

"Down to Jericho"—A Trip of Heat, "Bath", Information

REV. F. C. STIFLER VIEWS DEAD SEA: SWIMS IN IT

But Tourist Finds Famed Water Salty and Bitter—Tropical Sun Furnishes Only "Outlet"

This is the seventh article of a series being written by the Rev. Francis Carr Stifler, pastor of Wilmette Baptist church, describing the high lights of the Holy Land, which he recently visited. He titles this story "Down to Jericho" and draws a word picture that is intensely interesting.

By REV. FRANCIS CARR STIFLER

THERE is no market for alarm clocks in Jerusalem. You go to bed with the birds and get up with them. You have to. There is not enough good light to make an enjoyable evening, even in the best hotel, so everybody goes to bed. And because you go to bed early, you waken early, or even if you happen to retire late you waken early, for donkeys are braying, and auto-horns squawking, and milk venders are ringing bells, and arab arguments are opening in the narrow street below your window.

Accordingly it was no hardship to arise at five and be off at six for Jericho and the Dead Sea. The early morning drive was most delightful although there was no dew and few birds, and the road, as usual, was dusty.

Travel Over Mt. of Olives

The only vehicles we passed in the forty miles were a string of auto trucks bringing grapes, plums, figs and honeydew melons from the tropical gardens of Jericho to the markets of Jerusalem, where by the way last February, there was four inches of snow on the ground for a week. The tropics and the snow all within a radius of forty miles!

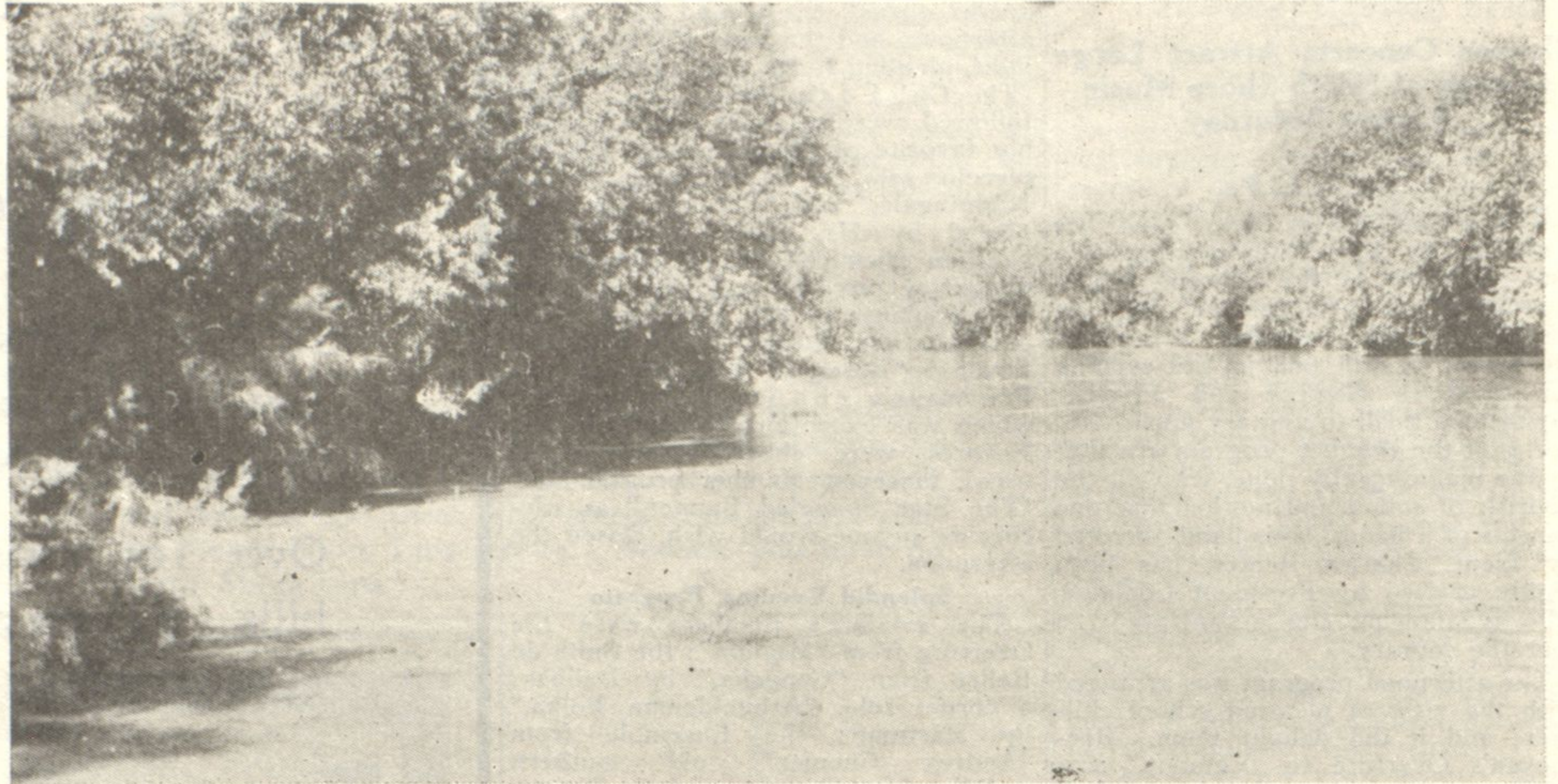
Jerusalem is 2600 feet above the sea level. Our road took us several hundred feet higher over the Mt. of Olives before we began to descend. The mountains are most barren and forbidding in summer. We passed the traditional site of the Good Samaritan Inn. It would still be a splendid place for a hold-up. When we had gone about twenty miles, (and I think the drivers in Palestine are all lineal descendants of Jehu), we passed a sign printed in English, Arabic and Hebrew saying, "Sea Level."

