On the way to Bethlehem

By William Allen Knight

ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE SONG OF OUR SYRIAN GUEST
THE LOVE WATCH
SAINT ABIGAIL OF THE PINES
THE SIGNS IN THE CHRISTMAS FIRE
THE SHEPHERD OF JEBEL NUR
NO ROOM IN THE INN
OUTSIDE A CITY WALL
THE SONG OF OUR SYRIAN GUEST (*with notes*)
PETER IN THE FIRELIGHT
ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM

LAKE GALILEE

Curving north shore to the right

On the Way To Bethlehem

BY

WILLIAM ALLEN KNIGHT

AUTHOR OF "THE SONG OF OUR SYRIAN GUEST," ETC.

THE PILGRIM PRESS
NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO
MCMXII

Published, September, 1912

THE · PLIMPTON · PRESS
[W · D · O]
NORWOOD · MASS · U · S · A

TO HER WHOSE EYES HAVE MADE MY WIFE
SEE BEAUTY ALL OUR WAY THROUGH LIFE,
WHOSE HEART, WHEREVER I MAY ROAM,
HAS BEEN AND STILL SHALL BE MY HOME

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

A Christmastide Pilgrimage

THE picturesque crowds, and the Arabs and the horsemen, in the sunshine; the noble old convent, and the gray-bearded priests, with their feast; the church, with its pictures and columns and incense; the wide brown hills spreading round the village; with the accidents of the road — flocks and shepherds, wells and funerals and camel trains — have left on my mind a brilliant, romantic, and cheerful picture. But you, Dear M——, without visiting the place, have imagined one far finer; and Bethlehem, where the Holy Child was born, and the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men," is the most sacred and beautiful spot in the earth to you.

W. M. THACKERAY,

A Journey from Cornhill to Cairo

I

A CHRISTMASTIDE PILGRIMAGE

IT is Christmastide here in America — Christmastide in I know not how many lands over-seas. By that token, if your eye is not dimmed nor your natural force abated, you will know for a certainty that now is the time of a world-wide pilgrimage.

The other night in a dream the bells of a Christmas morning far back through the years awoke me — but only in my dream — and I was a child again running with my brothers to our stockings on the chair-backs by the fire. This busy day in mid-manhood has not broken the spell of that dream. All through its hours the thrill of childhood's wonder, the sweetness of Christmas

reality and mystery, have been mine in common with the children of all Christian lands; and I have joined unabashed in the pilgrimage which little hearts are now making, the pilgrimage in which loving women and kind men lead the way. They are off for Bethlehem!

There is no pilgrimage of the spirit among men like this, save one — the outgoing of all souls when older grown to the city not on earth but in heaven. Is not this Christmas pilgrimage also to a city not of earth? It is to the Bethlehem of long ago, the Bethlehem of the shepherds on the hushed hills, of the Wise Men on the road watching the star, of the Mother and the manger and the Babe; but this Bethlehem will not pass away while childhood is with us and love lasts. The lure of it calls to the child-mind out of the unseen before the longings which make heaven so dear have begun. It starts childhood on a pilgrimage

which is the first stage of the heavenly. A manger-cradle is set on the way to the house of the many mansions!

Under the charm of such a time it is a delight to take up the call of those shepherds of old and sound it anew, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see." For there is an ancient town still to be seen among the Judean hills which does much to make real this Bethlehem of old — the Bethlehem so often dimmed in the tumult of life though it is ever clear to the eyes of children. Throngs are journeying to it now from many lands, over wintry seas, over silent deserts, over far-away steppes and mountains. It is ours to join them. Some of us may go as the children do, borne by the winds of the spirit, the pages of a book being the sails that bear us on; some may go bodily as the pilgrims are going. But however the journey is made, all may go as those

few shepherds did at first, to see there what we may of him who is Christ the Lord. Little did they know what a world-pilgrimage they started that night!

No doubt they talked together on the way to Bethlehem, those shepherds climbing the slopes which are there still — talked in the starlit valley fields, talked as they gained the level of one terrace after another, talked as they hurried through the shade of olive trees or breathed the scent of grape-vines. One voice, perchance, spoke of their sheep and of those left behind to tend them in the wintry weather; another, all heedless of the first, hushed habitual care by asking, "What were the words we heard?" Then one and another joined in recalling the wondrous details, forgetting their sheep.

"'This shall be the sign unto you,' the voice said," quoth one shepherd; then, stumbling along and huddling together to hear each

other's low utterance, they told over the words — about a babe, about swaddling-clothes, about the manger, all familiar and dear as of their own homes and little ones. Likely enough, an old shepherd, silent till now, stilled all voices as he said, "Even so — even so! And we heard the words, 'A Saviour which is Christ the Lord!'"

Thus may we truly think of those shepherds, since they were men with hearts like ours, as talking together while they were on the way to Bethlehem. And we may well be like them as we go, forgetting for the time cares left behind, talking together of the endearing human realities of him to whose birthplace we journey, remembering above all that he is "a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

When they had climbed the Bethlehem hillsides, gained the winding road, entered the narrow streets between the dark houses where towns-

folk were fast asleep, — what then? As they pressed their search, how void of beauty and heavenly glory the little town must have seemed! Not until they had found the place where the child lay, not until they had seen Jesus, did Bethlehem become in their eyes a town of unwonted glory.

We must expect to be like the shepherds in this also, no doubt. Bethlehem will seem commonplace enough, when we ascend its hillside and stand in its cluttered ways looking on the town. But if we join in the shepherds' quest truly, giving little heed to the village hurly-burly, the jostle of the crooked streets, the importunity of pedlers, the sharp dealing of shopkeepers, the chatter of peasants or priests — if we look upon all as the poor human setting of his birthplace, and keep our minds on him, Bethlehem will have great glory in our eyes also.

Here is the inmost charm, the

secret of joy above all else, in the journeys which men have made to the land of Bethlehem through the centuries. All Palestine is in a plight that tries the heart of reverent travelers. Yet it is the Holy Land above all others; and it is holy supremely because men see Jesus there.

For David's sake some, no doubt, would visit the rough and sometimes wild sheepwalks of Judea, and the hills round about Jerusalem of which he sang, as some go to the shores glorified by Homer. Because of Solomon the Temple-builder, and Isaiah the spokesman of his people's welfare, and Paul the voice of a silenced master in writings that cannot perish, some would go to their wasted land, as some go to that other little country, now spent and ruin-covered, where Pericles built and Demosthenes spoke, and Plato wrote when Socrates was dead. But because of Jesus numberless hearts turn to Palestine as to no other land

on earth. Greece has no match for him. Italy has no name which does not pale beside his. Palestine — without art, without belles-lettres, without seamanship, without memory of imperial sway — Palestine is supreme because it had him.

It lies there in the clutch of an alien throne, smitten by the havoc of merciless centuries, cluttered with the creations of vaporing minds, teeming with beggars, peopled by a weak peasantry. But even so, the slopes of Nazareth that must have known the daily presence of Jesus are there, and the lake along whose beaches the common people used to press upon him, while he talked and touched their afflicted ones with his healing hands; Olivet, too, is there, lifting its top above the changeful years that men may there have one of a very few points of certainty when they come craving a sense of nearness to a spot where he surely stood; beside Olivet is the Kidron

valley with his Gethsemane somewhere in its small bounds, and above that is the city on whose hills, somewhere, they set up his cross and found his rock-hewn tomb. From those hills, but for a ridge which we shall know by the monastery on its top, we could see Bethlehem!

Because such token of his real presence on earth are there, men have gone, at times even in coats of mail, go now, will go to Palestine forever. What romance of love, what march of armies, what migration of peoples, can compare in depth of meaning with this age-long quest!

Once, when the days were ending in which Jesus was still seen bodily in the ways of Palestine, "there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast." So runs the fine old narrative. "The same came to Philip which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." Did they see him, see his

form and face? No man knows. Strangely enough, the writer seems to have quite overlooked that point in the story. Those Greeks are left, standing forever with their request on their lips. Would that some master-hand could paint them! He would show us by the picture that to see Jesus as he was seen by John that day is so much more than to see him bodily, that one might well forget those Greeks with their earnest request. For, in what follows, the writer unveils the heart of this Man of Galilee. The pathos of his patience, the romance of his discerning hope, the tender grace and strength of his life of self-giving for men, are seen as in the climax of drama — it is like a tableau in soft, full light.

His first words were, "The hour is come." He seemed to be thinking, "So Greeks have come to see me — these men of the West have begun to search me out!" For

Greeks were of the West in those days and to Jesus of Palestine.

He spoke as if he saw the world-light on those Greek faces. "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." He showed what was in his mind when he went on, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." These Greeks were to him the forerunners of "all men." Think as we may, surely in Jesus there was, as he neared the culmination of his short life in Palestine, a world-consciousness transcending all his social and mental environment, which was quite as distinctive as even his sense of union with God as his Father and the Father of men. His clear mind — with what dream of peoples unseen, who can conceive? — seemed at last to have a vision of nations beyond the great western sea, which he had doubtless gazed upon as it shone twenty miles away from Nazareth's hilltops, nations

which some day "would see Jesus."

But the mystery of his power to draw all these far men unto himself! It was awesome even to his dauntless spirit. "I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." How he heard the still teaching of his Father's earth! But that *if it die!* Even the heart of the Master quivered at that. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

We all know what he said. It was first plaintively human; then it was calmly masterful; then it was divine.

But stay! We would not yet speak our final word of him, the central figure in that scene. We must try to keep our eyes for a little on those Greeks whom we are to follow. For they, with their inquiry, were our forerunners in the endless procession out of the West of those

who have gone and are going to the scenes of his earthly life, desiring to see Jesus. Their quest was

> "The first low wash of waves
> Where rolls a mighty sea."

The Wise Men came out of the East to his cradle. These men of the West came to his manhood matured to full strength by the shadow of his cross. The Wise Men came with characteristic eastern words, "We have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him." The spirit of the West, the spirit that does not deduce for star signs but makes direct study of reality, was in the words of those Greeks, "Sir, we would see *Jesus*."

In that spirit our modern minds turn to the life and the land of Jesus. We seek to receive that fuller vision which came of old and has been growing more clear ever since, not of his face but of his mind and heart. This is the high meaning of our pilgrimages to the land where he

lived. We would interpret the secret of Christendom through the mystic message of his homeland.

Then, ring on, happy Christmas bells, and speed our journey. There is no hollow sound in your music for us. Our hearts are off for the land of Bethlehem to see what we may of the realities from manger to cross, that we may the better understand the throne that is so real.

The Outer Court of
The Holy Land

THIS book . . . is addressed only to those for whom the soil of Palestine, so fondly and so long known as the Holy Land, is peopled with the known and loved, the poets and sages and kings with whom we are familiar as with the records of our own lives, and consecrated to all time by One, more wonderful than it had entered into the heart of man to conceive, until He came, the climax and divine completion of the old world, the divine leader, teacher, and Lord of the new.

MRS. OLIPHANT,
Jerusalem the Holy City

II

THE OUTER COURT OF THE HOLY LAND

"Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream."

P. B. SHELLEY,
Hellas

WHEN the ship out of the West has passed the gateway of waters where Gibraltar stands guard, sea and land are straightway panoramic. For the voyager is then no longer beyond the Pillars of Hercules, as the ancients said, but has entered within their bounds where of old another world than ours was spread, and still lingers half real, half phantom. The dwindled and often repulsive present of this Mediterranean world, if seen truly, only deepens the

mystery and charm of what it once was and indeed ever will be to men — a world of unmatched and unvanishing glories. But how shrouded in shadows now!

For many of us it is, above all, a world which has its supreme meaning when viewed as the approach to the little land lying obscure and poor at the sea's end. From Gibraltar eastward everything says "Palestine" with deepening voice as we go — sometimes in tones that thrill, sometimes with pathos so overpowering that solace is found only in repeating the Name, "Jesus"! This in all simplicity, was my experience, from Gibraltar and Algiers to Constantinople, Smyrna, and Jaffa. That he should have come out of such a world as this, that we must needs approach his native land through such a medley of wreck and charm and human clutter as one finds along the Mediterranean, this is the chief of wonders. Before entering the

land which was his home, we must not fail to make the spiritual approach which is visualized in this Mediterranean setting. In truth, this sea with its shores is the panoramic outer court of the Holy Land.

THE WAYMARKS

All the way one is kept aware of approach to Palestine by outlying reminders. At Cadiz in Spain, before entering this sea, thoughts awake which are not of the songful Spanish people or the white houses in the sun's gleaming; for this is reckoned by many to be the westernmost locality mentioned in the Scriptures of Israel, that is, Tarshish. "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind," sang the psalmist, praising the God of Israel as perhaps he saw tall sails bearing down on the shore of Palestine out of the West, and beheld how a timely wind drove them back from the harborless coast to perish in the deep. There is no

going ashore on that coast when the wind is up, as I can testify with sufficiently wretched memories!

Midway in the Mediterranean lies the island of Sicily, where Paul tarried three days; and northward in the Bay of Naples one still sees remains of the Puteoli mole at which he must have landed, bearing the Nazarene's gospel in his dauntless breast to the seat of world empire at Rome.

Not far beyond Sicily is the island of Malta with its beautiful, lonely St. Paul's Bay, which in all details, even to the soundings, so remarkably matches the account of the Apostle's shipwreck given in the book of Acts. As one stands at "the place where two seas meet" — they meet now as of old — and watches the waves wash from both sides over the sundered tongue of rocky land, he can almost see the brave man out there in the dark on the deck of the terrorized grain ship, cheering his

companions and taking food himself to give them courage, while the four anchors astern held fast, and they "wished for day."

And beyond Malta eastward is the seamy rock of Mars Hill clinging midway on the slope that leads to the august top of the Acropolis in Athens, with its sure memories of the same heroic traveler from Palestine; beyond that still eastward, sailing the Ægean we sight the little isle of Patmos, go ashore at Smyrna, watch the coast of "the seven churches which are in Asia" — even their cities are grassy ruins now, every one save Smyrna — all the while thinking of John the beloved of Jesus, and of Paul the matchless. Then we sail round the bend in the coast and head for Palestine, with Crete off to starboard and Cyprus ahead over the port bow, having Paul and the manly Barnabas in our thought until the Syrian mountains shine white and glistening above the sea-

line. Southward are the low hills of Palestine itself, which has thus been kept in mind all the way.

But the thought of this Mediterranean world as the outer court of the Holy Land takes wider meaning when one ponders the relation of Jesus to its great past, and his preeminence as its chief contribution to modern life. Amid that old world's long, marvelous, human outshining, he appeared; out of its extinguishment, or rather discontinuance, he alone has come forth to growing glory unto this day.

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

What lights once shone about these waters! First of all, if one has seeing eyes, sea and land are frescoed, by the glow of man's spirit long ago, with pictured realities more enduring than his crumbling triumphs in stone and marble. This is the true meaning of that wealth of mythology and legend abounding on these shores.

For therein the light of man's unquenchable moral nature was focused through the lens of his imagination in vivid pictures — of singing sirens on pleasant shores, of giant Cyclops at the cave's mouth, of deadly Scylla and Charybdis where overhanging cliff and engulfing vortex made peril great, of lone mountain heights where avenging gods and goddesses abode. Where are the subtleties of temptation and moral disaster, to take a single example, treated with more understanding insight than in the pictorial significances fixed on these coasts by Homer's tale of the return of Ulysses and his men from the wars? But these are only instances of many masterpieces in spiritual portrayal which the mind of man here achieved.

To think slightingly of this ancient mythology is to be blind to the resistless powers of the human spirit. This old East is an endless gallery of the work of man's moral genius.

Out of that gifted life now weak and pallid, out of its vivid realization of unseen verities, out of its irrepressible oriental vivacity of the spirit, Jesus came — Jesus, sane and clear and sure!

One need not pause to speak much of the more obvious outshinings of man's mind along the Mediterranean — of the cities he set up, the architecture he conceived and fashioned in speaking stone, the infinite self-expression and interpretation of life and nature which his art left in the now fragmentary but most precious survivals of his handiwork, or of the jeweled treasury of his literature. Once again let a single instance suffice. What shall it be? Oh, that temple-thronged Acropolis, which greets and enthralls the eye while our ship glides through the waters alongside Salamis Island and we gaze on the little city embosomed in the hills which once encircled Athens!

Beyond any other spot along this

sea, I would name that; for all those glories of man's achievements shine together here as in no other single view, I would say, on these shores. One does not wish to trifle with words before that sight in the morning sunlight! Go ashore with the reverence of quiet lips. Socrates strolled up and down those slopes yonder, talking as he went. Plato and the regal Aristotle, Phidias, Æschylus, Sophocles — but why attempt to choose from that galaxy of immortals! — they all were townsmen here once. Heed not the higgling boatmen landing you at the low stone steps; get your foot thereon and let them gabble — this is the threshold of the Piræus. Mind not the clamorous cabmen, the unctuous pedler, the whimpering blind beggar. Silence them quickly with backshish of scrap-iron coin, and have your quiet. Yonder looms the Acropolis lifting its magic perfections of stone russet and white in the sun-

shine! Yet this Athens is but a supreme example of the glory which man has left along these shores from Spain's Granada with its Alhambra to Baalbec with its fragmentary majesty of temples amid the Syrian mountains.

But how man has dwindled here now; how puny his mind and life! And how ravaged and wrecked are all these priceless tokens of his past greatness!

THE PRAYING RUNNER

There is a stone figure in that treasure-house of Athens, the National Museum, which is to me the most appealing single object in Athens, because it seemed to my eyes an embodiment of the spirit of the past surviving and shining out through the wreckage of centuries. Its namelessness deepens its charm. It is simply "2774." I shall always call it "The Praying Runner." For it is a figure, with youth in every

line, in the attitude of a runner's strong effort; and the face is radiant with pleading, yearning for victory.

But the effect of this masterpiece is immeasurably deepened, I think, in that while one entire side of the body is sound and sinewy, the other — one leg, one arm, one side of breast and head — is eaten away and wasted to skeleton and snags. It lay through many centuries half buried and so preserved, half exposed to wind or water and so consumed. But the strain in the lithe yet tense body, and the soul's yearning in the face, are uneffaced by the ravages of time. All the glory of man's past on these shores, is like "2774," my Praying Runner.

Out of such aspiration and endeavor, such tragic persistence of human helplessness in striving to embody man's sense of strength and beauty in imperishable forms, out of all this wreck and desolate waste, Jesus stands forth — Jesus, un-

touched by the universal havoc, complete in personal expression of the inmost good, strong and beautiful and having the power of endless life!

LITTLE DAVID OF SMYRNA

I told a black-eyed Jewish boy who was guiding us through squalid alleyways of Smyrna that we were going on to Jerusalem where a good man of his race named Jesus once lived. I watched his great eyes light up. "Jesus?" he replied, "Jesus? He prophet — he good prophet. But he dead now!" Ah, little David of Smyrna, you were wrong. Jesus is living, untouched by the death-blight that long ago fell on your wonderful East! And even this sea with its storied shores is none too great to be called the outer court to the land which was his home.

