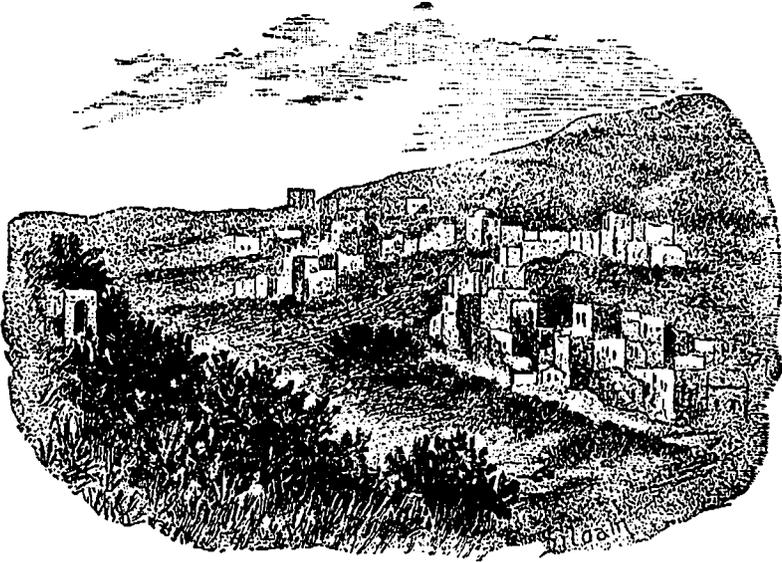


It is the intention of the Russians to build this tower high enough to be seen from the Mediterranean sea—forty miles distant—and to place a light on its top for the guidance of pilgrims from Jaffa by night. On the tower is a fine chime of bells. The largest bell I found to measure seven feet across,



RUINS OF BETHANY.

and knowing it must weigh several tons, I wondered how it had been brought there over the rough up and down road from Jaffa and up the rugged sides of Olivet. Upon enquiry I was informed the Russians, after landing it at Jaffa, had given up all hope of getting it further, when a large company of pilgrims volunteered to take it on. A crude cart was constructed, and over 1000 pilgrims—mostly women—hailed the ponderous weight up and down, over the stony roads, singing hymns all the way. It took them seven days. How is that for pluck? The fidelity of these pilgrims to the Greek Church is marvellous. Near the tower the Russians were excavating for another building of some sort, and there I saw both men and women engaged in the work, who were giving their labor for love of the Church. To make the pilgrimage is the sincerest wish of every devout Russian, and many of them die from the hardships endured in accomplishing it.

On the summit of Olivet a beautiful specimen of mosaic pavement has been discovered and preserved. The ornamentations are very artistic, and the fish, birds, and animals splendidly worked out. Bits of mosaic—cubes of stone or colored marble half-an-inch square—are to be found all about in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, and this fact in itself serves as a striking illustration of the extensive ruins there are there. They may be picked up on the slopes of Olivet, in the valleys and about the walls. I have found them out as far as the Tombs of the Kings and the Tombs of the Judges (so called). On the slopes of Mount Zion a person with sharp eyes will gather a pocket-full in the course of an hour, if he be so disposed. On the centre summit of Olivet is a small Mohamedan Mosque, which it is said stands over the place whence Christ ascended.

From the minaret of the Mosque is a similar view to that from the Russian Bell Tower, but less grand. A little further down the mountain is a peculiar building erected by a French Princess, to be her future tomb. It marks the site where Jesus taught the disciples the Lord's Prayer, and arranged around the walls of the inner court of this new structure are 33 large tile tablets, which contain the Prayer in as many different languages. On the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane! What hallowed

memories the name suggests! Here are some very old olive trees, which probably sprung from the roots of those there in Christ's time. Unfortunately this most sacred spot is in the hands of the Latin Church, who have enclosed it with a heavy stone wall and ornamented (?) it in a manner quite out of taste. Whether this enclosure be the exact location cannot be now determined.

One thing is certain, it must be nearly correct at least, and no one can visit it without most serious thoughts.

Just above the Garden, on the mountain side, the Russians have built a handsome new church, not yet quite finished. But I am lingering too long on the sights of this one excursion.

On one occasion we drove to the Pools of Solomon. The Pools are

three enormous cisterns of marble masonry, so located in a valley as to catch the water shed by the surrounding hills. So well are these great basins preserved that one can scarcely believe they are of such great age, though in all probability they date from Solomon's time, whence the name. "I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees" (Eccles., ii. 6). They were, however, restored by Pontius Pilate. Formerly water was conveyed from these pools to Jerusalem by an aqueduct, the course of which can even now be traced all the way to the Haram—a distance of from twelve to fourteen miles. These were great undertakings for those early periods and exhibited engineering skill of a high order.

If the Turks had any enterprise, they might easily make use of these pools and save Jerusalem from danger during dry seasons, but far from that, so adverse to improvement is the Turkish Government that it refused the kind offer of a beneficent English lady to lay iron pipes on the track of the old aqueduct to convey an abundant supply of good water for the use of the poor of the city, and thus relieve their sufferings in a time of drought. At present Bethlehem alone derives benefit from these ancient ponds, the largest of which it is said would float the largest man-of-war in existence.

Of the various excursions we made in the vicinity of Jerusalem, none have left pleasanter memories than that to Bethlehem, which stands in the midst of a district teeming with historic association. It is six miles from Jerusalem. About midway, close to the road side, is the Tomb of Rachel, which in all probability

marks the scene of the touching story of Rachel's death (Gen. xxxv. 16 20).

As we approach Bethlehem we come into a neighborhood which was the scene of the events recorded in many Bible narratives. Here Naomi returned from Moab. Here the beautiful Ruth gleaned in the field. Here David kept his father's sheep and spent his youth. Here the shepherds were told "The Good Tidings of Great Joy," and of the birth of the Son of David. As for Bethlehem itself the allusions to it in scripture are very numerous.

"The modern town consists of about 500 houses, mostly substantial, and the fortress-like buildings of the Church of the Nativity and the three adjoining convents." The houses are built on the slopes and top of an elongated hill, with well-cultivated terraces around its sides. Vines and fig-trees abound on these terraces, while in the valley below are fertile fields. The streets are narrow, steep, and slippery. The population is about 8,000. The chief centre of attraction in Bethlehem and the only one of which I have time to speak is the Church of the Nativity, which stands over the site of the birthplace of our Lord.

Like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, this Church is a strange collection of buildings and chapels which belong to different religious sects, and here, too, shameful to relate, as in Jerusalem, religious quarrels are frequent. The nave of this old church looks desolate and neglected, but it is said to be the "oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world."

Of the many chapels and altars here to be seen I will single out the most important—the Chapel or Grotto of the Nativity—for mention. This is a cave in the rock, 33 x 11 ft., around which the church buildings have been erected. It is 20 feet below the floor level and approached by two spiral staircases. "The vault is encased in Italian marble, decorated with numerous lamps, figures of saints, embroidery, and various other ornaments." A silver star in the pavement, in a recess at one side of the grotto, marks the birthplace of the Messiah. Sixteen lamps are kept perpetually burning above the star—six belonging to the Greeks and five each



POOLS OF SOLOMON.

to the Latins and Armenians. Here in this sacred grotto a Turkish soldier is continually stationed to keep peace amongst the worshippers! How shameful!

It is difficult to conjecture what the future experience of Palestine is to be. How strange that