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**Democratic Watchman**

Bellefonte, Pa., Feb. 17, 1899.

**MAJ. W. H. HASTINGS TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND.**

An Entertaining Story of the Holy Cities—Jaffa the Port to which Hiram Dragged the Cedars of Lebanon for the Temple at Jerusalem—Jerusalem the Ancient—Travels by Boat and Rail Interwoven in a Clear Tale.

In Jerusalem we lived in a hotel built in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. When I opened my window next morning to the boiling sun, I looked out on the tower of David, and as I took my matutinal tub I thought I could hear King David, over there on the balcony, pinching his harp while flirting with Uria's wife across the way. She became David's queen and was the mother of Solomon.

The Jaffa gate for the tourist is the centre of Jerusalem. Here at all hours is assembled a motley and picturesque crowd of Syrians, Arabs, Bedouins, Levantines and Jews each in his distinctive costume. An excellent description, in detail, of the Vanity Fair is contained in Ben Hur. Contrasted with the bright colors of Syrians and Arabs were the dirty "gaberdine" and black wide-awake hat of the Yemen Jew, a seely, uncanny creature, whose love-locks, a long ringlet in front of the ear, make him conspicuous and ridiculous.

Sturdy Armenians, admirable men, fierce Kurds and beautiful, rosy cheeked, gaudily dressed damsels from Bethlehem contrasted with the dignified Spanish Jew, and the Pharisee, as of old, in rich purple velvet cloak and fur hat.

When I came down to breakfast I strolled out towards the Jaffa gate and there I found Dr. Shoemaker. The doctor and the Bishop came with me to see the sights. I had studied Jerusalem in 97 during three weeks and they insisted that I should play pilot.

The open space in front of the hotel represents almost all there is modern, within the walls, of Jerusalem. Dominated by the high, massive walls and towers of David's castle, now a Turkish barracks, are many shops, dealing in objects of piety, two hats, a beer kneipe, and the ticket office with the familiar name Cook over the door.

In David street was a company of Turkish soldiers, in line. Some were bare foot, others wore slippers with no stockings, some wore top boots. In physique the Turkish soldier is a magnificent, well-shaped, broad-shouldered, tall animal, who intellectually a mummy, obeys orders believing that killed in battle he goes straight to the bosom of Allah. The company tailor and an officer were inspecting the uniforms and the tailor where he found a patch necessary was making a chalk mark. Knees, shoulders and the seat of war were being decorated with cabalistic signs. They must get repaired to receive the German Kaiser!

David street the principal thoroughfare, is very narrow, paved with slippery cobble stones; the descent is rapid by a series of terraced steps. The bazaar with vaulted roof, and dark recesses usually large enough to contain a man, is peopled by shop keepers who are scarcely distinguishable in the dim, uncertain light. They sit among their goods, smoking nargileks, and gossiping with visitors or purchasers. Four persons would have difficulty walking abreast between the rows of shops.

The roofs of the streets, of canvas and wood serve a double purpose; they shut out the sun and keep in the unfrangipanni aroma of sewage. Distances are not great in Jerusalem and soon we emerge into a flood of golden light into the square in front of the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Coming through this street is like running the gauntlet. "Balak!" "Take care!" shouts the donkey boy in a shrill voice. "Balak!" shouts hoarsely the dervish camel driver, while the "ship of the desert," swinging contemptuously his long flexible neck places gingerly his padding feet; "stand from under or get crushed!"

Nowhere, except perhaps in Cairo or Constantinople, can be found, in so narrow a space, such a roaring tide of life and color, such a motley assemblage of races, religions, costumes and characters.

The peasant, bare-legged and bare-breasted, with sandals on his feet and bright shawl on his head, rubs elbows with the gaunt faced Bedouin, gaunt, picturesque and stealthy in mien. The stolid Turk, the sturdy Armenian, the gloomy Kopt, the negro, intelligent Abyssinian, the rosy-cheeked, unveiled dandy from Bethlehem, the fanatical Softa, the sleek crafty Jew, the unkempt, greasy, disgusting Russian pilgrim, a woman, a wabbling, strutting thing, tawdry in paint and finery, the wily Greek,—these are drops in the stream of humanity which surges through the Jerusalem Bazaar.

The square before the church of the Holy Sepulchre is full of vendors of mementoes—loons for the Russians and Greeks, dried flowers from Gethsemane, carved mother of pearl from Bethlehem, crowns of thorns, and olive wood from the neighboring Mount. In the sunlight you are glad to get a breath of fresh air, after traversing this maze of evil-smelling alleys of indescribable filth.

