

NOTES.—GOLD IN PALESTINE.

Note furnished by the Rev. Greville J. Chester.

THREE years ago, when I was at Samaria, a poor peasant brought a nugget of native gold for sale to my dragoman. The bargain had not been concluded on my coming up, and, seeing me, the man at once doubled the price he originally asked. I therefore did not buy it, which I have since regretted. The nugget was about an inch in length, and nearly pure. The peasant stated he had found it in the neighbourhood, and it certainly was an unlikely thing to have been dropped by any passing traveller. The fact, at all events, is worth recording. It is hard to understand how gold could be found amidst such recent geological formations. Could it have been originally contained in a boulder?

September, 1869.

A SINGULAR CUSTOM.

Extract from Journal in Palestine of G. Octavius Wray, Esq.

OUR quarters for the night are a family dwelling-house, consisting of one chamber some 30ft. square, with dome roof of solid masonry; on one side of the room is a raised floor of 10ft. in breadth, with a wood fire under an insufficient chimney. Besides this and the closed door, there is no other opening. The inner boundary of the dais is a wall of clay, 6ft. high, with hollow places filled with wheat and barley—the family granary. On the floor of the dais sleep the grandfather, or patriarch, and his family of children and grandchildren, male and female, some eight of them, under a vast blanket. That this custom is ancient is shown by the plea of the lazy man in the parable, "My children are with me in bed; I cannot arise and give thee."

The lower part of the house contains our four horses, the syce, and an unknown number of cows, goats, and barndoor fowls. The first cockcrow approaches, and within three minutes of midnight, by my watch, the cock flaps his wings, crows lustily, and so rouses the family, who come and crouch round the fire, except the old woman, or Surah, the princess of the tribe, whose privilege it is now, as it was when Abraham entertained the angels, to make the cakes. She takes from a recess in the wall her kneading trough and meal, and kneads the dough at the head of my bed; next, puts it into a large round flat basket, together with a small earthenware lamp, placing the cover of the basket over all. She then stalks forth into the darkness, with the light streaming through the wickerwork, to get the cakes baked at the village oven. Presently she returns; the family eat, drink water, talk, and then to bed again, none of them having offered to assist the old woman in her labours from beginning to end.

SINGIL, March 17, 1863.