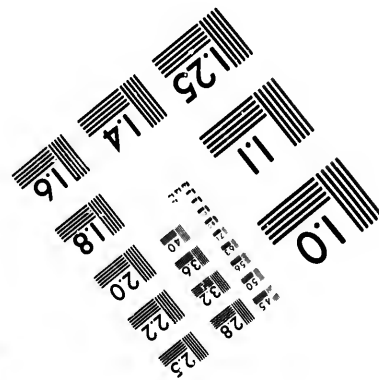
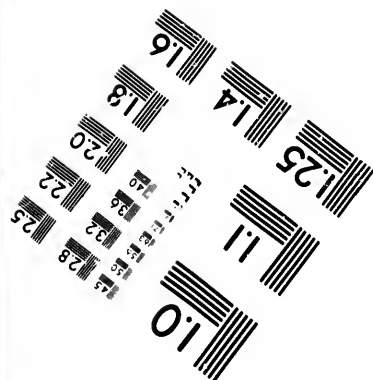
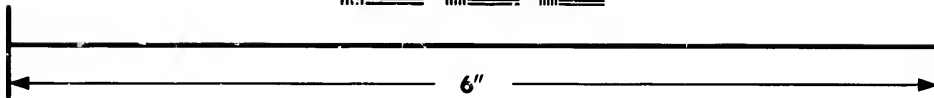
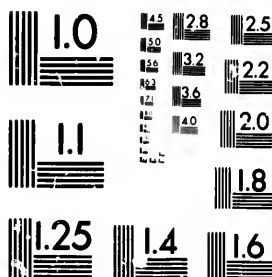


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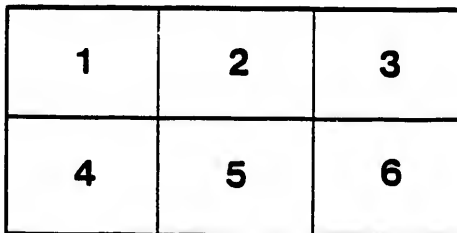
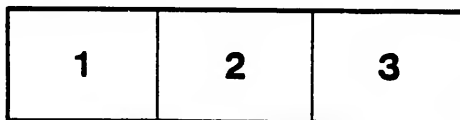
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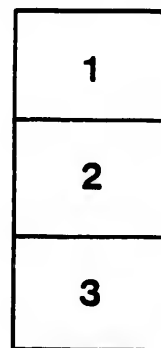
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# OUR LORD AT BETHANY,

A PAPER

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CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE  
AND EVANGELIST,  
QUEBEC.

By E. T. F.



OTTAWA:

