruins of the famous Sodom, than I feel regret at having seen to-day only this kind of advance post, placed like a light-house on the very shore of the sea, called Redjom-el-Mezorrhel."¹

Such is Mons. De Saulcy's first discovery of Sodom — a discovery verified only by a cursory examination on his return, when he says he found "huge masses of disconnected ruins, still visible, and perfectly distinguishable," of which, however, he gives no detailed account. In analyzing this narrative we find that the name Usdûm, which the Arabs have given to the Salt Mountain, works powerfully upon his imagination, and kindles a zest for the discovery of the doomed city. And, since it is a principle with him to treat the traditions of the country with the utmost respect, he experiments upon the traditional knowledge of his gallant and immaculate Sheikh. The sight of a small ruin kindles his enthusiasm. He asks the Sheikh its name; and hears with evident disappointment that it goes by the universal name of an old castle and a heap of stones. According to the formula of questioning proposed by Laborde, Mons. De Saulcy has put this first question in such a way as to get a sensible, though unsatisfactory, answer. No doubt the Sheikh then told him all he knew. But our traveller still thinks of Sodom; and, so rapidly does his imagination work, that, without any other clue, in a few minutes — say by two minutes past eleven — he entertains no doubt that the veritable ruins of Sodom are before his eyes. With this foregone conclusion he turns earnestly to the Sheikh, and asks: "Where was Sodom? Did this belong to it? Are there other ruins?" To all these questions he receives an affirmative answer, as a matter of course, according to the formula already quoted from Laborde, which every traveller among the Bedouins will verify. The Arabs, and especially the Bedouins, are the only people in the world who will *lie* continuously, uniformly, and systematically, without any apparent motive; who will answer any and every question according to the supposed wish of the questioner, without the least regard to truth. This native trait alone would account for the readiness with which Abu Daouk identified

¹ Tome I. p. 249.

Sodom as soon as he discovered that Mons. De Saulcy was in quest of that particular site. But his quick eye detected the weakness of the French traveller, and that worthy brave whom he has immortalized, found his own philosopher's stone in the salt-encrusted stones of Wady Zuweirah. Ruins for the traveller were piastres for the Sheikh; and the supply proved equal to the demand. Drs. Robinson and Smith descended Wady Zuweirah and found at ez-Zuweirah only a small Saracenic fort;¹ neither elsewhere in the Wady nor at its mouth, did these careful observers find the slightest vestige of any former site. As they rounded the base of Usdûm, they remark: "A heap of stones lay between us and the shore, called Um Zôghal." We do not doubt that Drs. Robinson and Smith saw years ago the same "huge masses of disconnected ruins," which Mons. De Saulcy so rapturously describes. The faculty in which he excels his predecessors is rather that of invention than that of discovery.

The ruins which Mons. De Saulcy so confidently alleges to be those of Sodom, are found upon the *western* side of the Dead Sea, near its south-western angle, and at the northern extremity of Djebel Usdûm. This location of Sodom is as novel as the discovery itself, and deserves special attention. The key to the discovery of the Pentapolis must be found in the site of Zoar. That "little city" was the only one of the five that escaped the bituminous conflagration of the plain; it is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures after that catastrophe; and, therefore, of Zoar, if of any of those cities, we might expect to find some traces at this day. Eusebius and Jerome speak of Zoar as having many inhabitants and a Roman garrison. We have seen that Maundeville reports the ruins of Segor as still visible, in the fourteenth century. The Crusaders found it a pleasant place with many palm-trees. Abulfeda calls the Dead Sea the sea of Zôghar. Moreover, the situation of Zoar at the base of a mountain is another *datum* of importance in our investigations. Zoar was not upon the mountain; for Lot, fearing that the storm would overtake him before he could reach the mountain, begged the privilege of halting at this city. "I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die; behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one; Oh, let me escape thither."²

¹ *Researches*, Vol. II. p. 481.

² Gen. 19: 19, 20.

And, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we read that Lot "went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain."¹ Zoar could not have been more than half an hour distant from Sodom, for we read that Lot made his escape thither in the brief interval between daybreak and sunrise.

