

though well supplied with pure water, the ground is rugged and rocky, —towards the base of the mountain awfully so; but still it is quite possible that a certain number might have established themselves there, as the Arabs do at present, while, as on other occasions, the principal masses were distributed in the surrounding valleys. I do not know that there is any adequate ground for believing, as Robinson does, that because the people were warned not to invade the seclusion of the mount, and a guard was placed to prevent them from doing so, that *therefore the encampment itself* pressed closely on its borders. Curiosity might possibly enough lead many to attempt this even from a distance, to say nothing of those already supposed to be located in the Wady Aleyat, near the base of the mountain, to whom the injunction would more especially apply. Those, however, who press closely the literal sense of one or two passages, should bear in mind all the difficulties previously cited, and the absolute destitution of verdure, cultivation, running streams, and even of abundant springs, which characterise the fearfully barren vicinity of the monkish Sinai, where there is indeed room and verge enough for encampment, *but no resources whatever*. If we take up the ground of a *continual and miraculous provision* for all the wants of two millions of people, doubtless they may have been subsisted there as well as in any other place; otherwise it seems incredible that Moses should ever have abandoned a spot, offering such unique advantages as Feiran, to select instead the most dreary and sterile spot in its neighbourhood.

Thus much in reference to this question generally. But when we enter into details the result is less satisfactory; indeed, we cannot but be astonished that Dr. Lepsius, professing an implicit belief in the historical character of the Bible narrative, should fix the site of Rephidim at the entrance of the valley at El Hesue. The statement in Exodus is, that the Israelites, after their march from the wells and palm-trees of Elim through the Desert of Sin, (on which route there are no springs at the present day, unless scanty, and remote from the road,) murmured, when *encamped at Rephidim*, for want of water, where Moses was directed to strike