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THE HISTORY OF THE

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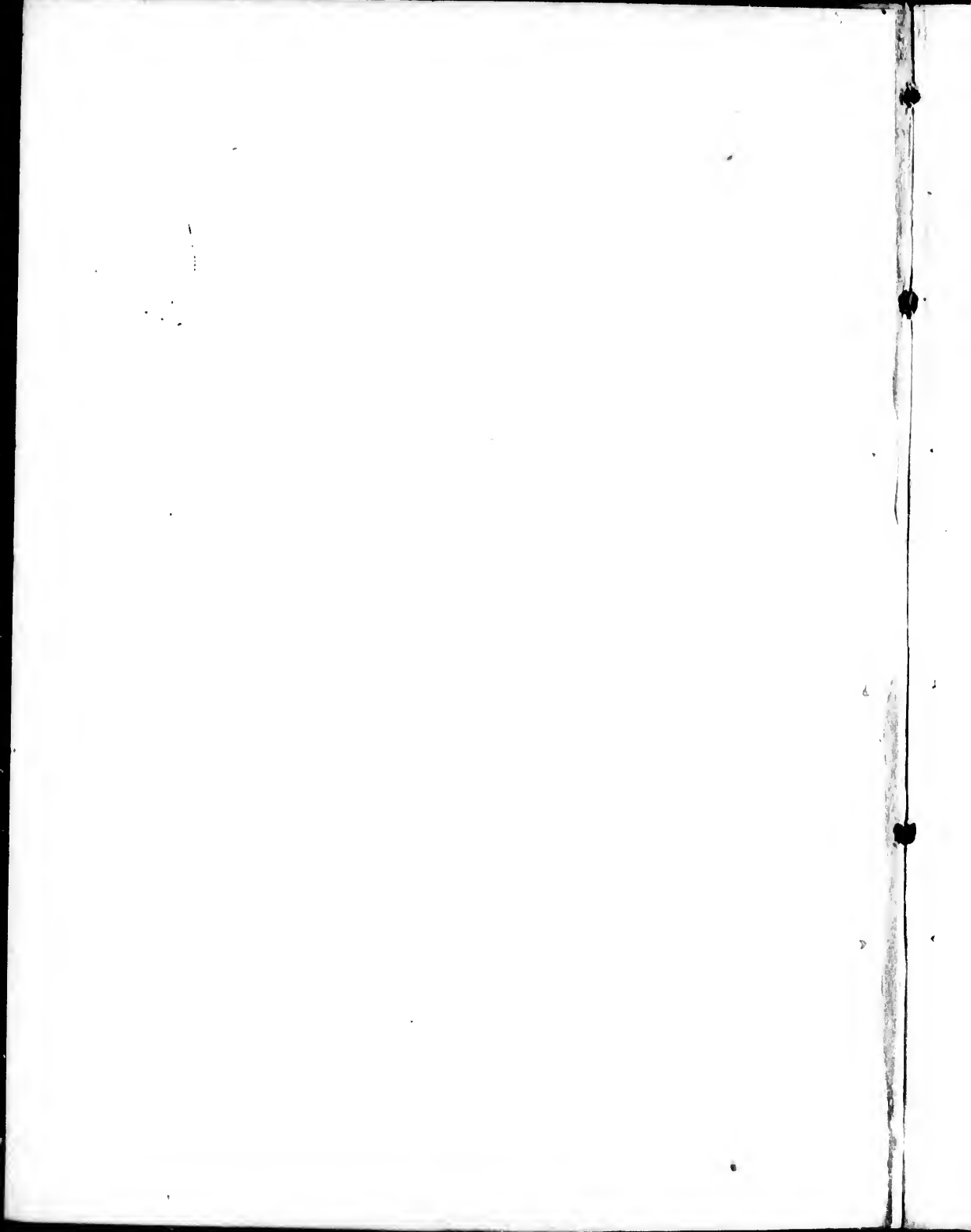
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## OUR LORD AT BETHANY.



WHEN the voice of some kindly benefactor is hushed by death : When the face of some loving friend, who has sealed his fidelity with his life, has vanished from among us and is seen no more ; it is by an ineradicable instinct of our nature that we seek to re-create the minutest particulars of his presence. We strive to recall his looks, his gestures, his very words. We would fain follow his footsteps ; we would trace again the paths which he trod, the places where he rested ; we would surround ourselves with the visible indications of his being : we would cheat ourselves almost into the belief that he is not wholly gone, but still exists in spirit beside us, though invisible as the viewless air. Our deep-rooted affection will not be torn up, refuses to give way. Alas, it is with an unspeakable yearning, with a love all the stronger for its hopelessness, that we gaze wistfully after the departing apparition. We seem yet to catch the sound of the retreating footfalls. To us he still lives : to us he will live always.

We can understand then how it is that, for age after age, the christian worshippers of all lands,

the wealthy, the poor, the highborn and the indigent, have visited and traversed the Holy land, Palestine, the scene of Our Lord's life and sufferings, and have examined, with lowly and affectionate veneration, every trace of his wanderings, every print of his footsteps. And not without reason. For those wanderings were made for our sakes : it was for us that he became weary, homeless, footsore, despised, and an outcast. For us he suffered, died and was buried ; and again broke the bonds of death in sunder, in token that we also should rise again.