How we came to Galilee

IT was in obedience to a natural but probably mistaken impulse, that I went straight to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during my first hour in the city. Perhaps it was a mistake to go there at all; certainly I should have waited until I had become more accustomed to holy places.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER,
In the Levant

As I looked across the site of Gamala and down the gorge on the lake and the houses of Tiberias opposite — their squalor glorified in the mid-day sun . . . the sound came over the hill of a bugle of a troop of Turkish horse. It was a glimpse and an echo of that time when Greek cities and Roman camps environed the lake. . . . The only sound I heard, save the bugle, was of the bees.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH,
The Lake of Galilee, in *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*

III

HOW WE CAME TO GALILEE

THEY who enter Palestine at Jaffa, plunging at once by the short railway into the solemnities of the Holy Land at Jerusalem, often experience disappointment; they sometimes undergo reaction distressing and even damaging. For this usual way of entry is psychologically wrong. In Jerusalem, amid a hodgepodge of hoary incongruities and modern nuisances, one straightway comes face to face with the earthly setting of the supreme sanctities in Christian belief. The mind can hardly overcome such a jumble of ruins, sites and spots, alien life and tawdry show; neither can it adjust its vision to receive all at once the climax of Palestine's mystic verities.

Bethlehem, which is but a little

way off among the hills, sounds music all too sweet and tender, a message too rapt and not of earth, to be heard if the heart be unquiet. Jerusalem, like her Herod of old, is still such as to slay the Babe of Bethlehem. As the Wise Men were warned to depart from Bethlehem "another way," we were led to come to its waiting charms by another way.

I shall always recall gratefully the relentless, snow-driving, sea-lashing storm which would not let the wretched little Italian steamer that bore us thither so much as near the shore of harborless Jaffa. True, it kept us rolling in the offing until we seemed to be sharing the plight of Jonah in those same waters, and finally forced us to Beyrout harbor, whence we had journeyed inland to Damascus two weeks before. But so it was that there came to me the most rewarding experience ever found in travel. There was nothing to be done, such was the persistence of

that gale, but to take the rack-and-pinion railway over the Lebanon ranges to Damascus once more, and enter Palestine from the north. But

"Blest be the tempest, kind the storm"

that drove us to do this. For so we experienced first of all the simple, unvexed charms of Galilee and its associations. Thus we came with prepared minds to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

LEAVING DAMASCUS

"Now while the day-star glimmers bright,
We suppliantly pray
That He, the uncreated Light,
May guide us on our way."
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

It was yet dark when our carriage crossed the Abana and clattered along the main stream of the seven into which Naaman's boasted river spreads its flow through Damascus. In the keen air before a March dawn Venus shone like a huge diamond

low in the east. There was room now to drive apace when we turned into the crooked street called Sanjak Dar, which teems by day with all manner of artisans and tradesmen at work on the narrow sidewalks, while it also serves as the outlet to those dingy, fascinating arcades crammed with bazaars which encompass "the street called Straight." Room enough; for the daytime throng of men, veiled women, camels, horses, donkeys, sheep, dogs, and almost everything that hath breath, had vanished. No, not quite; here and there we saw a Moslem, wrapped in the long coarse cloak of all the poor, squatting by a fire on the muddy sidewalk and tending a steaming pan ready for the first comer; a nimble-footed donkey toppling under his pack just cleared our wheels; a bunch of sheep parted at our horses' feet; three camels with noiseless tread loomed in the dark and groaned in their cavernous way as they

passed. But these were only the forerunners of the throng that would tangle itself up in that street when another day broke in old Damascus.

MT. HERMON AT SUNRISE

The dawn disclosed the snowy bulk of Mt. Hermon to the southwest as we boarded the train at the lonely little station out on the open plain. It was the Hejaz railroad, that is to say, the road of Mecca pilgrims. At six o'clock came a sunrise never to be forgotten. First there were wide quickenings on the billowy skyline eastward, then a faint glimmer of answering light on Hermon's central height. Suddenly a ribbon of soft gold tint was flung along its summit line; a sheen spread downward mottled by ravines. There was a burst of glistening majesty! And the white mountain with kingly calm greeted the splendor risen in the east.

Flocks with their shepherds were seen among the rocks over the plains,

cloaked figures waving to us now and then. Round about these peasants royal amenities were going on in a carnival of colors. A dark blue band appeared along the lower part of Hermon's shining front. Areas of wine-color lay on plowed patches below, for the soil has blood tints in it through these old lands. The green of the plain's expanse was on every hand; and through a light purple haze the sun cleared the hills and took possession of the sky for its own glory. So began the day which brought us to Lake Galilee.

On we rolled, stopping now and then at squalid mud villages sighted far ahead on the treeless plain; on through a land "like a troubled sea that has suddenly solidified," the Bashan of the Old Testament (Psalm 22: 12), in whose mountains the Druses dwell. Black tents and galloping bedecked horses of the dreaded Bedouins are often seen. Guns are strung on the backs of the ragged

riders. About noon we come to Derat, where the road running far to the south toward Mecca in the desert branches westward to Semach at the southern end of Lake Galilee.

THE BEAUTY OF THE APPROACH TO THE LAKE

How shall I put into words the approach which now opens to the sacred lake! For the train soon enters the upper end of the Yarmuk valley and leaves it only to emerge by the charmed waters. Winding down into an ever-deepening gorge, a panorama of surpassing beauty opens. Where the little station-house, bearing the name Zezoon in Arabic, halts the train at its perch on the steep, the Yarmuk has cut its way down through stratified rock and clay until it flows in a solid stone bed with surely five hundred feet of horizontally seamed hillsides rising above it to tell of its age-long zeal to reach the Jordan.

A comb of rock, like a palisade abandoned in battle long since and grass-grown, runs along the top of these conquered hills. Thick strata of stone rib the slopes supporting patches of ruddy soil and green fields. Flowers in quickly increasing abundance spread their colors in the valley's warm shelter — crimson poppies and anemones; yellow chrysanthemums, daisies, mustard plants; dark blue, sometimes purplish, lupines (they call them wild oats here) with their plumlike flowers massed in phalanxes that command the eye and awe the spirit while yet a great way off. The spectral forms of camels are detected at times gliding in the sun's brightness high up along the sky-line. Black, bat-wing tents of Bedouins are stretched on the green level by the stream below; there, too, are lone clusters of stone and mud hovels teeming with the children of the peasants. My companion enjoys waving, in hope of

getting some human response, to stolid women and half-clad children gazing up at the winding train. She gets it now and then in a lifted arm — once from a gray-bearded man in the usual baglike cloak standing in the grass beside a bunch of nibbling sheep. Ah, what an approach to the spot chosen by the Man of Nazareth to begin his appeal to hearts that he could trust and to end it there in part — through scenes so grand and life so pitiful and lowly!

At Wadi Kleit, where for some reason the train stops long in the sunshine and we try to talk with the peasants and I find a solitary young Christian amid Moslems, we have passed through ten miles of the Yarmuk's entryway and descended therein a thousand feet, being a hundred and fifty feet below sea-level now. But the lake lies yet thirteen miles down the valley six hundred and eighty feet below seas.

At last there comes an opening out of the hillsides ahead; a plain appears; we spy a curving segment of blue water; the train glides out from the valley walls; from our compartment window we look down another valley running southward with hills standing back on either side from a river winding through a plain. It is the Jordan! With what eagerness we hasten to the north windows out in the car's narrow corridor! A small, richly colored plain spreads out sprinkled with flowers; a herd of black cattle are feeding near its center; three flocks of sheep and goats, some black, some white, speckle its further side along a low shore; and beyond them, shining in the brightness of mid-afternoon, quiet as a dream, embosomed by hills, lies a shimmer of soft blue looking like a little child of the sky. It is Lake Galilee!

TAKING BOAT TO TIBERIAS

Speaking but little and in low tones, we leave the train, pass in a moment through the clump of flat huts which is Semach and down a clay road to a small boat under the bank. We do not allow the top-heavy sail, rigged on a loose slant spar, to be spread; and five swarthy Arabs, one deeply pockmarked, begin to ply the long oars heading for Tiberias, which is in sight half-way up the western shore. The town seems near; but it is six miles off, says our dragoman. It is hard to believe that the stretch of water before us is thirteen miles long — four miles wide where our boat now is, and seven ahead yonder. But so it is — have we not been taught all that from our mothers' knees? Oh, the voices that have told us of this Galilee!

By common impulse we do not talk. There is no sound save the

plash of oars and the Arabic chatter of the boatmen. Soon even they are silent. Black heads of wild ducks bob on the glistening water here and there; once and again a fish leaps as if to welcome us. Presently a boatman begins crooning a quavering air; another joins. It is the way of these Arab folk in all they do. So they swing at the oars, some standing, some sitting, and we glide over Galilee to the boatmen's monotone of song.

Looking back, the narrow southern end of the lake is walled by a sheer bank of stratified clay, fifteen feet or more in height, topped by the green of the plain and the gray hovels of Semach with one poor minaret rising among them. Through the small break there at the western end of this wall the lake's waters flow into the Jordan. Looking forward, up the eastern shore, hills steep and furrowed, and standing a little way back from the beach, shut in

TIBERIAS

Ruins of ancient castle in central background

the lake; along the western shore, hills sloping from the water's edge, rising gradually, with a group of camels and a flock or two of goats feeding on their green sides, become more rocky and steep as they ascend and lift more imposing tops as we go up-shore; over the waters, where the north shore spreads like an inverted V, with the upper Jordan flowing in through the notch at the apex, the hills are seen to fall away, opening the view over their sloping uplands to the distant eminence westward where Safed is a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, and eastward to Mt. Hermon, the white guard of all these quiet lands.

Though all ashore is green and flowers are everywhere, no trees are seen save a palm's lone plume here and there. The abounding trees of the past have vanished, doubtless because of the ravage of wars, the heavy tax on all that grows from the soil, the need of fuel through cen-

turies of poverty, and the grazing of many flocks and herds; but the result for us is that this hallowed landscape is as open to the eyes as the lake itself. No town is seen but poor Semach growing dim astern, an indistinct hamlet or two on the east shore, and Tiberias, toward which we are still heading. But I count a dozen places where large stones, obviously not akin to the beach, are strewn for a few rods at a time on its pebbly length, and think of the nine small cities which once were in sight here. Yet, I reflect, He was a lover of out-of-town places; and how often the scenes of old were on the open shore! Therefore the strips of beach where stones are not piled draw my eyes with the deeper charm.

ALONG THE BEACH

That narrow beach! It is so little, so rural, so like the sequestered shores of small waters loved by

common people the world over, that it lays a sweet spell upon me. Was it on that tiny strand that He, the mightiest personality of our noisy new age, uttered his word to mankind? At length I cannot resist its wooing. The boatmen are induced to head for shore; I leap to the beach and stroll beside it toward the town. The joy of that walk is not in the key of words!

Fragments of massive pillars lay here and there after I passed the first outlying remnants of Herodian walls; one was awash on the beach. But the dwindled town was still a half-hour's walk up the shore. Flocks were coming in now, their lambs and kids bleating as they went. Jews with tall black caps answered my greeting pleasantly as I passed the far-famed Hot Springs and the tombs of celebrated Rabbis. An old Jewess stooped in the road to kiss a child she was leading; she smiled at me when she saw that

the stranger noticed her tenderness. Little she knew, that hollow-cheeked old Jewish woman, how this double token of human kindness in her heart sent the passing Gentile along the road greeting all the solemn Jews he met, to the surprise of many, because she had set him thinking how One whom she hated could say of her people, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

When the sun dropped behind the hills above the road, I was standing by the beach, outside the town but in hearing of its voices. Children were playing knee-deep in the rippling water. Women were at the lake's edge filling jars and bearing them away on their heads. A few fishers were bringing in their boats; one boat still lay off with the net in the water. The whole valley was glooming. But over on the Gadarene steeps of the east shore was a patch of lingering light. By some reflection, perhaps due to shifting

cloud or the shape of a gap on the hilltops, it moved up-shore; it rested on a place of much grass in a cove of the hills, and there faded out.

Such was the mystic charm of the time that it seemed like a signal to remind me that northward were the shores richest in memories of him for whose sake I had come. Indeed, there is no report of Jesus ever entering Tiberias — the heathenishly grand city which Herod quickly built in the Nazarene's early manhood, to the horror of all Hebrews. I looked up to the dismal ruins of Herod's castle frowning in the shadows above the town, and thought how the Teacher who loved this lake and its people once defied that alien tyrant. "Go ye, and tell that fox!" said he. This cowardly little creature will be barking on those hills yonder tonight!

Yes, the shores northward around the wider end of the lake, where streams flow in fresh from the hills

and the fishing is still the best, where fisherfolk abounded in cities and villages, where the simple natives of the land came in by the highways and over the hills—there I must go on the morrow; for he chose to go there most when he was here. But those shores are fading from view now; and the lights that shine out here and there around the lake are camp-fires of Bedouins. I must wait for another day's sunshine.

As I entered the hubbub of muddy little Tiberias, then, if never before, Jesus Christ entered that town. For in its dark alleyways his presence was more real to me than any strange form I saw.

The Lakeside Home of Jesus

ANOTHER ridge climbed, and there was the "Sea of Galilee which is the Sea of Tiberias." There it lay in the soft afternoon light, blue among the purple hills. There were the waves He walked, the shores where He taught, the mountains where He prayed. With Hermon's white head to the north, with the steep Moab hills coming to its brink on the east, with its low western shore where the old city stood, with Safed, "the city set on a hill," off to the northwest, it was a sight not to be forgotten. . . . We left the old walls of Tiberias behind us, and rode northward along the western shore. . . . We rode across the plain, through the oleander bushes that skirt the shore, and at its other end came to an old ruined khan . . . and an acre or more covered with old foundations and heaps of stones. . . . This is Capernaum, the home of Christ after Nazareth rejected Him. "And thou, Capernaum."

PHILLIPS BROOKS,
Letters of Travel

IV

THE LAKESIDE HOME OF JESUS

SEHR schön, mein Herr, sehr schön!" said I in the stone hall of the small German inn at Tiberias, pointing to the sunrise over the lake. Herr Grossmann's blue eyes grew big with the gaze he turned toward the morning's splendor; a smile spread over his face, and with satisfying fulness of utterance he rolled out, "*Wunderschön!*" It was a lesson in suiting the word to the idea which will stay by me like the memory of a masterpiece.

While the dragoman and his Arabs got away from the fishers' wharf with supplies and the boat, we set off afoot. In three minutes we left the clutter of the town behind and passed the big gate in a high wall

where a crowd of afflicted ones crouch daily in the morning sunlight. They are waiting for the wonder-work of that eye and hand which for more than twenty-five years have blessed all the country round about in Dr. Torrance's hospital. Immediately beyond this thrilling sight, this monumental place of healing and teaching which stands alone on the lake amid memories of him who there "healed their sick" and "taught them many things," the whole northern half of the lake opens to view. In that shining outlook is seen a small, near-lying sweep of shore which if you have understanding eyes moves you as no other waterfront on earth is able to do. It gave me the most distinct, unmarred, satisfying realization of Jesus Christ's presence among men found in all Palestine, save one. I say, save one, speaking with care.

TO MAGDALA

We followed the road they are cutting like a shelf where the ancient bridle-path runs low on the hills above the beach. Soon the shore bends westward, broadening the lake as far as Magdala, some three miles off; then it closes in upon the waters with a gentle curve to meet the eastern shore, which is seen curving likewise to join it at the lake's apex, where the upper Jordan cuts through the highlands. At Magdala a lone palm tree lifts its plume above a cheerless clump of mud-built hovels. It looks like a memorial of that rescued womanhood which Jesus lifted into everlasting symbolism of hope in the name Magdalene. Beyond this tree the plain of Gennesaret circles up the shore, like a crescent in shape, something over three miles in length, a mile or more at its central breadth. Can this small strip be the plain immortalized

in the thought of all Christendom! Yet this is only typical of what the alchemy of the spirit has done here; for, of all spots on earth, this is the region of simplicity glorified.

TOWARD GALILEE

At each tapering end of this plain the hills crowd their rocks close to the water's edge; along its whole length they wall it round with cherishing nearness. But they open two or three gaps toward the highlands of Galilee — gaps through which roads went up of old and still go; through one of them, called the Valley of Doves, the Horns of Hattin on the way to Nazareth loom into view like a reminder from the hills of the union between Nazareth and these shores. Down those roads Jesus came from his home in the highlands to the towns by the lake, seeking men who would heed his voice; when he had found a few fishermen and a tax-gatherer to follow him,

"Christ went up those roads to rule the world." How such simplicity endears the throne that is now his!

Five bright little streams wind through this lowland nook from springs on the plain or in the hills to the ribbon-like beach, white with pebbles and tiny shells, which stretches between the green expanse and the blue. Flowers make the green level gay with color; sunbeams do likewise for the sparkling blue. Scattered on the green or embedded under its soil, but mostly at its northern end, lie the stones of ruins whose story the skill of men has never been able to interpret. We understand from them that a city, or a large town rather, and villages were here; but we can only guess the rest, their lips are so heavy with the sleep of centuries.

THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET

Where the hewn stones are thickest northward, the hills gather the

plain into a fold or hollow and lift it on their sides. In this striking view stand the walls of an old khan or wayside inn called Minyeh, perhaps a half-mile from the shore. Round about this grim wreck lie ruins in considerable abundance. They are traceable on the cliff above, down by the small bay, even a mile southward on the plain. Most significant of all, the caravan road from Damascus and the vast East still comes down through the hills at Minyeh as the Roman road did when Jesus watched its passing scenes and enshrined them in his parables. It is a spot which holds the mind in spell. And immediately beside it eastward the hills thrust a rugged bluff of rock down to the water, as if to bid the traveler pause and think, like the Selah marking the end of a psalm's strophe. For this is the end of Gennesaret's plain. I gaze on it long — this now silent, sequestered slope, strewn

with stones whose story, could we but understand their muffled speech, would be to the ears of millions one of the dearest tales that could be told. For such a town was surely here that in this circling hillside memories of Jesus in near relations with men must be garnered as abundantly as in any nook of the Holy Land.

But this north shore stretches eastward some four or five miles. We must go on; for it is near noon. A short distance beyond the bluff by Khan Minyeh, close to the beach, is a line of leafy trees belonging to a lone little German hospice, the first trees since we left Tiberias. In their shade we spread lunch. Sweet was the hush of prayer over food on such a shore! Then in the sunny stillness our Arabs rowed on eastward. Soon the gushing flood of the springs called Tabigha was seen and heard pouring into the lake. There the fishing has been good from of old, as writers have recorded

through centuries; and there, sure enough, were several fishers taking their nooning. They were washing and mending their nets. When they saw that we were about to photograph them, they good-naturedly faced us; and one old fellow, true to human impulse at such a time, passed his big hand smoothingly over his dripping hair and beard and smiled steadily as he squatted in the glistening lake.

