

ORIGINAL MILLARD RESIDENCE—WHERE NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING NOW STANDS.

Probable Place of Christ's Transfiguration

(Copyright, 1901, by C. H. Levy.)
 That Jesus was transfigured upon a mountain in Galilee is one of the events in His life upon which no less than three of the gospels agree, almost to the point of identity. That this was Mount Tabor is agreed in the same unanimous fashion by all Christian authorities from the earliest times to the present day. But it is only lately that excavations have been made at Tabor proving the early occupation of this mountain as a site sacred to early Christians. This valuable investigation has been made by an Alsatian missionary, Father Barnabe, who is considered one of the leading authorities upon Christian archaeology in Palestine, and is now in the monastery on Mount Tabor. His investigations have just been made public in Paris.

Mount Tabor had been a notable place even in early Egyptian times, lying as it did upon the direct route between Egypt and Assyria. Prof. Maspero has identified an Egyptian scarabaeus found at Tabor as belonging to the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, so this site must have been well known as early as 1500 B. C. That it bore a sacred character in the times just preceding the birth of Jesus seems more than probable from Rabbinical traditions, which speak of it as the Sacred Mountain of Galilee. Father Barnabe holds that the

tradition which located the transfiguration on Mount Tabor is one of the best founded of all traditions, going back to the very first century of the Christians. Origen, Eusebius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. Jerome are unanimous in proclaiming Tabor as the Mount of Transfiguration. Attentive study of the accounts in the three gospels of the transfiguration point toward Tabor, although it is not named.

Incident of Transfiguration.

Father Barnabe points out that Jesus, during the last few weeks of His life, was making a final pastoral journey in Galilee. He came from Tyre and was on His way to the sea of Genesareth. At last He reached Caesarea Philippi on the extreme northern boundary of the territory of Israel, in the center of a population largely pagan. When He arrived in this neighborhood He asked His disciples:

"Who do they say the Son of Man is? And you yourselves, who do you say I am?" Simon-Peter, answering, said: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Seeing them so well fixed in the faith Jesus began to disclose to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer much, be put to death and rise on the third day. Of His further sojourn in Caesarea no single detail is given. Six days later the mystery

of the Transfiguration took place. All three evangelists seem to insist upon a space of time having elapsed between the last discourse of the Savior and His Transfiguration. Since no word is said of any preaching during this time it is probable that the six days were passed in a journey, and it might easily take six days, walking as slowly as Jesus walked in converse with His disciples, to go from Caesarea Philippi to Tabor.