The word was made flesh and dwelt among men. He became like unto us. We have most of us, it may be, a difficulty in realising the perfect humanity of the son of Man. To our seeming, the words which He spoke, the lessons which He taught, and those loving utterances with which he soothed the sorrows of the desolate, all sound to us almost as the mere echoes of a Divine voice heard faintly across the abyss of a lengthened lapse of time, rather than the speech of a being human as ourselves, and who, consenting to veil his Divinity for a space, took upon himself the form of a servant. Yet He was indeed a man, living manlike ; he hungered, he thirsted, he was weary : he shared in the innocent festivities, the kindly amenities of life. He mourned with the mourners, he mingled his tears with theirs ; and wept with them over the grave of the departed : and in that last closing scene at Calvary, he did not forget to soothe the weeping women who followed him on the way,

and to commend his mother Mary to the beloved disciple, 'who took her to his own home.'

Nor, as I think, on reading these precious records of his life, can we escape the conviction that Our Lord, throughout the days of his humiliation, suffered more than other men. Yes, inconceivably more : The quickly kindled rebuke, the instant commiseration, the warm tears which he shed, and even those mysterious eclipses of his higher nature, those cries as of one forsaken, the momentary darkness and desolation of Gethsemane and the Cross, all these seem to assure us that he possessed a frame and spirit of exquisite sensibility. When He, the meek, the infinitely lowly, came, as he did, to seek and to save, to deliver the captives, to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, and to give eternal life to all who would accept it,—what must He have felt, when his message was despised and himself rejected ? One of our chiefest poets has spoken wisely and well of the suffering inflicted by a thankless child. What must Our Lord have felt, when he came to his own, and his own received Him not ? Neither was His the torpor of old age, or the fatuous ignorance of childhood : but he passed through these days of tribulation in the prime of glorious manhood, in the perfection of bodily sense and mental perception, with every nerve attuned to vibrate responsively to all the sights and sounds, to all the passionate and variable greeting, that met him on his way.

To a being so constituted, it must have been most grateful to withdraw at times from the tur-

moil of public life to the quietude and repose of some secluded home. Here, surrounded by those whom he loved, and waited upon by the lowly ministration of friends, He might pause for a while, might calm his disquieted spirit and heal his bitter wounds, and so gather renewed strength and energy for that last conflict wherein death was swallowed up in victory. Such a place was Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, whose western slope fronts the city of Jerusalem, the valley of Jehosaphat lying between. It is now known as El Lazarich, or the village of Lazarus : and while the locality of other places, as Capernaum, Bethsaida and Charazin, has faded away in incertitude, that of Bethany has never been disputed. It lies surrounded by hills, a lonely spot in the wilderness, remote from the more noisy haunts and occupation of men. Huge masses of foliage, the growth of olives, almonds, pomegranates, as well as of oaks and carobs, afford here and there a cooling and refreshing shade : while, from its great elevation, a magnificent view is afforded, eastward, of the adjacent valley of the Jordan.

We know not the beginnings of our Lord's intimacy with the family of Martha and Mary. From the words of his pathetic exclamation in the Temple, " Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would " I have gathered thy children together," we are led to believe that He visited the city on many other occasions than on those mentioned by the Evangelists. Nor does it seem at all improbable, of itself, that Our Lord's well known visit, when

twelve years old, was subsequently repeated. In some of these unrecorded journeys up to Jerusalem made between his twelfth and thirteenth year and performed doubtless for the purpose of attending the greater festivals, the Holy Family may have taken, as was frequently done, the route through Peræa and the Jordan valley, from their extreme aversion to hold intercourse with the people of Samaria, which lay in the direct path. How deep this aversion was, we may learn from the question asked of Our Lord at a later date, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest water of me who am a woman of Samaria?" Peopled for the most part by the descendants of the five heathen nations which Esarhaddon, at the close of the Babylonish captivity, had planted in the land, Samaria with its central position and rich fields of waving grain, remained to the last a standing reproach and horror to the Hebrews of the Covenant. Its people were indeed publicly cursed in the Jewish Synagogues: the words "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil," were intended to express the last extremity of contumelious insult: and the Jews of Galilee, equally with those of Judæa carefully avoided all contract or dealing with their mixed and semi-idolatrous neighbours.

