

A sweet-faced girl, wearing the quaint, high, square linen head-covering peculiar to the women of Bethlehem, came to meet us and drew water for our refreshment from this old well.

But the chief interest of Bethlehem centres around the Church of the Nativity and its adjacent convents. It looks, with its huge walls and massive masonry, more like a mediæval fortress than



GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY—THE MANGER.

like a church. We entered the ancient Basilica, built by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, in 330, one of the oldest Christian churches in the world. It has four rows of columns, each a single stone of reddish limestone veined with white. In the dim, religious light may be discerned a series of mosaic groups of the kings and patriarchs who were the ancestors of Mary, and the saints and angels of the heavenly hierarchy. Here