

JERUSALEM.

From "Notes of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," Etc.

Prepared Especially for the Carmelite Review,

—BY—

THE VERY REV. ALOYSIUS M. BLAKELY, C. P.,

Vicar-General of Nicopolis, Bulgaria.

IT was close to six o'clock in the evening and quite dark when we set foot in Jerusalem on our return from Jericho. The dim outline of the "Holy City"—its bleak gray walls, flanked by frowning battlements, its dome-capped houses, forbidding-looking mosques, and meaningless synagogues—all conspired to make a weird and startling picture, as we contemplated it from the last rise in our path along the Mountain of Olives. Not a light was to be seen within it; not a sound to be heard. We felt as though we were in the presence of a mere memory; for assuredly there was nothing here to recall the ancient glory of Sion, nothing to invite or to cheer the oncomer, as of old. And the plaint of Jeremiah: "How does the city sit solitary that was full of people?"* best expressed our emotions at the thought of its incomparable past as contrasted with its present state of abandonment and decay.

Was this then indeed the "City of God," the "Mistress of the Gentiles," and the "Pride of the Nations";—that city in whose annals is enshrined all that is most noble, all that is most glorious, and all that is most sacred in the history of man? Was this that spot which, above all others, had received the impress of Jesus' feet; which He had bedewed with His tears, and which had been the witness of His

grandest miracles?—the soil on which the sublimest manifestations of the Deity to the Chosen People both of the Old and New Testaments had been vouchsafed, from the moment in which, appearing in a golden cloud, Jehovah filled the Temple with His glory, until that in which, vested in the semblance of sinful man, the only-begotten Son of God offered Himself upon Calvary's Mount, amid unspeakable humiliations, heart-rending anguish and appalling sufferings, for the redemption of the world?—the "City of David," once superlatively magnificent, because of its inexhaustible riches, marvellous structures and royal splendor; renowned throughout the earth for its men of unsurpassed valor, profound wisdom and consummate sanctity; and unrivalled in holiness, hallowed as it was under the Old Covenant by God in person, and under the New, by His divine Son, the "Great High Priest Jesus Christ," who made it the site of the principal mysteries of our holy faith—namely, the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, His Passion, Death and Resurrection—inaugurating, moreover, within its walls, upon the Descent of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity at Pentecost, His spiritual kingdom on earth, by making it the cradle of Christianity and the birthplace of His Church? Thrice blessed, too, and dear beyond every place under heaven, because there was born the

*Lamentations, I. 1.