

marble platform from which rises the Mosque, with its many-coloured marbles, and tiling, and surmounted with that most exquisite of domes, glittering in the sunlight. Then we took our shoes from off our feet, and we put on red morocco slippers furnished us. Now we enter the Noble Sanctuary, an octagonal edifice, one hundred and seventy feet in diameter, each of the eight sides being sixty-seven feet long. There are four doors pointing to four points of the compass. Two corridors encircle the interior, an outer formed of eight massive piers, and sixteen Corinthian columns, exceedingly graceful, and an inner, formed of four piers, and twelve columns of polished porphyry, purple in colour. These four piers sustain the dome, which is sixty feet in diameter, is highly ornamented, and over one hundred and fifty feet in height. The dome is surmounted by a slender spire, which supports a gilded crescent. The walls of the interior are covered with mosaics, marbles, and gilt stucco, on which are traced, in Arabic characters, quotations from the Koran. The stained glass windows are gorgeously rich, and the soft, subdued light passing through them is changed into ruby tints, heaven's blue, golden yellow, and every intermediate colour.

But the great attraction is the immense mass of native rock, the remnant of the summit ridge of Moriah, some sixty feet in length, fifty-five feet in width, and rising five or six feet above the marble floor. This is unquestionably a part of that sacred rock which David bought from Araunah, the Jebusite, on the day when the pestilence was stayed. All the rest of this rocky, irregular threshing-floor was cut away when levelling off the platform for the Temple, and its courts. No mark of any tool of iron is upon this bare rugged rock. It is surrounded with an iron railing, and over it hangs the crimson war-banner of the Caliph Omar. The Mohammedans regard this rock with peculiar sanctity, and their tradition is that it descended from heaven, when the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn from earth; but that when Mohammed took his flight to Paradise, he ascended from this rock, which attempted to return with him to its native glory, and was only restrained by the powerful hand of the Angel Gabriel. In proof of this they show us on the rock the footprints of the Prophet, and also the prints of the Angel's huge fingers on the stone. The rock, although its ascension was prevented, refused to touch the earth again, and there it remains suspended in mid-