

spires more devotion. The continual caravans from all the Christian nations—the public prayers—the prostrations—the rich presents sent thither by Christian princes—all excite in the soul what is better felt than described. Added to this, the extraordinary contrast in scenes the most striking. On going out of the grotto, where you have found riches, the arts and the religion of a civilized people, you find yourself in a profound solitude, in the midst of the paltry houses of the Arabs, among half-naked savages and Musselmén without faith. This holy land dare no more display its gladness—the remembrance of its glory is confined in its bosom. We descended from the Grotto of the Nativity to a subterraneous Chapel, where tradition places the Sepulchre of the Innocents. The Chapel of the Innocents leads to the grotto of St. Jerom. We there saw the tomb of this doctor of the Church, who passed the greater part of his life in this grotto. Saint Paula and her daughter S. Eustochia, are also buried here. These noble ladies, of the family of Scipios, quitted the splendor of Rome to live and die at Bethlehem in the practice of monastic virtues.

I returned to the convent, and viewed the country from the top of a terrace. Bethlehem is built on a small hill that overlooks a long valley. This valley extends from East to West. The hill, to the South, is covered with olive trees and to the North, with fig trees. The monastery owes part of its riches to Baldwin, king of Jerusalem. It was a fortress, and its walls are so thick, that it would easily sustain a siege against the Turks.

At six o'clock in the morning we departed from Bethlehem. We followed at first the valley of Bethlém, that

extends, as I have said, to the East, and arrived at a grotto, called the Grotto of the Shepherds. In this place, the shepherds of Judea were apprised of the birth of the Saviour. The piety of the faithful has transformed it into a Chapel. It must have formerly been greatly ornamented, as I remarked there two pillars of the Corinthian, and two others of the Ionic order.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

"Yet a little while and a very little while, and he that is to come will come and will not delay."

"To-morrow you shall go out, and the Lord will be with you."

"Be prepared to meet your God."

O God! who cheerest our hearts by the yearly expectation of the feast of our Redemption, grant that as we joyfully receive thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, when he comes to redeem us, we may also behold him without fear, when he shall come to be our judge; who with thee liveth, &c.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

"While the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty Word, O Lord! leapt down from thy royal throne."

"He is God, our God unto eternity: he shall rule us for ever more."

"And of his kingdom there shall be no end."

"This day is born to you a Saviour."

"The Lord your God is in the midst of you to deliver you."

God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son."

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, the Orient from on high hath visited us: to enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace.

"Born of the Father before all ages," Christ was, in the fulness of time, "born of the Virgin Mary," and he is daily born spiritually in the heart of the just. These three births of the