THE VANISHED CITIES

Little they knew, these Moslem peasants, what the sight of their daily task meant to us of One no longer seen among their fisherfolk. But their human kindliness and responsive simplicity in this chance scene along the deserted shore reproduced enough of the old life here to give us a glimpse of Jesus which somehow brought mist to the eyes. He turned with hope to men in these waters, and they turned to him!

NORTH SHORE OF LAKE GALILEE

Plain of Gennesaret in central background, with Horns of Hattin showing through the break in the hills

"They straightway left their nets and followed him." And only these fishermen, of all the life on these shores when the Nazarene came, only these successors of those who received him, are seen here now. I lifted my eyes to the length of lonely shore. His "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" and his deeper malediction, "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades!" — all have been fulfilled. They have vanished. Their slopes are bare as far as the eye carries. Their shores are left, save for roving bands, to these fishermen and memories of the rejected Man from Nazareth. Was the dramatic effect of a touch of common life in a landscape ever deeper?

FATHER WENDELINUS

Two miles ahead, lying close to the water, we saw the enclosure

built around excavations in the ruins known as Tel Hum, a few small trees rising above the shore level there. When at length we stood among its famous fragments of "the white synagogue," old Father Wendelinus, the caretaker, strolled out in his brown Franciscan robe, gray-bearded and spectacled, to tell us about his darling ruins. He talked in German and with good sense about probable sites. Father Wendelinus feels quite sure that the fragments unearthed around the white synagogue are remains of Capernaum. I am not so sure of that. But I asked where he thought Simon Peter's house stood; for this fisherman of Galilee has ever been dear to me. His eyes kindled and he beckoned us to follow. In a mound, perhaps a hundred feet from the water, he lifted two stones which weighted two slabs of wood. Fondly he brushed the spot with his hand. It was a bit of mosaic floor. Smiling, he ventured to attempt

English. "Here where Holy Peter's wife mutter lay in fever, I tink. *Sehr schön!*"

When he had led us to many a cherished bit of ruin in the overturned soil or parted grass, he walked with us to the waterside still chatting. There I took his hand and said, "*Dominus tecum.*" I knew he would enjoy a scrap of Latin. He laughed merrily with surprise and quickly responded, "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" Then he strolled back to his small abode through the flickering shade of the pepper trees he had grown. The Arab boatmen had to wait while I watched him.

THE NORTH SHORE'S MEANING

No, I am not so sure as Father Wendelinus is that Tel Hum was once Capernaum; for the Khan Minyeh slope laid a sense of assurance upon me that there, where the Roman road came down and divided into three diverging high-

ways, was the town where Matthew was found at the seat of customs, the town which Jesus recognized as central and made "his own city." Yet what matters it after all whether here or there precisely? Along this strip of shore, some four miles long, were Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin above them, all near together and seen in one close view. Here was the lakeside home of Jesus. Here he came into human touch with the people—healed them, fed them, talked to them in terms of their every-day life on the beach and in their homes, asked favors of boatmen, showed interest in their fishing and their children and their field work and their tax-paying, shared their scorn for the alien Herod over there at Tiberias, and smote him with cutting words, went with them to befriend a centurion of whom they said, "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue," went up into "the moun-

tain" as the townsfolk did and out on the lakeside when weary, and in all human ways mingled with them as one of their own, pouring his manly strength and tenderness into the natural currents of their life. So he sought to win them to Life as he knew it.

It was the thought of all this, together with the total absence of distracting sights and sounds here, which must explain the fact that Galilee's north shores gave me the most impressive realization of the Saviour's earthly presence found in any spot of Palestine, save one. If any single natural object of that land is worthy to be paired with Calvary because of what it signifies concerning him, it is surely Lake Galilee with these north shores as its circling diadem. To interpret what this lake stands for in the life of our Lord would be to disclose as in no other single setting known the working of his mind and heart in their

natural approach, their human nearness, to men. And abating not a jot of his divineness, this is of priceless worth. Is it not a fact of vast import, too outstanding to be disregarded, that Jesus came to Calvary by way of paths along fishing beaches and beside household door-stones?

Who shall say what hopes were his when at first he touched hands with men in those paths, or what triumph over hopes baffled he achieved in his assurance at the last, even if there was disappointment by Galilee, that Calvary would not prove unavailing! We must read those ultimate words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," not in the shadow of Calvary only; read them as well in the sunlight of Galilee's shores to get their depth of glow, their central victory-fire. We need what this Galilee light brings out — a clear sight of the reality of his nearness to us in nature and life. When his

divinity charms me most, I am afraid of losing his humanness out of my thought of him more than of any other blunder. For nothing so empties the incarnation of vital reality as that, and nothing so insulates the power of the cross from the needs of the world.

"AT EVEN WHEN THE SUN DID SET"

As our boat turned to follow the shore back to Tiberias I sat a-stern with my feet hanging over the water thinking of all this and watching the shoreland. It was silent and lone in the light of the westering sun. Stillness lay on the lake like a dream. Now and then our boatmen joined in crooning a plaintive Arab song, guttural and tuneless. It seemed to round up over and over in a refrain which sounded to my ear like

"Oiyai, oiyai, oiyai, oiyai-ai-ai-lah."

At length I asked our dragoman what the song was about. He smiled; then he answered, "They

sing, sir, of the one having the beautiful eyes." This touch of common life did not mar but rather enhanced the sacred charm; Jesus was so sensitive to all human impulses, so sympathetic toward all human interests on these shores. As we passed Khan Minyeh and turned down the Gennesaret beach, I gazed long on the little hillside valley, no sound mingling with the silence of the past save the plash of oars and the boatmen's quavering song,

"Oiyai, oiyai, oiyai, oiyai-ai-ai-lah."

The sun had dropped behind the ragged hilltops when the Arabs touched the beach near Magdala to let me walk to Tiberias. "At even when the sun did set" was running through my mind; I would watch the day close on the storied shores we were leaving behind. The boat had not gone far when a man urging a laden donkey called to me in Arabic and bade me by motions and

repetition of the words "*Imshi! Bedawi!*" to move on quickly to the town. I had not heard that a man had been robbed and killed after nightfall thereabout some weeks before, and so waved to him to go his way. The kind peasant repeated that Bedouins were near, then he left me to the evening's sanctities.

Presently a stocky fellow with a red-skirted garment came running down the hillside ahead of me carrying over his shoulder a heavy stick knotted at the end. He jumped down into the road. I came near him slowly. He took no notice of me. I passed on. Soon the dusk came. At length I heard some one behind me. I turned and saw the same red-skirted figure. He was humming softly. In each fold of his cloak I saw a lamb, and he held a black kid in his arms. He was a shepherd singing on his way to the fold, having found his sheep that were lost.

The Hillside Home of Jesus

It is one peculiarity of the Galilean hills, that they contain or sustain green basins of table-land just below their topmost ridges. . . . Such above all is Nazareth. Fifteen gently rounded hills "seem as if they had met to form an enclosure" for this peaceful basin — they rise round it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of these green hills — abounding in gay flowers, in fig trees, small gardens, hedges of the prickly pear; and the dense rich grass affords an abundant pasture. . . . From the crest of the hills which thus screen it, is one of the most striking views in Palestine. . . . These are the natural features which for nearly thirty years met the almost daily view of Him who "increased in wisdom and stature" within this beautiful seclusion.

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY,
Sinai and Palestine

V

THE HILLSIDE HOME OF JESUS

THERE are two other home-centers in the life of Jesus besides Lake Galilee. At the lake we see him beginning his public career in the fulness of manhood — near to men, fond of every-day life, yet overtopping them in mind, heart, and resources of personality. Nazareth, sixteen miles westward over uplands and hills, was the place of his growth to such manhood; Jerusalem, eighty or ninety miles to the south, was the region of his ultimate grief and glory. Each of these three centers afforded him the charm or at least the attraction which men are wont to find in a sense of home. Even when his public career brought the reproach of the townsfolk upon

him, he would go back to Nazareth full of memories of his youth. To the lake he was ever returning as to "his own city," even to the last. In the heavy Jerusalem days when he resolutely went up to the proud city against the wishes of his friends and lingered among his foes with undaunted voice, how fondly he would go at the day's end out to that Bethany home over Olivet. His relations to these three homes fill out the chord which deepens and enriches that plaintive note, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

Each of the three aspects of life represented in these home-centers must be contemplated if "we would see Jesus" — the gradual growth to fulness of power; the hopeful, natural, humane application of his powers to his conscious mission; the undismayed self-giving to the destiny at last emerging as requisite to the

accomplishment of that for which he was sent into the world.

FAREWELL TO LAKE GALILEE

No more fitting farewell to the lakeside home is possible, it seems to me, than to go afoot as we did up the hoof-made road from Tiberias to the crest of the western slope when the morning sun is new. For Jesus came down this steep from Nazareth to begin his career; he passed up this way when he led a band of peasants out of the lake's valley to face his nation's need; and his hopefulness then was like the glow of morning.

When we had climbed the road winding roundabout through fields and pastures, and stood on the edge of the uplands, we paused for a last long look. Who would not! There lay the town which sprang into an abominated existence when he was in his twenties — Tiberias, now huddled close to the water amid

fragments and snags of the old walls, with grim remains of its founder Herod's castle overlooking its decrepitude. But in the gleam of as lovely a spring morning as ever came over eastern hills we saw an expanse of many-colored beauty in dreamlike stillness. The whole length of the lake lay shimmering, perhaps a thousand feet below, silver-white with patches of blue. The white of beaches stretched around it everywhere. Treeless slopes rising on every side except at the southern end lifted a plenitude of verdure. In the midst of this upraised enclosure about the bright waters we saw here and there spots of black and white which were goats and sheep and cattle and outspread Bedouin tents, the bright red of anemones and poppies in great patches, long stretches of yellow bloom, blocks of purple where wild-oat flowers were massed, now and then red, yellow, blue, white, in

small moving spots — the garb of shepherd or herdsman or plowman; and toned to memory most of all, plots of soil which plowmen were turning with their primitive, one-handed plows showed out richly wine-colored on every side of the lake even to the top of the hills. I would assure all whose reverent fancy has pictured this lake as a spot sweet and charming that they need not give up that delight in these days of disillusionment through the search for reality. Lake Galilee as we saw it in those days of springtime was as entrancing as any Christian dream ever made it.

At last we took our way westward over the uplands. The lake narrowed to a thin strip, then vanished; and against the hills eastward we saw only a misty-blue haze like incense hanging over the sacred sea.

ON THE WAY TO NAZARETH

The splendor of Junelike noon was round us now, for the climb was

slow and our gazing long. While the dragoman spread luncheon in the open plain I climbed the rocky side of a hill near at hand. It was the Horns of Hattin. I was thinking how it was on this lone hill that misguided Christian warriors gathered at nightfall more than seven centuries ago, bearing the Holy Cross for the conquest of their Master's homeland; and how next day on the surrounding plain Saladin, bearing the Moslem Star and Crescent, crushed their hopes and broke the wild zeal of crusading Europe. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight for it," was sounding in my ears mightily. Tradition has it that this is the mount on which the true principles of his kingdom were uttered in the Beatitudes. Of that no man knows. But this I know, that when I stood by the scattered olive trees near its top I saw once more the shining of Galilee's waters! Beyond them rose

the hills where the distraught man sat at Jesus' feet in his right mind. Then I prayed — prayed for the right-mindedness which the Master can give still. And it was a veritable Mount of Beatitudes to me!

On through fields of grain and the sweet-scented broad bean, olive orchards and grazing land, we followed a road which at times none but the dragoman or the muleteer could find. By mid-afternoon we came to a clump of hovels called Kenna, which divides with a neighboring village the honor of marking the only region between the lake and Nazareth definitely identified with a scene in our Lord's life. Here in Cana he wrought "this beginning of signs" at a wedding feast; here, too, he spoke the words which sent a father from Capernaum back over the road we had just traveled to receive a message that his son down by the lake was not dead but had come out of the fever.

It is therefore a spot to set one pondering on the wonder-works of Jesus.

But the girls and women of the village swarmed about us with such pestiferous zeal to sell their lace trifles that it was impossible to think. We looked about the poor little church with its stone "water-pot that held the wine," received the well-meant interest of the villagers as kindly as we could, then made our escape from the lace girls to the excellent carriage road which stretches its serpentine length up the hill toward Nazareth. There we paused, looked back over Cana and the billowy way to the blue haze above the lake, and pondered.

WHAT OF THE WONDER-WORKS?

How did the miracles appear there where Jesus began to perform them? With such depth of human reality impressing the mind, they seemed to fall in with a common fact of life—

they became in my thought a matter of comparative personality. Some of them appeared to be at once explainable on natural grounds when conditions there were seen — supernatural no doubt to provincial lakeside and hill-town peasants then or now, but quite within the range of natural powers and influences as known to us. Some appeared supernatural to us as well as to them, yet entirely conceivable as natural to a personality like that of Jesus. "Miracle is a relative term," my thought ran; "its beginning and range of application are determined by the personality of the beholder. Its mystery vanishes in an ever-widening field as the personality rises."

Then I recalled how in his hospital yonder by the lake, on a bed over which the donor had set the inscription, "One appointed to give," Dr. Torrance had shown us a six-fingered Bedouin on whom he had that day

performed a work of mercy which doubtless was nothing short of miracle in the eyes of the suffering nomad and his band. To "Torrance by the lake," as the natives call this great-souled man for miles around, it was reasonable enough. With what ease of power he laid his hand on the sufferer, smiled, and spoke a few Arabic words which stilled the wild head on the pillow! That was the real wonder — the surpassing power of this man's personality. I thought of Jesus, how he walked those shores and hills at one with God and man; and I realized as never before that it is the most natural thing in human experience for such a personality as his to have done what was miraculous to those provincials and to all of his land and time — yes, deeds which are still beyond the ordinary working of natural powers to our minds and will be until we come to understand the secrets of nature and the powers of

the spirit at one with God as he was. I would be disappointed if he had not done so. I do not need the miracles to prove what he was, as the people of his time did. But I profoundly need the reports thereof to give me assurance that he, being what he was, did what would be natural to a personality so far above mine. As we turned to follow the winding road up, far up, the sum of the matter shaped itself in my mind thus: "It is a fundamental error to conceive and define his wonder-works as contravention of natural law. On the contrary, it is supreme conformity to natural law that a higher personality should do that which is wonder-work to personalities which do not reach the scope of knowledge and power and relationship familiar to that higher personality. Jesus was in his own person the goal of growing humanity — at one with man, at one with God."

LOOKING DOWN ON NAZARETH

When that long day's sun was setting we were winding our way around the high hill's top and looking down on a large town. It was Nazareth. The view was one of surprising beauty. White stone houses with tinted roofs, green lines of cactus hedges and green clumps of olive or fig trees and dark green spires of cypresses showing out among them, all lapped in green hillsides — it was a picture that fully matched our reverent musings. Down in that little vale Jesus of Nazareth grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man — grew to the powers which made his wonders of speech and deed and life natural to him. There must be ten thousand inhabitants in the town now, but it was less than a third as large when he lived there. The memory of him accounts for the many large stone buildings of recent

construction which are seen in the town or perched on the slopes around it. They are orphanages, hospitals, monasteries, and the like.

The little town he knew has quite vanished. Perhaps the only object remaining which was there when he was is the fountain. There is no other well. There he must have stood often when he came for water with his mother. We paused beside it as we entered the town. Women and children were filling their water-jars in the evening light.

But nature keeps her remarkable setting of his hillside home the same now as then. I have read descriptions of this from my youth up; but never have I conceived it as being so striking and phenomenal as I found it. The highlands which extend from Lake Galilee to Nazareth at last rise here into a cluster of high hills. Those northward are tallest. Lower hills circle around southward, and on all sides of this cluster

the highlands abruptly drop down to plains but little above sea-level which sweep afar to distant heights south, west, and north. Thus Nazareth is nestled high in the lap of tall hills with lower elevations rising like the knees thereof between it and the plains below. Such is the picturesque formation with which the highlands running west from the lake end. Mount Tabor, a southerly spur of these highlands with the noblest height and shapeliness in all lower Galilee, stands a little apart from the hills that hold Nazareth as if contemplating this singular uplift of a small town amidst plains whereon great armies waged battle from Deborah to Napoleon, and pomp and commerce passed for centuries.

Is it not a beautiful thing to think upon — this grouping of hills to hold the town where Jesus grew up, at the end of the highlands that run over to the little sea where he

NAZARETH
Jebel es-Sikh rising to the left

chose his first followers and began his work? What secluded simplicity of life in this hill-girt valley! But what visions of the world outside from the hilltops around the town!

ON A NAZARETH HILL

More than once I went to the top of the height called Jebel es-Sikh, which holds many of the houses on its slope, thinking how the boy and the youth of long ago must have sought that spot often in those thirty growing years. I was there alone one evening at sunset.

"Surely from boyhood up he must have come here," I was thinking, as I neared the ruins of a tomb called Nebi Sain on the lonely top. I was surprised by the sound of voices. Soon three dark-eyed boys about twelve years of age stepped out from behind the ruins. The lads little knew what their happy faces meant to me. By and by they started

down one of the many paths to the town. I stood there alone in the splendor of such a sunset as my eyes had never seen before; and the sense of the youthful Jesus was deeper and sweeter than years of loving thought had ever attained. Westward the Mediterranean, the sea of Rome and Greece and the vast world in his day, stretched a long sheen of glory with the dark line of Mount Carmel silhouetted against it. Southward and northward distant hills circled round the now untrampled plains that encompass the Nazareth hills. Eastward rolling highlands and jutting mounts extended to the blue haze that overhangs the deep valley of the lake; and beyond that, Mount Hermon lifted its snowy head in the backlight of the sunset. What that view would mean to a youth with a mind conscious of oneness with God and growing to a world purpose, I tried to realize. It was a view of marvel-

ous import to me. But what must it have meant to Jesus!

While I pondered thereon, the sun sank from sight midway in the high line of Carmel against the sea. Soon, as if signalizing the hour of my lifelong dream's fulfilment, a streamer of gleaming gold was flung along Carmel's top; flashes of heliotrope shot up from behind the darkened ridge, beaconing all the western sky and sea; a long band of green, faint and seamed with shining lines of opalescent clouds, opened above the central splendor; the heliotrope flashes culminated in a sheen that deepened to wine-color and suddenly covered the sky, as if completing the evening pageant of celebration, while the Mediterranean's far expanse of blue opened westward paths of light, and the darker blue of Galilee's hills raised on every side a silent amphitheater around Nazareth — and me.