Have we, then, any means of identifying the mountain near which Zoar was situated? Can we at least determine whether it was on the eastern or the western side of the sea? On this point the narrative in Genesis leaves no room to doubt. Lot, fearing to dwell in Zoar because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, went up into the mountain and dwelt with his two daughters in a cave. The mountain was uninhabited, and his daughters had no prospect of marriage and of lawful issue. Therefore they committed incest with their father, whom they had made drunk with wine, and the issue of that incest were the Moabites and the Ammonites. The name Moab itself perpetuates that fact. It only remains, therefore, that we should ascertain the western boundaries of Moab in order to fix the limits within which we must search for Zoar. Zoar is always spoken of in the Scriptures as a city of Moab, and in terms that point to it as the key or frontier town of Moab toward the west. The city is thus alluded to by Isaiah and Jeremiah. The former says of it: "My heart shall cry out for Moab, to the borders thereof, even to Zoar;"² the latter speaks of lamentation for Moab as reaching "from Zoar even to Horonaim."³ Now the boundaries of Moab never passed over to the western side of the Dead Sea. The *Wady Zared* is regarded by some as its southern boundary. It is unnecessary to follow Mons. De Saulcy through his argument to prove the contrary of this almost unanimous opinion of Biblical geographers. A careful reading of it is sufficient to show that it refutes itself; for not a passage does he quote, whether sacred or profane, to justify his theory, which he does not either pervert from its connection or distort from its obvious meaning. The Bible uniformly describes Moab as the mountainous region to the east of the Dead Sea stretching upon the south and west to the borders of Edom. The river Arnon, on the eastern side of Jordan, was the southern boundary of the conquests of the Israelites upon that side of the river. Here trans-Jordanic Palestine adjoined the northern frontier of Moab.⁴ The southern boundary

¹ Gen. 19: 30. ² Isa. 15: 5. ³ Jer. 48: 34. ⁴ Deut. 3: 8, 12. Judg. 11: 18.

of the conquest upon the hither side of Jordan is clearly defined in the book of Numbers.¹ "When ye come into the land of Canaan, then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be *the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward*; and your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin." Here can be no mistake. The borders of Judah were the western shore of the Dead Sea and southward around the sea toward the eastern coast. These were identical with the borders of Canaan; "the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof shall fall to you for an inheritance."² And, according to Gen. 10: 19, the borders of Canaan extended eastward as far as the site of the Pentapolis. It is impossible even for the ingenuity of Mons. De Saulcy to transfer those cities, or either of them to the western shore of the Dead Sea, which belonged to Canaan and afterwards to Judah, but never to Moab. Zoar, which must be the key to the site of Sodom, was still within Moab, though perhaps its most westerly city. Josephus speaks of Zoar as in Arabia;³ one of the twelve towns conquered from the Arabs by Alexander Jannæus;⁴ but Josephus never considered the western shore of the Dead Sea as belonging to Arabia. The affinity that Mons. De Saulcy imagines between the Arabic *es-Zuweirah* and the Hebrew *Zoar* is declared to be without foundation by Dr. Eli Smith, whom all will acknowledge the first living authority for Arabic names and their Hebrew affinities. And yet from this fanciful affinity, which Drs. Robinson and Smith had already pronounced impossible, Mons. De Saulcy, having already hit by the same active fancy upon the site of Sodom, asserts "the necessary and undeniable identity of the Biblical Zoar with the Zouera-et-Jahtah, the ruins of which are to be seen to the right and left of the mouth of Wady Zuweirah."

We have seen how our author leaped to the conclusion that the Kharbet-Esdoum (ruins of Sodom) which the ever-ready Sheikh pointed out near the base of the Salt Mountain, "are really the ruins of the Sodom mentioned in the Bible." On this point his assertions grow more and more confident the oftener he repeats them. It is a curious instance of the effect of this

¹ Num. 34: 2-5.

² Bel. Jad. B. IV. C. VIII. 4.

³ Num. 34: 2.

⁴ Ant. Jud. XIX. ii. 4.

