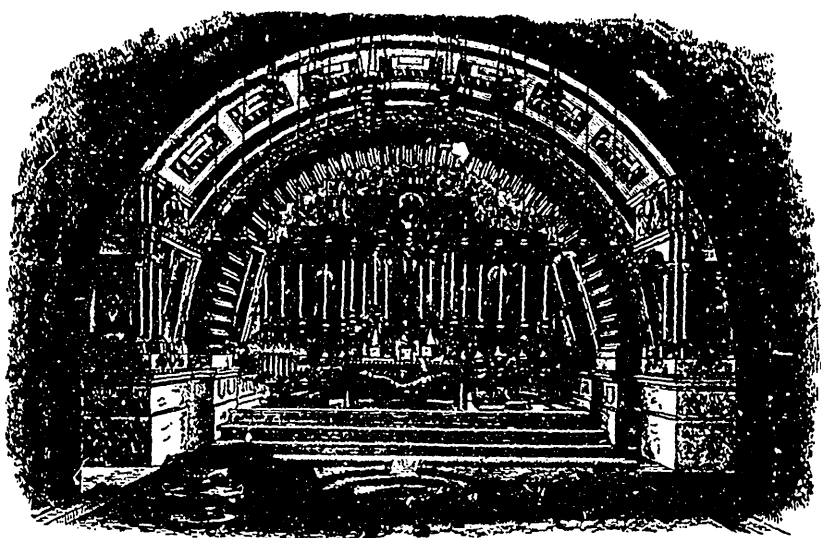




TRADITIONAL SITE OF CALVARY.

hallowed sites, witnessing the devotion of the pilgrims, and realizing the time-hallowed associations so dear to the heart of Christendom. During the Easter festival the church is crowded with pilgrims of every nationality, and the ecclesiastical ceremonies are of splendidly spectacular character. On Easter Sunday, specially, the disgraceful spectacle of the so-called miracle of the holy fire takes place. This has thus been described by Dean Stanley :

“Greeks, Armenians, Copts, and Abyssinians take part in the ceremony. The wild and noisy scene begins on Good Friday. The crowd passes the night in the church in order to secure places, some of them attaching themselves by cords to the sepulchre, while others run round it in anything but a reverential manner. On Easter Eve, about two p.m., a procession of the superior clergy moves round the sepulchre, all lamps having been carefully extinguished in view of the crowd. The patriarch enters the Chapel of the Sepulchre, while the priests pray and the people are in the utmost suspense. At length the fire, which it is alleged has come down from heaven, gleams from the sepulchre, the priests emerge with a bundle of burning tapers, and there now follows an indescribable tumult, everyone endeavouring to be the first to get his taper lighted. Even from the gallery tapers are let down to be lighted, and in a few seconds the whole church is illuminated. This, however, never happens without fighting, and accidents generally occur owing to the crush. The spectators do not appear to take warning from the terrible catastrophe of 1834. On that occasion there were upwards of 6,000 persons in the church when a riot suddenly broke out. The Turkish guards, thinking they were attacked, used their weapons against the pilgrims, and in the scuffle that followed about three hundred pilgrims were suffocated or trampled to death.”