

“Wherefore he may wonder who learns, as I have by books, that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified in Golgotha, in the very spot where the body of Adam was laid. For after leaving Paradise, and dwelling opposite it a long while, he at length left it, and having died in this spot—Jerusalem, I mean—there he was buried in Golgotha. Whence, it is probable, that the place took its name, being translated, ‘the place of a skull,’ while the outline of the place bears no resemblance to a skull. For neither is it situated on any height, so that it should be called a skull, answering to the place of the head in the body, nor is it a place of outlook; for neither is it situated on an elevation beyond other places. For opposite it is the Mount of Olives, which is higher, and Gabaon, eight miles farther on, is also loftier. Moreover the height which once existed on Mount Zion, but has now been scarped, is also loftier than that spot.

“Whence then has it derived its name—‘the Skull’? Because the skull of Adam, the first created man, was found there, and his mortal remains were laid there, therefore the spot was called ‘the Place of a Skull.’”—*Epiph. i. iii., Hær. xlvi. cap. 5.*

R. GOVETT.

THE COLONISATION OF PALESTINE.

WE are indebted to the courtesy of the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* for permission to reproduce the following letters on a subject in which many of the subscribers to the Palestine Exploration Fund are deeply interested. It may be remarked that some very important communications have lately appeared in the pages of this paper on the present condition of the Jews in Constantinople, Russia, and Syria, together with articles, letters, and notes on the future of the Holy Land:—

“Sir,—‘The Jews Regaining their Land’ is the title of a paragraph going the round of the papers, to the effect that ‘owing to the Jewish immigration the population of Palestine has more than doubled during the past ten years.’ As a resident of this country since 1867, I can positively deny this statement. Many Jews, it is true, have come to live in Jerusalem, not in other places, or rather to lay their bones in the valley of Jehoshaphat, during the past decade; but it is utter folly to declare that ‘the population of Palestine had been doubled’ by such immigration. The population of Palestine was reckoned at 1,200,000 ten years ago, and to maintain that it has doubled would give us an influx of 1,200,000 Jews. The truth is that about 5,000 Jews have come to this land during the past ten years, and this fact is the origin of much exaggeration. Of these a large number have died, but others may have taken their places, leaving the number about the same. Nearly all live in poverty, and make appeals from time to time to their wealthy

brethren in Europe and America for means to maintain themselves and their families. The immigration is virtually a pauper influx, who expect to live in idleness upon the hard-earned savings of their coreligionists abroad. Some are eventually disgusted at the penury which the rabbis' strict rule often enforces, and return to the countries whence they came. A few weeks ago I helped a poor American Jew to return to New York, and the United States Consul at Jerusalem has given assistance to many. A number of new houses have, indeed, been built outside the walls of Jerusalem by both Jews and Christians, following the example of the Russian and Protestant missions, which first began to do so. These houses, being built over cisterns of rain water, are for the most part nests of typhus and malarial fever, and, instead of contributing to the health of the city, have materially added to the prevalent insalubriousness of Jerusalem. In the city itself the soil is so saturated with the impurities of past generations that any disturbance of the ground for building purposes invariably engenders malignant fevers. Captain Warren, R.E. and his corps of assistants, while making explorations and excavations in and about Jerusalem, suffered terribly from this cause. The scarcity of pure water is another source of evil at the Holy City, and although an abundant supply could be brought from the ancient Pools of Solomon, yet all efforts to repair or rebuild the aqueduct are thwarted by the fanaticism of the Moslem rulers.