reiterated assertion upon his own mind, that when he comes to speak of Zeboim, he argues most earnestly that this city *may* have been situated on the eastern shore; just where everybody supposed the whole five cities were, until Mons. De Saulcy transferred four of them to the western shore. No doubt there are extensive ruins upon the eastern side of the Dead Sea, near where the Wady Karak opens upon the neck of the peninsula before referred to. Here Irby and Mangles suggest the site of Zoar. "There is," say they, at this point, "very clearly an ancient site; stones that have been used in building, though for the most part unhewn, are strewn over a great surface of uneven ground, and mixed both with bricks and pottery. This appearance continues without interruption during the space of at least half a mile, quite down to the plain, so that it would seem to be a place of considerable extent. We noticed one column, and we found a pretty specimen of antique variegated glass; it may possibly be the site of the ancient Zoar." In this conjecture later travellers concur; including Robinson and Smith, and Lynch. Mons. De Saulcy traced ruins over a considerable extent of table land, and he was certainly fortunate in the discovery of an ancient bas-relief, and other monuments of great antiquity. Indeed, this section of his tour is the most valuable part of his journal. Catching at the Arabic name of these ruins, Sebâan, he says: "I distinctly recognize in these stupendous ruins the remains of the Zeboim that perished in the common catastrophe. . . . There is nothing, absolutely nothing, to prove that all the doomed cities were situated on the same western shore of the Dead Sea. There is, on the contrary, strong presumptive evidence in favor of the opinion which I think myself bound to set forth, that one at least of the cities of the Pentapolis must have been on the eastern shore!" Surely no one will dispute our author upon that point.

Irby and Mangles notice the ruins of which Mons. De Saulcy speaks: "The whole of the plains [of Moab] are covered with the sites of towns on every eminence and spot convenient for the construction of one; and, as the land is capable of rich cultivation, there can be no doubt that the country, now so deserted, once presented a continued picture of plenty and fertility. The form of fields is still visible, and there are remains of Roman highways which are in some places completely paved, and on which there are milestones of the times of Trajan, Marcus Aure'

lins, and Severus, with the numbers of the miles legible upon them."¹

From Zeboiim on the east, Mons. De Saulcy leaps to Admah on the west, and then to Gomorrah on the north-western extremity of the lake, near the plain of Jericho. The manner of this discovery was in perfect keeping with what we have already described as our author's bent. Returning from the southern border of the Dead Sea to Hebron, and thence to Jerusalem, he made a separate excursion from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way thither he betrays his crude and credulous judgment, by the remarks that the olive trees of Gethsemane — which may possibly be a thousand years old — are "most certainly of an earlier date than the advent of our Lord;" and that the ruin at Bethany — which belongs either to the time of the Crusaders or at most to an earlier ecclesiastical period of the Christian era — "is, without doubt, a military structure dating from the time of the kings of Judah." Arrived at the Dead Sea, as he wanders along its shore in a south-westerly direction, he lights upon the foundation stones of some antique structure, which he admits are not easily distinguished, and, hearing in the same connection the name Kharbet-Goumran or Oumran, he becomes as confident of the identification of the Biblical Gomorrah, as he was of the identification of Sodom. And then to suit the theory, he makes war upon the Biblical order of the cities of the plain given in Gen. 10: 19: "as thou goest to Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboiim;" and attempts to show that this enumeration marks the four points of a parallelogram, of which Sodom was at the base, and Gomorrah at the top.

The accompanying outline of the Dead Sea will sufficiently indicate to the eye of the reader the sites of the cities of the plain according to Mons. De Saulcy. The theory of submersion supposes four of the cities to have occupied what is now the bed of the lower bay of the sea, whose waters have an average depth of only fifteen feet; the average depth of the sea north of the promontory being about twelve hundred feet. Irby and Mangles fix the site of Zoar near the neck of the promontory, at the mouth of Wady Karak.

It is due to Mons. De Saulcy to state that his quarto Atlas, containing sixty plates, illustrating his entire tour, is a val-

¹ Quoted by Kitto.

uable addition to our materials for the study of the geography, the natural history, and the archaeology of Palestine. His maps of Palestine and of the Dead Sea are finished specimens of the engraver's art; and all the illustrations are given in the most elaborate style. This Atlas should have a place in every principal library, so that naturalists, architects, artists, geographers, archaeologists, — each of whom will find in it something of value — might consult it at leisure and without expense. While we differ most earnestly from Mons. De Saulcy in his conclusions, we cheerfully accord to him the praise due for the scientific and artistic results of his expedition.



