

the steep slopes of the Mount of Offence,* scarcely distinguishable from the gray rock. This consists of eighty miserable houses, many of them part cave, formerly used as tombs or hermit cells. The thievish inhabitants live by farming and cattle raising, and some bring water from Siloah, or Job's well, on the back of donkeys, into the town.

We have now entered the Valley of Jehosaphat, the whole of which is one great cemetery. The Moslems declare that here Mahomet shall judge the world, an idea, perhaps, derived from the prophecy of Joel, "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehosaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. . . . Multitudes, multitudes, in the Valley of Decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the Valley of Decision," Joel iii., 12-14. It has been for ages the place of burial for both Jews and Moslems. Many generations sleep beneath the slabs which literally pave the ground. From very ancient times this valley seems to have been a favourite place of sepulchre. Here we have the tombs of Jehosaphat, Absalom, Zechariah, St. James and many nameless caves. The first we meet, facing the north, is the tomb of Zechariah, an isolated pyramid, thirty feet in height, hewn entirely from the rock, and bearing a number of Hebrew names.

Near by is the tomb of St. James, with two doric columns in front, and a number of chambers and rock tombs behind. Tradition avers that here St. James lay concealed after the crucifixion. His tomb in the fifteenth century was occupied by monks, but was afterwards used as a sheep pen.

The next is the tomb of Jehosaphat, with a broad entrance almost choked with rubbish. Then we reach the tomb of Absalom. It is a huge cube about twenty feet square, and about as many high, hewn out of solid rock. Above it is a low spire, about forty-seven feet in height. It is identified with the tomb mentioned in 2 Sam. xviii, 18.†

Around the base of this monument the ground is covered with stones, thrown there by the Jews in detestation of the unfilial conduct of Absalom.

* So named from the tradition that here Solomon set up his idolatrous worship. "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." 1 Kings, xi., 7.

† "Now Absalom, in his lifetime, had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the King's Dale; for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place."