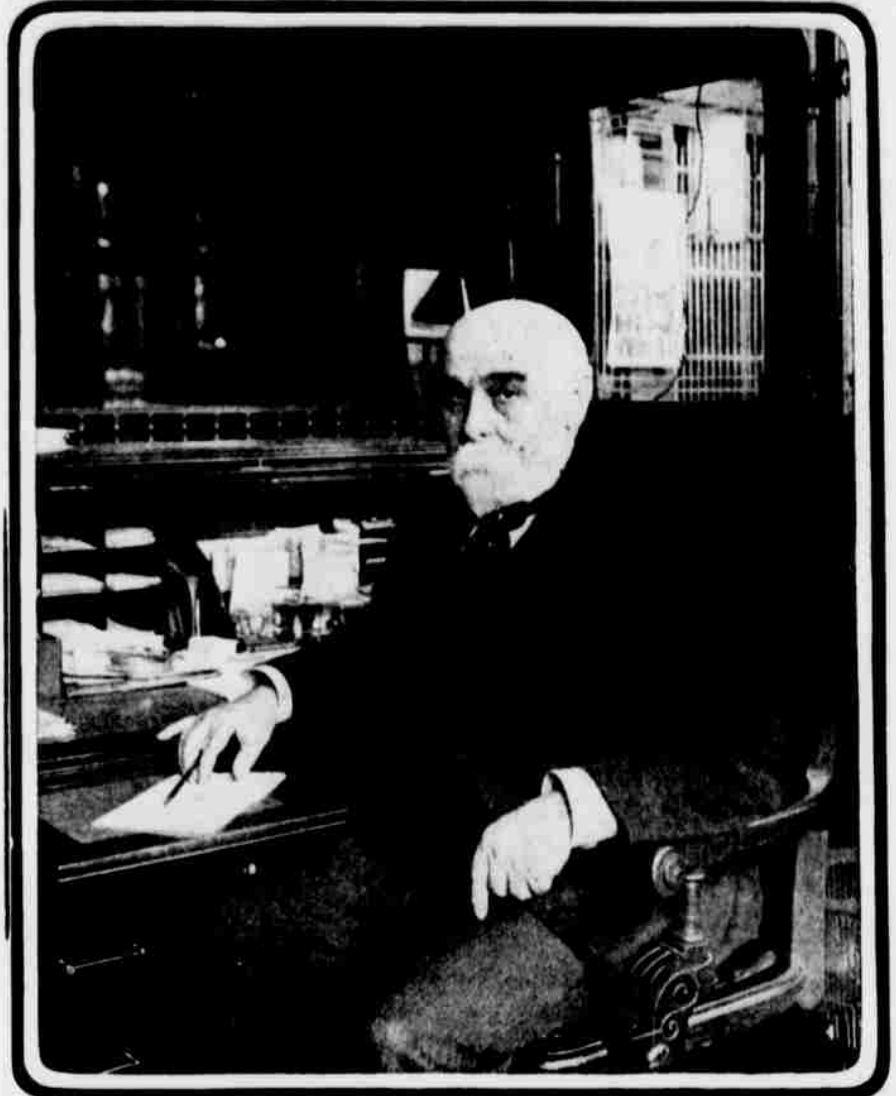
Having satisfied himself by his investigations, both historical and geographical, that Mount Tabor was the site of the Transfiguration, Father Barnabe set himself to the examination of the ruins found there. The transformations of the buildings on Tabor have been so numerous that they present many difficulties to the archaeologist, who has to help himself by history at times, and then fill in the gaps of history by his discoveries. The principal ruins of a religious order are to be found grouped together in a square on the western side of the plateau. To the left on entering are the remains of a small church, the walls of which are still standing from three to six feet high. This was the first sacred edifice found in excavating this corner of the plateau. There seems to have been a second church here also. The first was hardly more than a chapel, 12x18 feet, with a semi-circular recess on the west. The walls are built in Roman style, covered on the inside by white stucco, on which are some traces of decorative foliage in red tints. The pavement is a mosaic of black and white cubes, forming a large circle and lozenges.

Architecture of Early Date.

This little building bears the character of the oratories of the fourth and fifth centuries. It is without doubt one of the oldest church edifices ever discovered in the Holy Land. Two niches in the recess show the Christian character of the edifice without any doubt, for one is evidently the prothesis or oblationarium, where the faithful deposit their offerings of bread and wine, and the other is the diaconicum, where the chalice and gospel were kept. A little further to the west is a church with three naves, having small chapels on each side of it. St. Antoine of Plaisance states (576) that he found three churches on Tabor at the spot at which Peter said to Jesus: "It is good, Lord, to be here. Make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elias." It is known that in 533 the council of Constantinople decreed the erection of a bishopric upon Mount Tabor and in consequence there must have been a cathedral there. Upon the best archaeological grounds it can be asserted that the ruins found here are not later than the sixth century, but they may be much earlier. The church was perched upon the solid rock, on the very spot, according to tradition, where the transfiguration took place. On each side are the chapels dedicated to Moses and Elijah, and they were certainly constructed at the same time as the main edifice. In the ruins of this church were found several capitals in white marble. One of these capitals is perfectly preserved, and is a foot and a half high. It is markedly Corinthian in character, and identical with those of the Basilica of Bethlehem, which archaeologists agree goes back to the age of Constantine.

This ancient church was succeeded in later times by one built by the Benedictine monks, which was destroyed by the troops of Saladin in 1187. From 1209 to 1217 the Saracens were in possession. In 1229 the cities of Nazareth and Mount Tabor were surrendered to Christian hands, and the mountain was occupied by the Hungarian Brothers, who built a new church, using some of the material from the old one. During the Crusades this was burned.