At length through gathering

shadows lights began to beam in the houses down in the town. A bell sounded softly on a magnificent new building just below the hilltop, a building over whose doorway were the words, "Orphelinat de Jesu Adollescent." I started down the path the three boys had taken to the town. And I did not doubt, so profound was my sense of the young Jesus, that even then the enthroned Christ was once more mindful of those evening paths and the days when he, too, walked down them to his hillside home.

From Galilee to the Holy City

THE SONG OF A HEATHEN

(Sojourning in Galilee A.D. 32)

I

IF Jesus Christ is a man, —
And only a man, — I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will I cleave alway.

II

If Jesus Christ is a God, —
And the only God, — I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!

RICHARD WATSON GILDER

VI

FROM GALILEE TO THE HOLY CITY

THERE is but little sightseeing in Nazareth; a day is almost enough for that. And a long day was given to ascending Mount Tabor for a look back on the lake, and a farewell view of all lower Galilee; for this is the crowning experience of the joys found in that delightful region.

But so charged with memories of Jesus are the nature-scenes and abiding environment of the town itself that we took endless satisfaction in roaming about at will, musingly and quite alone save for chance relations with friendly villagers. How peasants could be kindlier than the people of Nazareth were to us, it

would be hard to imagine. That writers have pronounced them quarrelsome and the like, is surely not without a suggestion of occasion given; for everywhere I found cottagers, priests, shepherds, trinket-sellers, even loungers in the sun and and peasants on the open hillsides, friendly and genial. The dogs were the only troublers, and I fear that my rambling sometimes gave them good reason for their unfriendliness. But the townsfolk more than once called them off with evident good-will.

On the morning of the fourth day, when we mounted the small horses with big saddles for the long ride to Jerusalem, it was the culmination of all our happiness there to be aware that the crooked streets, the winding lanes, the outstanding buildings, the spirelike cypress trees, the hillsides close around and high above, all had come to have a familiar look which woke in our hearts something

akin to the sense of being at home in this home of Jesus.

As we looked back from our saddles, there on the north slope was the white stone cottage where a mother was standing in the morning sunshine chatting with a neighbor woman and working lace when we came up the path near her door — she who showed us through her little home with housewifely smiles, even to the bake-oven by the back door, refusing "backshish" for her trouble. Above that we saw the lane between dooryard walls where we had watched a group of boys going from cottage to cottage, unrolling a long strip of paper whereon were sacred pictures, singing of each as it came to view, one of their number squatting meanwhile under the suspended scroll holding a basket with two eggs in it; for it was "Lazarus Saturday," and so they celebrated what their great Predecessor did at Bethany when he became a man, those merry little

boys of Nazareth. Yes, and higher still, in full view, was the steep hoof-way where one evening I had walked beside a shepherd while his bleating sheep and goats pattered close behind us and he good-naturedly compared his rod with one I carried acquired from a shepherd on the hills by Lake Galilee. And above all rose the top of Jebel es-Sikh, familiar now and dear to the eye because repeatedly visited with long thoughts of him who must have stood there many a time as boy and man.

That touch of home-feeling in Nazareth I would not part with while life lasts. What must it have been when Jesus scanned the same view with the eyes of a man in his twenties! Somehow the sense of sharing it with him, even in slight degree, surpassed any sightseeing for giving reality to the world-winning Life which matured in that hillside valley.

Two or three ravines cut through

the lower hills southward which hide Nazareth from the plain. Along one of these our horses followed a shelving path until we reached the expanse below. The trail we took was scarcely traceable in the soft soil. There was no sound save the low droning of the muleteer. Flowers abounded. Nazareth was out of sight. To the left in the morning's glory loomed Mt. Tabor, on whose top we had spent entrancing hours gazing down on the charms of Galilee, strangely rich in colors, in view there from the lake deep in the hills eastward to the Mediterranean high and shining along the west.

AT NAIN

We were heading for Little Hermon rising out of the plain southward; for on its slope we saw what is left of Nain. An hour and more it was raised to view, compelling reflection on that mystery at

its long-vanished gate. It is beyond my power of words to tell fully the effect made upon me by this, with the Nazareth hills rising just behind us under the Syrian serenity of sky and the spell of Galilee on our minds. It is a distinct memory that while riding somewhat apart I said aloud, "O Lord God, was there help for the widow's son?" Nain seemed to lie there as if to challenge love's reverie when one rides away from Galilee. "You have found him surpassingly human here," it seemed to say; "do you set human limits in your thought of him?"

At last we rode into the wretched huddle of mud huts which is the Nain of today. Out of its weedy squalor I looked back to the hills that held Nazareth in their security. How clear and beautiful they were! There, at least, all seemed real and calmly certain. Looking on them I felt sure of Jesus of Nazareth. Being sure of him, of such a personality as

all Galilee certifies, what of Nain's question? Nature's established order is inviolate. True; but personality is ever the factor in any established order which makes room for itself!

There is a small Christian chapel standing for a memorial amid ruins and rubbish and wild bushes in Nain. A Mohammedan villager came bringing the key to admit us to its interior. Above its bare altar hangs a painting of the scene which immortalizes the place. It is crude in workmanship. But this picture, unnoticed by any writer so far as I have observed, deserves the attention of travelers because of one excellence. In it the Nazarene's regard is centered on the mother who kneels yearningly at his feet. Even the young man rising on his bier seems to be awakened, drawn back to life, by the might of this tenderness toward her. This is precisely the interpretative touch which makes

the report of Luke so exquisite. There, he that was borne to burial is "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." "And when the Lord saw *her*, he had compassion on *her*, and said unto *her*, Weep not." Then comes the great word, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." The call to the young man is for the sake of one whose heart is breaking for him.

Sitting before this picture I saw as never before the philosophy underlying belief in such a deed — not belief in Jesus because of wonder-work, but belief in wonder-work because of Jesus. Extraordinary sympathy joined with extraordinary power; love enabled to have its way! Such a personality making room for itself — this is the view of Jesus disclosed in Galilee and portrayed in the picture of Nain.

As we rode through weeds and bushes and heaps of stone to the open plain, my mind made its way out of entangling thoughts until all

NAIN

The Christian chapel, the Plain of Esdraelon and Mount Tabor seen in the background

was clear. I set no limits to such a one as Jesus when we turned toward the hills of Samaria.

BY JACOB'S WELL

There are but two spots on the way from Nazareth to Jerusalem definitely associated with the Life we are contemplating. The other is Jacob's Well. To this we came in the morning of the third day, over wearying bridle-paths, passing many a scene of Old Testament fame, spreading food under olive trees, hearing Arab guards whistle their night-watch calls round our tents.

The neighborhood of this well is exceedingly picturesque. Ebal and Gerizim rise with their ancient impressiveness about the well-watered and verdant vale or mountain pass in which is Nablus, the Shechem of old. At its eastern opening, just as you turn southward toward Jerusalem, is the well.

Descending several broken steps and passing under a fragment of the church which once stood there, we came beside its curb. Travelers for many years have reported that the well was filled with stones and rubbish. The chief writer of our own generation found it "impossible to say whether the well is now dry." But all this is changed at last. Through the opening in the heavy curbstone, the sides of which are grooved by the wear of the rope, we looked down into a well seven feet in diameter. A peasant silently lowered a tray of candles. We watched the round, wet walls become visible as the light went down — watched them until the tray rested on the water far below. At length the rope was drawn up and I found that it was sixty feet long. Our dragoman, speaking Arabic, learned that the depth of water was "twelve meters when last measured." There it was, a hundred feet in depth, dug

JACOB'S WELL
Note grooves in the curb worn by rope

before the Decalogue was fashioned, old when David sang, the well by which Jesus sat weary with his journey and asked for a drink! It and the fountain in Nazareth are unmatched in Palestine for the precision with which they mark the very spot where Jesus stood. Down that dark opening he looked with his human eyes and saw that "the well is deep."

In the stillness which falls on a group there, one seems to hear the two voices in that conversation — one querulous and strident with prejudice, the other sweet-toned by reason of patience and good-will.

What aspect of the Man of Galilee is disclosed at this well? The same as in Galilee — human, forgetting self for the sake of others, concerned in the deeper need, able to meet it with masterful ease. But more than that comes to view here. At Nazareth he applied to himself the words, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me."

Here, when the woman, turned from pertness and falsehood and upraised in her thoughts by the stranger's talk and bearing, was moved to say "I know that Messiah cometh," Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am he." Galilee is interpreted at Jacob's Well.

But what did that mean to him? We would see Jesus as he saw himself. We must go on to Jerusalem to see the full self-disclosure of the Nazarene.

ON TOWARD JERUSALEM

Jacob's Well is halfway from Nazareth to Jerusalem. It was near nightfall when we descried the first tokens that the Holy City was at hand. They were lone towers rising in the gloom from the top of Olivet. The first storm of our journey from Damascus in the far north was about to break. Wind and dust drove us to the shelter of a cattle-shed while the horses were fed at El-Bireh, a

village among the hills ten miles from Jerusalem. It is the tradition that the Mother missed her boy of twelve at El-Bireh. At any rate, it was somewhere among those northward hills, for they were going home to Nazareth.

In the gathering dark we climbed the serpentine road leading to the top of Mt. Scopus, behind which the city was still hid. On that rocky height Titus and his legions camped for the siege of Jerusalem which at length razed its walls and demolished its holy places. The winds were in full fury now. Storm-clouds rushed over huge shapes which were hilltops, over the city of immemorial destiny still unseen behind them. It was hard to resist the impression that the elements were witnessing to the memories abiding there. For we were entering the cluster of hills amid which a human drama of great pathos centered of old, and the spiritual issues of mankind have

foregathered as at no other spot on our globe. What would this world be — this world with its Hebrew Bible, its evolved monotheism, its Christendom, its Jesus Christ, crucified yet living ever — what would this world be if that Jerusalem behind the hills had never been!

At last we reached the top of Mt. Scopus — and lo, the city! Its lights alone were seen. They glimmered in the tempestuous dark. The road plunged down into the gloom. It turned, then turned again, still going down. We were crossing the upper end of the Kidron valley. A long black line was raised in the gloom to our left. That was the top of Olivet. Jerusalem lay just above us, silent in the storm. How eagerly we waited for morning!

The Jerusalem Home of Jesus

JERUSALEM is, indeed, the most singular place in the world; its present is an unrivaled medley of the ludicrous and odious, while behind all this is the most extraordinary past, still translucid at every step. The topography is very precise. This legendary topography is certainly provoking. . . . But, chimeras apart, there cannot be a difference of more than a few feet, when all is considered.

Here, assuredly, are Bethphage, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives, the places beloved of Jesus. Gethsemane is not far from this little region. . . . Yonder is Bethesda, Siloam, and its fountain. Golgotha was not far from where they now place it. This road cut in the rock, descending from Galilee, has certainly borne the footprints of Jesus!

ERNEST RENAN,
Letters from the Holy Land

VII

THE JERUSALEM HOME OF JESUS

"And faith hath still its Olivet
And love its Galilee."
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

WHAT is the token of a master-hand in these lines? The right words are matched, simply yet with the scope of power. Love is the word of words to write with Galilee. Faith, and that alone, is worthy of Olivet. For Galilee first makes known the nearness to common life, the simplicity, the tenderness, the hopeful strength of the Nazarene; Olivet distinctively shows what was behind and above all that — union with God, consciousness of special personal capacity and call, realization of a world-mission, vision

of need not to be fathomed to its full depths by going about doing deeds of mercy nor compassed by speaking as man never spoke. It it not a mere poetic shift of words which makes Olivet the choice of names to represent that final phase of Christ's life which centered about Jerusalem and gave climax even to a career so transcendent before; it is not simply the happy channel found by the rhythmic flow of song, this word Olivet. No, it gathers in itself as no other single word could the fullest reflection of what a great heart saw in love's supreme tragedy at Jerusalem.

A CONTRAST

The traveler fresh from Galilee is struck by the contrast when he looks on the Holy City. Galilee is fertile and verdant, rural, winsome in plain and hill, toned to peasant life. But Jerusalem — what pen does not halt for words to describe

MOUNT OLIVET

The rider is on the bridge over the Kidron, the brook-bed showing to his right. Cypress trees within walls mark traditional site of Gethsemane. Bethany is over the lower

its hoary solemnity of walls and towers amid grim, battalioned hills, its pathos of endless subjection to war's havoc and alien rule, its mystic metropolitanism!

Look eastward. It has been well said that those fifteen miles of chaos toward the Dead Sea — of wilderness rocks and gorges, of wrenched weirdness — give the sense of living next door to doom. The region of Jerusalem seems to match that world-agony which came on the Man of Galilee there.

A LIKENESS

But there seemed to me to be a striking exception. Standing immediately eastward beside the city, parted from its hilltop wall along the Temple area only by a narrow valley filled with olive trees, gardens, graves, and seamed at its bottom by a brook bed, is a mount of singular charm notwithstanding distressing disfigurement by walls and structures. It

is Olivet. From the first it impressed me as like Galilee. This idea grew upon me through a score of days — grew as I roamed over this mount again and again or viewed it from the Temple hill which Olivet parallels and a little more than equals in height. Is it possible that this conception points the way to a beautiful secret — a natural explanation of a well-known fact in the life of Jesus? Finely has George Adam Smith said, "The value of a vision of the Holy Land is that it fills the silences of the Holy Book."

HIS JERUSALEM HOME

Jesus was a suburbanite in his Jerusalem days. It is no idle question, in times when men are everywhere moved to make homes outside the city, to ask why this was so. It may be that we shall find in the answer a fresh point of union between our lives and his.

Our Lord's relations to "the un-

believing city," at least so far as known to us and to a degree indicating the characteristic fact, were associated with its eastern or Olivet side. As he came and went he repeatedly found his way to Bethany, the village over the hill from the city, on a southeasterly slope of Mount Olivet. Busy as he often was in the Temple and throughout the city, he would go out over Olivet as the day closed; from Olivet he came back to the city in the morning. Over Olivet he rode in symbolic state when his last week's work began; and when from Olivet's top he saw the city across the little valley, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known." When he had accomplished his purpose that day over in the city, and "he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

As that week went on, "Every day he was teaching in the Temple,

and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." When the last day of work was ending, it was on the way over this mount that he turned — sat down on the slope over against the Temple — gazed on the city's expanse — foretold the doom that was to come upon it and did come — talked of the tumult of time amid which the gospel of his kingdom should be preached in all the world.

On Olivet he spent the day or two of waiting. Over Olivet he came to the upper room in the city, at last drawing, it would appear, on the ready accommodation of friends in the city which he might have received during the days before, if he had not chosen Olivet for reasons of his own. When the night hours were there filled to the full with communion human and divine, he went through the dark out to a garden at the foot of Olivet. There

the traitor's torches found him. Thence they led him up the steep slope — back into the city — bound and ready to die.

When there was a conquered grave somewhere among the myriad tombs of Jerusalem, and there had been a fond return to Galilee's lakeside — how significant that going once more to Galilee! — "he led them out as far as Bethany." Over Olivet to the last! And from the slope of that mount he went home to God.

Well may Olivet be called the Jerusalem home of Jesus.

Surely there was some deep-lying choice in all this. Prudence may have had some part therein during that last bitter week; yet it seems that his foes might have found and beset him quite as readily out on those open slopes as in the city, for this, indeed, they did when they finally seized him. Perhaps the location on Olivet of the booths where Magdala's traffic in turtle-doves and

pigeons for the Temple rites centered, may have given Mary Magdalene, his ministering friend, acquaintance in Bethany, and she may have opened for him the satisfactions of that village home which drew him endearingly. But allowing for all such circumstantial reasons, I wonder whether there was not a deeper. I wonder whether the homing heart of Jesus did not turn to Olivet because it seemed to him like Galilee, as it did to me — that even yet beautiful, olive hill with the Bethany home on its side.

Olivet lifts the love for him confirmed in Galilee to faith that has to do with things in heaven. But the place it holds in our Lord's relations to Jerusalem testifies, I think, that to the last a human love of home was in his heart — that heart which felt the world's sorrows until it broke with longing to draw all mankind to his Father's house.

Peals of bells are in the two great

towers that have been erected in late years on this mount by Russian and German enterprise; their voices, toned to mid-ocean's boom, carry over the city with quiet grandeur as each day passes. They seem to give at last some fitting expression to the meaning of Olivet's presence beside Jerusalem.

I cannot testify too strongly to the place that Olivet took in the impressions received when I first contemplated Jerusalem and its environs. It at once became the central reality. Its form drew my gaze; it seemed to have the charm of what is long known and one's own. Yielding to this, I soon discovered that this mount, the veritable home of Jesus when he was about Jerusalem, is now the true viewpoint for seeing him in the scenes of his life that centered thereabout.

OLIVET AS A VIEWPOINT

The traveler who comes to his first view of the Holy City, not by rail from his ship off Jaffa but over the bridle-paths and roads from Galilee, comes with a preparation that does much to help him see all in an atmosphere which many a hurried tourist fails to find, without which Jerusalem is utterly inglorious. The obvious present, repulsive indeed as so many have truly reported it, is dimmed in that atmosphere, and the past — its hovering silences, its vistas imperishable — the past is brought out in vivid perspective.

Strangely enough, it is from Mount Olivet that he who would see Jesus while viewing Jerusalem can best find this revealing atmosphere. Renan, iconoclast though he was, yet had the genius of interpretation to discern this medium of vision even without faith's magic. "Behind all this," he wrote, "is the most extraordinary

past, still translucid at every step." And his genius instinctively fixed on Olivet as the viewpoint whence this mystic reality is best seen. In the passage cited before this chapter, every detail has to do with Olivet or the immediate view from its top. All stands out as in a translucent cyclorama around Olivet.

Northward stretches away a billowy sea of hills, crested in mountains here and there, beyond which lies Galilee, his boyhood home.

Eastward a valley deepens down; it is seamed with gorges, flanked with ragged precipices and rolling ground-swells, and it opens away to low expanses where glimpses of the winding Jordan are, and a vision of the Dead Sea's waters. The Mountains of Moab loom beyond it, shutting in this view of the region wherein the youth of Jesus began manhood's career at his baptism, and faced manhood's temptations to false reliances and ambitions. Bethany lies

there, near at hand on the descent toward this valley — Bethany amid whose huddle of flat roofs and jagged ruins we picked a wild flower and a bit of stone from a grassy foundation wall for one in America whose name is Martha. Still the Jericho road winds down this valley; fearsome fellows we saw there, giving point to tales of present-day robberies, and a beggar rolling sightless balls followed us, his wailing call and outstretched hand as he stumbled over the stones bringing to mind the days when his like there heard voices say, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

Southward — ah, from a spot on Olivet by the Russian bell-tower, I thought I caught a glimpse of Bethlehem one bright morning!

Westward, down the slope of this mount still runs "this road cut in the rock"; the site of Gethsemane is somewhere beside it, and where it crosses the bridge is still seen the

bed of the brook Kidron. Immediately beyond rises the hill on which a great wall now as of old shuts in that ancient threshing-floor area, where gleamed in his time Israel's white Temple, where now Mohammedan mosques and minarets lift their somber forms. Around that area Jerusalem spreads her mongrel roofs, domes, towers, and somewhere, somewhere, over on that high ground, "the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha," was and is. And near it, the rock-hewn tomb!

