

EASTER IN JERUSALEM.

The narrow, crooked streets of Jerusalem are thronged at Eastertide with a motley multitude—men and women of every type, making up a picturesque mass. The fur cap and flowing robes of the Jew, the red fez or close turban of the Moslem, mingle with the gorgeous robes of the Greek and Roman, Coptic and Syrian priests, and conspicuous everywhere is the uniform of the Turkish officers, who are appointed by the Government to preserve order. All are intent on making their way to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a mass of venerable buildings, whose enormous dome covers most of the "holy sites" located in Jerusalem. These are owned by various Christian sects, for this Church is one of the only two buildings in the world where Roman Catholic, Greek, Syrians, Copts and Armenians, worship under the same roof. These different sects cordially hate each other, and were it not for the Turkish guards, who keep the peace, there would be continually deeds of bloodshed and violence.

This old church has been for centuries the centre of a world-wide interest, for millions believe that on this spot was Mount Calvary of old, where the three crosses rose, and where the tomb of Jesus was hollowed out of the rock. The exact spot where every event of that awful tragedy took place is pointed out. The evidence in favor of this location is principally traditional, and scholars have exposed its pretensions scores of times, yet thousands of pilgrims flock to it every Easter. It was to rescue this building from the rule of the Moslems that the Crusades were fought in the Middle Ages. All Europe sent forth the flower of her nobility and poured out rivers of blood to rescue this sacred spot from infidel pollution. But it was in vain; the Crusader's kingdom was soon swept away, and the Holy Sepulchre remains to this day in the grasp of the Ottoman Empire.

Inside the door, is a great flat stone, called the "Stone of Unction," where they believe the body of Jesus was laid to prepare it for burial. It is quite the fashion for pilgrims to measure it and have their own shrouds made of exactly the same dimensions. Just under the great rotunda is the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. It has two compartments, and the outer one is called the Chapel

of the Angel, and is said to contain a portion of the very stone which was rolled away from the Sepulchre, and on which the angel was sitting, when he said to Mary: "He is not here; He is risen, as He said." Stooping low, we entered the inner chamber, the Sepulchre itself, only seven feet long by six feet wide, and half of it is occupied by the stone couch on which the crucified Saviour lay. The ceiling is low, and from it hang forty-three ever-burning golden lamps, belonging to the Latins, Greeks, Armenians and Copts. It is here that the Greek Church still celebrates the miracle of the "Holy Fire." Hundreds of pilgrims, who have come thousands of miles to obtain the "sacred fire," stand waiting with their tapers for hours, without food or drink. The Greek Patriarch goes within the Sepulchre, and after a tense moment of silence, he thrusts four or five lighted candles through holes in the wall. Then follows a scene of the wildest confusion. They struggle like maniacs to get their candles lighted, and so possess the Holy Ghost. Often pilgrims are trampled upon, and it is recorded that, upon one occasion three hundred people perished in the church. But this is all a sad delusion, for scholars find no satisfactory proof that Christ was either crucified or buried within the precincts of this church. The Gospels state that Christ was crucified and buried outside the city wall, and most people now believe that the sacred spot is what is known as Gordon's Calvary outside the Damascus Gate. As we look at that rounded knoll, with two caverns yawning under it, "Golgotha," skull-like, suggests itself, and we are reminded of the lines we have so often sung:—

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all."

Our eyes grow dim as we gaze upon it. The centuries fade away, and we see the three crosses—see the circle of Jewish enemies and Roman soldiers around Him, look upon the stricken mother, the sympathizing women, and the beloved disciples standing there as the gloom gathers over the landscape, and as the words, "It is finished," fall upon our ears, we realize that it was for us "He hung and suffered there." Not