There are other interesting ruins north of



SENATOR MILLARD AT HIS DESK.

the remains of the church, consisting of a vast hall with the bases of three huge columns which once sustained the arches. That this hall was very broad is attested by the discovery of one of the ruined arches. This is thought to be the capitular hall of the Benedictines. There has also been found a large Ionic capital which seems to belong to the Macedonian period anterior to Jesus Christ. Another capital found in a wall has the head of a lion in the center and a crouching child on each side of it. On another capital are the figures of a lion and a bull. Still another capital is markedly Egyptian or Phoenician in style, with the figure of a ram and a lion or tiger. Here, too, are many blocks of basalt with curious figures upon them, like those found on the slopes of Mount Hermon. All of these stones are, of course, of pagan origin.

The inscriptions in Greek and Arabic are well preserved and refer to the building of the fortress. On the west side of the plateau are several sepulchral grottoes, with the benches hewn out of the rock. As these tombs have been violated by Arabs in search of treasure it is impossible to state whether they are Hebrew or Christian. Father Barnabe describes some vertical tombs forming a little cemetery in the center of the plateau. In the center of this cemetery were the remains of a small room, paved and built of plaster, in one corner of which was a furnace, glazed and hardened by fire, and in another corner an oblong tub of masonry lined with a kind of hard cement. This seems

to have been a room where the bodies of children were washed, that they might be embalmed after the Hebrew method. This room would seem to go back to the time of Josephus. The Saracens built houses over these tombs and used them for cellars.

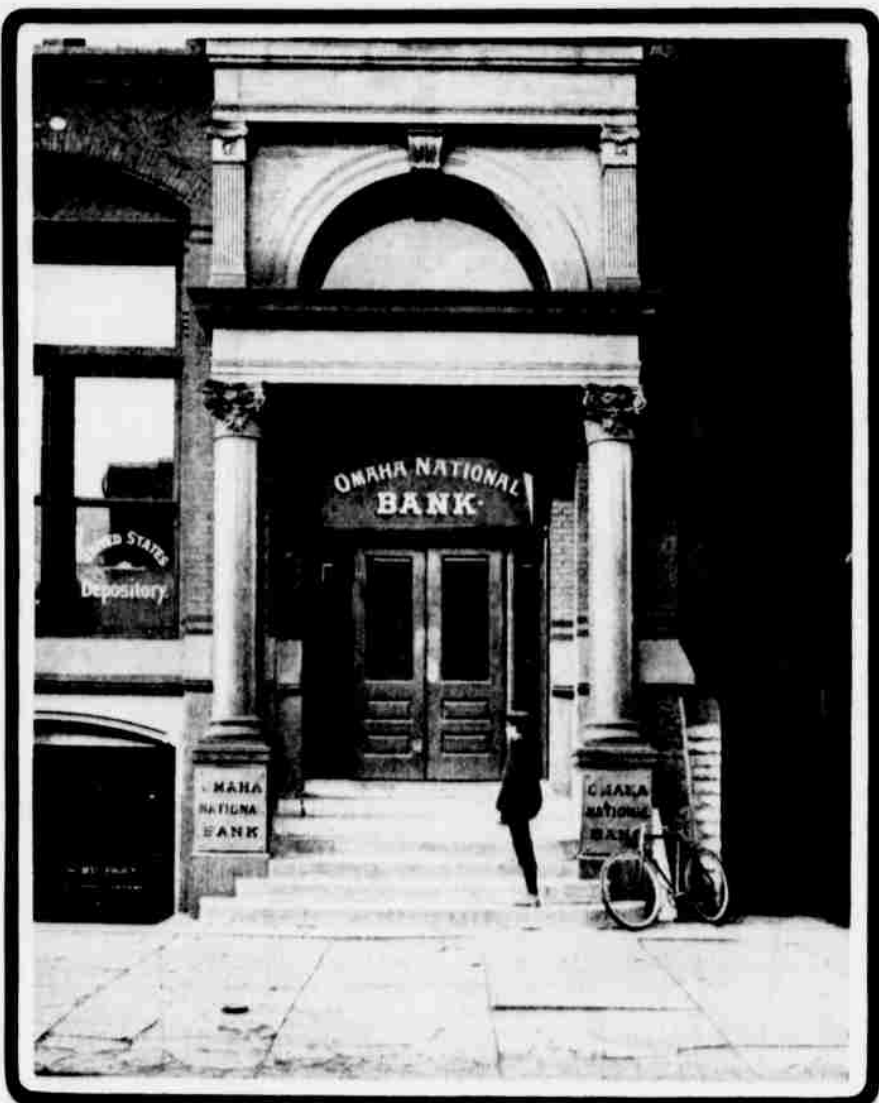
The several grottoes found on the west, evidently used as habitations, are among the most interesting of all the discoveries. Here are mills for grinding grain and ancient wine and oil presses. Near them are several cisterns in the shape of large bottles, like the one into which Joseph was lowered. Whether these dwellings were occupied by the Hebrews and later by anchorites and monks no proof is forthcoming.