Such is the view from Olivet. He who presses his feet on this mount's soil, thinking of it as the Master's chosen resort, his Jerusalem home, will not fail to discern its magic scope of outlook. For lovers of Jesus Olivet has no mate in revealing vision on earth.

Let one who stood there with seeing eyes speak for us unhastingly of what fills the mind there.

"'Twas thus I thought:
At last the very land whose breath he breathed,
The very hills his bruisèd feet did climb!
This is his Olivet; on this Mount he stood,
As I do now, and with this same surprise
Straight down into the startling blue he gazed
Of the fair, turquoise mid-sea of the plain.
That long, straight, misty, dreamlike, violet wall
Of Moab — lo, how close it looms! The same
Quick human wonder struck his holy vision.
About these feet the flowers he knew so well.
Back where the city's shadow slowly climbs
There is a wood of olives gaunt and gray,
And centuries old; it holds the name it bore
That night of agony and bloody sweat.
I tell you when I looked upon these fields
And stony valleys, — through the purple veil
Of twilight, or what time the Orient sun
Made shining jewels of the barren rocks, —
Something within me trembled; for I said:
This picture once was mirrored in his eyes;
This sky, that lake, those hills, this loveliness,
To him familiar were; this is the way

To Bethany; the red anemones
Along yon wandering path mark the steep road
To green-embowered Jordan. All is his:
These leprous outcasts pleading piteously;
This troubled country, — troubled then as now,
And wild and bloody, — this is his own land.
On such a day, girdled by these same hills,
Prest by this dark-browed, sullen, Orient crowd,
On yonder mount, spotted with crimson blooms,
He closed his eyes, in that dark tragedy
Which mortal spirit never dared to sound.
O God! I saw those eyes in every throng."[1]

They who would see Jesus in viewing the Jerusalem of our time should remember to seek this charmed viewpoint. In the city itself all is spiritual chaos. Indeed, excepting only the Temple area, so inviolately guarded by Mohammedan zealotism that it is quite impossible to be alone there and hazardous

[1] Richard Watson Gilder, "In Palestine."

even under escort to give the mind over to its majesties of memory, there is little inside the city gates of assured worth, little to aid in forming lifelike conceptions of scenes in our Lord's history. Was not Jerusalem razed to the ground a few years after he was led to death through its now deeply buried streets? Have not catastrophic centuries and teeming aliens done enough to warn intelligent Christians from a false hunt apt to end in serious revulsion? Even the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the chief claimant to being a witness to reality in the Saviour's Jerusalem experiences, whatever one may think of its ancient traditional warrant and the disputatious findings of modern research as to its marking the spot of the crucifixion and burial — even this most awesome Mecca of all Christendom is surely as unlike the reality of what it commemorates as anything man could contrive.

But go out to the valley eastward,

the uplift of Olivet, the fields outside the city wall northward. There, fixed in nature's secure keeping, you will find reality, certitude. Here, assuredly, is the little arena of the Master's last days. "Chimeras apart, there cannot be a difference of more than a few feet, when all is considered." Once there, it is for you to relume the past by the art of a reverent spirit.

The service I would now render all hearts attentive to what is here written is to let them share my personal experiences in contemplating Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Garden Tomb.

Outside a City Wall
Gethsemane

OR choose thee out a cell
In Kedron's storied dell,
Beside the springs of Love that never die;
Among the olives kneel,
The chill night-blast to feel,
And watch the moon that saw thy Master's agony.

Then rise at dawn of day,
And wind thy thoughtful way
Where rested once the Temple's stately shade,
With due feet tracing round
The city's northern bound
To the other holy garden where the Lord was laid.

JOHN KEBLE,
The Christian Year

VIII

OUTSIDE A CITY WALL GETHSEMANE,

IT was the evening in Holy Week before the night of the betrayal of Jesus; and Jerusalem lay round about us. All day rain and wind ceased not. In an American home outside the north wall we had enjoyed the rare comfort in the Levant of a warm fire, while the storm drenched the deep casements and we read or mused of the city which, after lifelong desire, we were to see when "the rain was over and gone."

A shepherd, dripping in his coarse, baglike cloak, passed now and then with his sheep or goats, abandoning the hills early in such a day. Camel men trudged by, their patient beasts lifting hardy, blinking heads against the storm's pelting and gauntly striding through the mud with cavernous groans or growls.

An hour before nightfall the rain abruptly stopped. An impulse seized me to walk out alone. There were risks in so doing, in a city never seen, whose customs, languages, and streets were strange and even perilous for an alien after dark. But the inducement was unusual; for the valley having Gethsemane in its depths, the valley between the Temple hill and Olivet on the city's east side, rises northward to a hollow which sweeps around to the house in which we were, and it was the evening before Christ's trouble of soul and triumph in that garden. I could not resist the prompting to go out alone.

IN THE GETHSEMANE VALLEY

Soon I was in the hollow. Olive trees were there, green and dripping. Ancient tombs, cut in the rocks walling this upper end of the Kidron valley, stood open and empty. Thinly plowed patches were encountered under the olive trees, and before

long the red clay clogged my feet until it was hard to walk. A dog set up a snarl and then fierce barking on a slope above; a swarthy man thrust his head out at a lone hut's door and stared at the straggler below. But as the hollow deepened I saw that it was circling toward the city's east side. Therefore the impulse to turn back was thrown off in hope of reaching the place of Gethsemane before dark. The weirdness of a suspended storm at evening time was over all. Jerusalem was spread along the hill on my right in silent pathos. The olive trees lifted their friendly forms in quietness down in the valley ahead, and brought to mind the lines:

"Into the woods my Master went,
  Clean forspent, forspent,
Into the woods my Master came,
  Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him;
The little gray leaves were kind to him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came."

The heaviness of my steps in the rain-soaked soil even seemed a reminder of the burdened ongoing of Jesus — from the upper room in the city yonder, down into this self-same valley.

Another ravine from the north joined the one in which I was; terraces began to stretch away through the murky air in various directions; the olive trees spread their hushed presences along them; then the valley of the Kidron opened its quiet depths to view. There it all was — Mount Olivet rising along the left; the Temple hill, central in the life and literature of Israel from Abraham to Jesus, lifting its rugged old wall high in the gloom to the right; and Gethsemane was somewhere down in the valley among the olive trees!

While pausing to view this scene I chanced to observe that no one was in sight. Suddenly, and with singular awe, the thought came upon me of being alone in Gethsemane's val-

ley. Was it possible that I was to be the only man of all the world there for those few moments in the history of redemption — the only man there when the reverent thought of millions was turning thither — the sole human heart beholding that spot on the evening before Christendom would commemorate her Lord's resort to the garden down there among the trees to face the world's holocaust of need alone with God!

I pressed on. Some distance ahead an Arab came down from Jerusalem, plodded across the valley toward the northern end of Olivet, climbed the hillside, and vanished. It was nothing to him, that valley! At length I hit upon a path which led to a carriage road running sidelong down the hill from Jerusalem. Beside an old well close to this road I discovered the traditional Gethsemane; the bridge over the Kidron and the garden inclosure lay in full view below.

The rain began to pour down again in torrents. There was a workman's shanty up the slope toward the Temple wall. A black man opened its door, beckoned, and shouted to me in Arabic. I hid from the rain's dash and the stranger behind a high retaining wall, and passed on down the road. The desire to reach Gethsemane was now overpowering. But the rain was a deluge and it was gloaming fast.

Presently the rain slackened. I passed onto the bridge. The little bed of the Kidron, which is stonewalled there and usually waterless, was full and rushing. I stood gazing down upon its lowliness — the most hallowed brook on earth. Gethsemane was surely near that spot, somewhere against the near-rising slope of Olivet. The walls of the traditional garden are only a few yards from the bridge. They who have longed from youth up to view the Saviour's Olivet resorts will under-

stand what solemnity, what a sense of standing amid mystic sanctities, came there.

All was hushed, strangely still, save the stream; for the rain had ceased. The realization of the presence of Jesus when he came into that valley's night-time quietude was unmarred. My soul melted in such near approach to the actuality of what occurred there. The head was bared. Lips whispered, "My Master!"

A TOUCH OF REALITY

But even at such a moment, as if to guard against the vagary of ecstasy, as if to bring to mind life in the world of men and deepen my realization of our Lord's bitter grief in that valley, there came an experience which strangely interpreted my consciousness of Jesus. In the silence I became aware of footsteps. Turning instantly, I saw close beside me the black man from the shanty —

as black a face as one ever sees among the peoples of the earth peering into mine. He gesticulated and uttered guttural words. What he meant I knew not. With studied friendliness I touched my forehead and pointed down to the stream, laid my hand on my heart and looked up to Jerusalem and Mount Olivet. But the black man only stepped nearer with insistent tone and bearing. I would gladly have clasped his hand; but his eye showed the folly of letting him lay hold upon me. "Imshi!" said I, turning resolutely upon him and waving him off. He glowered at me, as if to test my courage. At length his big, bare feet went sloshing off through the mud while he muttered and sent back ugly words over his shoulder.

It was a relief to see him disappear in the gloom up the slope of Olivet; yet it was painful, there beside Gethsemane, to think of him as a representative of those — how many they

are in the world's ways! — whom we know not how to receive and treat as brothers. Judas, and the stern gentleness of Jesus, took on intensified meaning for the man left alone in Gethsemane's valley.

It is needless to attempt a description of the thoughts that surged in my mind while lingering on the Kidron bridge. The sense of representing the world of men there at that particular hour in the centuries since Jesus suffered there for men and for God — the remembrance of what his majestic heart-struggle in that small valley has come to mean in the thought and life of humanity — the realization of what a heart he must have had that in such a spot he could ensphere the world in his grief, and in his peasant breast (for peasant he was to churchmen and rulers!) resolve that by his death the nations could and should be drawn to the heart of God — who can put such experience into adequate

language? Who that thinks needs words to understand?

THE COMING OF NIGHT

In the gathering dark I thought I saw a monk pass in a porch of the church on the slope of Olivet, the church with glaring bulbous domes. I thought he paused and looked down on me over the treetops, then vanished. I passed on to the garden. The gate was locked. This was of small moment; for not the conventional, but the natural and abiding was what I sought — the valley and its memories. Thereabout, surely, the feet of Jesus trod, his knees pressed the ground, his pleading went up between the hills to God, his gentle plaint and warning to sleeping friends sounded under the trees, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" There he gave himself up to his foes because he had yielded himself sublimely to his Father. Thence he was led with

hands bound across yon little Kidron stream, up that hillside, into thy gate, O Jerusalem!

The craving was strong to go on up the road to the top of Olivet and look over toward Bethany and muse on its exquisite glory by reason of the home that gave him comfort to the last. But thoughts of my own home turned me back; for high walls shut a man in along that rough road, and stormy darkness was settling down. The shrill, quavering, haunting cry of the Moslem night-call to prayer had floated down into the valley from the minarets high around the area where once stood the Temple of Israel's God; and its weird, long-drawn, bleating sound, like the wail of some hovering vulture, had died away in the gloom. Bethany must wait until daylight.

As I recrossed the bridge, over Olivet's top the moon broke through the rushing clouds. Its outshining seemed like a greeting, as if to say,

"All is not alien here — I am the Passover moon that watched and lighted this valley for him."

But in a moment it was blotted out. Through the misty gloaming I began to find my way up the road to Jerusalem. Soon that silver moon shone out again, only to be obliterated by swift clouds. All the way up the hill this emerging and vanquishing repeatedly drew my gaze. It thrilled me. With memories of the company that once climbed that hill awing the mind, it seemed like some supernatural token. Its symbolic beauty and grandeur — that, at least, was actual. Jesus, the memory of thee shall ever shine out through clouds and thick darkness!

A REMINDER OF HIS SUFFERINGS

But the secret, the mystery, of his shining was not to be left unremembered that night. When I reached the level of the city walls the moon was overwhelmed — the valley was

no longer discernible — the huge walls were only a blacker line through the dark. The rain broke once more into a descending flood.

Suddenly the barking of dogs sounded ahead. While I stood not knowing what to do, the psalm wherein are the words, "Dogs have compassed me," came to my mind. He uttered the first words of that psalm on his cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That psalm strangely tallies with what he suffered when he came up out of this same valley.

There was nothing possible but to go forward in pitchy darkness, through a locality never seen. The noise of the rain helped to cover the sound of my steps; but before long dogs surrounded me.

One thing only is worth recording here of that moment. As I stood amid their fierceness, not knowing whither to turn, there came such a sense as I never had before of the

feelings of Jesus when he reached that hilltop surrounded by his foes.

Through a lane I came at last to a small hill just outside the city wall. Forming a judgment as to what it was, I turned to the right and entered an olive grove. The rain had ceased and all was still save the dripping from the trees. In the midst of this grove I came upon the first human beings met since the black man disappeared. There were two of them. They moved slowly. I stood still. It was a peasant leading a bent old woman, who groaned and halted for breath. I was reassured by the sight of human tenderness and passed on. Ah, there is much in the world worth suffering for! Not long after I found the friendly roof beneath which warmth and brightness and love were waiting for me.

The next day I retraced my steps and found that of a truth the hill outside the city wall which had served to guide me home was none

other than what is known as Gordon's Calvary. In the darkness and storm I had made my way from the spot "over the brook Kidron, where was a garden," to the one place around Jerusalem which is like "the place of a skull, where they crucified him" — from Gethsemane to the Cross.

Outside a City Wall
Calvary

THERE is a green hill far away,
Outside a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.
We may not know, we can not tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to makes us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.
O dearly, dearly hath he loved!
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

CECIL FRANCES ALEXANDER

IX

OUTSIDE A CITY WALL
CALVARY

"PERHAPS we should go inside the walls tonight. He was there, you know, until morning."

The heart companioning mine through Holy Week at Jerusalem was right. Gone though they are, the places that knew Jesus; repulsive as are the ways of men that traffic in memories of him around alleged remains associated with his last hours — yes, we should go inside the walls, for it was the night in which he was led thither. "He was there, you know, until morning."

Somewhere in the two hundred acres of the earth there inclosed was the house of the upper room, though the old building now shown by higgling keepers, with its stone stair leading down by its outer wall, is nothing to you; somewhere was

Pilate's Judgment Hall — indeed, its locality is fixed, for the Temple area is there still and the Tower of Antonia was at its northwest corner, the Palace not far away across the hollow to the west. In the walls surrounding this august Temple space, like surviving witnesses, are shaggy stones here and there which felt the sun's light when that morning broke and the pulsing of the air as the cry arose, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Near the site of the Tower of Antonia, down a stair underground, the ancient Roman pavement is laid bare by excavation. One of the Sisterhood in charge, a lady speaking softly in beautiful English, showed us a checker-square on the paving stones. "Perhaps the soldiers in the Tower above used this in their gaming," said she. It seemed strange beside those marks to learn that she was from our own city in America. Near the pavement are natural-rock chambers with holes for tether ropes.

Did the horsemen of the Antonia garrison use these? Somewhere along its length this pavement must have felt the tread of Jesus' feet as he obeyed the mandate of Pilate.

Thence run the narrow, winding lanes of today called *Via Dolorosa*. Along these footways are marked the "stations of the cross." Fictitious they must be largely. Yet the streets through which they led Jesus from judgment to execution doubtless ran thereabout; and what are a few yards to the heart!

THE NIGHT IN THE CITY

What is this little street with dim lights down its cobblestone steps? We have lost the windings of the *Via Dolorosa*. This is David Street. Its booths and shops are all shuttered and dark; but we will follow it down the steps and see what is going on in the section of Jerusalem where Jews abound. Glimmering lights are in this overhung passage to the right.

We will turn in here. What is this lighted building? The door is open. Let us enter.

A long-bearded rabbi stands on a platform at the center of the room beside a young man who is reading in Hebrew with all speed. A crowd of men and boys with their hats on are sitting on benches or standing about, each holding a small scroll and a burning taper, following the reading intently. A boy lets me hold one end of his scroll and puts a taper into my hand. Presently, with a chuckle, he runs his finger along the lines, backward as Hebrew is read, until it rests on the word "Haman." As the reader utters it a burst of derisive laughter breaks forth — groans from the old beards. Again that name is reached, and again the high monotone of the reader is drowned by the outburst, until the answering uproar fills the dingy room. They are reading the book of Esther, these Jews in their synagogue.

At length the boy beside me shows his white teeth gleefully, his black eyes flash. Something unusual is about to happen. He points along the lines once more, points insistently while the reader's voice rises breathless in its rush, points until the words are sounded, "Behold the gallows fifty cubits high" — the reader cannot be heard for the wild outcry. He pauses, looks around excitedly, then shouts with all his might, "And the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman" — then bedlam broke — a roar of mocking joy, a surge of groans, a crash of stamping feet till the building trembled, sticks and hammers pounding benches, posts, floor, walls, while faces raised to the dancing lights howled their jubilation. A youth near me fired a pistol uplifted toward the ceiling, at which the old rabbi turned, shaking his beard and mouthing wrath, and pointed a bony finger at our group while he fumed and glared.

Thus they kept the memory of the deliverance of their people when Haman was hanged on the gallows made for Mordecai, as their brethren were doing in all the synagogues of Jerusalem, as their fathers had kept "Mordecai's Day" at Purim from of old. But of their countryman Jesus, who was betrayed and condemned to hang on the cross, they had no thought. So the night passed inside the walls.

As we went to our abode outside the city gates I found myself wondering whether we had not seen the ancient celebration which, coming shortly before the Passover then as now, may have helped to produce the mood that voiced itself in the outcry, "Crucify him, crucify him."

A MORNING QUEST

Early the next morning, the day of the Crucifixion, a Mohammedan responded to my long rapping on a rickety door in a stone wall, and was

THE TOP OF CALVARY

Showing the wall below the hill with the Damascus Gate, the Dome marking the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

induced to let me enter. The wall surrounds a hillock which rises outside the north wall of the city a few hundred yards from the ancient gateway now covered by the Damascus Gate. One sees this mound well from the roads leading out from the city — an acre or two of rough ground upraised some fifty feet on natural rock, domed like a skull when viewed as one comes out from the Damascus Gate, sloping gently on all sides save that toward the city, which is an abrupt cliff marked with cave-holes singularly suggestive of the holes in the face of a skull.