At the door is the native guard, five or six Turks seated in a recess reading, smoking, drinking coffee, dozing.

They are all armed. The guard is necessary in order to prevent disturbances among the Christians who are in a chronic condition of warfare, as to the rights of way and the possession of a fixed number of square feet within these sacred walls.

The guard carry the instruments of justice in their belts!

Crossing the entrance, about a foot from the ground is the stone of Anointment, on which the body of Jesus laid when it was anointed by Nicodemus, a flat slab some four feet wide by eight long. This the devout pilgrims kneel and kiss before passing into the Rotunda which covers the sepulchre.

A Greek service was proceeding at the time of our first visit, and a crowd waited around the narrow entrance to the gaudily overdecorated tomb of our Saviour. The first low arch led to the Angels chapel which a dozen persons would fill.

A still lower archway at the end opened into the sepulchre itself which is almost entirely covered with marble. On the right to the height of about three feet rises an altar-like tomb. The devout pilgrims kiss and rub their faces right and left on these pieces of flat stone. As the interior only measures six and a-half feet long by six feet wide, very few are admitted at a time. Above the tomb of the Son of Man hang some forty lamps, which are never extinguished, which belong to the Christian sects holding recognized positions in the church.

A Greek priest is continually present to set up the *ex-voto* candles which are taken in. He sprinkled our hands with rose water,—much needed to drown the fumes of the oil and sewage, gave us a sprig or flower, ostensibly from the garden of Gethsemane, and then passed around the plate for contributions!

The Greeks were celebrating mass and we went over into their portion of the church which they claim corresponds to the centre of the earth. Bustily engaged looking at the altars and icons, vulgarly resplendent with gold, a mitred priest wearing a cap like an inverted cartouche passed the plate for *backshich*, and, as we did not disburse as quickly as he desired he exclaimed testily; "*Payez ou sortez,*" Pay or get out!

The Latins, for a consideration, permitted us to wield the sword of Godfrey de Bouillon, and the Armenians showed us where was placed the true Cross. Immediately at the back of the sepulchre is a tiny chapel devoted to the Copts, and close by, in rock hewn tombs, are preserved Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Then we descended to the gloomy chapel of St. Helena, to whose piety and purse we owe the collection of so many historic and sacred sites within such an incredibly small area.

We ascended to the Mount of Calvary, and were shown the position of the crosses, and the cleft in the rock which reaches the centre of the earth! The genial priests showed us altars and chapels to the Virgin and to many saints. The Impenitent as well as the Penitent thief has each a chapel. Traditions, myths and fables have so overlaid what should be the most sacred spot in the world, that one turns away with deepest sadness akin to disgust.

As we left the church of the Sepulchre we met coming in Monsieur Pavia, the Potentate in Jerusalem of France, of the Vatican, with a numerous suite. Dr. Shoemaker, asked him "why all waiters and Jews are flat-footed?" The suite of priests formed a circle around the doctor and looked with pity and compassion on the poor *deli*. The *deli* in Turkey is an object of superstitious respect, of sacred horror. The primitive minded Turks consider insanity as a divine, a supernatural accident, and an irresponsible fool is sure of their protection.

Monsieur Pavia assured the doctor he had never thought of it but he would take into consideration the question of why waiters and Jews are flat footed, and then passed majestically, on giving the doctor his blessing as he went.

From the roof of the church of the Sepulchre we had a magnificent view. The city is isolated on all sides by deep ravines, vast natural rents that make it a splendid fortress.

Every pulse beats quicker at this view of Jerusalem, which it has been tersely said is the history of Earth and Heaven.

No monument of ancient Egypt, no ruin of old Rome gives one such a sense of profound antiquity as this city set on a hill, the ancient city of Zion, from which the glory is, indeed, departed. It belongs to a world of bygone centuries.

As a *sauce piquante* to our visit a low-browed monk, who was with the Bishop, told us that only a few years ago a harem existed on the roof of this sacred edifice! Many priests live in the church of the Sepulchre.

Looking to the East is the valley of Jehosphat, beyond is the picturesque Mount of Olives, crowned by the Russian church, (which is believed to be an arsenal,) this side of the mountains of Moab, which in the dancing sunlight look like blue clouds, are dead and damned Sodom and Gomorrah. In between you see a streak and a blotch of silver,—the Jordan which runs into the Dead sea and the desert, and gets lost.

