

sufferer to say good-bye forever to his woes. Whether this happy consummation be reached in every case or not, it is well worth while to take this romantic journey and see the glories of this watering place amid the rugged peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Some idea is gained of the wonders of our own Dominion, and a thought quickly rises that it is a good thing to be a Canadian.

BETHLEHEM, THE CITY OF DAVID.

PALESTINE is the most interesting country in the world. Who is there who has not longed to visit "those holy fields, over whose acres walked those blessed feet which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed, for our advantage, on the bitter cross"?

We propose taking our readers to some of those sacred places so familiar to us in connection with the life of our blessed Lord.

We commence with the place of His birth. Leaving Jerusalem by the Jaffa gate, we proceed for six miles over a road teeming with historical associations. Roads in the East are as unchangeable as fords and springs; we therefore feel that we are treading in the very footsteps of the old patriarchs. From this road Abraham and Isaac must have had their first glimpse of Moriah, while it was here that Rachel died and was buried, and to this day her tomb is to be seen on the wayside, a site which has never been disputed, and which is acknowledged by Christian, Jew, and Moslem. To Ruth this road must have been familiar, while David must have often traversed it. But our thoughts dwell rather on two weary travellers who made their way along this path to be "enrolled" in the city of their ancestors when "there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed."

We approach the town by a steep ascent. Few places are more beautifully situated than Beit-Lahm, "the house of flesh," by which name it is known, rather than by the one so familiar to us. Standing on a ridge of a "long gray hill" of limestone, it commands extensive views of the surrounding country. On all sides we find terrace gardens filled with olive and fig trees, while the ground is carpeted with the most brilliant wild flowers, particularly the scarlet anemone. The town is no longer walled, but in other respects it presents the same view it must have done in the days of David, for, from its peculiar situation, it is impossible to extend it. The inhabitants, numbering between four and five thousand, for the most part Christian, are spoken of as hard-working and industrious. The women are

remarkable for their beauty. It is said that they are not without a tinge of Norman blood in their veins—the result of the Crusades. They wear a peculiar head dress, a round brimless hat, over which is thrown a light veil, generally about two yards long, used not so much for the purpose of covering the face, as for holding anything they wish to carry. To this day they may be seen following the example of Ruth—the veil filled with barley. The forehead is usually covered with rows of gold or silver coins, a woman often carrying her fortune on her head. No doubt it was to one of these coins that reference is made in the parable of the "lost piece of silver." The house would need to be swept diligently, for the rooms often have no windows at all. The men of Bethlehem are, for the most part, engaged in agricultural pursuits, tending their flocks, or cultivating their vines, although many are employed in wood-carving, and in the manufacture of "mementoes" made of mother-of-pearl, brought from the Red Sea, which find a ready sale amongst the pilgrims.

Passing through the narrow streets, we come to an open space, on one side of which stands the noble basilica of St. Helena, the oldest Christian church in the world, containing within its walls the Cave or Grotto of the Nativity, the "stable" in which the Lord of life was born.

The church, erected by the mother of Constantine in A.D. 327, has from time to time been "restored," the last repairs being executed by Edward IV. of England. Still, much of the original building remains; therefore we have here the "oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world."

Whatever doubts may exist regarding some of the sacred sites in Palestine, there can be but little question regarding the "Grotto of the Nativity." As early as Justin Martyr, A.D. 120, "a certain cave very close to the village" was pointed out as the birthplace of the Lord. To this day caves are used for the purpose of sheltering cattle, while it is an acknowledged fact that Khans or inns never change in the East. Interesting as the church is, with all its historical associations, its interest pales before that which lies beneath.

Leaving the church by a half-sunk arched doorway at the east end, we descend a well-worn flight of steps, and soon find ourselves in the Chapel of Nativity.

Although now almost entirely cased with marble, there can be no doubt that we are standing in a rock-hewn cave. Its length is about forty feet, the height about ten. It is lighted by a number of handsome silver lamps, which are carefully tended by priests of the Greek, Latin, and Armenian Churches. In a recess at one end of the grotto there stands an altar, and beneath it, on the marble floor, is