That the social position of the family which Jesus loved was one far removed from indigence or obscurity may be inferred from the cumulative evidence of several minor incidents: as, for instance, the large attendance of Jews at the grave of Lazarus, the costly anointing of Our Saviour by

Mary, the employment of a messenger to go to Bethabara and the general deference paid to them at all times. They were therefore in a condition to exercise freely that hospitality which was universally practised at the greater festivals. At these times, the houses of those living in the city, or in its neighborhood, were thrown open as a matter of course, to the wayfarer who came from afar to worship in the Court of the Temple. Thus we find that at his last passover, Our Lord sent Peter and John into the city to a certain man, whom they were to recognise by a sign, and who at once gave them the apartment required. This practice was indeed to be expected from the vast multitudes that attended these feasts. Thus Josephus has told us, that at a given passover upwards of two hundred thousand paschal lambs, from actual count, were sacrificed : allowing ten persons to each, the smallest allowable number, the participants must have amounted to more than two millions.

Here then Our Lord, while as yet known only as ' the carpenter ' the worker in wood, may often have been entertained, may often have found a shelter and a resting place. With what simple-minded awe, with what guileless affection must he have been regarded by the youthful Martha and Mary, and how must Lazarus, then strong in early manhood, have gazed with large and wondering eyes on the gentle-spoken Nazarene, thoughtful, prematurely wise, beloved of all and growing in favor with God and man. Surely, as they sat and list-

ened with beating hearts, some gleams of His diviner nature must have broken through, and some fine instinct must have taught them, that a greater than Solomon was there. Did He, who in after-days drew a lesson from the lilies of the field and the birds of the air,—did He shew them the flowers at their feet, the lamps of Heaven above, the glories of the visible creation everywhere, and so lead them from nature up to its divine author? And when the sun set behind Mount Olivet and darkness fell upon the mountains, did He speak to them in tones that held them entranced with their strange power and melody, in words that rolled onward, calm and serene as the flow of some mighty river, of those ancient vaticinations, those lofty Messianic prophecies, that told how, in the latter days, there should come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre should rise out of Israel, and how the Strong One, the Elect and Servant of God, should be sent to open the blind eyes and to bring the prisoners from the prison? And they, haply, with heads reverently bowed, wishing, yet not daring, to ask the question which his words suggested, whether this scripture was not this day fulfilled,—withdrew in silence to their rest, wondering greatly at these things.

Their guest departed : and there seemed a void in the household. He was gone. It was as if the glory of some majestic vision, the utterance of some divine voice, was suddenly withdrawn, leaving only darkness and silence. Yet it seemed as if some echoes of those tones yet lived in the tre-

mulous air and ran whisperingly along the rooms he so lately gladdened with his presence. But even these died out at length. Months and years passed : and then rumours reached them from all parts, from the Jordan, from Jerusalem, from the far lake of Galilee, of his wondrous deeds, his miracles, his teachings, his open assumption of the office of priest and prophet, his claim to be considered as the long expected Messiah.

Then, after a time, a dark cloud settled on the loving family at Bethany ; Lazarus was sick. Lazarus the beloved brother. His life was ebbing rapidly away. Was there no help ? Was there none to arrest his downward progress to the tomb ? Oh, if their Lord and friend, if He who had so many times healed the sick and withdrawn the dying from the gloomy portals of the grave,—if He, the strong and mighty to save, were only with them now, all would be well. Let him only come, and their brother would live.

Our Lord was at this time, at Bethabara beyond Jordan, the place where John at first baptised, whither He himself had now retired from Jerusalem, his time being not yet come, to avoid the persecution consequent on his claim to an equality with the Father. From the festival of the Dedication, in December, when he went to Jerusalem, to the feast of the Passover, in April, when he returned there for the last time, is about four months, and he appears to have spent nearly the half of this period, or about six weeks, at Bethabara. We may place here the delivery of the parables narrated



in the fourteenth and two following chapters of St. Luke, that of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, the prodigal son, and that of the wasteful steward. While thus enjoying converse with the earliest converts of the Baptist, instructing his disciples, and preaching the words of eternal life to publicans and sinners, a messenger reached Him from the household of Martha, with the simple and pathetic words, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." That was all. No word more. It was not necessary to appeal to the friendship of their divine master : it needed not to say, "Lord, come and heal him." They, in their unshaken faith, knew that their passionate cry for help would fall on no unheeding ear, they felt, in the guileless simplicity of their strong affection, that they, crying out of the depths of their great anguish would be heard and answered. They knew that he would come.