The Dead sea is 4000 feet below us and fourteen miles distant. Between Jerusalem and the Dead sea the country looks like a mass of immense billows, a cooled-down hell cauldron of roasted rocks, gigantic waves of molten stone suddenly fixed, rendered immovable. The imagination is crushed by the desolation of that petrified ocean.

We made a three week's stay in Jerusalem, long enough to fall into regular habits of occupation and amusement, to become, for the time being, "men about town." Gradually you lose the enthusiasm which you felt when you trod the sacred soil for the first time, and it will then seem strange to you, to find yourself so completely surrounded by the designs and sounds of religion. Your hotel seems a monastery, your rooms are cells, the landlord a stately abbot, and the waiters are flat-footed, hooded monks.

If you walk out of the town you find yourself in the valley of Jehosphat, or on the Mount of Olives, or the Hill of Evil Counsel. If you mount a horse and extend your rambles you will naturally be guided to the wilderness of St. John, Jericho, the Dead sea, or the birth place of our Saviour. Your club is the great church of the Holy Sepulchre where you meet everybody you know every day. If you lounge through the town your Chestnut street, is the Via Dolorosa. Would you hear music? It must be the chanting of friars. If you look at pictures you see overfed virgins with chubby foreshortened arms, or devils out of perspective, of angels in impious, acrobatic positions tumbling in the skies.

In the long evenings you read your Bible, stay in your hotel, for the streets of Jerusalem in the night are dangerous.

The more you see of the holy places the more you doubt the accuracy of their location. A tourist in the church of the Holy Sepulchre inquires of his guide, "How long does it take to go to Mount Calvary?" and the guide answers pointing, *cecco lo*, it is up stairs on the first floor. You ascend and then you are shown the now golden sockets in which the crosses of our Lord and the two thieves were fixed! These are, to say the least, geographical surprises which puzzle the Bible student.

He is surprised to learn that the church of the Sepulchre comprises all the spots associated with the closing career of our Lord. The guide points out continuing; there, on your right, He stood and wept; by the pillar, on your left He was scourged; on the spot just before you he was crowned with the crown of thorns; up there He was crucified, and down here He was buried! Even the spot where the cock crew when Peter denied his Master is fixed and surrounded by the walls of an Armenian convent! In the Via Dolorosa there is a record of the stones, painted and numbered, which should have cried out!

I am somewhat of a "doubting Thomas" and am not convinced as to the certainty of the spot where the cock crew!

The strife of the contenting sects for the ownership of these sacred spots is no less ridiculous. In this diplomatic warfare the Greek church has signally triumphed, and the most famous of the shrines are in the care of their priesthood. They possess, for instance, the golden socket in which stood the cross of our Lord, whilst the Latins are obliged to content themselves with the apertures in which were inserted the crosses of the two thieves! Regular diplomatic contracts are carefully treasured at the Vatican, Paris, and St. Petersburg specifying what particular days and hours the Latins sweep out the sanctuary, and when the Greeks, and defining, to a centimetre, the limits beyond which scrubwater may not be thrown!

One day, it was a Friday, we followed a Latin procession along the so called Via Dolorosa, a prayer being offered at each station of the Cross up to the Calvary in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. A Turkish soldier, fully armed, carrying a Martini-Peabody (he handed it to me to examine!) led the way. There were about one hundred followers, some being well dressed women.

The majority knuckled at each station, kissing the ground, despite the filthy condition of the streets and alleys traversed. In the procession was a lunatic, a Frenchman, with a waxed mustache, dressed in a white robe, his head bearing a crown of thorns, a great cross on his shoulder. He marched from station to station, falling where Jesus fell, stopping where he stopped and thus up to the Sepulchre, where Jesus was put in the tomb. The Bishop and I concluded that he deserved to be the victim of the rest of the tragedy.

To be continued.

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The Pennsylvania railroad company's third tour of the present season to Jacksonville, allowing two weeks in Florida, will leave New York and Philadelphia by special train of Pullman palace cars, Tuesday, February 21st. Excursion tickets, including railway transportation, Pullman accommodations (one berth) and meals en route in both directions while traveling on the special train, will be sold, at the following rates: New York, \$50.00; Philadelphia, \$48.00; Canandaigua, \$32.55; Erie, \$34.55; Wilkesbarre, \$30.35; Pitsburg, \$35.00; and at proportionate rates from other points.

For tickets, itineraries, and full information apply to ticket agents or address Geo. W. Boyd, assistant general passenger agent, Broad street station, Philadelphia.

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