

The Nativity.

(From Farrar's Life of Christ.)

ONE mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands a bare and neglected chapel known by the name of the Angel of the Shepherds. It is built over the traditional site of the fields where, in the beautiful language of St. Luke—more exquisite than any idyl to Christian ears—"there were shephdrds keeping watch over the flock by night; when lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them" and to their happy ears were uttered the good tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David a Saviour which was Christ the God.

"And suddenly", adds the sole evangelist who has narrated the circumstances of that memorable night in which Jesus was born, amid the indifference of a world unconscious of its Deliverer, "there came with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men of good will."

"Come now! let us go unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass which the Lord made known to us," said the shepherds, when those angel songs had ceased to break the starry silence. Their way would lead them up the terraced hill, and through the moonlit gardens of Bethlehem, until they reached the summit of a gray ridge on which the little town is built. On that summit stood the village inn. The khan, (or caravanserai of a Syrian village at that day, was probably identical in its appearance and accommodation with those which still exist in modern Palestine. A khan is a low structure built of rough stones, and generally, only a single story in height. It consists for the most part of a square enclosure in which the cattle can be tied up in safety for the night; and in arched rooms for the accommodation of the travellers. The *lecwan*, or paved floor of the recess is raised a foot or two above the level of the courtyard. A large khan might contain a series of such recesses which are in fact low small rooms with no front wall to them. They are, of course, perfectly public, and everything that takes place in them is visible to every person in the khan. They are also totally