And He came : but not then. It was Our Lord's pleasure to subject their faith and patience to a severe trial. He waited for two days after receiving the message before setting out on his journey. The gloom of sorrow deepened meanwhile with his friends at Bethany. The grave was opening at their feet : and He came not. The sun set and rose again : still He came not. With what agony of expectancy, fearing, hoping, half despairing, must they have watched and waited through the long hours of day and twilight, and through all the dreadful night, that seemed as if it would never end. How must every moaning cry, every feverish wandering of the sufferer, have seemed

almost like a reproach to the friendship that halted thus in coming. Than the morning came, the darkness fled : the sun arose in his strength : the far off hills of Moab, that lay like a wall on the edge of the horizon, were all aflame with the glorious golden hues of the day's early prime : and the visible world arose out of the gloom of night, new-created, rejoicing, alive with song, and redolent with the incense of shrub and flower. Still He came not. And Lazarus, as a strong cedar smitten down in its strength, died and was buried. Can we wonder if darkness for a moment descended on his weeping sisters ? if a cold mist of doubt and despair wrapped them as a pall ? and if to them, all truth and honor and faithfulness seemed dead, or baseless as a vision ? What wonder if, to them, in so rude a shock the very pillars of the moral world seemed shaken ? If their foothold failed here, where might they tread safely, and if this friend had deceived them, who or what might be believed ?—No : all things were false and vain : and through the mists and shadows of a world that had thus suddenly grown grey and cold, there would be for them, as for others, naught save the shapes and phantoms of unreal seeming. A sad negation of belief, yet not new or wholly without ground. Our Lord himself had already summed up the selfishness and indifference of the world in the character of the Pharisee who passed by on the other side ; and for age after age, through all time, moralist, poet, and philosopher had descanted mournfully on the faith that fails in time

of trial, and the love that perishes ere life be dim.

But it was not so with Him. He had not forgotten to be gracious. He was already on the way. A rumour of his coming preceded him. The distance being not much under thirty miles, it was, most probably, not till the afternoon of the second day that he approached the village of Bethany. Then Martha, roused by the strong revulsion of feeling, impatient of delay, and again hoping for some undefined way of escape from these evils, hastened forward to meet Him on the road, addressing Him in those words, memorable through all time for their simple pathos,—“ Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died ”,—and thus leading to that sublime declaration on the part of Our Lord, the very corner stone and pillar of Our Faith,, “ I am the resurrection and the life : “ he that believeth on me, though he were dead, “ yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and “ believeth in me shall never die. ”

Groaning in spirit he approached the grave : shewing by those precious tears which He is recorded to have shed, that He was indeed made like unto us, and touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Yet he was even then about to call Lazarus back to life : he was about to perform the greatest of his miracles by resuscitating a body which had lain three days in the tomb, and on which corruption had already begun its work. He would shew that He was supreme Lord of all things : that with Him were the issues of life and

death : and thus, by raising the dead in this extremity, he gave an assurance and a sign that those who were content to tread in His footsteps should in like manner be raised from corruption to incorruption, and should hereafter have everlasting life with Him in his kingdom.

For hitherto the world had lain in darkness. There seemed no certainty of a life beyond the grave. From age to age the generations of men had passed away, as the leaves that fall in autumn, leaving their survivors in dumb and shivering expectation on the brink of the abyss, gazing downwards into the gulf which threatened to swallow all things. The mother resigned her child, the parent his offspring, and each gave up what he most loved, with a despairing grief untempered by the hopes which are permitted to us now. The semi-orientalism of Plato the divine, and the stoicism of Seneca, the noblest effort of Roman philosophy, seemed in their lofty idealism to be poetic aspirations to shape out what might be, rather than the utterance of deep and well founded conviction. Even among the stoics there were those who, like the Rhodian Panætius, the intimate friend of Scipio Emilianus and the younger Lelius, flatly denied the doctrine of a future life. The Roman Orator Cicero speaks thus contemptuously of the disciples of the Porch,—“ They maintain that souls continue “ to exist after they have left the body, but that they “ are not to exist always, gratifying us thus not with “ immortality, but with a long life, somewhat like “ crows.” This is explained by Diogenes to have re-

