

# Notes of a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

## With Impressions en route

—BY—

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### VIII.

THE narrow foot-path leading to the place where the Son of God made man was gloriously transfigured in the presence of His favored Apostles, Peter, James and John—Moses and Elias standing on either side of Him, they typifying respectively the Law and the Prophets, and He the Gospel,—winds in sinuous folds about the mountain, but is exceedingly steep withal. Several of my co-pilgrims who had made the ascent in former years assured me, however, that it was vastly superior to the one existing prior to Emperor William's visit to Palestine, it having been constructed in view of that event, but never used by him. It will doubtless be a pleasure to his imperial majesty to know that the good will of Abdul Hamid in his regard has proved a boon—if not to the poverty-stricken Turkish peasantry, which has been heavily taxed to meet the enormous expenses of these improvements—at least to devout Christian pilgrims coming uninterruptedly to this sanctified spot. [What "My good Friend the Sultan" will think of this outcome of his arrangements for the comfort of the Kaiser, may be better imagined than described].

After a two hours' climb, interspersed with occasional stops, we reached the top of Mount Tabor, and were glad to escape from the sun under the cover of

the Hospice, which here as elsewhere in Palestine, is under the charge of the Franciscans. It so happened that Rev. Père Benoit, \* was a fellow-voyager of ours from Smyrna to Beyrouth, and from thence to Caiffa. Hence we were already acquainted, and met like "old friends." He had been expecting us, and was prepared. Tempting refreshments were served—excellent wine and cold, sparkling water *in capite*,—to the undisguised satisfaction of our medical tyro especially, who had not ceased to lament his extravagance and to bewail the unblushing mendacity of Bedouins generally, but of those in particular who sell hot stale beer—advertised as "ice-cold"—at ruinous prices. We hastened our "rinfresco" however, out of deference to one of our companions, Monsieur l'abbé Castaigne, pastor of the Church of Notre Dame, Bordeaux, and honorary canon of the cathedral of that city, a venerable priest, aged seventy-two, who had remained fasting since supper on the previous evening at Tiberiade in order that he might have the consolation of saying Mass on the site of our Saviour's glorious transfiguration. He was already in the chapel, where we found him a little later, absorbed in contemplation of the divine mystery of Tabor and in preparation for the Holy Sacrifice, at which we all assisted. It was

\* NOTE—Superior of the Hospice on Mt. Tabor.