

places, it is said, the soil is so impregnated with these inflammable materials, that it may be easily set on fire. Pumice, obsidian, and ashes, are scattered over the face of the country; and craters have been discovered in various parts among rocks of sienite and porphyry.

Dr. Daubeny has given a very interesting account of this district, in his work on Volcanoes, but in some particulars we differ from him as to the origin of the Dead Sea. "I should suppose," he says, "that the same volcano which destroyed the cities of the plain, threw out at the same time a current of lava sufficiently considerable to stop the course of the Jordan, the waters of which, unable to overcome the barrier, accumulated in the plain Siddim, until they converted it into the present lake." The natural termination of the river was thus altered; its estuary, which the doctor supposes to have before opened into the Elemitic branch of the Red Sea by Ahaba, was entirely destroyed; and the waters which it brought down from the mountains of Antilibanus, were dissipated by evaporation from the Dead Sea, which is a mere accumulation of them, its extent being determined by the temperature, which induces evaporation from its surface in proportion to the quantity brought into that sea by the Jordan and other streams.

Although we admit the accuracy of the general outline of the geological picture which Dr. Daubeny has drawn of the Holy Land before the catastrophe which destroyed the cities of the plain, there is one feature which appears to us inaccurate—the southerly direction of the Jordan. He speaks of a great longitudinal valley, discovered by Burckhardt, as the channel through which its waters were once discharged. But the probability is, that this river was either lost before it reached Ahaba, or it turned to the west after passing through the Vale of Siddim, and fell into the Mediterranean Sea; for we cannot imagine that so small a river as the Jordan, fed by so few auxiliary streams, could find its way through the broad gorges of El Araba and El Ghor, the stream itself being constantly decreased by evaporation. This question, however, can only be solved by a careful examination of the district. Nor do we believe that the Dead Sea is an accumulation of water brought into the Vale of Siddim by the Jordan; for it appears to us far more probable that the earth on which the devoted cities stood, sank at the time of their destruction,