ference to the opinion of Cleanthes, that souls should be preserved only to the conflagration of the universe, when all was to be absorbed into the supreme deity. We seem here to trace a line of thought collateral with that of the old Brahminic theosophy. But whatever the speculations of the refined and cultivated spirits of the time, the period of Augustus and Tiberius was an age of the most hopeless atheism and the idlest superstition, an age of unbounded luxury and yet withal of profoundest sadness. There appears indeed to be almost a necessity that these seeming opposites should co-exist. The popular mind, with that instinctive feeling which prompts the drowning to catch at a straw, sought a refuge from the nihilism of philosophic systems in all the outward splendor of ceremonial religion, in the solemn functions of the priests, the *Salii*, the *Flamens*, and the *Augurs*, and thence, urged by their deep unrest, descended to give implicit credence to sorcerers, astrologers, exorcists, and impostors of every kind. The unknown powers which surrounded them, the dread and secret influences of the Universe, might haply be thus appeased, and perhaps thus interpreted. So also it was an age of boundless luxury, of immeasurable sensuality. The softness of *Sybaris*, the manners of *Rhodes* and *Antioch*, and of perfumed, drunken, flower-crowned *Miletus*, were all to be found at Rome. The dignity and self-respect of the old city of the Republic had vanished. The descendants of *Æmilius* and *Gracchus* mixed familiarly with the pariahs of society in

the lowest dens of infamy : no form of vice was left unpracticed : the refinements of Oriental sensualism were eagerly naturalised : and women, forgetting their divine mission, unsexed themselves to take part in the shameless orgies of Roman patricians. Words would fail to express the unutterable degradation of the time, as half revealed by Seneca and the satirists ;—a degradation which, doubtless, in its origin was but the outgrowth and ultimate expression of the feeling that from death there was no awakening. “ Non semper idem floribus est honor,” exclaims the graceful poet of Venusia,—“ the same glory “ does not always remain to the flowers of spring, “ nor does the ruddy moon shine with one continued aspect ; why therefore dost thou fatigue “ thy mind unequal to eternal objects ? Why do “ we not rather, while it is yet in our power, thus “ carelessly reclining under a lofty plane-tree or “ this pine, with our hoary locks made fragrant by “ roses, and anointed with Syrian perfume, indulge ourselves with generous wine ? ” Even so. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. In their deep despair of all things the votaries of pleasure rushed madly on ; and side by side with them went the phantom Death. Suicide,—suicide out of mere ennui and weariness of life was singularly prevalent. Man ran to death, because all forms of pleasure had been exhausted ; to escape the tedious iteration of a most wearisome round, they sought by poison, by starvation, by venesection, by suffocation in the bath, the repose that seemed

promised by an absolute negation of being. The world's wit and wisdom terminated here; and after the revolution of so large a cycle, after the ebb and flow of so many centuries, that had seen the despairing efforts of successive generations struggling for light and life, and swept onward un pityingly into darkness and oblivion, it seemed as if Humanity was ending where it began, without assurance of a resurrection, and with no certain or well founded hope of an immortality hereafter.

But the light had dawned at last. The decisive moment was come. And when, at those dread words "Lazarus, come forth," the figure of the dead man slid forwards and downwards from its receptacle into the open vault, and stood on its feet swathed and bound, awful as some pale phantom of the grave, half doubting its own resuscitation, and reopening, in fear and wonder, those eyes that seemed closed for ever,—the lengthened period of probation, the long bondage of God's children, ended at once and for ever with the words "Loose him, and let him go." It was done. The faithful and true witness had spoken: and the ray of spiritual light, which then flashed into being, still shines as a star above the troubled waters of time.

And Lazarus himself, what of him? Did he reveal the dread secrets of the kingdom of shadows? Did he who had so lately come from that world which lies all around us and of which we know nothing, that dim hiding-place of souls whither our dearest have gone,—did he breathe no syllable of its mysteries? He spoke no word. Neither from

him nor from others who like him have died and lived again, has any sound or whisper escaped, to gratify either idle questioning, or half natural curiosity. Let us be content with the conviction that we know all that is necessary or profitable, that Our Lord has taken away all terrors of the grave, and that we need not fear to tread where one so great has gone before.

