

apart, and are so constructed that when the water in the upper cistern has reached a certain height, it flows into the second and thence into the third. They are fed by perennial springs, one of which, rising from the south-west corner of a dilapidated old castle, is pointed out by tradition as the sealed fountain to which the "beloved" is compared—"a spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

A few hours' ride south of these pools stands the ancient Hebron. "Sarah died in this place; and Abraham bought from Ephron, the Hittite, the only portion of the land of promise he could ever call his own—the cave and field of Machpelah for his family tomb. This burial place received the remains of Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah, and subsequently the embalmed body of Jacob. For no less than three thousand seven hundred years, Jews, Christians, and Moslems have honoured this sepulchre of the great Patriarch, the friend of God; a large mosque covers the cave, which is two hundred feet long, one hundred and fifteen feet wide, and sixty feet high." The cave of Machpelah cannot be entered, and aside from the magnificent tree called Abraham's Oak, and the Valley of Eschol, with its grapes, there is little to detain the traveller. We rode along the hillside over the Wady-Urtas, following the long-covered aqueduct from Solomon's Pools as far as Bethlehem. The road was stony, and in some places dangerous, but the views were picturesque, and the valley charming and well cultivated. It is the site of Solomon's Gardens. The very hills between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, even where the grass does not grow, are covered with many-tinted flowers, or if they are not flowers they are weeds as "beautiful as flowers."

We reached Bethlehem in a pelting rain, and rode through its steep and slippery and narrow streets to the Khan. Here we had ample time for rest and thought; and as the Bethlehemites gathered around us, how there came rushing upon us the sacred associations of the place. Here the King of Glory is found as a babe, born amid the lowing of herds and the radiant minstrelsy of angels. In this little "City of David" a Light shone and a King was born whom we call Lord and Christ. We descend at once a flight of marble steps, and traversing a subterranean corridor enter the rock-hewn Chapel of the Nativity. The sacred grotto is thirty-eight feet long, eleven wide, and two deep. Near the eastern end is a white marble slab, with a little silver star in the centre, encircled with the inscription. "Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born."

Reascending the marble staircase, we entered the Church of the Nativity proper, the oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world. It is built in the form of the cross, is of imposing size, but the nave is desolate and cheerless, with its forty-four pillars, in seven rows, taken, according to tradition, from the porches of the Temple at Jerusalem. Originally the roof and rafters were of cedar, from the forests of Lebanon; but at present they are of oak, the gift of Edward IV., of England, and

they look dreary enough. This noble edifice, one of the grandest of basilicas, is sadly in need of repair, as well as the old and half-decayed convent which crowns the hill, and looks, in its extent and buttressed strength, like a mediæval castle.

Toward the south and east is the fertile plain where Ruth gleaned, and where the glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds, as they watched their flocks on that night when the Redeemer of the world was born.

A ride of fifteen minutes brought us to the Shepherds' Field. It is a kind of plain, and we thought of that night, surpassing all other nights in wonders, when, as the peaceful shepherds watched their flocks, that lie on the hill-sides, like snow drifts in the late spring, suddenly the whole heavens are filled with splendor; a supernatural glory bursts upon them; the light grows brighter, until it takes the form of a shining angel, and there is waked to them the celestial strain:—"Fear not, for, behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Then as if the heavens must burst to disclose their joyous minstrelsy, a mighty orchestra—"a multitude of the heavenly host"—pour forth the *Gloria in Excelsis*, until through all the balconies of light, and the galleries of the skies, from rock to rock, from throne to throne, from the hills of earth to the gateways of pearl, from cherubim to seraphim, is heard the rapturous refrain, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

Book Notices.

History of England for Beginners. By ARABELLA BUCKLEY. With colored maps and tables. Pp. xxxii—380. London and New York: Macmillan & Co.

The art of writing history—especially school histories—has been entirely revolutionized. We no longer have a dry and barren and uninteresting outline, studded with a formidable list of unassociated dates. We have instead a picturesque narrative, a grasp of principles, a record of great social movements—illustrated with maps and tables, showing the relations of great events, which makes the remembering of their dates comparatively easy. At least that is the sort of history presented to us in the volume under review. It is not a bare record of battles and sieges, of treaties and Acts of Parliament. It gives an insight into the domestic and social life of the people, and into the great and moral movements of the times, with sketches of the progress of literature, art, science, and invention—the growth of the Colonial Empire of that Greater Britain which is engirdling the world. The maps, tables, index, and other helps to the study of the book are of great value. The narrative is brought down to 1886. The sections devoted to recent times are of especial interest. We heartily commend the book.