

limestone, the people were clean and industrious, two qualities not usually found in the Orient. In the large square area in front of the Church of the Nativity we dismounted. The population is about 6,000, and the citizens do a thriving trade in mother-of-pearl work and making souvenirs of native wood and stone. On the eastern brow of the ridge of limestone, on which the city is built, stands the Church of the Nativity with its three convents. It is like a vast fortress externally, commanding the city and the deep valleys that extend eastward and northward. To the east are the rich fields which probably were the possessions of Boaz where Ruth gleaned, and where David watched his father's flocks, and where the shepherds were abiding when the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and where the heavenly host sang, "on earth peace and good will toward men." The site of Bethlehem is one of the localities about which there is no uncertainty, for history and tradition speak of it in almost every century since the time of Christ. Justin Martyr and Origen and many of the Fathers speak of this grotto or cave, now covered by the church, as the birthplace of the Lord. And, besides, it is hardly possible that in the two centuries and a quarter intervening between the death of John and the building of the church the knowledge of the locality would have been lost. The Basilica was built by the Empress Helena early in the fourth century, and is the oldest Christian church in the world.

I entered through a small iron door into a court and thence into the nave of the church. There are forty columns of marble, very old, and with Corinthian capitals of various sizes and shapes. The columns are supposed to have belonged to the porches of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. They were dug up from the rubbish in the Temple Area, and probably belong to the first or second Temple, and thus are of the deepest interest. They divide this part of the church into the nave and two aisles on each side. They support the roof which is covered with cedar from Lebanon. Among the cedar beams the birds were singing their sweetest song, and it seemed as if they had come to this birthplace of the Lord to sing His praise, who even takes care of the sparrows as well as the mightiest and holiest archangel. A wall separates the nave from the transept and apse. Passing into the right hand transept, we descend by a few steps into the grotto that marks the spot where Christ was born.

Every town of importance possessed a Caravansary in ancient times. It was a quadrangle, one of whose sides, if possible, was a range of hills, with caverns in it to afford shelter for man and beast. Bethlehem, on the highway to the south, would have one, and as history gives us almost an unbroken chain of evidence in support of this spot, I believe it to be the spot honored above all others on earth, where Christ entered upon His life on earth, which ended with His death on Calvary, but for our redemption. Golden lamps are burning day and night on the marble slab that covers the grotto, fitting emblem of Him who is the light of the world. On the slab is a silver star, with the words "Hic de Virgine Maria Iesus Christus Natus Est." Here came the bread of life of which, if we eat, we shall never hunger. Here began to flow that living water which has refreshed the thirsty pilgrims heavenward through the past ages, and of its waters, if we drink, we shall never thirst. If the great St. Lawrence and the rivers of the world were dried to their lowest depths human progress would end, life would cease, every living creature would perish. But the river of the water of life which began to flow in Bethlehem is of infinitely more importance. It has spread itself in numberless channels over this world of sin, and has given life and strength and cheer to great multitudes who now serve Him, who became flesh and died for our salvation, but who is now seated upon His Throne as the Eternal and Omnipotent King. I was filled with intense emotion and thanksgiving as I stood near the Cradle of Christ. Though born in that

Judean town, His blessing is for the world, so that in Canada we may serve Him, see His glory and share His redemption; for His gifts were not for Judean plains, or hills, or walled cities, or towns, but for the world and for man. This was His life work: "I came to seek and save that which was lost." His salvation, therefore, is ours, let our service of praise to Him be a holy life.

GEO. BURNFIELD, B.D.,
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Brockville.

Sheffield.

ON the way to London we broke the journey to have a peep at the world's great cutlery shop. Distance does not lend enchantment to Sheffield, as but a little way off nothing can be seen of it only a dense cloud of smoke issuing from innumerable factories and from mines which have completely honey-combed the foundation of the town. This Egyptian darkness is not regarded by the inhabitants as a plague, but as a sign of good times indicating industry and prosperity. It seems, however, to have been a hindrance to the erection of fine buildings public and private, if one may judge from the conspicuous absence of such. The only ecclesiastical edifices of any architectural pretensions are the parish church and the Roman Catholic church, and these are so black with smoke as to lead one to think they are built of ebony. The Methodist churches recently erected, are rapidly assuming the same sable appearance. There is no cathedral in Sheffield, for although it has a population double that of Montreal it has not yet attained the dignity of a city. The inhabitants think they can get along all right without these Episcopal luxuries. Thus it will be understood that the features of Sheffield are not its splendid streets and magnificent buildings, but its great workshops, manufacturing goods for every land. Most of the factories exhibit "No admission" over the gateway, and as the rule is strictly enforced, the visitor requires the aid of one who knows the "open sesame." This we found in a Methodist brother, a retired merchant of the town, who during our stay in Sheffield well sustained the reputation of Englishmen for hospitality. After seeing the art of electro-plating at Wilkinson's establishment, we proceeded to see that for which Sheffield has become famous, the manufacture of cutlery. We witnessed this satisfactorily at the two principal factories of Rogers and Nixon. The forging, smithing, scorching, stamping and buffing of the steel was exceedingly interesting to us. We were informed that the making of each piece of a knife, the blade, spring, rivets, handle, is a distinct trade. The best paid part of the work is the dry-grinding, as the steel dust is very injurious to the health of the workmen. Leaving the workshops we entered Rogers' show room, where are exhibited some of the triumphs of the cutler's art. We noticed especially a pocket knife with 250 blades, each having engraved on it a view of some place in Sheffield. Another pocket (?) knife contained the immense number of 1880 blades to which the addition of a blade is made every year. A very tiny dozen pairs of scissors, all workable yet only weighing one grain, caused us to say "O scissors." Cutlery was once the staple industry of Sheffield, and it still occupies the leading position among the trades of the town. During our stay the Master cutler (who is elected annually) gave a banquet to a distinguished company in the Cutlers' Hall. The Sheffielders justly regard this yearly feast as of great importance. There are other industries, however, fast pushing the cutlery trade into the shade. Of late years an increasing business in railway plant and armour plates for the navy has sprung up. So we went to the extensive works of Cammells, and what we there saw was even more interesting than what we had already witnessed in town. A long way off we could hear the roar of the Bessemer furnace, and near its fiery vomit resembled no small volcano. On entering we were just in time to see the