Artist Tissot Writes of His Visite to the Birthplace of Christ.

CITY APPEARS TODAY

Explanation of the Presence of Shepherds in the Fields, the Coming of the Magi and the Guiding Star.

When I left Paris in October, 1886, it was to go to Palestine, there to come into per- chambers connected with each other. As a sonal contact with those spots sanctified by the presence of the Savior when He trod

I went to Jerusalem and saw that Via Dolorosa along which He made His weary way toward Calvary. I saw Calvary itself and all the sacred spots in the neighborhood, Gethsemane and its garden, Bethany and its tomb. But I reserved for Christmas my visit to Bethlehem, that little spot destined to immortality because of the birth of the Savior within its confines.

On the day before Christmas, accompanied by the French consul, I departed from Jerusalem toward Bethlehem, resolved to see that place and its sanctified grotto on the anniversary of the very night when Jesus the Christ first opened His eyes upon the world which He had come to save. But. alas, for the emotions which filled my being I could not have chosen a more unfortunate time. As we were on our way I noticed great crowds of people of every nation on the face of the globs hurrying in the same direction, anxiously, eagerly, as if they feared to miss some part of an exhibition We arrived in Bethlehem and through the influence of the consul were permitted to pass the night in the very grotte in which the Christ was born. Throng at the Shrine.

To my surprise and horror I found a seething mass of men and women surging around the place trying to push each other aside and see-they knew not what. I was infinitely shocked, for it seemed to me that these thousands lacked all reverence for this, the holiest place on earth to a believing Christian. I had hoped, burying myself in reflection upon the wondrous Nativity, to pass the night in prayer and meditation. I hardly dared to do more than peep at the place in which the Virgin had borne the world's Redeemer-but these people, this mob, appeared to lack all sense and sentiment; I wondered how much they understood, how deeply they reverenced the Saviour. I was glad when the night was past; I would have made my escape at once had it been possible to pass through that curious, pushing. ding crowd. I determined never to co to Bethlehem when the was being so polluted.

The next year (1887) I again passed Christmas eve in Palestine, but it was in the convent near Jerusalem, and there was deep sentiment and holy reverence. Never can I forget the sermon preached in the into flights of stone steps.

DAY OF DAYS IN BETHLEHEM | the Desert, where St. John dwelt; on the where Ruth gleaned the ears of grain in the fields of Boaz, while beyond can be seen the several stony hills called the Wilderness. Still further to the east the rocks of Mount Monb stretch along like a wall, the base of which is bathed by the waters of the Dead sea. On the south Mount Herodion forms a regular cone, on he summit of which a few ruins indicate the site of the castle of Herod. It was here that the tetrarch was interred and later the Crusaders raised defensive works; hence its more modern appellation of the Hill of the Franks.

Pince of the Nativity. The grottos of the Nativity are a series of natural caves, extending for a considerable distance in the mountains, forming matter of fact shepherds watching their flocks from the hills avail themselves of these shelters in cold or bad weather and it was in them that Mary and Joseph, finding no place in the caravansary, decided to take refuge.

be, Mary found something there to serve the purpose of a crib in which to lay her newborn child. This crib, or manger as it is generally called, is now preserved in the Church of Santa-Maria-Naggiore at Rome, where it is visited and venerated by numerous pilgrims.

The place rendered sacred by the birth of the Savior, naturally, has been a goal of pilgrimage to many thousands besides myself. The early Christians flocked to it in crowds. After the revolt of the Jews under Bar-Cochba the Emperor Hadrian had a temple to Jupiter erected on the Mount of Olives, on the very scene of the ascension; a temple to Venus on Golgotha, and one to Adonis above the grottos of Bethlehem. These three temples remained standing for 180 years, thus providentially attesting the sites of these venerated sanctuaries until the time when St. Helens, mother of the Emperor Constantine, replaced them with basilicas in honor of Jesus Christ.

The basilica of Bethlehem is still standing and with the exception of the facade, which



The particular place indicate

is hidden by massive buildings, is almost

Presence of Shepherds Explained. a word signifying "The House of the Shep intense. It was, no doubt, to the end o refers, but the pastures were not vast grazing grounds where the sheep were gathered together in thousands from every direction familiar with the customs of the east.

After the December rains are over the grass begins to grow again and the flowers reappear. The severity of the winter varies very much and some especially fine days occur, even in the very heart of the cold season, when the shepherds of Bethlehem would go down into the plain with their flocks, as the Arabs do now in good season. The gospels tell us that when the shepherds were surprised by the angels they were "abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night." The night was always divided into three so-called watches The shepherds changed guards every three hours during the short night of the summer and every four hours during the longer nights of the winter. In the latter case the first watch ended at 10 and the second at while the third fasted till daybreak. The shepherds on guard gathered round the campfire while waiting their turn to rest and it must have been to those thus waiting that the angels appeared. They no doubt wakened their comrades to tell them the wonderful news and afterwards all wen together to Bethlehem, where they found and worshiped the Holy Child.

The other personages mentioned in scripare the Magi. Magi or soothsayers are

The interior consists of five naves, divided by rows of columns with Corinthian capitals which were probably taken from the ruins of the Temple of Jerusalem, doubtless the source of much of the material used in the basilicas of St. Helena, which were erected in a very short space of time.