On its top are scattered a number of flat, stone-covered Mohammedan graves. To the gateman it was sacred as a burying-ground of his people. To me it was more sacred than even this universal human sanctity could make it. For this spot, known to Christian scholars as Gordon's Calvary, is most like "the place of a skull, where they crucified him," of

all places to be seen around Jerusalem. Indeed, no place is at all comparable with this for matching the descriptive details of the Gospels and the findings of learned research. An impressive number of experts, ever increasing since the searchlight of scholarship found this hill sixty years ago, have reported their belief that it is Golgotha. They present an array of reasons for so believing that cannot be approached by what can be said of any other spot, not excepting that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which has been the unrivaled resort of pilgrims for sixteen centuries. But in any case the great debate between ancient tradition and modern realism is waged over a plot of ground less than a thousand yards wide. It is enough for me that this little hill is in the immediate region where the Cross was upraised, as it surely is — quite enough that it is near the spot, in the same environment and essen-

tially like what Golgotha was beside the road out of Jerusalem when "they led him away to crucify him." Listen, then, friend who may read these words, while I tell how, in our quest to see Jesus, there as never before I saw "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The gateman, appeased by two francs, disappeared in his stone lodge. I climbed the little hill. No one else was in the inclosure. All sounds were remote. The top is just high enough to let one look over the city wall.

VIEW FROM CALVARY

The view that spread before me was so near, so distinct, so like seeing in sudden actuality what faith has long dreamed of among the things unseen which are eternal, that it was almost too much for me. The dimness of morning rain, the subdued light under low-hanging clouds, was over all Jerusalem. But this

only made the sight the more lifelike, veiling the ragged, hoary present and letting the mind see the city of that morning long ago. Indeed, Jerusalem is always seen best in dimness or distance — that is, in dream-light, when the heart's eyes grow big.

To the left lay the Kidron valley where olives and cypresses showed out like specters in the mist at the foot of Olivet. Gethsemane was there. Shifting my gaze to the right, just above the valley were walls, towers, domes, where of old stood the Temple and the Roman Tower of Antonia. A little further to the right, there where the Turkish barracks now stand, was the Palace of Herod. They took him thither amid that morning's tumult. There they mocked him with a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Thence at last they led him bearing his cross — led him somewhere toward this mound.

Yonder black dome, in the midst of the present city, is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, wherein millions of pilgrims have kissed spots where they believed he was crucified and buried. Let me not contemn their age-long veneration. But this hill is the true place to me. There, all is as unlike Calvary with its garden tomb as any place could be — a labyrinth of impostures, a pile of candle-lit gloom. But how lifelike all is here, on this hill outside the wall, with yonder little garden close by! It is only a third of a mile from that black dome to this green knoll, anyway. At least it is certain that this upraised area on natural rock was here in near view of the place, so near that one standing here could have seen the cross. Yonder Damascus Gate has the arching top of an ancient buried gate showing at its base. Through such a gate as that they led him out.

BESIDE THE CROSS

With these musings the morning hours went by. The hymn

> "There is a green hill far away,
> Outside a city wall,"

kept running through my mind. It seemed to put into words more of what the Cross meant there than any language I know — this hymn written by a woman for children! I tried to sing it

> "Where our dear Lord was crucified
> Who died to save us all."

Even while singing — how softly, how brokenly! — I turned to look on the stony ground at my feet, to realize that the green hill of which Christendom sings was no longer far away from me, to think how there, in the ground under me or somewhere near, the Cross was set in the earth — the Cross that now is the mightiest benefactor earth knows.

An impulse came to look up where his face would be on the Cross.

Should I — I, with a man's breast, a man's memories? To his praise let it be written, *My eyes were lifted.*

Like a solemn *Credo* were the whispered words,

> "He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good,
> He died that we might go to heaven
> Saved by his precious blood."

What words in like compass match these for scope and simplicity in voicing the faith of Christendom concerning the mysteries of the Saviour's death!

Just then strident cries, coarse laughter and bickering sounded from the road down by the wall. It was like laceration to my spirit. Never shall I forget the realization at that moment of what the ribaldry of the crowd about his cross must have meant to him whose body was nailed and hanging. What are any of our pangs in service beside that! This was the deepest impression of seeing Jesus which I received in all the

Holy Land. His "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was in my ears. Then, as never before, I understood why the Cross is so imperative in an empowered gospel.

> "Oh, dearly, dearly hath he loved!
> And we must love him, too,
> And trust in his redeeming blood,
> And try his works to do."

As the hymn ended it was nearing noon. I hurried away to bring one who has shared many a sacred experience with me. When we returned four men were kneeling in prayer near the knoll's top, their heads bared to the rain. At the center of the summit two Arabs were digging a little grave — throwing up the opened yellow earth. My companion picked some tiny wildflowers which manage to bloom on that rough soil; I gathered a few stones thrown up by the grave-diggers.

The rain presently broke into a gust. We sought shelter beside a

small tool house on the summit, whence the whole city was in view. There we uttered prayer together. And while we prayed bells began to sound in the Christian towers of Jerusalem — a solemn, broken chorus, answered by the slow boom of two great bell-towers on Olivet. It was noon in the ancient city — noon once more on Calvary — and, in our heart, noon on the Cross.

Clouds and darkness of a day in the twentieth century were round about hill and ancient city, deepening our realization of that dire mid-day — when his hands had been outstretched three hours, three endless hours, only three hours, those pierced hands which now have beckoned the world so long — when that three-hour darkness was beginning which well-nigh quenched the light of his sure knowledge of God. In the gloom my soul heard his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If he had given up

— ah, if he had lost God in that darkness! Another cry was heard, "I thirst." But not the plaint of helpless agony which men are wont to deem it, did that cry seem there. All hearts that suffer, hear its nobler meaning which I heard on Calvary. That was his victory-shout! He would not give up. He would revive the body to aid the spirit even by the least, would come to the end a conqueror. Moisten his lips, ye stolid soldiers of Rome, reach your vinegar sponge to his mouth as ye would do for any brave man! Never man rallied sinking body by the spirit's might to win such a triumph!

As the day began to wear away, and in our hearts all was over on Calvary, there came a memory which sweetened all others. It was of a voice — after the tumult of many voices had ceased somewhat and only moans were sounding for the most part — of a voice tremulous but calm.

"Woman, behold thy son."

Then, as to one who stood near, "Behold thy mother."

And then, still as to one very near but so loud that all could hear, "Father, into thy hands!"

Mother — son — Father! So, with thoughts of home, on earth and in heaven, came the end.

Outside a City Wall
The Garden Tomb

When questions were written to him about Christ, he would say to me: "Answer for me that I have given my belief in In Memoriam."

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON,
A Memoir by His Son

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON,
In Memoriam

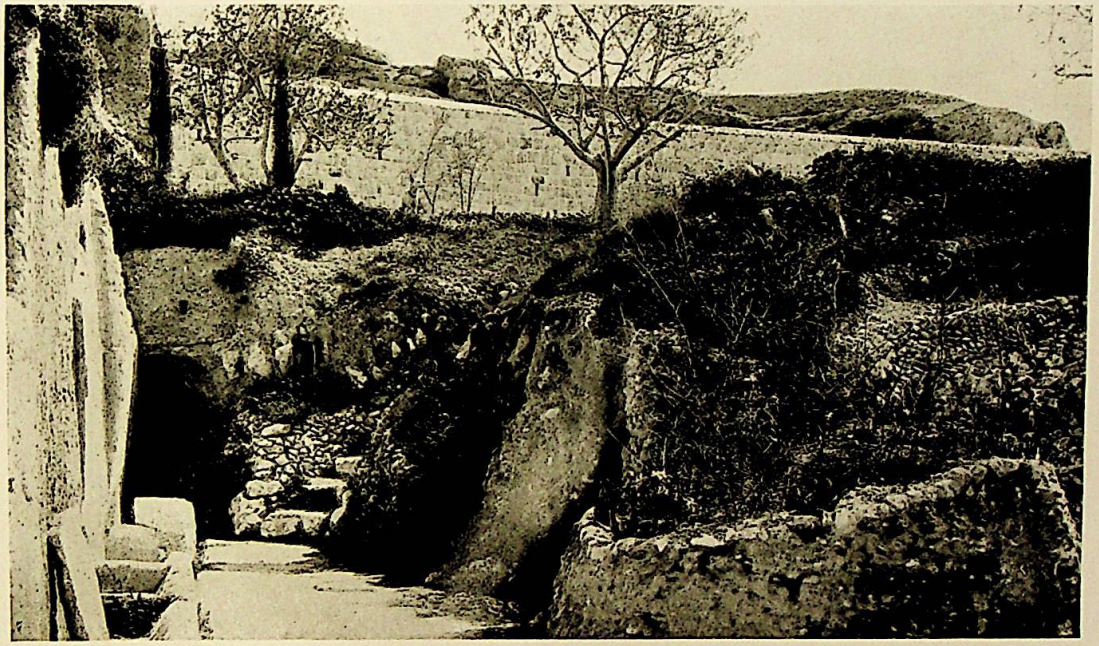
X

OUTSIDE A CITY WALL
THE GARDEN TOMB

THE next morning, which was the Jewish Sabbath, a murky sky hung low over the mongrel life of Jerusalem. Jewish shops were closed; but Mohammedan venders, the same as ever, sat shivering beside sliced masses of "Turkish delight" along the dark streets, called out with unctuous friendliness from stalls of garish dry goods and souvenir trumpery, pounded glumly on wares of leather, wood, metal, beside the wet little pavements. High over the cramped, dripping mass of houses Christian bells sounded now and then from cupola and tower; but their voices were broken, ending soon and mournfully. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her."

Our thoughts were of Jesus in his grave. All interest for us that morning centered at a spot outside the wall. It was a relief to enter its quietude.

It lies, this small garden, just below the hill of our narrative. A tomb is there, a tomb hewn out of a thick ledge at the garden's side. It has an upright entrance, a small window-like hole beside the door, and a deep groove cut along the entire base of the rock as if for a rolling stone to cover the door. Its length suggests that it was also for stones to close the doors of other tombs which were to be cut in this ledge. Indeed, surface cuttings noticeable on either side of the tomb hewn out seem to encourage this conjecture. This long trench started another fancy. Cross pieces of stone are now set along its length, and it is said that these point to its appropriation as a feeding place, perhaps by Cru-



THE GARDEN TOMB

Entrance at the upright opening in the ledge to the reader's left. Calvary in the background above the wall

saders when they came to rescue from alien hands yonder Church of the Holy Sepulchre within the walls. What dramatic impressiveness is in such a scene as that conjures up — men feeding their horses at this tomb, beside this hill, while striving to capture the place of their Master's cross and tomb, never dreaming that their horses were tethered at the spot where after-generations would find what they sought! Such is the drama of humanity.

Since this chamber was found and cleared of rubbish, a number of reputable scholars have come to the belief that this tomb beside the hill was the place where the body of Jesus was laid. In the French Dominican inclosure immediately adjoining it were tombs whereon striking inscriptions were found. These are to be seen in the Museum there. One of them reads, "To Nonus and Onesimus, Deacons of the Church of the Witness of the Resurrection of

Christ." Another bears in Greek these words, "Buried near his Lord." In the tomb's chamber are unmistakable marks of its religious use by Christians. For some reason this spot seems to have been distinguished in early Christian veneration. Beyond that, no man can speak as to the fact.

But this can be said with grateful confidence. This tomb answers to the details of the gospel narrative marvelously. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid." "And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed." This garden tomb is near "the place called a skull," and it is "hewn out in the rock," and it is a "new tomb," as the unfinished chisel-work plainly

shows, and it is a rich man's tomb — no doubt of that, for it was a costly undertaking to enter the front of such a ledge and chisel out a chamber so ample, with such complete accommodations for a family as are found there. But above all, in its appeal to the heart, it is in a quiet garden. Surely for the deeper realism of the spirit, the discernment of lifelike actuality in seeing Jesus laid in the tomb, this is the spot above all others. Here as nowhere else we may respond to the call, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Thither we went in the morning of the Jewish Sabbath, the day when Jesus lay entombed. How shall one give account of the emotions that

"Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,"

when, mindful of a buried Lord and the world of living griefs, he stands on such a morning at the tomb of Jesus? Let a bit of real life, a touch of human pathos, simple but suffi-

cient, stand for all the world's sorrow and longing.

PETER

The keeper was a tall, grizzled, slow-speaking man. His name was Peter. Another name he had, a European name, but his Christian name was Peter. Instantly when I heard that, remembering how of old Peter came to the Saviour's tomb, the name caught my ear and started a captivating fancy. I was eager to get the story of *Peter and the garden tomb*. Some day it may be told; but only the outline can be given now. He was a Dane, this Peter. In 1855 he found his way to America and wandered in our far West. Then he came to Palestine with his young wife. For five years he was a carpenter in Bethlehem. Then they became keepers of this garden and its tomb. There, in their little house among the bushes, after many years she died.

"I lost my wife — a while ago," the old man said on that Saturday morning of the Lord's entombment, "and I'm all alone here."

"Where is she buried?"

"Over by Zion Church — that's on Mount Zion. I'm goin' over there — to her grave — tomorrow mornin' — for Easter, you know."

At length as our acquaintance grew, into his lonely house we went, and he showed us her picture. He took it from the wall beside his cot. It was a face sweet with wifely goodness.

As I glanced into his shrunken, gray-bearded countenance, I thought how many hearts would turn to graves with the comfort of hope on the morrow — "for Easter, you know."

Jesus, how the remembrance of thee is embalmed in grieving loves the world over!

All that day and throughout the night there was rain and wind —

rain still when Easter morning broke — rain when I started to the garden tomb. But on the way, out came the sun! Mists took flight in the brightened air. Clouds parted to disclose heaven's plenitude. The small garden, impearled by myriad drops, was sparkling in the sunshine when I entered its walls, flowers filled it with perfume, birds chirped and sang little melodies of gladness.

I followed a path leading around by the keeper's cottage to the tomb. There were fresh footprints in the wet sand. My knock and low call brought no answer. Peter had gone to the grave on Mount Zion — "for Easter, you know."

EASTER MORNING AT THE TOMB

Feeling a strangely sweet sense of privilege, of personal right there, I went on among the bushes — passed down the steps — stood in the space before the tomb. The sunlight, coming over the top of Olivet, poured

into the wind-sheltered little hollow with joyous radiancy. How the birds twittered in trees and bushes up in the garden! And one kept singing a rapturous round, but in tones so mellow that it minded me of Easter joy which is ever softened by memories. Even the dripping in the open cistern under the natural rock at my feet was resonant and musical. The front of the rock in which the tomb is cut shone by reason of sunshine where rain had just been. All seemed touched with symbolic beauty.

With some difficulty I could peer into the tomb through the high window; but the door was shut and I had no key. I sat in a sunny niche to the west of the tomb on a slab under an arch in the ledge. Through a still half-hour memories of the first Easter morning held me in such reverie as scenes of earth may never vouchsafe again. And all the while morning sunshine was bright and warm in that nook by the tomb.

At length my thoughts were on Mary, how she stood without at the tomb weeping, how, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb — of the voice, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and of her words, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Suddenly I noticed that the sunshine had faded, clouds had returned. Soon it was raining again. In complete shelter I sat still, musing on the singular accompaniment to my thoughts which nature was rendering.

THE COMING OF A STRANGER

Presently I saw a man coming slowly down the steps at the further side. He was neatly dressed, had a fair face, blue eyes, and kindly bearing. Thoughts of him who came in the garden to meet Mary thrilled me.

The stranger was evidently surprised at sight of me. But he answered my "good morning" pleas-

antly in broken English. I arose and met him near the entrance to the tomb. Soon we began talking as Christian men would at such a spot on Easter morning. Speaking somewhat scrutinizingly, after a few moments he said, "Would you like to go inside? I can bring de key in half a moment, I tink."

Presently he returned and opened the door. I asked no questions. Together we entered the chamber. After silence, he began to speak of the impressive features there found — of the two places for bodies on either side set off by stone slabs resting on the floor, one of which was completed, the other unfinished; of a third place started in the rock between them for a smaller body; of marks in the wall as if for holding a raised slab; of the unfinished chiselwork; of the Christian symbols dimly traceable in color on the east wall.

Talking quietly, he said: "Vhen Christ vas crucified on de hill yonder,

vhat should be done? Perhaps verkmen might haf been even den at verk in dis tomb. In any case it vas not finished. See dose half-cut places. Yoseph of Aramathea loved him as ve know; and no udder place being ready, would say, 'Lay him in my new tomb — for a few days at least.' But vhy vas dis tomb not finished afterward? Perhaps Yoseph cared not to make change after vhat occurred in dat man's place, over here. Perhaps he cared not to lay any one here after dat. And you know it vas not long after dis dat Jerusalem vas destroyed. Den dis place vas losed like all de udder holy places. By and by Queen Helena located de church of de Holy Sepulchre. But no hill dhere — only a place of stairs built up; no tomb dhere — only a place of marble built up. Here all is like vhat is told in de Gospels."

While he was talking thus, my heart burned within me. When he

came to silence again, I said, "Shall we not have Easter morning prayer together?" His eyes met mine. He turned and pushed the door nearly shut. We knelt on the rock floor.

EASTER MORNING PRAYER

"You begin," he said. After I had uttered brief prayer, he, with his hands grasping the bars which divide the *loculi* for the dead from the antechamber, straightened his kneeling form and slowly prayed in these unforgotten words:

"Our beloved Jesu! Ve tank dhee dat thou vas dead for us; and dat de life vas brought fort for us by dhee. It has many times been to us as to thy furst disciples and Mary — she who vas veeping because she had losed dhee; and thou vas a dead Lord to us. Den de shadow buried us also! But thou did come to Mary and say, 'Mary!' so she knew thou vas not dead; and her joy came once

more. Our Jesu, say the same to us as thou did to Mary; speak de name of each of us, so ve shall know dhee, living not dead. Ve come here not seeking holy places and stones; ve come to find dhee, and receive dhee into our lifes. Give us dat joy in believing vhich shall send us out from dis place, vherever ve may go in de world, able to make udders belief dat de Lord is risen indeed. Amen."

Tears were on my face as we arose. I took his hand. It did not occur to me to ask his name; he seemed a representative of them that believe in Jesus among the many-tongued peoples of the earth, and so I let him remain. I looked into his fair face and said, "I am glad we met here." He smiled, and with hands still clasped answered, "I vish I could speak your English better. But God vill understand our prayers, I tink."

We opened the door and came out. The sun was shining, the garden

agleam. And from all the wondrous Syrian sky the clouds had rolled away.

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem"

IN Bethlehem the Lord of glory,
Who brought us life, first drew his breath;
On Golgotha, O bloody story!
By death he broke the power of death.
From western shores, all danger scorning,
I traveled through the lands of morning;
And greater spots I nowhere saw
Than Bethlehem and Golgotha.

Where are the seven works of wonder
The ancient world beheld with pride?
They all have fallen, sinking under
The splendor of the Crucified!
I saw them, as I wandered spying
Amid their ruins, crumbled lying;
None stand in quiet gloria
Like Bethlehem and Golgotha.

FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT

Bethlehem is to all the world one of the sweetest of words. . . . And the traveler today can view it with, perhaps, less shock to his feelings of reverence, certainly with a purer and simpler enjoyment, than any other place in Holy Land. He finds its ruggedness and desolateness picturesque, in the light of old song and story.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER,
In the Levant

XI

"LET US NOW GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM"

ONE morning during Holy Week in Jerusalem I chanced upon a captivating surprise. I was strolling on Olivet. The mounting sun had broken through persistent rain-clouds, and the valley toward the Jordan shone with a radiance that transformed its chaos. White vapors rose like altar incense from gorges here and there. All hills round about were lit revealingly, appearing near and distinct.

I was standing near the Russian bell-tower, taking to heart the cheer of the morning and the kindred joy of home thoughts started by looking down where the remains of Bethany lay among green trees. As

my eyes reveled in welcome disclosures in the wide view, passing from one elevation to another they came in the billowy expanse southward to the ridge topped by the Convent of Mar Elyas.

Suddenly I noticed unusual glinting on the slope of a hill beyond. It was houses in the morning's brightness, a village showing out behind the convent ridge, with an oddly rounded mount looming beyond it. Only a bit of the town was in view. Soon my heart leaped. Was it a first glimpse of the dearest town on earth — the goal of our journey?

I had read in many writings that the village of the manger and the city of the cross were invisible to each other though near together, but never that any view of Bethlehem might be obtained from the mount beside Jerusalem. It was a fair vision, and I still indulge the hope that my eyes were not deceived, that it was indeed houses of

Bethlehem shining in morning light; for afterward I repeatedly saw the tower on Mount Olivet from the region of Bethlehem and marked how the town lies under the frown of that oddly rounded mountain. At any rate, when Easter had brought its culmination to a week of awe and pathos, how keen was my desire for Bethlehem! Those words of the shepherds were sounding in my ears, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see."

Eschewing the clattering carriages that go from the Jaffa Gate in the city's west wall, out of the confusion there I chose a pondering little beast, problematical in aspect but covered with a capacious saddle and to all appearances disposed to silence. With him I set off under the moat-walls rising to the ancient towers called the Citadel of David, along the road leading down into a valley, across a bridge, and over the hills south of the city.

A grunting, shouting donkey-boy emerged from the babel at the place of starting and came hotfoot to belabor my small fellow-creature, startling the rider more than the ridden by his onslaughts. At length I perceived with dismay that he meant to attend us all the way — a vociferous presence robbing the journey of nearly everything I sought there. The shambling donkey, pensive and unhasting and of the old East a part, was quite to my liking; but that lad astern was intolerably tourist-bred and enterprising. Yet he appeared unable to comprehend any of the protestations in my power that his services were not desired.

The donkey seemed to understand, however; at last he headed about amid the jangle of our voices and joined me calmly enough in refusing to budge, while I gesticulated and cried, "Imshi," until the youth vanished on his reluctant way back to the city gate. Then we two, the

donkey and I, turned our faces from Jerusalem and silently took the road.

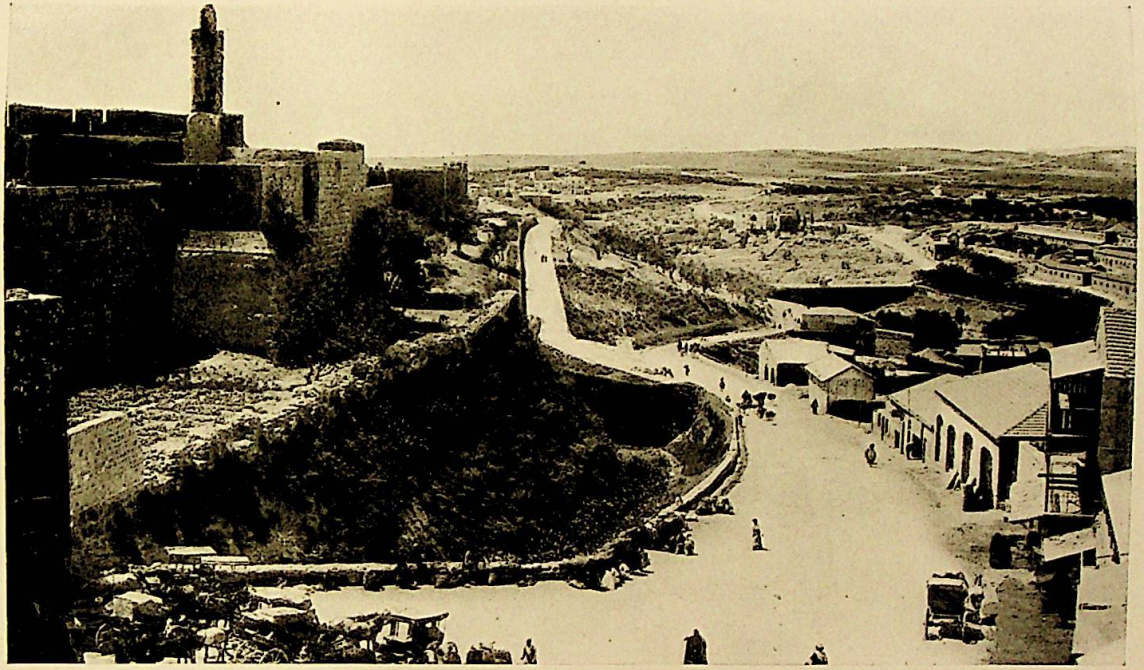
What musing held him in spell as he footed along the highway in leisurely quiet, this pen cannot record. As for myself, the dream of life from youth up came true; for I was on the way to Bethlehem with eyes and mind open to all mystic charms and soon to behold its hallowed actualities.

A gray-bearded shepherd bearing a tall staff with the old-time round crook returned my greeting as he trudged by. A Greek priest with a portly person crowned by a high, square-topped, black cap, and clad in a robe that covered all but the head and legs of a mount like mine, outdid my salute while his feet dangled idly near those that were serving him. Peasant women and girls, their erect heads balancing bundles of sticks, skins of milk or cheese, trays of olive wood or mother-

of-pearl trinkets, hushed their rippling talk and glided by with modest glances or dropped eyes. But of none who passed us did the donkey seem aware, save that he rather suddenly gave the whole road to a train of mouthing, sweating camels that came striding in gaunt line laden with huge netfuls of earthenware.

Meanwhile the joy of the way to Bethlehem was a deepening reality for me. The six-mile road rises gradually from the bridge down in the valley below Jerusalem to a point about half-way to Bethlehem. It runs along a broad ridge. Valleys fall away from it with hills crowding beyond them. It is as if this venerable highway were set in reverent contemplation by nature. This impression became a solemn and delightful verity, deepening the charm of the landscape.

From the start a long slope covered with plowed fields, vineyards, orchards, flanks the road on the right,



THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

The Jerusalem wall and Tower of David to the reader's left, the road winding off to the right passing the Convent of Mar Elyas in the upper corner to the right

running down to a small plain, beyond which stand hills that hide the Mediterranean.

On the left the highlands that uplift the road wall it in for a while. But at the so-called Well of the Magi they open enough to disclose a great valley with glimpses of the Dead Sea; then they shut off the view as they rise to the summit marked afar by the Convent of Mar Elyas. This is half-way. Jerusalem is still seen, and Bethlehem suddenly comes into view. Abruptly the highlands halt. A deep, wide-sweeping valley opens to the left of the road. It is as if nature would do her best to pay obeisance before Bethlehem!

What a valley it is! Down, down, run the long terraces decked with grape-vines, fig trees, olive trees. Old towers, some round, some square, all of stone, show out in the green of fields below where thirty centuries ago the grain of Boaz grew. Low, rambling stone walls

checker all slopes and deep expanses. Then breaking into bare hills, crags, chasms, this valley sinks to the Dead Sea thirty-eight hundred feet below, a narrow sheen forty-seven miles in length and some ten hours of rough riding away. A long blue haze overhangs those waters; and beyond in solemn distance loom the Mountains of Moab veiled in purple.

Around the top of such a valley, while Jerusalem vanishes from sight, the road circles until it ascends to Bethlehem set high on its unshared hill. Could nature do more to honor the place of Messiah's birth!

How many hearts have throbbed while eyes gazed from this road by Mar Elyas toward yonder little town! It seems to lie apart, hidden away from the manhood ways of Jesus, in seclusion all its own, in the pure haze of southern hills, in an atmosphere of sweet romance. The poetry of the gospels gathered about the birth and infancy, finding

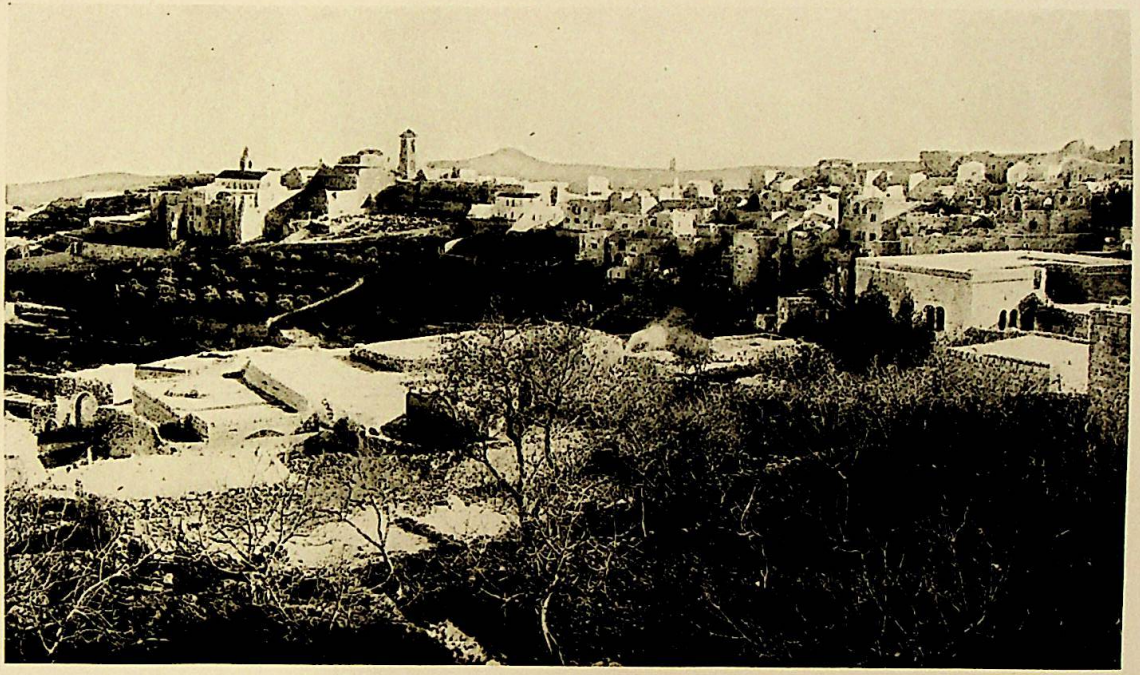
expression in those songs cherished by all Christendom — the Magnificat, the Gloria in Excelsis — has a distinctive natural setting at Bethlehem.

Besides that, an enchantment lingers there from the history of the region which is altogether unique and characteristic. The idyllic story of Jacob, whose first-loved Rachel died at the birth of their Benjamin and was buried "there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem," is brought to mind by the small structure called Rachel's Tomb at the side of the road as it rounds the rim of the valley. The exquisite pastoral of Ruth, the Moabitess, whose native mountains rise through the haze over the Dead Sea yonder — did not her young widowhood prove faithful in love while she gleaned among the barley reapers down there in this still valley? The epic story of Ruth's great-grandson, ruddy David, the young shepherd

"withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon," he whose sling-stone smote down Goliath, he who was anointed king, made Jerusalem glorious, and sang songs of all souls — this, too, clings about these hills and vales.

And David's last great Son! The story of Mary and her little Jesus, with its singing angels, its hurrying shepherds, its manger cradle, its bowing Wise Men, its rush of Herod's soldiers, its wail of empty breasts, its flight over the desert southward of one mother still nestling her Babe, the cautious return and alarmed departure with the Child forever — this story, blending its radiance and shadow with all else there, finds a natural and altogether dramatic setting in the hills and valleys of Bethlehem.

Even amid such loveliness of scene and association, the shadow of tragedy is most deftly thrown in the picture's completeness. Yonder, be-



BETHLEHEM

The Church of the Nativity in central background with Frank Mountain, the burial-place of Herod, beyond

yond the little town, looming in the sky-line, forever lowering over Bethlehem, is seen the eminence now called the Frank Mountain. Its curious shape, like a truncated cone, draws the eye. Well it may; for this was the Herodium of old, the burial-place of that monster king whose slaying of Bethlehem's boy babes terrorized all hearts in the village while Jesus was borne away untouched as yet by death. Josephus, the historian of that time, significantly speaks of it as shaped like a mother's breast. Twice he uses this strange comparison. I wonder whether there is in this a subtle register of what was in the historian's mind—a dim disclosure of the memory of those bereft breasts in Bethlehem. However that may be, there it is, bared to the sky, an awesome form beside the beauty of the place where Jesus was born.

I cannot tell what this road and the view of Bethlehem meant to me

better than by recording that four days were given to contemplation there — sometimes afoot all the way with not even the donkey present, roaming at will, viewing the charmful natural outlook, pondering the past, watching scenes of present life, and at last watching the movement of the stars in that sacred sky as I returned to the city.

Coming thither after traversing the land of Jesus from the north, pondering his manhood until it culminated outside the walls of Jerusalem, was like approaching the source whence flows a serving river whose windings, enriching all its way with new life, have been followed back to a clear fountain. Of the spring's sweet waters one deeply drinks, thinking all the while of the river.

Following the road around the top of the eastward valley, you look down on the magical expanse until you ascend a gentle slope under a

cliff that rises sheer above the road on its west side, making it like a shelf above the valley. Thus you come into Bethlehem itself.

Oh, how commonplace it seems! Small, old stone houses close against a narrow, crooked street that leads off to the right — the click and clatter and scrapping of mother-of-pearl and olive-wood workmen seen in dingy shops as you peer through open doors or arches — the gurgle of guttural voices often rough with irritation as herdsmen or shepherds or priests shuffle by — the babble of children or the calls of their mothers in doorway or passage or amid the street's clutter — the rattle of a cabman's wheels from Jerusalem — the patter of sheep and goats, or the dank presence of stalking camels, or the patient push of a laden donkey making way while his master prods him astern and utters that weird call of the East, "Unnh, unnh!" Such is Bethlehem at first.

You try to realize that through these streets the shepherds trod, that night when they came up the slope from the pastures in search of the place where lay "a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" — yes, these very streets, for there is no deep burying of the ancient roadways on this hill-top by a city's wreckage and rubbish as at Jerusalem. Perhaps in your heart is sounding the song of Christmas musings in far America,

> "O little town of Bethlehem,
> How still we see thee lie!"

and you try to repeat the words,

> "Yet in thy dark streets shineth
> The everlasting Light;
> The hopes and fears of all the years
> Are met in thee tonight."

How strange it seems, with that song's sweetness in your thoughts, to watch tousle-haired children quit their play by unclean thresholds to scurry round you, murmuring some beggar phrase with their dirty little

hands lifted to you — to hear peasant mothers chattering inside the dark houses or in the jostled street — to face the ingratiating palaver of a store's hawker, a trinket seller, a pestiferously persistent guide to the places charmed by the Christ Child!

But there is no escape. This winding street, scarcely more than alley-wide, is the only thoroughfare. Diminutive side streets open here and there, up or down the slope whereon the houses are crowded; but they are blind alleys for the most part, too rough and crooked save for foot or hoof. I ventured to look into a sunken door close beside one of these. Deep in the dark at the lower side of a sloping earth floor, two villagers, a man and a woman, were squatted by a tiny fire against the wall, eating a bit of breakfast while the smoke curled out of the darkness to escape at the room's only opening where I stood; and a camel's munching lips and breath-

ing nostrils were raised dim in the gloom. Soon I returned to follow the main street.

One thing catches the eye and touches the heart pleasingly even in that street. It is the singular beauty of children's faces. Their tangled hair often falls over eyes that are like jewels. Their features are fair-tinted, ruddy. And matching this, true to nature's way in such matters, many of the women, though by no means all, are seen to be oval-faced, full-eyed, of ampler countenance and richer complexion that elsewhere. Nowhere else in Palestine does one see such women and children as in Bethlehem. It is said that Crusader blood has something to do with this. Be that as it may, what a striking survival of an ancient town trait this is amid the peasant life long huddled there — this fair, human richness of countenance in the womanhood and childhood of the town where Rachel and Ruth and

Mary became mothers, the birthplace of Ben-oni, David, Jesus! Mother and child are the mind's delight in Bethlehem.

The pitiful concealment of woman's face observed almost everywhere in the Levant finds no yielding to its thraldom on this hill. No black veils cover the countenances of Bethlehem women; their peasant comeliness is not hidden by an upraised arm before a man's eyes. Yet modesty is evident. Virtue is a treasure prized above life.

The pleasant effect of this emancipation is heightened by a fashion in head-dress peculiar to Bethlehem. Married women honor their state by it. Over a plain, brimless hat, shaped high like a fez and set back on the hair, with burnished coins or semblances thereof tinkling on the front, is thrown a muslin or linen scarf of some fair color, often white, which falls over the shoulders and back, framing the uncovered face.

Even an ordinary countenance is given singular dignity by this Bethlehem masterpiece in womanly art; a face and form blest with beauty are set in most graceful array. And poor though they are, the women of Bethlehem wear a garment many-colored and bright, which is peculiar to their town and altogether striking in contrast with the somber clothing of Palestine women elsewhere. But the finest token of their full, vital quality is the child-beauty which catches the stranger's eyes here and there about their poor dwellings.

Not with light fancy does the traveler observe all this in the small street entering Bethlehem. His heart has need of such stimulation. The spell of the beautiful valley eastward is shut out by the houses. Reverent gladness wanes. That petty, half-modernized street, though less squalid than most Palestine towns, seems to mock one's musings. There is great reason to repeat the

BETHLEHEM MARKET-PLACE

Entrance from the Jerusalem road in the narrow opening to right of tower, whence one looks across market-place to the Church of the Nativity

watchword of Palestine travel, "Do not belittle your mood." The surprising beauty of many mothers and children helps to keep the heart aglow. For what could be more in keeping with that town's charm!

But the little street is circling round the top of the hidden valley, and it is only a few hundred yards long. Soon it bends to the left. At that turn a young mother carrying her babe in arms passed me without so much as a glance, seemingly absorbed in her little one. It was toying with her married woman's head-scarf. I saw it press a gleeful kiss on the mother's cheek. So in high heart I followed the turn of the street between huddled stone houses, in search of the place where Jesus Christ was born!

Presently the street emerges into a small market square. At first eyes and ears are caught by the jumble and chatter. It is a country village scene of petty hubbub. Merriment

and bickering, enterprise and beggary, genial gossip and strident quarreling over a spilt skin of milk, charcoal and oranges, olive-wood rosaries and chunks of Turkish delight, mutton and cheese and bundles of sticks for firewood, donkeys and camels, goats and dogs, women and children, shepherds, herdsmen, farmers, cabmen, priests, Turkish soldiers, a carnival of colors, a riot of sounds — it is like a scene of comedy as a noble drama nears its climax, this piping clutter of peasant life in Bethlehem on a market day.

