

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## JENSON'S TRAVELS.

(Letter 80.)

Sunday, July 12, 1896.—I left the Olivet House bright and early, entered Jerusalem through the Gate of Herod, or Bab ez-Zarhreh (which is the Arabian name), and left it through the St. Stephen gate. I then crossed the Kedron valley (a mere wash) once more and entered the Latin Garden of Gethsemane. It consists of a little more than an acre of land lying in the shape of an irregular quadrangle and enclosed by high rock walls through which a little iron door leads into the enclosure from the Mount Olives side. The interior of the place is made safe by a high iron fence which prevents visitors from helping themselves to the beautiful flowers and shrubs which are being cultivated there by the Franciscan monks who own the garden. But there is a broad walk all around the garden between the outside rock wall and the inside iron fence along which visitors make their tour, and on the inside of the walls hang pictures of the so-called fourteen stations in the sufferings of Christ from the moment He was betrayed by Judas in the garden till He expired on the cross. The garden also contains eight venerable olive trees (with trunks burst from age and shored up with rocks) which are said to date from the days of Christ. The olive oil yielded by these trees is sold at a high price, and rosaries are made from the olive stones. A rock lying immediately east of the garden door "marks the spot where Peter, James and John slept (Mark 14: 32). About ten paces south of this spot the fragment of a column indicates the traditional place where Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss—an event which was formerly said to have happened elsewhere."

Three roads lead from the Garden of Gethsemane to the top of the Mount of Olives. About thirty steps from the garden is a light grey rock, which since the fourteenth century has been pointed out as the place where the Virgin on her assumption dropped her girdle into the hands of Thomas. By following the central path we reach, about half way up the mountain slope, another point which since the fourteenth century has been shown as the spot where "when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it" (Luke 19: 41). The spot commands a beautiful view of the city. Even the Moslems once regarded the scene of the weeping of Christ as holy, and a mosque stood here in the seventeenth century which is now a deserted ruin. The top of the Mount of Olives is reached from Gethsemane by an ordinary walk in fifteen minutes.

The Mount of Olives, called Jebel et-Tuh by the Arabs, runs parallel with the Temple Hill but is somewhat higher. It consists of several different strata of chalky limestone, over which there are newer formations in places. The Mount of Olives is divided into four eminences by low depressions. The highest and northernmost is called Viri Gallaci, owing to the tradition that the men of Galilee were addressed here by the two men in white apparel after the ascension (Acts 1: 11). The bases of two columns still mark the traditional spot where they stood. This hill is 2,723 feet above the sea level, and most of the area belongs to the orthodox Greeks who have erected a chapel and other buildings here. On the west side of the two central summits lies the Arab village Kefr et-Tur, consisting of miserable stone cottages and inhabited by Moslems who general-

ly act very importunate to strangers. I know that nearly half the youngsters of the village came running after me, when I passed through, calling for bakhshish.

After my return to the city I ascended the walls near the Damascus gate, and from this point of observation I was able to form an idea of the boundaries of the four hills on which Jerusalem is built. The depressions, which in ancient days no doubt were easily traced, have, during the frequent destruction of buildings been almost filled up with debris. I next ascended a hill lying immediately outside of the Damascus gate to the right of the main road leading northward and back of the so-called grotto of Jeremiah. This hill many believe to be the true Golgotha, but though I sought for inspiration on that point, I failed to obtain any. The top of the hill is a veritable Jewish graveyard. Late in the afternoon I walked out to a large building situated near the tombs of the kings, where I made the acquaintance of a religious body known as the "Americans." They number about one hundred persons, who live together as one great family and claim to be guided by direct revelation from God every moment, and consequently make no mistakes. They have made the saying of Jesus "Love thy neighbor as thyself" their sole creed, and endeavor, as they claim, to live perfect lives. They acknowledge no earthly head, have no organization and obey no president; all claim to be equal in all things. They don't work for direct remuneration. If they work at all, they will accept nothing for their services; and they believe the Lord in return will provide for them. On several occasions already they have been reduced to actual want; but at the last moment they have, so they claim, always received relief. Speaking of organizations, one of their principal men expressed the opinion that no one had ever been successful in leading his fellow man in religious matters. Even the Prophets and Apostles in all ages had made miserable failures of the religious organizations which they had founded. Hence these "Americans" believe in no earthly organization whatever. The presence of these peculiar people in Jerusalem dates back to 1881, when the first fourteen arrived from America; others followed soon afterwards, and last spring their number was increased from about 30 to 100; another company is expected from Sweden soon. At present there are about 55 native born Americans, 40 Swedes, 5 Norwegians and 2 Danes. They have nearly all come from Chicago, Illinois. I attended their afternoon meeting, which was conducted in an original way. They opened their services by singing several hymns, the first being a Swedish selection. Then followed a number of prayers offered by several of the members in regular succession, the first one by a woman, who seemed to take the lead throughout, though not by appointment; then the 15th chapter of Luke was read from an entire new translation of the Bible, which they claimed to be much more literal than the one ordered by King James. Then followed comments by different members; next several hymns, and last a number of closing prayers. In this peculiar mode of worship they claimed to be led in detail by the Spirit of God, as they have no regular way of conducting a meeting, nor indeed in doing anything else. After meeting I accepted an invitation to dine with them and

