



AT FOOT OF THE WALL.

the end of every epoch, and when all are gone will be the end of the world. Satan once destroyed all but three and a half which still remain.

“This magnificent building,” says Prof. Soccin, “produced a wonderful impression on the Franks of the Middle Ages, and it was popularly believed to be the veritable temple of Solomon. The society of knights founded here was accordingly called the Order of the Temple, and they adopted the dome of the Sacred Rock as a part of their armorial bearings. The Templars, moreover, carried the plan of the building to distant parts of Europe, and London, Laon, Metz, and several other towns still possess churches in this style. The polygonal outline of this mosque is even to be seen in the background of Raphael’s famous *Spasalizio* in the Brera at Milan.”

In the paved area rise a number of pavilions, fountains, and an elegant Saracen pulpit, from which a sermon is preached every Friday during the month of Ramadan. Beneath the pavement are a number of cisterns or reservoirs—one being upwards of 40 feet in depth and 246 yards in circumference. A companion of Omar, having let his pitcher fall into a cistern, descended to recover it and discovered a gate which led to orchards. There he plucked a leaf which he brought back to his friends. The leaf came from paradise and never faded. Others, however, who attempted to discover the elysian orchards were unable to find them. One of these fountains, according to tradition, occupies the site of the brazen laver of Solomon.

The other great structure of this sacred inclosure is the Mosque El-Aksa, a vast and complex pile. Originally a basilica, built by the Emperor Justinian, it has been enlarged and altered into a great mosque, 90 yards long and 60 yards wide. Like many Moslem structures it is built from the spoils of earlier churches and temples. The columns, bases and capitals exhibit much variety and yet have an odd kind of harmony of their own.