

The "Presbyterian Parliaments" for 1890 closed about November 1st—in New Zealand. The annual round will begin again in England in April. Then in May the Scotch and the American Assemblies will meet. In June our Assembly and that of the Irish Church will meet. The European and Australian meetings follow in later months. The vast extent of the Presbyterian family may be judged from the fact that over forty Annual Assemblies or synods are held representing a population of over 20,000,000.

## Sketches from Palestine.

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### IV. THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES is one of the most interesting localities in the Holy Land. It is not a very large, or a very lofty mountain, but it sufficiently elevated to be a conspicuous object in the landscape. Jerusalem, as already stated, is about 2500 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. The Mount of Olives is at various points from one to two hundred feet higher than the rocky plateau on which the Holy City is built. It is situated just as it is represented by the inspired penmen—directly East of Jerusalem, from which it is separated by the narrow Valley of the Kidron. On close observation I found, what I scarcely seemed to know before, that this holiest of all the mountains that are round about Jerusalem, has actually four summits, each one of which has some memorable event of the past forever associated with it. The Northernmost of these is called the "Galilee," or more fully "Viri Galilaei;"—Men of Galilee. It is so called from the traditional belief that this is the spot on which the two angels stood when they said to the apostles immediately after the ascension of Christ—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven, etc. The next is "the Mount of the Ascension." On it stands the so-called Church of the Ascension with its lofty minaret pointing the traveller upward to the blue heaven through which our Saviour ascended to the throne of glory when He completed His work on earth. There is here a small modern village inhabited by poverty-stricken Arabs whose first and last word to us was *backsheesh-backsheesh!* I can find no

words by which I can give any adequate idea of the enrapturing, impressive view which is obtained from this highest elevation of Olivet. Stretching away South and East you see the dreary Wilderness of Judea in which of old the stern prophet of the desert urged the erring multitude in thunder tones to bring forth fruit meet for repentance, and in which again the sinless Son of God had His mysterious encounter with the great Tempter. Looking further Eastward you can see the low-lying Valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, with the blue hills of Moab and Gilead on the further side. Turning Northward, you see towering up before you Scopus, and Nob, and Ramah, and other elevations teeming with a thousand memories of by-gone days. And then immediately before you on the West you have the best possible view of the city of Jerusalem. Shorn, as this marvellous city now is of much of its ancient glory, as I surveyed its tapering minarets, and lofty domes, and terraced roofs, and solid walls, and surrounding deep ravines from this commanding height of Olivet, I found myself unconsciously exclaiming with the ancient Singer of Israel: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the North, the city of the great King."

The third summit of the Mount of Olives is called "the Prophets," from the so-called "Tombs of the Prophets" which it contains. These "Tombs," excavated by human hands in ancient times from the white limestone rock of the district, are in the near neighborhood of the modern village of Bethany. It was in one of them in all probability that the brother of Martha and Mary slept the sleep of death until the Great Miracle-Worker called him back to life.

The Southern summit of Olivet is "the Mount of Corruption," the "Mons Offensionis," as it is called in the Latin Vulgate. It was so called on account of the idolatrous temples which Solomon built on this "high place" to Moloch and Chemosh and Ash-taroth, as we read in the Second Book of Kings.

To go from Jerusalem to Olivet as I did three several times—once on foot, once on a braying donkey, and once on a Syrian pony—you must cross the bridge which