

critical moment, a friendly voice sounded to him from the crowd, coming undoubtedly from the queen: "Ride over the field and not over the road." The advice was at once complied with and the consequence was that the rider came home a few minutes before the imps arrived. For the field had been ploughed, and as steel is a mighty talisman against all kinds of imps, they had no power to pursue the rider over the field, but had to follow the road.

As soon as our hero arrived in the stable he placed himself under the horse and waited for developments. The fiends were soon there. They first asked very humbly for their horn and whistle, for these were the only means by which they could continue their celebrations of Yule. But their supplications did not avail. A fierce battle followed. But our hero was well defended by the noble animal, and the ugly little enemies received such blows from the iron-clad hoofs, that a number of them tumbled to the ground and vanished. It is uncertain, however, how the unique conflict between the horse and hundreds of imps would have ended, had not the midnight hour arrived; for the noble animal soon became exhausted in the uneven fight. But it struck twelve o'clock. The raging imps fled in all directions. Our hero was safe, and the estate was never again troubled with the supernatural Christmas visitors.

The horn and the whistle were kept in the mansion as the greatest curiosities, and may be there still, unless they should have been conveyed to some national museum for better safe-keeping.

Written for this Paper.

BETHLEHEM TO-DAY.

WASHINGTON, December 21st, 1893.—On this day, the day before Christmas, I want you to take a trip with me to the birthplace of Christ. I visited it a few years ago, and the notes of my pencil and my camera lie before me. The sweet face of a Bethlehem Madonna looks up at me from my table as I write, and photographs of Bethlehem shepherds in their sheepskin coats, registered by my camera only a year or so ago, make me think of those famous shepherds who first saw the star the night before Christ came. They watch their flocks on the same plains today, and in coming to Bethlehem from Jerusalem I drove right over the fields upon which they lay and saw the star.

THE JUDEA OF TODAY.

Palestine is much the same now as it was nineteen hundred years ago. The greatness of its history has magnified its size, and it is hard to appreciate how small it is. You could lose it in one of the counties of Texas. You could ride across it in a few hours on a railroad train, and today a second class ticket from Joppa to Jerusalem costs you only a dollar. Between the seacoast and the mountains lie the rich lands of the Philistines. They are the famed plains of Sharon, and they are twenty miles wide and sixty miles long. The mountains of Judea would be lost in the Alleghamies or the Rockies, and the Mount of Olives is so small that you can go out of Jerusalem, walk past the Garden of Gethsemane and be at its top in an hour. Standing here you can look clear across Palestine. On a bright day you can see the thin, silvery Jordan tied as a string

to the great tin pan of the Dead sea on your left, and the vast, sparkling Mediterranean away over the plains of Sharon on the right. King David made a great fuss about his all-day's trip from Jerusalem to the Jordan, but the distance is only fourteen miles, and the Sabbath day's journey from the Holy City to Bethlehem is not more than six miles. The Jews dealt in big figures. They looked upon everything concerning themselves or their people through the right end of the opera glass, and their imagery is truly oriental. The probability is that Judea never had a very large population, and it is very doubtful whether Jerusalem was a large city in comparison with the great capitals of today. It now contains just about 40,000 souls, and the walls around it inclose less than a half section of land. You could crowd the whole city on a good-sized farm, and Bethlehem covers hardly more than a garden patch.

A LOOK AT JERUSALEM.

Both towns lie in the hills of Judea, and they will show you in Jerusalem just where Herod lived when he got excited about the coming of Christ and massacred the innocents. I walked over the same floor upon which Pontius Pilate stood when he gave up the Lord to be crucified. The walls of Jerusalem are thirty-eight feet high. They would reach to the top of a four story house, and they run around Jerusalem cutting it out in the shape of a diamond. Outside of these walls the steep hills run down on every side and across the valleys formed by these you see other hills, and the whole country is rolling. The big diamond inside the wall is filled with a mass of box-shaped limestone houses, built one on top of the other and crowded into streets which cut each other at all sorts of angles. The roofs of the houses are flat. There are no chimneys and no windows. Many of their rooms look like vaulted caves, floored, walled and ceiled with stone, and those which open on the street are of this character. The streets have no sidewalks, and the shops are merely holes in the wall. The streets are vaulted and winding, and in going through them you think of the catacombs and appear to be going through long vaulted caves. The town is so densely populated that one room often constitutes a house for a family and these narrow streets are packed with people of all descriptions. They are so narrow that no carriage can enter Jerusalem, and in going to Bethlehem I had to walk from my hotel through the city and out of David's gate before I could get a conveyance.

"A SABBATH DAY'S JOURNEY."

The ride from Jerusalem to Bethlehem can be made in less than an hour. It is one of the most interesting journeys of the world, and it is through a most interesting country. Outside the walls of Jerusalem you find many new houses. They have grown up since the building of the railroad and the Holy City has had a suburban real estate boom. These houses are of limestone. They have no gardens about them and the white walls and the white dusty roads as they glare in the winter sun are painful to the eye. About the gate you find camels with dark faced Bedouins upon them. They have guns with them and they scowl at you as you pass by. Here are ragged farmers on donkeys with their black and

white blankets hanging from their necks down over their bodies and half covering the animals they ride. Now you go by Russian pilgrims, who are on their way into Jerusalem to worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and here pass turbaned Mohammedans, who scowl at you. There are plenty of beggars. A bare footed Turk with a crate on his back yells out Bachsheesh and behind him stand the Turkish soldiers with guns in their hands and with swords at their sides. It is a noisy crowd and you are glad when you have gotten your way through it and out in the country.

AMONG THE SHEPHERDS.

My trip to Bethlehem was made in the spring. The hills were then dotted with olive groves, whose leaves shone like frosted silver under the bright sun of Palestine, and the plains through which the road passed were covered with grass as green as that of old Ireland. These were the plains on which the shepherds lay when they saw the star, and there the shepherds graze their sheep today. I saw perhaps a dozen bearded men in sheepskin coats who were watching their flocks on these Judean hills, and their eyes were kind, and their faces full of character.

In one place I saw a family of four, a husband and wife and two children which might have represented the Holy Family, with the addition of John the Baptist. One child sat in the mother's arms, another squatted cross legged on the ground, while the father lay on his elbow and looked curiously at me as I drove by. The faces of all were fine, and you will see nowhere more striking features than those of these natives of Palestine.

It is out in the country districts of Palestine that you realize that you are in the lands of the Scriptures. I saw a dozen old men during the journey whose patriarchal faces and long white beards remind me of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and an old turbaned Syrian wearing a long beard who rode behind me on a donkey made me wonder if he was not a second Balaam, and why his long-eared beast did not open its mouth and speak. Away off at the back I was shown the site of the town of Mizpah, where the Prophet anointed Saul as king when he was out hunting his father's asses, and the inn into which Christ turned to break bread when he conversed incognito with two of his apostles was shown to me. The site is now occupied by a Greek wine shop, with a billiard table as an accompaniment, and it is within a few miles of the spot where "David with his little stone the great Goliath slew. I passed this place in going to Bethlehem, and I find that there are plenty of stones there still, and a lusty, bear-headed Syrian youth was playing among them, though I did not note that he had the sling of his mighty ancestor. It was not far from this point that I rode through the identical land which was owned by Boaz, the richest farmer of this day, when he fell in love with Ruth, and disgusted his neighbors by marrying out of his sphere.

THE GIRLS OF BETHLEHEM.

I don't wonder that Boaz fell in love with Ruth. The Bethlehem girls are among the beauties of the east and you will find more pretty girls in the hills of