

We stopped an hour at Ramleh, the traditional Arimathea, where lived the Joseph whose borrowed tomb afforded a resting-place for the dishonored body of our Lord. Like all Syrian towns, it looks best at a distance, its whitewashed walls losing their beauty on nearer approach. The town numbers about half as many people as Jaffa. In passing through its streets we saw "the needle's eye" through which a camel, in order to go, must be stripped of all burdens and crawl, if possible, on his knees. It is a very small door cut in a large one. The large one is rarely opened, while through the "needle's eye," as it is called, the people pass in and out of the court, or yard. The one we saw was on the premises of the Greek convent, and not a common thing. The ordinary house does not need one. Here, too, we saw "the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," the same, perhaps, of which Solomon spoke, and that used in the temple-service. We have often noticed it since clinging to the wall by its roots and hanging down in graceful bunches. It bears a light yellow flower.

Here we visited what was once a Christian church, built, probably, in the time of the Crusades. It has two rows of large columns to support the roof, and was once a fine structure. Marble columns and capitals are still found about the inclosure. It is now used as a mosque, while its bell-tower, or cupola, has become a minaret. I thought it worth while to take off my shoes to see the interior of an early church. Its floor is covered with mats for the faithful to kneel upon, facing the Mecca side, while the former place of the pulpit is bare. Ramleh has been known for its considerable number of lepers. We saw none of these, but met two persons on the street all broken out with small-pox!

Resuming our carriage, or open vehicle with springs, we soon saw the ruins of Gezer, one of the

Canaanitish cities which Pharaoh captured and gave as his daughter's dower to Solomon. Our road became more stony as we continued, until we finally entered the Valley of Ajalon, through which fled the five kings of the Amorites after the decisive battle of Gibeon. Such hailstones as pelted them occasionally fall to this day, making this valley unsafe for travelers at such a time. Very large ones fell only the week before we passed through. Here, under the shade of a fig-tree, we spread our lunch, remembering the example of Him who blessed the bread and brake it ere he fed the seated thousands on the sward. On the hill-side, near our fig-tree, was an old wine-press, quarried out of the rock, where the juice of the grape had been trodden out by human feet. In the distance we could see the terraced hill-sides with their patches of green, and nearer at hand the plain where Joshua's soldiers pursued after the kings of the Amorites. What wonderful tales could these Judean hills tell of victory and defeat! Our resting-place is called Bab-el-Wady, or the "Gate of the Valley."

Leaving our carriage to overtake us, we started on foot up the steep road which led through the narrow pass in the mountains. Here, years ago, a sheik levied a tax on all who passed through. He did not regard it as robbery, but demanded it as a toll for crossing his dominions, always limiting his demands to a fixed sum per head. By means of a small fortification he commanded with his muskets the narrowest part of the defile, and was for many years the terror of the country. Finally, however, he and his family were crushed, and we even ventured to look into his desolate castle that once bristled with guns at the traveler's approach. In fact, the entire immediate vicinity was a good place for robbers. Here, in this home of thieves, tradition finds the birthplace of the penitent thief. All these hill-

sides are covered with olive-trees, whose gnarled trunks comport well with the rocks, whence they appear to have sprung. Many of the hills have natural terraces, owing to the lay of the *strata* of the rocks, but the soil has generally been washed down into the valley. Occasionally, where the art of man has interfered, we see fields of grain extending almost to the top of the mountains. The Japanese, with their knowledge of terracing and agriculture, could make these hills green with verdure. We continued to ascend and descend until we reached Jerusalem. Some of the points commanded fine views of the whole country—the blue line of the Mediterranean, the white line of the sandy shore, the green plains, dotted with the occasional villages which we had passed, all coming into sight.

We passed Kirjath-jearim, where the Ark of the Lord once rested in the house of Obed-edom, and brought such a blessing with it. It now bears the name of the sheik who levied the invariable tax, but was formerly called the "Town of Grapes." We saw many vineyards as we passed, and usually saw the tower built in the midst, and once or twice a fig-tree planted in the vineyard. Down in the valley we crossed the brook where, it is believed, David stopped to gather five smooth stones for his sling ere he fought Goliath of Gath. We had no difficulty in selecting some of the same kind from the dry bed of the brook. The broken limestone is rounded by attrition during the rainy season, when these brooks are swollen torrents. The traditional scene of the giant's death is located near here. It seems quite probable, since we were very near the borders of the Philistines.

We are now nearing Jerusalem. Far up to our left, on the highest point of the mountains, is Neby Samuel, the birthplace of the last of the judges.