Just to see that sign made us feel we were getting hot. And we really were. It was hot and humid. And we descended 1300 feet further. Soon we left the mountains and our cars bumped across the stark salt wilderness. There was no road, only a wandering maze of ruts. There were three miles of this before we reached the shores of the Dead Sea, the lowest known spot on the surface of the earth.

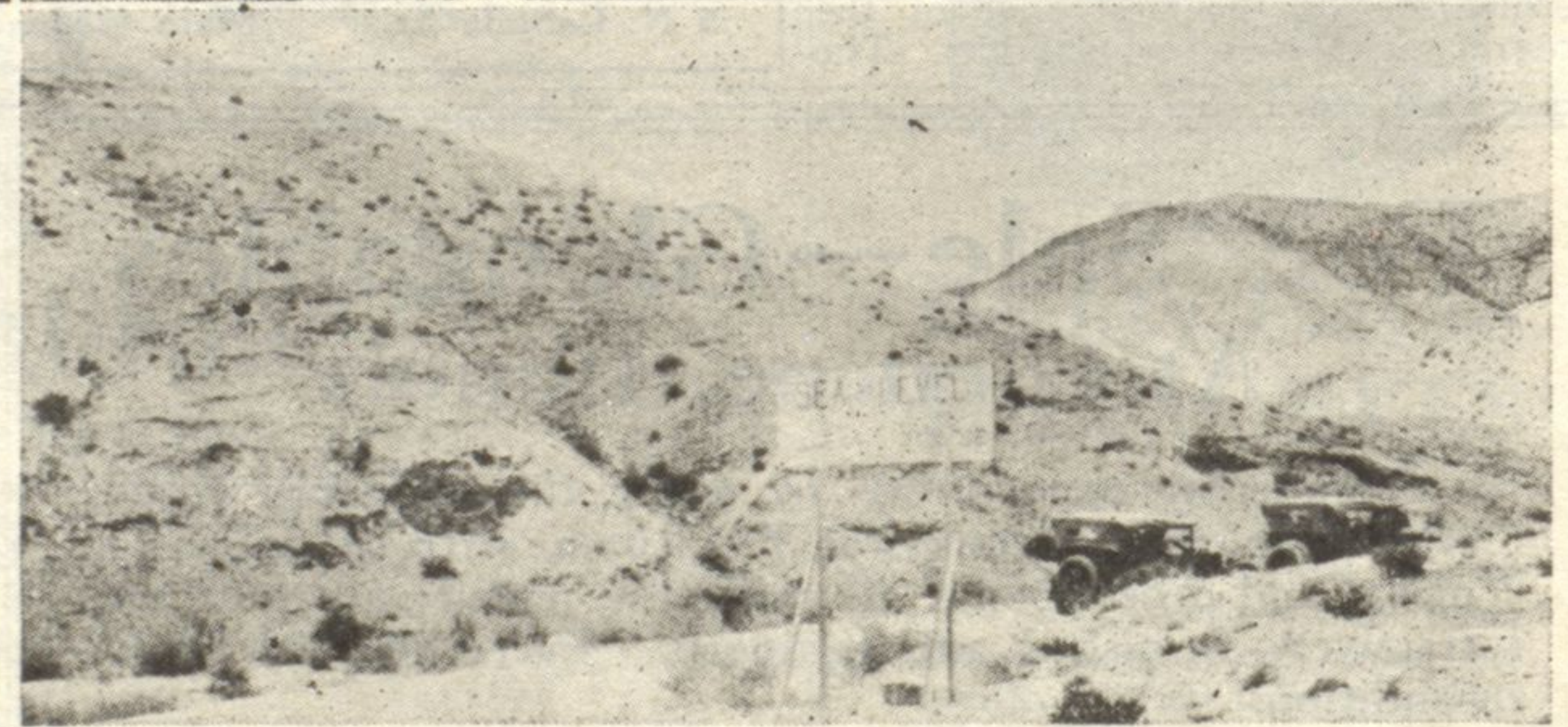
A Swim in the Dead Sea

The setting of the sea is beautiful, with mountains all around and nearest to us, famous old Mt. Nebo where Moses looked out upon the promised land and then went home to God.

There was a shelter by the sea and men lived there, lived on the tourists for as yet there is nothing else to live by there. Of course we had to take a dip. They furnished us with suits



THE PICTURES: The Jordan at Pilgrim Bathing place (top)—Bathing in the Dead Sea, the Rev. F. C. Stifler is shown on right of group (left center)—Tourist party boating on the Dead Sea (below)—Mr. and Mrs. Nichols who keep resting place on the Jordan (right center)—Passing sea level on road to Jericho (bottom).



and a place to dress. Did I call it water? It hardly seemed so. It is not merely salty, it is bitter. And it was hot, about 82 degrees that day. It is almost one third salts of various kinds so that we could not sink. No living thing is in it. When our "bath" was done we called for rinsing water. This was furnished in the ever-useful five gallon gasoline can—and it was not fresh, just a bit less salty, but the psychology of its use was good.

There were beggars there as everywhere. A little ragged Arab girl had something to sell. What was it? Nothing but big hunks of coal-tar. She picked them up along the Dead Sea shore. Strange. Then why should Jerusalem import all the way from England her coal and its derivatives. I asked the guide and learned what I have found appearing in the papers

and the magazines at home since I came back.

Sun Lifts Water Out of Sea

Chemists have long been studying this old basin. Under British rule they have been unhampered in their study. And here is what they found. This ancient sea with its 400 square miles of surface, 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean 70 miles away, has been for countless centuries receiving at its northern end, the water from the Jordan with no outlet at the southern end.

The burning tropical sun has furnished an outlet of another sort. Thousands of tons of water are lifted up

daily. The salts are left. And they have been precipitating there for millenniums. Recent estimates run into figures that make Grimm's Fairy Tales as dull as a time table for they say that in potash, bromine, salt, gypsum and manganese chloride there is one trillion, one hundred and ninety billion dollars worth of products which the hungry industrial and agricultural century will buy as fast as they can be moved.

A despatch from London that appeared in the New York Times the very day that we visited the Dead Sea states that the concession for the ex-

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