

creasing ease and the vast extension of means of communication between distant parts of the country have promoted the movement of the population.—From "The Lack of Old Homes in America," by Professor Charles Elliot Norton, in the *May Scribner's*.

AROUND JERUSALEM.

The environs of the Holy City are not less interesting than the city itself. Everywhere it is holy ground, and a description of Jerusalem would be incomplete without reference to the various surroundings, which play such an important role in sacred history. Having in a previous letter attempted to give a representation of the most interesting points within the walls of the city, I would now invite the readers of the *DESERET NEWS* to follow me on a foot tour outside these walls.

Leaving Jerusalem through the Stephen gate on the east side, we find a road leading down into the deep valley of Kidron or Valley of Jehosaphat. Not far from the gate is a stone which is supposed to mark the place where the first martyr for Christianity, Stephen, was stoned to death. On this occasion we first hear of the afterwards great apostle of the Gentiles, Paul. Going over a small bridge we cross the Kidron, a dried up creek in which water is found only after heavy rain.

The valley of Jehosaphat is, according to Jewish and Mahomedan tradition, the place where the last judgment shall be held. The prophet Mahommed shall on that day stand on a pillar which protrudes from the wall of the Haram. The Kaaba in Mecca shall come to the es-Sachra mosque in Jerusalem. Christ is sitting on a throne on the mount of Olivet across the valley, and a bridge as thin as a hair is suspended across the abyss. Everybody must cross this bridge. "The good will be helped over by the angels, but the bad will fall down and be forever lost."

Thus runs the Mahomedan account of the last judgment, and many people have their graves here in order to beat band as soon as the judgment trumpet shall sound. According to the prophet Joel, a great judgment will be held in this valley at the winding up of the present dispensation—a judgment which will affect the nations who have dealt cruelly with the children of Judah in their long captivity. (Compare Joel iii, 1-8; xiv, 14-21.)

We continue our walk to the left and follow the tide of pilgrims who go to worship at the grave of the Virgin Mary. This is a subterranean chapel built at the time of the crusaders. Not far from this grave we find a cave, which is pointed out as the place where our Savior sweated blood during his prayer in Gethsemane; and a few steps further on we reach the garden itself, where Jesus spent the last hours of His life on earth, and where He was betrayed by one of the twelve. The garden is very small, and still con-

tains a few olive trees, some of which look old enough to have stood there already when our blessed Savior sought repose under their shady branches.

From Gethsemane we ascend Mount Olivet, the top of which we reach in a quarter of an hour. Here Jesus shed tears over the sinful city, and from here He probably ascended into heaven. His work in the flesh being completed. On the highest point the Russians have built a tower, from the top of which is obtained a grand view of the surroundings—to the west the holy city with its hundreds of towers and cupolas; to the east the valley of Jordan and the Dead Sea, 1200 metres under our feet.

Not far from the tower we are shown an old church which is pointed out as the one in which the disciples composed the so-called "Symbolum Apostolicum;" and having seen this we view the "Pater Noster" church, built on the spot where the monks believe the Lord sat when He taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer. This church is a very neat building, ornamented with 32 marble statues on which the Lord's Prayer is written in 32 different languages.

The graves of the Prophets, a magnificent Russian church, Absalom's grave, and the pyramids of Zechariah are all worth seeing.

Continuing our tour, we soon arrive at the Valley of Hinnom, a wild looking, rocky canyon. Here are pointed out the tree on which Judas ended his life after having betrayed our Lord, and also the hakeldama that was bought for the money which the priests refused to accept from his guilty hands. It has been thought that the valley has its name Hinnom from a person so-called; but it is more probable that the name the "Valley of the Sons of Hinnom" means, literally translated, the "Valley of the Sons of Groaning." For here, near the mouth of the valley of Kidron, was the place where the apostate kings, Ahab, Manasseh, and Amon sacrificed children in honor of the shocking idol, Baal Moloch. Hence the name Tophet (fireplace). King Josiah put an end to this fearful idolatry, and from this time the place was a receptacle for the bodies of executed criminals and all kinds of uncleanness which was thrown out from the city and here consumed by an almost continually burning fire. Thus the name Gehinnom (Greek "Geenna") became in the Oriental language, with figurative expressions so richly ornamented, a symbol of "hell," the place of the eternal punishment of the wicked.

We now continue our walk to the end of the valley and ascend the traditional Mount Zion, on which the Mahomedans possess a couple of large buildings, called the Prophet David, Nehl Daud. At the time of the Empress Helen a church was erected here, but at the present time the "Christians" have no possession here. Entering the building we are shown a large hall, Coenaculum, in which, as we are told, Christ ate his last Passover with his disciples and instituted "The Lord's Supper."

In another part of the building we are shown the sarcophagi of David, covered with a large cloth. That the grave of David was on Mount Zion is sure enough, according to Nehemiah iii: 15; but that the Mahomedans have found his coffin and still can show it is, of course, doubtful.

We now continue our walk past the Jaffa gate and the Damascus gate until we arrived at the cave of the Prophet Jeremiah, but the Arabs called it Hedamije. This cave is also in the hands of the Mahomedans, and it appears that an old sheik has here taken up his residence in order to enjoy the quietude of life in the circle of his wives and children. After much knocking on the door we secured an entrance and—the backschisch being paid—we are shown the grave of the Sultan Ibrahim, the grave of Jeremiah the prophet, and the spot where he composed his "Lamentations," bewailing the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It may be mentioned here that some consider the hill above this cave to be the Calvary hill on which our Savior was crucified.

We have now almost circumscribed the holy city and return to our humble lodgings, meditating on the events of the past so vividly brought to our minds by everything we see here.

As I write this letter one of my neighbors informs me that the Sultan has just issued a "firman" by which the concession has been given to a French company of capitalists to build a railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem and from Haifa to Damascus, and that the German colonists have sent a telegram thanking the Sultan for this "firman." Any further information on this subject I have not been able to obtain, but I suppose there is some truth in the rumor. Certain it is that his Turkish majesty, like all earthly monarchs, needs vast sums of money, and for money almost anything can be had here, as well as in dear America. Money can open the way even for railways. A Jew once told me that the railway would be the forerunner for Messiah and one of the means by which the children of Israel should return from their exile. He referred to where the Prophet in his vision sees the Jews scattered among the nations, bringing their offerings to Jerusalem on various conveyances—"on horses, and wagons, and mules, and on kirkaroth." This word "kirkaroth" has been variously translated, commonly into meaning "swift runners" or "swift camels." It is, however, coined from *kar*, a furnace, and *karkar*, to sway, and might be rendered awaying furnaces. The Prophet evidently tried to coin a word for a railway train which he saw in his vision, but for which object the language then had no word.

Taking this explanation of the passage, the building of railways in the Holy Land is certainly one of the signs of the times which the people of God will do well to consider. Adieu.

J. M. S.
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