

series of steps descending along the side of it towards Siloam, a large cistern and fine arch in the valley, and the magnificent paved way on the eastern side near Ophel.

It is to be hoped that these excavations will soon determine definitely the disputed question as to the site of the City of David. Some most interesting developments I feel sure are in store for Dr. Bliss and the friends of the Fund during this coming year. The work is being pushed rapidly, and each day yields important results. The workmen are interested as well as the director, and all work together with a will. Dr. Bliss and Mr. Dickie are on the best of terms with all their people, and have the faculty of getting the most work with the least friction. Mr. Dickie is acquiring the colloquial, and is already able to make his way among the workmen without an interpreter. This *entente cordiale* between the directors of the work and their men is of the greatest advantage, and not always easy to be gained in this country without a free use of money. The men of Siloam seem to have a warm attachment and genuine regard for Dr. Bliss and Mr. Dickie. The latter's injury at the hands of ruffians aroused their sympathies, and his re-appearance among them was the occasion of sincere congratulations.

During my visit, Mr. Dickie was busy in preparing his case for the trial of his assailants. The affair seems a strange one, no sufficient motive for the attack being evident. It is to be hoped that the aggressors will receive such sentence as will deter others from similar assaults. The authorities are no doubt anxious to see justice done, and the case is a clear one.

I was glad to find the health of Dr. Bliss and Mr. Dickie so good. The climate is rather trying, and the work exacting, but Dr. Bliss says it agrees with him far better than his two months of enforced idleness. His next report will be awaited with interest.

SYRIAN PROTESTANT COLLEGE,
BEIRÛT, SYRIA, *August 19th, 1896.*

ARMENIAN DESCRIPTION OF THE HOLY PLACES IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

Translated from the Russian by R. NISBET BAIN, Esq.

THE fragment here communicated, presenting a short description of the Holy Places in Palestine, attracts our attention by its undoubtedly great antiquity, although it appears impossible to give an exact or even approximate date of its first appearance in writing. Moses Kagankatvatsi, the author of the "History of Agvan," translated into the Russian tongue by Professor K. P. Patkanov,¹ in which the description

¹ "History of Agvan" of Moses Kagankatvatsi, a writer of the tenth century. Translated from the Armenian. Sb., 1051.

in question is embodied, lived undoubtedly at the end of the tenth century ; but, as the labours of specialists have conclusively proved, only the last (*i.e.*, the third) part of his "History of Agvan,"¹ should be considered his own independent work, the first two parts being nothing more nor less than literal borrowing from other sources dating back to the middle of the seventh century. The chapter so interesting to us, containing a description of the Holy Places, occurs at the very end of the second part, and consequently did not originate in the tenth but rather in the seventh century. After a general description of the Holy Places comes an enumeration of the monasteries built at Jerusalem by the Agvans, it takes up the 52nd and following chapter of the second book, and is obviously connected with the much fuller enumeration of the 70 Armenian monasteries in Jerusalem, published recently in a French translation from the Armenian. Compare : Archives de l'orient latin, t. II, p. 394 : Deux descriptions arméniennes des lieux saints de Palestine : 1. Anastase d'Arménie (vii siècle). "Les LXX couvents arméniens de Jérusalem." The name Anastasius, standing also in chapter 52 of the second book of the Agvan history, has induced the learned Armenian scholar L. Alishan to suppose that the enumeration of the Armenian monasteries, translated by him, really belongs to the seventh century. It is also natural to suppose that the preceding 51st chapter likewise belongs to the same period.

Chapter 51.² Number and situation of the Churches built in Holy Jerusalem.

Thou wilt find here the faithful account of an eye-witness.

The rock-hewn tomb (grave) of the life-giving Jesus is $1\frac{1}{2}$ circuits of the arms (= $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms) beyond the middle cupola of the holy life-giving sepulchre. In the colonnaded cupola-shaped³ church (which is built) 100 ells in height and 100 ells in breadth, on this and that side (are found) [or stand] 12 columns below and 12 columns above. There in the upper division (in the chamber) are the lance, sponge, and cup of Christ, wrought in gold. In the chief church (Katolike) called Maturn (*ματρύριον*), but also Invention of the Cross, 20 ells distant from the Church of the Resurrection, are disposed in line, 65⁴ columns above and below.

The Church of Holy Golgotha, called also the tomb of Adam, (is) 10 steps distant from the Resurrection ; in it is an altar where Christ was crucified on the ladder (scala).

