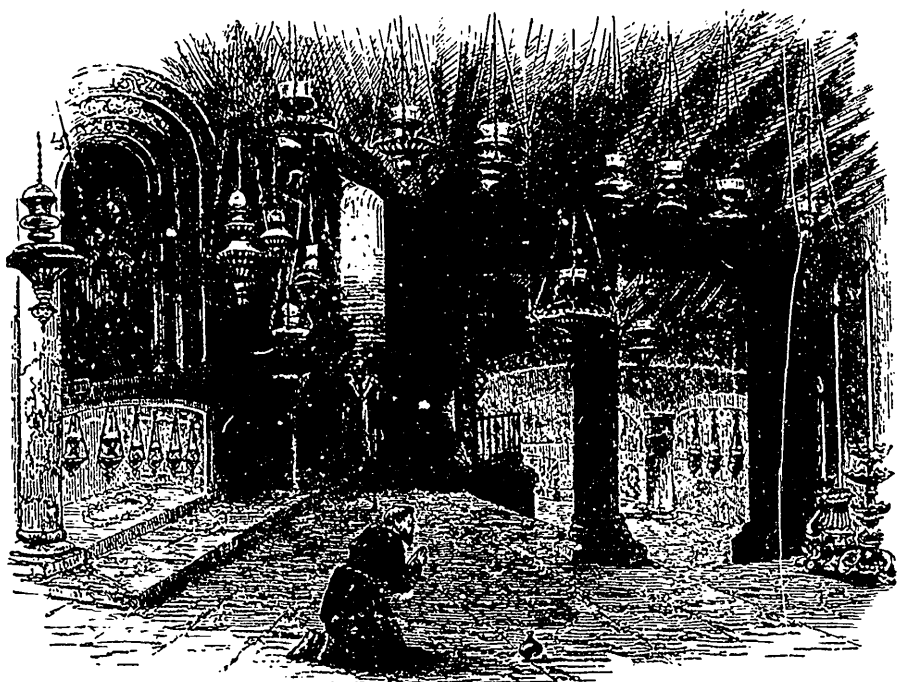




GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY AND CHAPEL OF THE ADORATION.

on Christmas Day, 1101, Baldwin, the heroic crusader, was crowned sovereign of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1482, Edward IV. of England constructed the open timber roof which we now see, sending the woodwork by sea to Jaffa and thence to Bethlehem on camels.

But of chief interest is the Grotto of the Nativity, to which we descend by a narrow stair. The grotto is only four yards wide, about thrice as long, and ten feet high. It is lit with over thirty silver lamps, whose soft light dispels the darkness. A recess in the wall is said to be the place where the manger stood. A silver star is let into the stone, and a Latin inscription surrounding it reads: "*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*"—"Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born." A number of pilgrims were devoutly kneeling and kissing with passionate devotion the sacred spot.

A small chamber to the right is that of the adoration of the Magi. In looking around I was startled to see standing behind me a Turkish soldier, with musket and side-arms, on guard to prevent the rival Greek and Latin Christians from desecrating with their quarrels this sacred place. So keen is the rivalry