European archaeologists and theologians regard these discoveries as among the most important to biblical history ever made. Their particular value lies in the fact of their showing that in the early days of the Christian religion, when all that concerned the life of Christ was still matter of oral tradition and familiar local history, Mount Tabor was by general consent regarded as the scene of the transfiguration and edifices commemorative of the event were erected there.

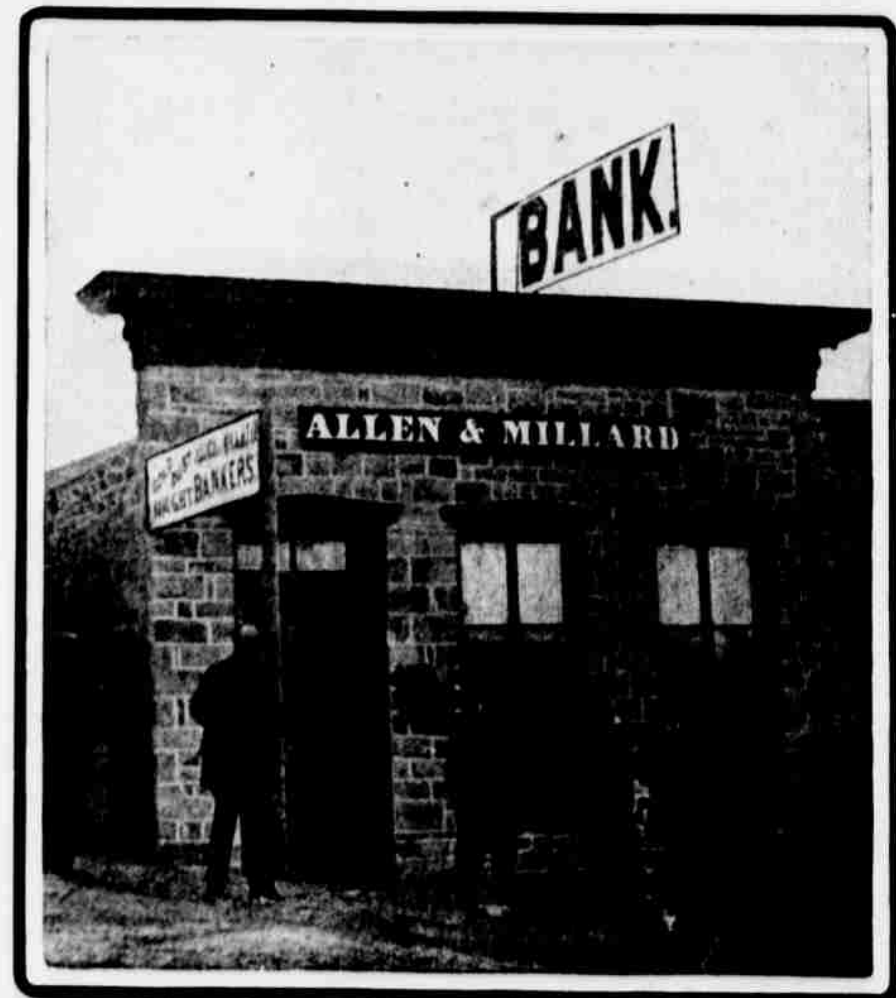
C. H. LEVY.

Veteran Singing Master

The veteran singing master, Manuel Garcia, has attained the age of 96. He is still in excellent health. When he was 90 Garcia, who then had a class at the London Royal Academy of Music, received a testimonial subscribed for by practically every professor of the institution.



ENTRANCE TO THE MILLARD BANK.



BANK AT VIRGINIA CITY, Mont.