It is a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid. On the right a pretty town clings to the hill-side, and claims to be the place in the hill country of Judea where John the Baptist was born. A convent has been built there in honor of the event. We get a glimpse of Bethlehem through an opening in the hills. A skillful engineer must have built this road which winds up to the mountains. Bishop Marvin and I preferred to walk, for we had just passed the traditional Emmaus, where Jesus, on the day of his resurrection, had walked with two of his disciples. We also felt his presence, and our hearts burned within us as we talked by the way. We continued our walk, with a slight intermission, to the Holy City. We had enjoyed for some days the company of our consul at Jerusalem, the Rev. Dr. De Hass. We shall always remember his great assistance, and the fullness and general accuracy of his information about the land of our Saviour's nativity. An escort had now come out to meet him, as is common to an official in this Oriental land, and while a man with a silver mace preceded the carriage and other *attachés* of the consulate rode on each side, it was more in consonance with our own feelings to follow Christ's example and enter Jerusalem on foot. So, dismissing the carriage, we walked on in silence and deep thought to the gates of the city consecrated by the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. His heart had yearned over its perishing and blinded people, and his eyes had wept in contemplating its certain destruction. These mountains round about Jerusalem had been hallowed by his presence, and tears, and prayers. We preferred not to be hurried into these sacred scenes, but to endeavor to realize in silence their weighty lessons.

Our meditations were profitable in our walk to the Jaffa gate, but our view was quite unsatisfactory.

Jerusalem, as you approach it from the west, appears like a modern city. You see immense stone buildings recently erected, some for schools and hospitals, and others for residences. These, however, are outside of the city, but conceal the city-wall itself until you are quite near it. Then the city is on the side of the hill that you descend, and you may obtain a very imperfect view of its buildings. It took me half a day to recover from my disappointment. But on the following morning when I saw the Holy City from the brow of Olivet, every gate, and dome, and tower visible at once, I wondered not that Jesus almost invariably approached it from that side. Close by the Jaffa gate is what is called David's Tower, standing still on Mount Zion, perhaps on the very spot won after so many years from the Jebusites. Just by it is the Mediterranean Hotel, where we stopped. The veranda upon which our room opens looks out upon the Mount of Olives, down upon Hezekiah's Pool, and is within a hundred yards of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is being more and more accepted as marking the Calvary where Jesus was crucified and the garden where they laid him. Down there, not far from the old temple-area, stood Pilate's Judgment-seat, while off to the right lay the old city, much of which is now without the walls. We look out from another veranda upon the probable site of the royal palace whose splendor so dazzled the Queen of Sheba.

Such was the general view which we had the first evening. Immediately after breakfast the next day Bishop Marvin and I started on foot for Olivet and over the brow to Bethany. We had no need of a guide. The way appeared as familiar as if we had walked over it many times before. The truth of the Scripture record was written on the face of all the country. Leaving by the Jaffa gate, we passed

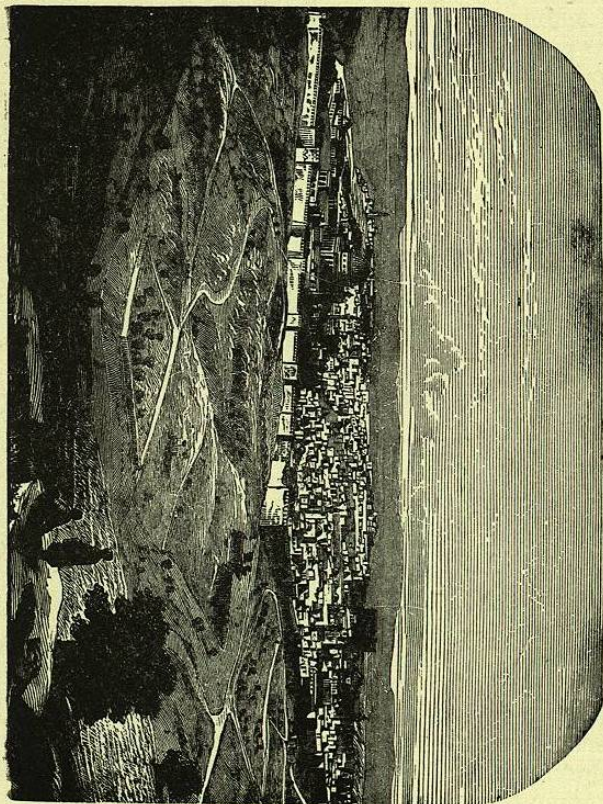
around the wall of the city until we reached the Damascus gate on the north. We paused to notice the place from which Saul of Tarsus went forth on his bloody mission. The present gate, although the finest of the city, interested us far less than an old arch barely visible above ground, marking the old gate through which Jesus had probably entered from Samaria and Saul passed on his way to Damascus. Near this rise the original *strata* of the rocks form a considerable part of the walls, which are built upon them.

We walked on to the north-east corner of the wall, where we descended into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The walls were now concealed from us, but the slopes of Olivet came into complete view. Its height is not more than about three thousand feet above the level of the sea, so that its frequent ascent was no difficult thing for our Lord and the disciples. Groups of olive-trees appeared at different points on its slopes and summit, justifying still its name—the Mount of Olives. Other hills about the city have probably almost as many, but Olivet was perhaps covered with them, thus affording our Saviour the privacy which he so often sought. When about opposite St. Stephen's gate, and near the traditional site of his martyrdom, we struck the path which led across the brook Kidron, up to Gethsemane on the slopes of Olivet.

