

Notes on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land,

PREPARED SPECIALLY FOR THE CARMELITE REVIEW

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SEVERAL days were spent by our party in visiting Jerusalem itself under the guidance of Father Paul, O.S.F., a member of the Community of St. Saviour, who, for the time being, relieved our former cicerone, Frere Benoit. The profound acquaintance of this new leader with every portion of the Holy City, its numberless points of interest, and its past as well as modern history, sacred and profane, was a constant source of marvel to us. A perfect Hebrew, Greek and Latin scholar, a thorough archaeologist in the sense in which that term is commonly applied, it was no ordinary treat we enjoyed, in listening to his lucid explanations of ancient monuments and sacred sites. Indeed, so gifted was he, that his eloquent descriptions of the once grand structures amid whose ruins he addressed us seemed to cast a hypnotic spell over his wrapt hearers, and we found ourselves transported for the nonce some decades of centuries back, and beheld the glories of Zion in its most prosperous eras, mingling meanwhile with the motly gatherings that thronged its thoroughfares from age to age. Let me share with you, dear cousin Walter, some of the knowledge I acquired at the feet of this apt preceptor. For the moment I will stand aside and let him speak, merely assuming to myself the right of condensing and fusing into a whole some of the "talks" he gave us on different occasions and in widely separated places. And first of "El-Kods" (the Holy), as the Turks call the once famous capital of Judea.—"The Jerusalem of to-day is a sadly changed spectacle from that which was presented about the end of our Saviour's earthly career. Of all the imperial cities which then acknowledged the sway of the Roman Emperor, the City of David was in many respects the most wonderful. Alex-

andria, at the mouth of the Nile, Antioch, on the shore of Syria, Ephesus, Corinth, Carthage and all the rest of the magnificent cities which were subject to Rome itself, had to yield in certain matters to Jerusalem, and which had a mysterious antiquity, which none of her sister cities could equal, and possessed a glory which attached to none of them. A temple which surpassed in splendor the one Solomon built, stood upon Mount Moriah. The city's streets were filled with marble palaces and costly residences, the homes of the wealthy and ruling classes. The hill of Sion rose to the south, showing on its summit and slopes many costly buildings; to the west and northward lie Acoa, the portion of the town where the working people mostly dwelt; and further northward still was Bezetha, largely given over to merchandise, and known as the New City. Splendid gardens, beautiful parks, artificial ponds and magnificent mausoleums were met on every hand in the environs of the city; but the chief glory of the place was the temple which crowned the summit of Mount Moriah, whereof one writer has said:

It was seamed with golden plates and covered with a roof of golden spikes, lest the birds of the air might rest upon it. To the pilgrim afar off on the north and the east, it glittered in the bright sunlight of Judea with an effulgence which seemed divine. Within were two chambers. One was the Holy of Holies, into which no profane eye was allowed to gaze. It was wreathed in rare workmanship of the purest gold, and before its golden doors hung a veil, priceless in value, woven with the rarest skill of Jewish and Babylonian maids.

The outer chamber contained the golden candlesticks, whose seven lamps were the seven planets; the twelve loaves that marked the passing year;