then spent the evening listening to some excellent vocal and instrumental music by their musical members, in a spacious parlor. At a late hour three of their number conducted me to my lodgings.

Monday, July 13th. According to appointment made the previous evening, I met some of the Americans in their other building inside the city wall and near the Damascus gate. From the top of their roof which was considerably elevated above the top of the wall I had a much better view of the interior of the city than the one I enjoyed from the wall the day before. Later in the day I visited Wm. P. Brown, a Whitmerite Mormon, who, with his wife, lives outside the Yafa gate, some distance away. This couple came here with considerable means for missionary purposes five years ago, but Mr. Brown lost all his money through failure of banks, and is now so destitute of means that they can not return to America; his wife manages to make a little money by gathering flowers and selling them to pilgrims. They were both highly pleased to see me, and said I was the first man they had ever met in the holy land who shared their belief in Joseph Smith being a Prophet. Mr. Brown had made a few converts to the doctrine of baptism by immersion; and two men had asked for baptism at his hands; "but," said he, "there is not a suitable place around this whole city to perform the ordinance, and my health will not permit me to travel the long distance to the river Jordan." Hence his candidates had been waiting for two years to be baptized; but could not have their wish gratified for the lack of water. This gave me a new idea: It is no wonder then that John baptized in Enon, near Salim, nor that the multitudes from Judea and Jerusalem went out to him in the wilderness by the river Jordan to hear him preach and be baptized by him. Like Wm. P. Brown, John the Baptist could not find convenient places in or about Jerusalem to baptize those who bore the fruits of repentance, and therefore he went to the river Jordan or to other places where there was "much water." (John 3:23.)

Returning to the city I happened to meet Mr. Edward Baldwin, one of the Americans that I had seen before, who now accompanied me on my last walk through the holy city. Among the places that we visited was the Church of St. Anne, situated near the gate of St. Stephen. A nun took us through the building, and showed us, among other things, the ancient Roman pavement, as it existed in the days of Pontius Pilate, whose hall of justice is supposed to have stood here. This ancient pavement is fifteen feet below the level of the street in front of the St. Anne Church; in excavating, that much debris had to be removed before the pavement was reached. I now returned to my hotel, packed my luggage, and made ready for taking my final departure in the morning.

Tuesday, July 14th, at 6:30 a. m., a carriage called for me at the hotel door and a few minutes later I found myself at the railway station about a mile away. We left Jerusalem at 7:45 a. m., and arrived at Yafa about 11 a. m. The ride was made very interesting to me, by two of the Americans from Jerusalem, who were starting out on a tour to Abyssinia on business; they kindly pointed out the places of historical interest as we traveled along. Among other spots noticed by us on the journey was the so-called Phillip's Well, where the eunuch was baptized (Acts 8: 38), Bittir, where the Jews made their last stand against the Romans, the plains of Sharon, Ramleh, Lydda, where Peter healed the paralytic man, (Acts 9: 32-35.) etc. The distance from Jerusalem to Yafa by rail