There can be no profit in pursuing further such hasty and unfounded conjectures. We have tested Mons. De Saulcy's alleged discoveries by their own internal evidence, and by the light of sacred geography and history, and have found them wanting. It only remains that we should add the testimony of another traveller who has since gone over Mons. De Saulcy's route, attended by the same Bedouins, and favored with a manuscript copy of Mons. De Saulcy's own map. Lieutenant Van De Velde, to whose work we have already alluded in this Article, visited the southern shore of the Dead Sea in April, 1852, and followed as nearly as possible in the track of his French predecessor. He describes the small ruin at Zuweirah, already

noticed by Robinson and Smith, as "the remains of an insignificant fortress of Saracenic construction, built on a soft chalk rock a hundred and fifty feet in height, inclosed on all sides by high, naked, sharply-angled walls of rock. It is merely a fortified building."¹ Of the appearance of Wady Zuweirah, near which Mons. De Saulcy found the remains of Sodom, he thus speaks: "Zuweirah is separated from a plain on the south-west shore of the Dead Sea by a gorge of white and yellowish limestone rocks, called Wady Zuweirah. Under the action of rain these rocks have assumed most fantastic shapes, as the soft substance easily gives way, and leaves on the perpendicularly broken sides the different horizontal and slanting strata visible. A vivid imagination has difficulty in convincing itself that these layers of stone and lime have not been built by the hand of man, and that nature herself has alone been at work here. I thought of Mons. De Saulcy and his imaginary ruins. I must acknowledge that one is easily led to see in these rocks the ruins of towns and villages. It is through this gorge that the rain-water collected from the sides of the mountains in the crater of Zuweirah finds its way to the Dead Sea. The traces of this are everywhere visible, especially in the vegetation with which the bottom of the ravine is covered."²

From the Wady Zuweirah, Lieut. Van De Velde emerged upon the plain of three-quarters of an hour in breadth, that stretches from the entrance of the valley to the shore of the sea. We quote here his entire description:

"The plain exhibits an extent of gravel, chiefly of a gray color, diversified occasionally by rows of large stones, which generally run parallel to each other. Between these rows of stones grow various shrubs, such as are proper to this locality, especially one kind which bears a great resemblance to the tamarisk, but which, on closer examination, indicates a different botanical affinity. Mons. De Saulcy crossed this plain twice, once from north to south along the sea-shore, and afterwards from the north corner of the Salt Mountain to the Wady Zuweirah. Here he gets quite excited. Without doubt this is the plain of Sodom, and the rows of stones are the remains of the city walls, and who knows what more! How little observation thought I, is necessary to recognize, in these rows of stones among the gravel and vegetation, the course of torrents which in the winter-time sweep down from the mountain gorges, and overflow the plain! Nothing is clearer than this. Any one who has ever seen the dry course of a river in the desert has no

¹ Vol. II. pp. 109, 110.

² Ib. p. 112.

difficulty in here tracing the different beds of the numerous streams which, during the rainy season, wind through this plain. But what will not imagination do?

"We followed in the footsteps of Mons. De Saulcy to Jebel Usdûm. Accidentally we were kept for a considerable time on the north side of this mountain. One of our Bedouins, who knew well that we should have that day a very long journey, being ill, and so not feeling himself in a condition to accomplish it, attempted to conduct us by the east side of the Salt Mountain. At first, I did not see through his design; but as we came nearer to the mountain, and began to have it on our left, his object could be no longer hid. My guides now swore all sorts of oaths that there was no way to the west of the Salt Mountain; but you may easily understand that their oaths did not weigh much with me, and when they saw at last that I kept to my point, they gave way with the usual 'Insh'-Allah.' This circumstance meanwhile caused me to make a double march along the north side of the mountain, and I became thus fully convinced that whatever there may be on the plain, ruins there are not. That Mons. De Saulcy should have found here not only the remains of buildings and cities, but positively those of Sodom, I declare I cannot attribute to any other source than the creation of his fancy."¹

After this explicit denial of the existence of any such ruins as Mons. De Saulcy professes to have discovered, Lieut. Van De Velde offers in a note the following solution of his wonderful hallucination:

"I have followed Mons. De Saulcy's track in this place with Bedouins of the same tribe, of the same sheikh — Bedouins accustomed to rove about in these localities. I had a copy of Mons. De Saulcy's manuscript map with me. It was, therefore, impossible for me to pass by unnoticed the ruins he mentions. With eagerness I sought for them. It was not possible to miss them; nevertheless, I have not seen anything which confirms his assertions, and, notwithstanding all his assurances, I must set down his discoveries of Sodom as the mere work of the imagination. Mons. De Saulcy makes an appeal to his fellow-travellers for the truth of his information. I hope I shall be allowed to appeal to the opposite side, to the testimony of Robinson and Smith, and their predecessors. Certainly what might have escaped the notice of the latter would not have eluded the careful research of the American travellers.

"It will, then, be asked: What caused Mons. De Saulcy to run into such errors? I believe his misplaced generosity to Abû Dahûk. From what has been given above as a specimen of his rapacity, the character of this chieftain must be somewhat evident.