The raising of Lazarus, the most stupendous of Our Lord's miracles is narrated by St. John alone. In few and plain words, yet therefore all the more impressive and sublime, is described this wondrous victory over death. Nothing, to my mind, is more demonstrative of the divine origin of these sacred records, or shews more clearly that the Holy Spirit must have guided the pen of the writer, than the absence of all feverish or labored declamation, of all exaggeration in style or sentiment. Those human passions which are part of our heritage, even the allowable sympathies and emotions of our nature, seem, here, to be held in check by some calmer and serener spirit, some higher and mightier influence. The sustained and majestic simplicity of the style is as remarkable as the absence of all superfluity. It is for us to reverence and imitate this noble reticence. It is for us to be silent, and to adore.

After this significant exhibition of his power, Our Lord withdrew from Bethany to Ephraim in the wilderness, and remained there with his disciples until the passover was at hand. It is thought that he sought this secluded spot to avoid the



observation of his enemies till the appointed hour was come. Here he instructed his disciples and prepared them for their labours. After a stay of about six weeks here, the time for concealment being now past, and wishing to enter Jerusalem with all publicity, he directed his course to the Jordan with a view to meet the pilgrims from Galilee, who took this way to the feast. Then turning to the south, he passed through Jericho, came again to Bethany six days before the pass-over, and made his home, as before, with the family of Martha and Mary, until his final trial and crucifixion.

Arriving here on Friday, the eve of the Sabbath, he supped on the following evening in the house of Simon the leper. On the next day (Palm Sunday) he made his public entry into Jerusalem. It was on this occasion that on crossing the ridge of Olivet, and coming in view of the city, He wept over it. On Monday and Tuesday He again visited the city : in the morning, as St. Luke informs us He was teaching in the temple, and at eve "He went out and abode in the mount that is called " of Olives, " that is, Bethany.

Tuesday the 11th of Nisan (April 3rd) is memorable as the last day of Our Lord's public teaching. Discoursing in the Temple, He set forth the guilt of the Pharisees in rejecting Him, by the parables of the Two Sons and the Vineyard, the Wicked Husbandman, and the Wedding Garment. The Herodians friendly to the Roman power, wishing to convict him of treason to Cæsar, He put them

to silence by asserting the lawfulness of paying tribute. The Sadducees next proposing a case which seemed to place the law of Levirate marriages in conflict with the doctrine of the resurrection, were met by an assertion of the spirituality of the future state ; and, in contradiction of their denial of the immortality of the soul, were shown that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is a God not of the dead but of the living. Lastly he was here visited by certain Greeks, an incident mentioned only by St. John. Stier sets this visit of the Greeks from the west, in contrast to the visit of the Magi from the East : the one at the end, the other at the beginning of His life.

Then leaving Jerusalem He went to enjoy a last interval of repose at Bethany. He remained here during the evening of Tuesday, all Wednesday, and great part of Thursday, leaving it as the day advanced, to partake of his last passover at Jerusalem with the disciples, on the eve of His crucifixion.

During these days of retirement, his time was probably divided between the house of Martha and the wooded slopes of Olivet. From the summit of the Mount a magnificent view is obtained of Jerusalem which on its lower elevation lies spread out below like a map, while on the other side, eastward, the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea are plainly perceptible. How grand the historic association connected with this stretch of vision ! Two thousand years before, Melchizedek, king of Salem, came forth from the hill city to bless the