Many have wondered how it was possible for the shepherds to be watching in the open air at the time when Christ was born. The place where the shepherds were when the angels appeared to them is supposed to have been what is now called Beit-Sahour, berds." It is surprising at first sight that shepherds should be watching their flocks in open air at the time of the year set for the nativity, for the cold must have been December that the account in holy writ but mere local fields where each shepherd tended his own little group of animals, and there is nothing in this to surprise any one



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They studied astronomy and interpreted dreams. Those referred to in the gospels

kings, or sheiks of Chaldea and its neigh-

borhood. They, too, engaged in the study

of the heavenly bodies and perhaps also

worshiped them, a fact which explains the immediate attention accorded to a sign ap-

pearing in the heavens at the moment of the

undergarments, yellow, indicated their pro-

The Star of Bethlehem.

What was the star referred to in the

tive evidence on this point. Some think it

was a comet or some other similar body;

others are of the opinion that it was a

meteor, resembling more or less a shooting

star, which trailed slowly along at a little

distance from the ground, so as actually

to guide the steps of the Magi. The gospel seemed to sanction the latter interpretation

when it says: The star "came and stood

over where the young child was." A star.

properly so-called, would not have in-dicated the spot with such precision.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the significance

of the sign was revealed in some way to the

Had the traveters exchanged ideas pre-

vious to their arrival? It is very probable

that they had. No doubt their caravane, though they started from different points,

met beyond the Jordan on the side of the

mountains of Maob, whence they entered the promised land, still preceded by the

The word "house" used by the Evange-

lists to indicate the place where the Magt

found the Messiah seems to point to the

conclusion that during the journey of their

visitors from the east, Joseph and Mary

scenes as they must have taken place.

omfortable dwelling.

in the service of King Nebuchadnezzar. | and hearts of Christians of all lands, I am annes tissos

The writer has had occasion to use Chamberlain's Cough Remedy in a case of croup in his family within the last week, and the results were such that he can cheerfully testify to its merits.—J. C. Johnson, Busibirth of the Messiah. The color of their ness Manager of the Council Magazire Memphis, Tenn. sacred record? There is absolutely no posi-

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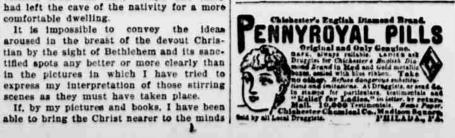
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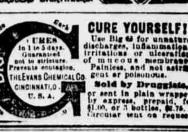
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chapel by a truly devout priest of Him whom What an inspiration in the very soil on which the preacher stood! What other subject could he choose but that of the Christ? How his voice touched every heart as with extended finger he said: "A stone's throw from here He was buried. A little further on He was crucified. Through that city He walked to His death. Just over the hills He was taken prisoner after His agony in the garden, and in that direction (pointing toward Bethlehem) He first saw In the Virgin's Steps. The holy pleasure of visiting Bethlehem under proper conditions I enjoyed a short time after my first unpleasant experience. followed the path which leads from Nazareth to that town to which Mary and Joseph had come at that critical time in their career It is a walk of three days from one town to the other, but it is worth far more than the fatigue which must be endured to feel that one is walking in the very footsteps

of the Virgin. Bethleen, or Bethlehem, is also known by the Hebrew name of Euthrata. These words mean the "House of Bread" and "the land" or "country." It was indeed to be a "House of Bread" in a great and spiritua sense after the birth of the Savior there The Arabs give it another name resembling the first, for they call it Bait-Lahen, or the "House of Meat." The town itself dates from most remote antiquity. Moses speaks of it in the xxxvth chapter of Genesis in connection with the birth of Benjamin, which took place, he tells us, when his parents had but a little way to come

When Palestine was conquered by Joshus Bethlehem, like Jerusalem, was inhabited by the idolatrous Canaanites and in the division of the conquered districts it fell to

through Ethrath (which is the same as

Bethlehem), Rachel dying immediately

the lot of the tribes of Juda.

The situation of Bethlehem is indeed most beautiful. Built on the crest of the mountains of Judea, about two leagues to the south of Jerusalem, its form is that of a crescent, one end of which is marked by the Wells of David, the other by the Grottos of the Nativity. Between the two horns of the crescent stretches a fertile valley, the Wady-el-Karoubeh. The descent of this valley is very steep and resembles a circus with low parallel walls, which keep the earth from sliding down, and have the form of tier on tier of seats. This valley presents a charming appearance, clothed as

is with an abundant vegetation in which vines, fig. olive and almond trees abound. The view from the top of the ascent is bounded on the north by the hill of Mar-Elias and on the west, by the Mountains of

THE GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY AT BETHLEHEM.

1—Grotto of Nativity. 2—Altar of the Adoration of the Magi. 3—Manger in which the infant Jesus was born. 4—Staircase leading from the Basilica to the Grotto. 5—Altar marking the spot where Jesus was born. 6—Spring which gushed out at the nativity. 7—Entrance to subterranean chambers. (Shaded portion of the plan represents the Basilica, which has been built a bove the Grotto.) Between the two sets of steps is a slight depression which tradition indicates as the spot to which Mary retired when the divine child was born. It was only after the birth that she carried him a few paces to a more ommodious place, more sheltered from the cold, where it was possible to give the cave ture in connection with the birth of Jesus something of the semblance of a room.