It was disconcerting at first, seeming wholly out of keeping with all thoughts of Bethlehem. But as I watched the jostle and self-interest of the crowd, the scene took deeper meaning. It became no longer comedy but the realistic setting of the drama's most pathetic episode. Was it not even so on this very hill when, weary and great with child, Mary came up the slope into Beth-

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

Entrance at end of paved area, to left of tower. The gravestones are on the edge of the terraced valley

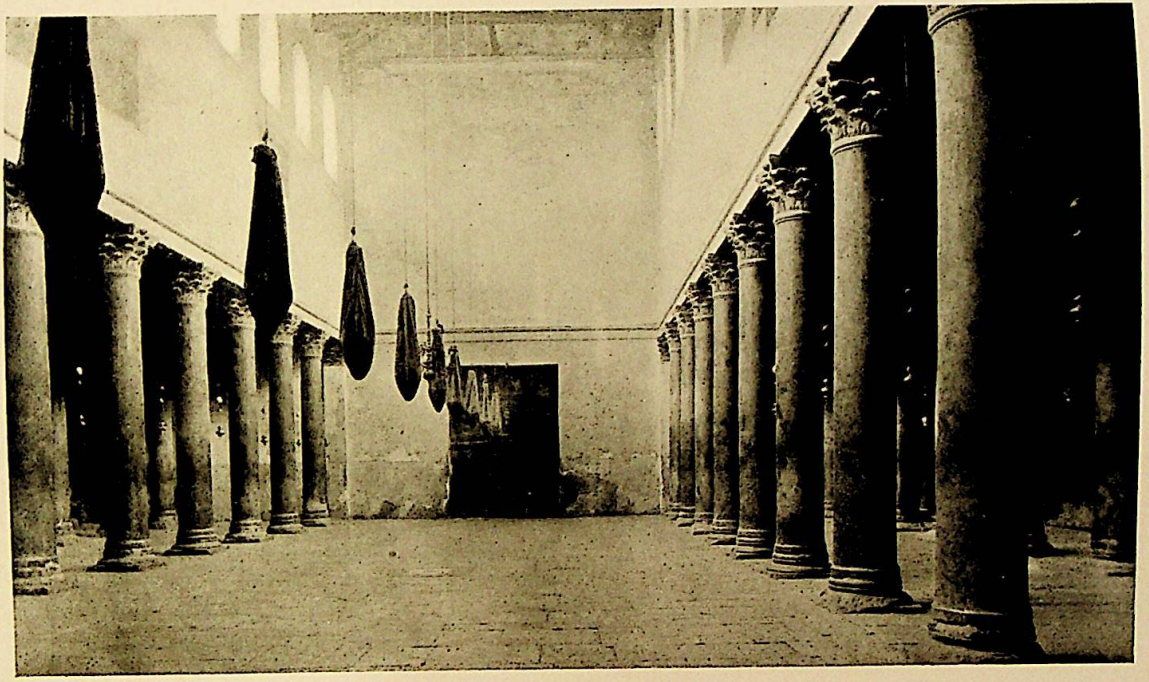
lehem, and "there was no room in the inn"?

Beyond the market's confusion one observes a fortress-like pile of buildings. They are somber, grim, huge. They stand somewhat apart from the village, on the abrupt end of the hilltop, as it were at the horn of a flat saddle, the market square being midway in the seat, the village houses on the raised back of the saddle. A long, open space, paved with stone, kept free from the market crowd by a Turkish patrol, runs from the village square to a low door in the central structure of the massed pile. That paved area was once the atrium or entrance hall; that door, made small by masonry to keep out Moslem invaders, is now the way into the Church of the Nativity. The structures crowded around the old church are monasteries of Greeks, Latins, and Armenians.

When the traveler has made his escape from the market's besetments

to the patrolled area, suddenly on his left the great valley eastward again opens before his gaze. It has swept around the extension of the hill over which he entered the town, to spread its beautiful depths close beside Bethlehem, under the very walls of its ancient church. Its green terraces are seen circling down at the traveler's feet. Yonder in its deep expanse are the fields of Boaz, the watchtowers, the sheep pastures, the far sweep to sea and mountains. The spell of nature's homage betokened in the landscape around Bethlehem is with you once more. You enter the church with the awe of the past encompassing all.

The vast, stone-floored interior deepens the spirit's hush. What simplicity, what hoary, spectral grandeur! Double rows of pillars, each hewn from a single stone, forty-four in all, stand stark and guard-like between the high-roofed nave and low-vaulted aisles, white veined,



INTERIOR OF CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

The door at end of nave leads to the transept seen in the next picture

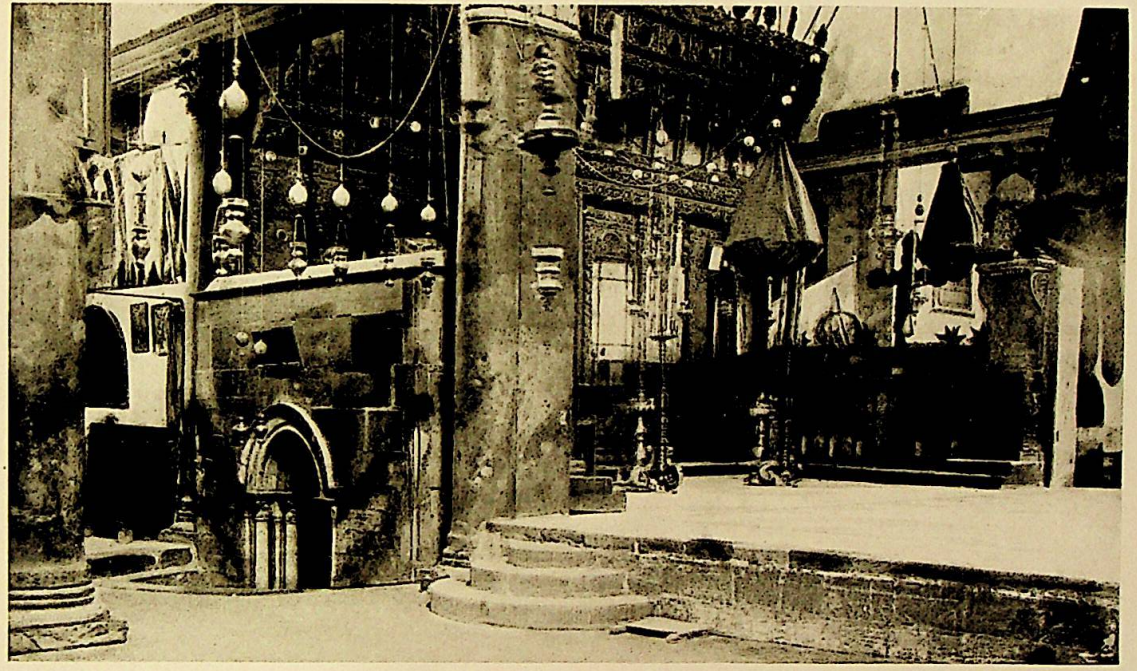
a cross carved at the top of each, crests of Crusaders cut on the sides of some.

Bare and gaunt it is, this most ancient sacred edifice of Christendom. Sixteen centuries have spent their havoc upon it since the first Christian emperor or his mother Helena caused its walls to be reared. Its glory of gilding and color are gone; the ceiling with beams from the cedars of Lebanon, repaired five centuries ago by English devotion with English oak, dim mosaics, inscriptions, these are there; but how like a skeleton it is! A font standing in the bareness has an inscription signifying that it was given by those "whose names are known to the Lord." What hosts of devotees to this house have vanished! Yet still it stands, grimly majestic in its desolateness, this witness to a belief running back through nearly eighteen centuries as attested by authentic writings, and constant in all genera-

tions. Of all the traditions as to sacred spots in Palestine, this alone extends unquestionably and without variation beyond Constantine and his pious mother, that Jesus was born in a cave on this narrow end of the Bethlehem hilltop.

Surely, somewhere on this circumscribed area, in the little gray town there fixed twenty centuries before and twenty centuries after its glorification, the birthplace of Jesus was. The traveler may walk across the broken slabs to the worn, circular stairway descending below the floor at its further end, confident that he is within a few steps of the spot where the manger received the Babe. Why be concerned as to whether this was the identical grotto? Hereabout, somewhere in the keeping of this hill's steadfast rock, is the place where the shepherds found the Christ Child. Is not that enough to hallow all and crown our quest?

Come, you who have journeyed



ENTRANCE TO CAVE OF THE NATIVITY

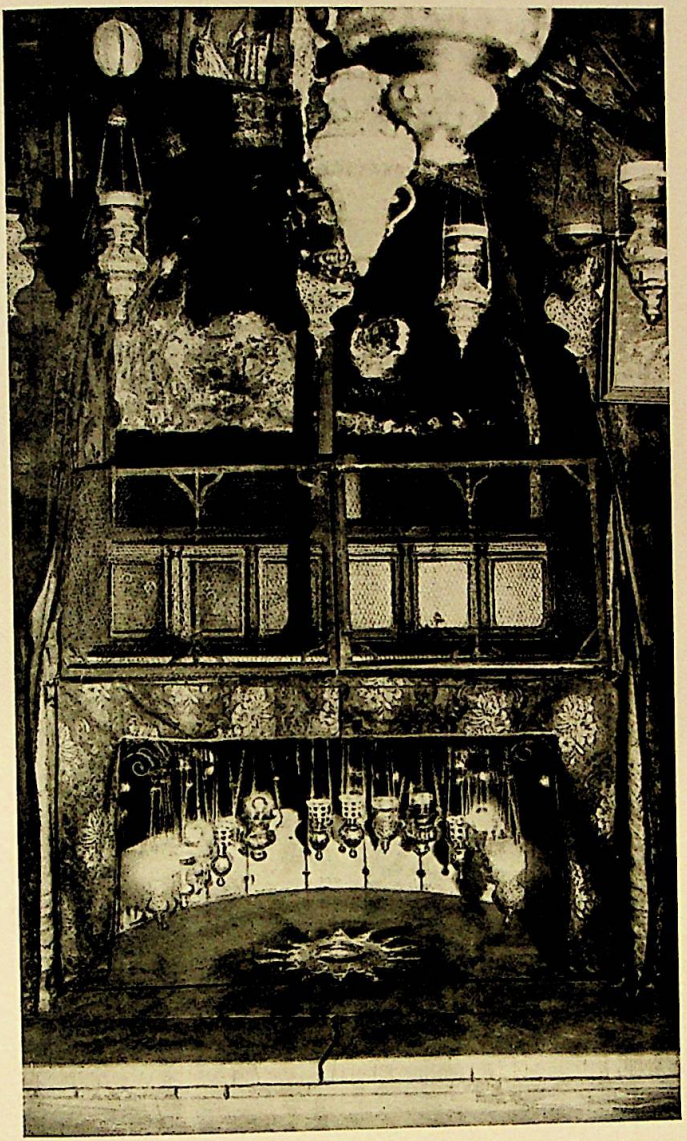
The descent is at the arched door below the floor (the higher floor is the transept)

with me "even unto Bethlehem," let me take your hands while we go down these steps. Tread cautiously; their hollows are deep and worn smooth. Think not jestingly or reproachfully of this. The feet of Crusaders, saints, scholars, kings, the far-tramping feet of countless poor pilgrims, have made them so. Be not unmindful of the footprints left where you step.

The passage is dark and winding and close. But come on, come and look into this small cavern. In the dim light of pendent lamps it has the appearance of a monastic little chapel all underground. Those old tapestries cover marble walling the cave; the floor is overlaid with marble. Yonder a dark passage leads off somewhere; these steps descend to some nook — ah, in it is a Bambino in a marble manger!

This glowing recess with a slightly raised floor and heavy curtains drawn aside — come, let us stand

together before it. A little altar above — lamps hanging underneath — in a semi-circle — fifteen — all burning — floor slabs warm and bright in their light, and set with a silver star. How it shines! Those Latin words round it? — "*Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born.*"



THE GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY

A Memory on Christmas Eve

GOOD King Wenceslas look'd out
On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about
Deep, and crisp, and even;
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine;
Bring me pine-logs hither;
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament,
And the bitter weather.

OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

XII

A MEMORY ON CHRISTMAS EVE

ONCE more the night wind round our New England home is laden with the music of Christmas Eve. In boyhood they seemed like magic presences calling through the dark, these bells proclaiming Christmas; and blithe were their voices in the clangor. But deeper than the thrill of childhood's wonder is the sense of verity wakened tonight by their tuneful pealing over the snowy town. For in my heart is this memory of the little town among Judea's hills.

One day while I was roaming about Bethlehem I chanced to find a peasant's dwelling which was a cave-house, stone walls inclosing

a recess in the rock of the hill. A small cow and some chickens were snug at the back of the rock-floored room wherein granny was grinding grain for bread before the fireplace. It was just outside the buildings joined to the Church of the Nativity, only a little way down the slope; yet how hidden from the throngs that visit the grotto under the church! It will always mean more to me than its venerated neighbor with the marble and lamps and star. For in it were the poor comforts of a Bethlehem home, and a mother's face, and a baby — the natural reality of the scene on that first Christmas Eve.

They received me kindly there, stranger though I was. Little by little and with careful pleasantry I saw all, bowing and smiling my thanks as I handled earthen water jars, turned the worn stone of the handmill, or spread my hands genially in the fireplace. When I

came upon the cow in the room's dark recess and a hen or two with a few chicks ran between my feet, I laughed until even granny was merry with the others. But little they knew what thoughts were in the stranger's mind as he struck a match and peered into the dark where the cow lay.

While the old woman held the babe its mother brought me a small brass can of oil with a wick. So there was a bit of lamplight in this cave also.

Beside the cow I found a hollow in the wall — a feeding place. While I eagerly passed my hands over it, the young mother, holding her babe once more and lifting the lamp that I might see, smiled with pleasure. What a picture that was — mother and child in the lamp's beaming, while I bent over a real manger in Bethlehem!

But deeper than its human appeal were the thoughts this sight started.

Could it be that Jesus Christ was laid in a manger, indeed, yet in a home instead of a stable? Suddenly the mother spoke Arabic and merrily beckoned me. A lad of Bethlehem who was my companion understood and explained in broken English. In an apartment up several stone steps she laid her child in a wooden cradle and stood pointing thereat with oriental exuberance of pleasure. It was clear that the manger and the cradle were associated in her mind somehow — yes, and the babe was the bond uniting them. Soon I saw that a mother's heart had given me subtle but unerring guidance to a discovery. That discovery is now uppermost in my memory of days in Bethlehem.

I was not then aware that the peasants of Palestine lay little ones in mangers which are inside their dwellings. Such travelers as Thomson and Tristram long ago noted this fact and its bearing on the story

of Christ's birth; but my eyes were holden until now.

By a blunder, due to western ways of life perhaps, we think of a stable as the birthplace of our Saviour, because it is written that Mary's Child was laid in a manger. But in Palestine animals are housed with the peasant family, mangers are often in the homes. Both the characteristic hospitality and the immemorial customs of the lowly there exclude such neglect as our understanding implies. When the gospel's narrative is interpreted true to the life of the land its meaning is this, that Mary and her Babe were given such shelter and comfort as the peasants have in their homes and gladly share with strangers. The manger and the swaddling-clothes go together in the story.

If that be true, what then? As I think of it on Christmas Eve in my far homeland of the West, next to the sense of reality in the story of the

Saviour's birth, this is the dearest truth learned in Bethlehem. For it bears witness to the good side which is surely in our human nature. It is, in fact, the dim beginning of all the glowing kindness that now brightens Christmastide.

Who would not wish to see this and make it known — to bring to light such a hidden beauty in the story of the first Christmas? How it deepens the meaning of all the good deeds we do under the influence of this happy time! How it points to a natural, inherent warrant in our humanity for the hope that the good-will we attain at Christmas may yet broaden to all the days of our life! For the manger, instead of witnessing to the selfishness of common life, now becomes a symbol of reassurance, testifying that when heaven's love sent us a Saviour, the kindness which is surely in our world in spite of all else did not so utterly fail to manifest itself that the

mother who brought him forth was left outside our common human tenderness. No, bad as we often are, we at least do not treat mother and child like that. There is some good-will on earth to match the goodness of heaven, some love among men to warrant God's love for men. He knows us well; he chose the surest way to the good that abides in us when he sent the Saviour as a Babe; and human nature did not fail to be kind to the Mother and Child. This is the true meaning of the manger — the very opposite of what our erring thought has made it mean.

The clearing vision of humanity which marks our time may well welcome the manger to its true significance in the Bethlehem story. It has a message for us — a message of vital worth. In truth, the manger signifies in man something akin to what the cross signifies in God. It was the first humble token given to

Jesus of the good that God saw in our fallen nature when he sent him to be our Saviour. How the tokens thereof have multiplied since then under the influence of him whom God gave us in Bethlehem!

All this bestirring of ourselves at Christmas to give gifts and do deeds of good-will, what is it and whence does it come? It has fullest meaning as the celebration of what God did for men in the gift of Jesus. But the beauty of even that significance is deepened when we may trace it all back to its simple, spontaneous beginning in what was done on the very night when Christ was born in crowded Bethlehem. Then what we now do testifies also with growing scope to the good in men which gave God hope when he sent us a Saviour; it brings out radiantly human nature's better side and bids us share the hope of God.

There is reason enough — who does not know it? — for solemn

thoughts on Good Friday, and great is their saving power. Blessed is the brightness of Easter with its hopes and assurance of immortality. But Christmas, too, has a high place in each year of human salvation, in the experience of all lovers of Jesus. It has always been a time of human kindness, of gladdening the life that now is by good-will and deeds of love, of realizing here and now something of the heavenly life to which Jesus is ever drawing us. We shall make it so all the more heartily and understandingly when we see aright the meaning of the manger as well as of the Babe — see that it betokens not selfishness but human tenderness, not neglect but instinctive kindness, when as yet none knew the gift of God.

Blessings on you, little Bethlehem mother who led me to see this. You knew not what you did, even as they knew not on that first Christmas Eve. But whenever I hear the

Christmas bells as the years go on, I shall think of you, whose name I know not, as one of those "whose names are known to the Lord." And as I watch and share the gladness of Christmastide, its merry secrecies of kindness and love, its mystic waking of hearts to good-will and the ways of human nature at its best, I shall always ponder with delight that scene in your Bethlehem long ago — how, when there was no room in the inn, some one, perhaps a woman like you in a home like yours on that selfsame hill, took Mary and gave her shelter from the wintry weather. Even so, through deeds of kindness it still comes to pass that the life of Jesus Christ on earth begins where we dwell.