Father of the faithful. There on Mount Moriah Isaac was offered : and on the twin Mount, Zion, rose of old, like a glorious vision, the Temple of Solomon. At the feet of our Saviour flowed the brook Kedron, recalling the affecting narrative of David's flight from Absalom. " And all the country wept with a loud voice and all the people " passed over : the king also himself passed over, " toward the way of the wilderness. And David " went up by Mount Olivet, and wept as he went " up, and had his head covered and he went bare- " foot : and all the people that were with him co- " vered every man his head, and they went up " weeping as they went." Far to the right, beyond the Damascus gate, was the cave where the prophet Jeremiah was said to have composed his Lamentations : while on the extreme left, cut in the solid rock, was the monument of Jehosaphat ; and before it rose the pillar of Absalom, at which the Jews to this day, to shew their abhorrence of the undutiful son, cast stones as they pass. North-eastward, He saw as if close to His feet, the wilderness of the Temptation, a network of precipices and black tunnel-like gorges, a region wearing a weird forgotten look, as of a dispeopled world. Farther to the right lay the plain of Jericho, undulating with palm groves, and still further, in a deep cavity among the hills lay the Dead Sea, prisoned between its great bastions of rock, and without a ripple to break its smooth transparent surface. Beyond this rose the hills of Moab, from the highest point of which, Mount Pisgah, Moses

looked on the land he was not permitted to enter, and from which, also, the prophet Balaam pronounced his unwilling blessings and uttered the first recorded prophecy of the destinies of the world. To the left of these, over the wilderness of the Temptation and beyond the giant dome of Mount Quarantania, lay Gilgal on this side Jordan, recalling another incident in the heroic age of Israel. "And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spoke unto the children of Israel saying, when your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land." Such was the panorama that rose before the vision of the Son of Man: such were its objects: and through the long sunny hours of those days of repose, who can doubt that He, who ever sympathised with Jerusalem and her children, looked round with calm thoughtfulness on them all.

It may be too that He, the Omniscient, thus communing with his own soul, looked back in thought on that grey dawn of time, before the mountains were brought forth, when as yet the Dead Sea was not, when at the command of Him who cleft the earth with rivers, the cooling granite split into cracks and crevices, when Carmel and Lebanon and the Moabite hills of porphyry rose

from the abyss with earthquake throes, and the Jordan ran on with free channel, to the Elamitic Gulf of the Red Sea. Or did He think as he gazed on these barren wastes, receiving ungratefully the dews of Heaven, on the thanklessness of those who refused the blessings He proffered? Did the rent rocks remind Him of the broken hearts he came to heal? Or did the Jordan as with rapid swirl it entered the Dead Sea, that lonely lake into which flow five rivers, and from which none find an exit, suggest to him the noisy current of Time with its multitudinous issues, all silenced at last in the calm of eternity?—Perhaps he took in his arms the brown children of the desert, and blessed them, as was his wont, and thought meanwhile of His own wondrous childhood, and of His return from Egypt along the shore of the blue Mediterranean, where the roses of Sharon were watered by running brooks, and the sky-lark aloft, as in western lands, filled the air with melody and song.

Then came the end. He must leave these hallowed haunts: he must leave the loving family at Bethany, the wooded slopes of Olivet, and the quiet home where he loved to sojourn. He must leave them all: yet not for the last time. He having loved His own, loved them even unto the end. The affection of Our Lord seemed to transcend the limits of the grave: and when after his precious death and burial, he rose again, he led his disciples towards Bethany, and there, in view of all that he had honored with a more than human love. He rose on high. He ascended into

Heaven, still, to the last moment of his disappearance, blessing them with uplifted hands.

But He will come again. One of the Roman pontiffs, Innocent III, has left a striking thought on record. “*Videt etiam tam bonus quam malus, antequam egrediatur anima de corpore, Christum in cruce positum.*” That is. “The good man, as well as the bad, before the soul departs from his body, shall see Christ upon the cross.” And to each of us shall come the message heard of old in Bethany. “The master is come and calleth for thee.”

He is seen no more among men. No more will He sit as a guest among them, or speak with them face to face, as friend with friend. I have heard of a poor savage of the forest, who, on hearing the story of Our Lord, exclaimed, “Ah, would he were alive now ; perhaps he would come even to the poor Indian.” Yet He is beside us still. Among the old mediæval legends there is one of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, telling how a leper came to her at night, and how she gave him food and raiment, and sheltered him under her roof, and how in the morning, on entering his room, she saw that it was Our Lord Himself that she had unwittingly entertained. Even so we, who are surrounded by misery in all its forms, may, by clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, have Him still among us as a friend, since we know that by doing it to the least of these, we do it also unto Him.

E. T. F.

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