"Abû Dahûk is of the same nature as his fellow-Bedouins. Show him that you are anxious to recognize in every stone squared off by the hand of

¹ Vol. II. pp. 113-115.

nature a piece of antiquity; excite his covetousness by presenting him continually with piastres, whenever he shows you something he calls a ruin; and you may be certain that he will show you ruins (khurbets) every quarter of an hour with names and surnames; if not near you, then at all events at a distance. This is the reason that in these regions of the Bedouins, one hears of so many names mentioned by some travellers, which other travellers are not able to re-find. I myself have repeatedly detected my Bedouin guides in telling me stories. To lie, is, as it were, daily bread among them; and nothing but a close cross-questioning is sufficient to bring out the truth. Nor must it be supposed that these Bedouins have much knowledge of ancient history, or care at all about the correctness of tradition. Like all other travellers, save Mons. De Saulcy, I have found them most ignorant and indifferent about such things. *Piastres* and *ghazis* is all the Bedouin cares for. Is it any wonder, then, that Mons. De Saulcy, after having spoiled Abū Dahūk by his continual presents, should be deceived by this fellow? Certainly the sharp eye of the robber chief has well discerned the weak side of the traveller."¹

Lest this solution should appear altogether incredible, we would refer the reader to the remarkable appearance of the limestone rocks in Wady Sal in the peninsula of Sinai. These rocks have been worn by the action of winds and rains into long corridors with pillars of fantastic shapes, some of a form so symmetrical, that the eye can hardly persuade itself that the hand of man did not fashion there of old some majestic temple whose galleries time has spared. A traveller of Mons. De Saulcy's temperament would certainly bring home a report that he had discovered upon the familiar route from Mt. Sinai to Akaba excavations as wonderful as those of Petra.

In summing up the whole question of Mons. De Saulcy's discoveries, we are led irresistibly to these three conclusions:

1. The ruins, if any, which Mons. De Saulcy found upon the south-western shore of the Dead Sea, cannot be identified as the ruins of Sodom.

2. Sodom never was upon that shore of the Dead Sea.

3. There are no ruins there such as he has described.

The ruins of the cities of the plain, therefore, still sleep in their ashes, awaiting some more fortunate discoverer than any who has hitherto visited those inhospitable shores. For the present, we must rest content with the conjectural site of Zoar proposed by Irby and Mangles, and look for its sister cities upon

¹ Vol. II. p. 115.

the same eastern shore of the sea. At first view, it may appear that this location groups the Pentapolis too closely together. But we must not measure the compact cities of Syria and Arabia — countries in which the farm-house and the villa are almost unknown — with the spacious circuit of modern cities. Besides, we know that the western shore of the sea of Galilee was thickly studded with cities along a strip of ten or twelve miles. No doubt the cities of the plain were in like manner grouped along the south-eastern shore of the fresh-water lake that once received the waters of the Jordan in the valley lying to the south of Jericho. The confident assertions of Mons. De Saulcy, and the no less confident denial of Lieut. Van De Velde, both unsupported by other testimony, call for a more thorough exploration of the southern and eastern shores of the Dead Sea than any small and single party, liable to the embarrassing incidents of travel in that region, can possibly accomplish. What Lieut. Lynch has so satisfactorily done for the sea itself, substituting accurate soundings for mythical legends and extravagant hypotheses, should be done also for the shores of the sea and its surroundings by a well-appointed scientific corps. We trust that American enterprise and science will yet complete the work so auspiciously begun.

We had intended to devote a few pages to the examination of Lieut. Van De Velde's two volumes upon Syria and Palestine; but the extent of this Article forbids any analysis of their character and results. Ignorant of the Arabic tongue, yet quick to read the Arab character; unlearned in Biblical archaeology, in physical science, or in general literature, yet skilled in topographical surveys, a good draftsman, and an accurate observer; incredulous upon all points of local or ecclesiastical tradition, yet a very enthusiast in his interpretation of special providences toward himself; the Dutch Lieutenant is the very antipodes of the French engineer, and presents some finely instructive contrasts of character. His work reminds us more of Maundeville than any that has been published since his day. Had he confined himself to the publication of a map with geographical notes, it would have been better for his own reputation, and Biblical literature would have suffered no loss. Yet there are points in his volumes of sufficient interest to call for notice in a separate Article, for which we may find time and space hereafter.