The Church of Holy Sion, one stadium (asparéz) distant from the

¹ Armenia.

² Professor K. P. Patkanov at our request has examined his former version of this chapter and collated it with the original MSS.

³ The words "colonnaded cupola-shaped" are not found in all MSS., but only in the Moscow edition of the Armenian original.

⁴ Variant., 75.

Resurrection, 100 ells in length and 70 in breadth, has 80¹ vaulted connected columns. In it there is no upper division (room, gallery), and only a wooden tarb (trellis-work), and on the tarb hangs the crown of thorns which was laid on the head of the Life-giver. To the right of the church the chamber of the mysteries, and a wooden cupola in which is imaged the sacred supper of the Saviour. In it an altar at which the liturgy is celebrated. In the upper division of Sion there is no chamber (gallery ?).

To the right² of Sion is the Palace of Pilate, called Kappata, and the stone on which Christ stood before Pilate. On it are seen his footprints to this day. Lower a taz (washing-basin) in which he washed the feet of his disciples. To the left of Sion is the dungeon where they shut Christ up. There is an altar, and the liturgy is celebrated.

Behind the town, in that place where the Hebrews keep the tomb of the Holy Virgin, and do not suffer her to be buried, is a cupola on four marble columns covered with copper crosses. Thence 250 stone steps lead down to the tomb (place of burial) of the Virgin, in the Vale of Gethsemane, and thence to the Mount of Olives, from whence Christ ascended, 800 steps.

On the place of the Ascension is erected, after the likeness of the Church of the Resurrection, a very beautiful cupola-shaped building, 100 ells in width. Thence are visible the River Jordan, Mount Hor, and many districts.

Bethlehem is distant from the Resurrection westwards 220 stadia. The church is 200 ells in length and 100 in breadth, with 90 marble columns and stone vaults. In it is a two-fold cavern which Abraham bought for a burial place. Below the altar (beneath the altar) the holy cave and manger where (also) is an altar, and liturgy (*i.e.*, divine service) is celebrated there. To the right of the church is a chapel (*μαρτυριον*) in which are preserved the relics of the children slain by Herod.

Thence eastwards, on the Jordan side, 3 stadia from Bethlehem, is a grove, and in it two churches in which the liturgy is celebrated.

The River Jordan, in which the Saviour was baptised, is 7³ stadia to the east from Jerusalem. There is built a stone church in the likeness of a cross, 80 ells in length and 80 in breadth, with three altars of the mysteries, on which the liturgy is accomplished. The Mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem.

[This description of the holy places at Jerusalem was probably written by an Armenian pilgrim (Anastasius?) who visited Jerusalem about

¹ Variant., 90.

² The expressions "to the right of Sion," and, lower down, "to the left of," mean, of course, on the right side of Sion, on the left side, &c. Not being acquainted with the language of the original, we dare not make any alteration in the translation thereof.

³ The cipher 7 is clearly a mistake.

A.D. 660. It is, therefore, the earliest account that we have of the Churches of the Resurrection, of the Cross, and of Golgotha, as restored by Modestus after the Persian invasion. Though very brief, and not always clear, the record is of much interest.

We learn, for instance, that the "colonnaded, cupola-shaped church," that is, the Church of the Resurrection, or of the Holy Sepulchre, had a clerestory in which were kept the lance, the sponge, and the cup of Christ. The 12 columns of the church may be compared with the 12 columns of the "Hemisphere" in Constantine's original church, and suggests the idea that the "Hemisphere" may have been the domed Church of the Anastasis. Arculf places the "lance" in the porch of the church, and the "sponge and the cup" in an exedra between Golgotha and the Basilica. The "cup" is said by Antoninus to have been of onyx, whilst the later one was of wrought gold. The Martyrium, Basilica, or Church of the Cross is said to have had 65, or, according to a variant, 75 columns, and a clerestory. The tomb of Adam is shown at Golgotha, in accordance with the tradition mentioned by Origen that Christ was buried beneath Calvary.

The Church of Holy Sion is said to have been only one stadium from the Anastasis, and to have had on its right (south) the Palace of Pilate, and on its left (north) the Prison of Christ. This possibly indicates that the original Church of Sion, "the mother of all churches," was not far from the present Armenian Church of St. James.

The notices of the Church of the Ascension as having been built on the model of the Anastasis, and of the cruciform church at the spot where Christ was baptised in Jordan, are also interesting.—C. W. W.