

chapel, fifteen feet above the level of the church. Here one may stoop down beneath an altar and examine the silver-faced opening where the Cross is said to have been set into the rock, and about five feet distant on either side the site of the crosses of the thieves. Here, too, one is shown the very cleft in the rock wrought by the earthquake, which is said by tradition to extend to the centre of the world. The chapel is sumptuously embellished with paintings, costly mosaics and icons of the Virgin, surrounded with silver nimbus. The life-sized image of the Virgin was bedecked with costly jewels and a number of gold watches and other votive offerings were lying at her feet. Near the Chapel of the Cross is the so-called Chapel of Adam, where tradition affirms that the first father of mankind was buried, and that the blood of Christ falling on his head restored him to life.

The following is a curious tradition about this true cross :

"According to this legend, Adam when sick sent Seth to the gate of Eden to ask for the healing balm of the Tree of Life ; but the guarding angel replied that ages must pass before that boon could be conferred on man. Seth received, however, three seeds, which he planted by his father's grave, situated on the site of Golgotha. From these sprang the rod of Aaron, and the tree which gave its mysterious virtue to the pool of Bethesda, and rising to the surface at the hour of the Passion, became the instrument of the crucifixion of our Lord. After that momentous event it was thrown into the town ditch with the crosses of the two thieves, and covered with rubbish ; but at the intercession of Helena the earth opened, divine odours breathed forth, the three crosses were discovered, and that of our Lord was revealed by its curing an inveterate disease and raising a dead man to life."*

Near by is the so-called tomb of Melchizedek. We were shown, too, the tomb of De Bouillon and Baldwin I., Christian kings of Jerusalem.

The mere descriptions of these sacred shrines, however, gives no conception of the thrilling interest that is felt in visiting their

* Milman's "History of Christianity," book IV., c. 4, and Withrow's "Catacombs of Rome," pp. 272-73.

See "*Legenda Aurea, de Inventione et Exaltatione Sanctæ Crucis.*"

The material of the cross is described in the following distich :

*Pes crucis est cedrus, corpus tenet alta cupressus,
Palma manus retinet titulo lætabor oliva.*

"The foot is cedar, a lofty cypress bears the body, the arms are palm, the title olive bears."

According to legend Helena calmed the Adriatic with one of the nails of the cross ; of another Constantine made a bit for his horse ; of another the iron crown of Lombardy with which Napoleon was crowned was made.