We saw several oil-presses still in use, such as originally gave the name to the garden where our Lord prayed in agony. The garden is to the right of the path, and is inclosed by a wall for its protection. The Latin father in charge responded to our knock at the gate, and we entered in silence. Beautiful flowers were blooming where Christ had sweat great drops of blood. In the center of many of these flower-beds were venerable olive-trees, which have been standing many centuries. We were left to walk where we would, while the father busied him-

self with the flowers. We believed that within or not far from this inclosure Jesus had suffered and prayed for us when an angel appeared strengthening him, and under one of these old olive-trees I knelt to consecrate myself anew to his service, to pray for absent and loved ones, and to present a list of names of those for whom I had long pleaded in prayer. May an interceding Saviour hear the petition!

We left Gethsemane for the summit of Olivet, a no less consecrated spot. We paused occasionally to look at the city, as Christ did when he wept over it. There it lay, a beautiful, startling sight, at our feet. Jesus saw it in prophetic vision doomed as it was now—the temple displaced by a Mohammedan mosque, the seed of Abraham supplanted by the infidel, its old walls destroyed, while newer and narrower ones covered them out of view, the old city disappeared under its own rubbish, the plow-share now being driven where palaces once stood, and when he saw it he wept. From the summit, and especially from a minaret erected there near the traditional spot of the ascension, we could see the waters of the Dead Sea, with their line of surf driven by the winds along the beach, lying almost below us, while the Valley of the Jordan and the mountains of Moab, from which Moses looked upon the promised land, seemed equally near. We hurried away from the buildings which appeared to desecrate the mountain top, covering, as is represented, the foot-prints left in the rock by Jesus when he ascended. We walked on over the brow of the hill, as he had so often done, to Bethany. With no place to lay his weary head in the city of David, and with no kindred spirits there with whom he might hold sweet communion, he found rest and companionship in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.



JERUSALEM.

We had no difficulty in finding the village. We knew from the Scriptures that it must be just beyond Olivet, and we found it so. Its only attraction to us was that Jesus loved the place so well, for it is now mostly in ruins, and with but few inhabitants. It was probably then, as now, the home of the poor. But in the house of Simon the leper was broken an alabaster box of precious ointment, whose odor had reached us in America, and we longed to visit the source of such divine sweetness. Here had been wrought a miracle second only to Christ's own resurrection, and we wished to see the place where dead Lazarus had heard the voice of God, and hearing it began to live. Here Jesus had shown a tender sympathy for mankind, such as perhaps appeared nowhere else in his life, and we desired to realize more of that sympathy with ourselves by being where he had talked so freely with Mary and Martha and wept at the grave of Lazarus because he loved him. It was not the under-ground tomb which they called that of Lazarus, or the house called that of the two sisters, or the old church erected by the crusaders on the site of Simon the leper's house, that we cared to see, for Christ's presence was not confined to these traditional or even real spots, but he had left a blessing in all the village, and we returned strengthened by the visit.

Bible in hand, we sat down in front of a rock-hewn grave in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and read in John's Gospel the story of the costly ointment. It was poured upon him only six days before his death. Its fragrance lingered still in that desolate valley. All about us were stones which had doubtless been rolled away from the doors of sepulchers. They bore, in Hebrew inscriptions, the names of the dead, but the graves had long since been rifled in hope of treasure, and the name was all that remained. On our left was the village of Siloam,

where the fatal tower fell upon eighteen and slew them, and near which is the pool where the blind man washed and saw. On our right is the city-wall, visible as far as it leads to the Beautiful gate, now walled up to protect the Mosque of Omar, while all along the wall are rows of Mohammedan graves. Absalom's tomb, so called, which he built to perpetuate a name which he could not leave to a child, was within a stone's throw of where we sat.

Following the path which led by the southern wall of the city, we passed over the ruins of nearly half of the old city, now left without a wall, until reaching Zion gate, when we had about completed the entire circuit. We had obeyed the psalmist's call: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."

Jerusalem, April 3, 1877.

LETTER XXIX.

A WEEK IN AND ABOUT JERUSALEM.

IT was not the Jerusalem that Christ visited, where we have been spending the past week, but that which God has cursed. No city was ever so loved, and none ever so punished. "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps." The streets where Jesus walked are now buried forty or fifty feet out of sight. The only way of knowing where the old city walls ran is by sinking deep shafts and following the lines of massive stone many feet under-ground. There is no doubt that the temple-inclosure is now occupied in part by the Mosque of Omar, but every other site is a disputed point. "Where was the House of the Forest of Lebanon? where the judgment-seat of Pilate? where the skull-shaped hill called Golgotha? where even Mount Zion?" Only excavations can answer these questions, and even these are not always conclusive. Verily God has fulfilled his threat, "I will make Jerusalem heaps." At several points we have gone many feet below the present streets of the city to see massive arches and columns, resting upon yet others out of sight. The *débris* of the city, after the desolation of its many sieges and captures, covers the prostrate monuments of its former glory. Now and then we see in the present walls some of those immense stones with the beveled Phenician edge,