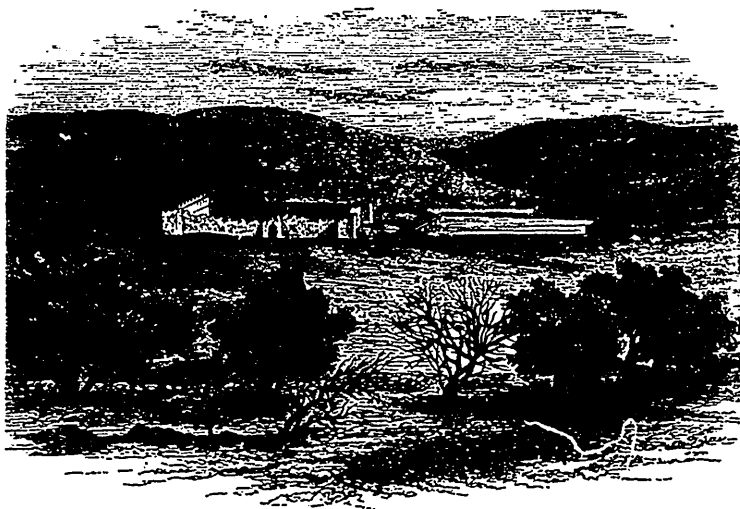


close beside the time-worn aqueduct we now took our way toward that town.

A short distance below the Pools, in a valley richly fertile, lies the village of Urtas, which is supposed to occupy the site of Etham, where, as Josephus, says: "Solomon was in the habit of taking a morning drive." If this be so, and it is more than probable, the fertile valley corresponds with the gardens of which he speaks. "I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards, I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted in them of all kinds of fruits," and here are laid the scenes of the Song of Songs. An earthly paradise, indeed, must this valley have been,



POOLS OF SOLOMON WITH SARACENIC CASTLE.

under the lavish wealth and taste and wisdom of the royal poet. In less than an hour after leaving the pools, a sharp turn in the mountain-road gave a view of a long line of white buildings crowning a hill across a valley, and we had our first view of Bethlehem. I have already described our visit in my paper in last December number, and some of my readers may remember that I broke off my narrative where, in mid afternoon, we turned the last ridge that commanded a view of the city, and after a farewell look toward it, rode on over the wilderness of Judea, toward the Convent of Mar Saba, and camped in its neighbourhood. Our path lay over a region of utter desolation. Great bare rounded hills, separated by deep gorges, extended for miles and