“The land of Palestine is extremely productive, and were colonies planted here as they are in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, there is no reason to doubt their success. The Rev. James Neil, B.A., formerly incumbent of Christ Church, Jerusalem, gives the following reasons why farming should be profitable in Palestine:—1. Labour is extremely cheap. The wages of ordinary labourers are—men, 5s. to 6s. a week; women, 3s.; boys and girls, 2s. These are considered good wages, and are amply sufficient to enable them to live. 2. The plough is extremely light. A man can carry it on his shoulders, and walk miles with it to his home. Two diminutive oxen, or one mule, are amply sufficient to draw it. 3. There is no expenditure whatever for manure. No artificial manure or any requiring carting is ever employed. That deposited by the beasts as they graze over the fields, and the ashes of whatever stubble is afterwards left to burn appear to be all the manure the rich Syrian arable lands have ever needed or received. 4. Horses, asses, oxen, and farm stock generally are very cheap. Horses cost from £3 to £10; mules, £12 to £15; camels, £8 to £20; asses, from £3 to £6; oxen, from £6 to £15; full-grown sheep, from 2s. to 8s.; and goats still less. 5. The keep of animals is very trifling. Their food consists chiefly of barley and chopped straw. Four horses can be kept at an annual cost of £30. For oxen very rich oil cake is abundant, but for the most part of the year they live and work on little else beside chopped straw. This is explained by the fact that animals, like their masters, require only the lightest and simplest food in a hot country. 6. Harvest can be gathered in without injury from wet. Rain is never known at

harvest time. The weather in May is warm and dry, and remains so until the next October. 7. There is no need of stacking the crops. All the sheaves are carried on the backs of camels or asses to an open floor, some smooth rock surface, in the middle of the fields, and are threshed, winnowed, &c., in the open air at leisure in the course of three or four months of uniformly hot weather, during which no rain falls. 8. No farm buildings of any kind are required, except the roughest and simplest cattle sheds, and no hedges, ditches, walls, or enclosures of any kind around the fields. The only storehouses needed are underground cisterns. These are alluded to in Jer. xli. 8. The lands are virtually undrained, and one farm or one field marked off from another only by large rough stones placed here and there along the boundary line. 9. The total amount of taxes is only a tithe of each year's produce. 10. The great fertility of ordinary arable lands. The heavy lands in some parts yield a hundredfold—at Siloam, for instance, and to the south of Gaza, in the region where it still retains the character it bore when 'Isaac sowed in the land, and received a hundredfold' (Gen. xxvi. 12). 11. The still greater fertility of irrigated lands. These yield four crops a year, and bear the combined products of England and Italy. 12. The immense productiveness of fruit trees. The olive, vine, fig, apricot, and mulberry tree in the high lands are excellent examples of the wealth that must have once been derived from this source. The vine, which is carelessly left to train along the ground, seems in some instances, as in the neighbourhood of Hebron, to turn into one huge mass of white grapes. In the hot plains oranges of very many kinds, lemon, citron, and banana, yield most abundantly.

"I can corroborate from personal observation the truth of the foregoing description, and believe that a European immigration on a large scale would be a valuable means of regenerating Palestine. A judicious outlay of capital in planting orange orchards and vineyards would yield a return in three years' time. Farming is lucrative; and native labourers must be employed when long exposure to the direct rays of the sun is required, but Europeans can readily oversee their labourers without suffering from the summer sun. The autumn and winter and spring months are charming; the summer heat can be diminished by building houses, as I have done, with verandahs and venetian blinds, and placing doors and windows opposite each other to facilitate cool ventilation.—I am, &c.,

"JOHN B. HAY, late United States Consul General.

"Jaffa, November 6, 1879.

"P.S. Since writing the foregoing I have seen the 56th annual report for 1878 of the Berlin Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. The population of Jerusalem is given as 7,000 Mahometans, 5,000 Christians, and 13,500 Jews. There were 8,000 or 10,000 Jews in Jerusalem ten years ago, and the increase of about 5,000 corroborates the statement of my letter as above."

To the Editor of the "Jewish Chronicle."

"Sir,—To Mr. John B. Hay's interesting letter I am enabled to add the following from the same pen. 'The German settlements at Jaffa, Mount Carmel, and Jerusalem are successful as far as they go. They are, however, possessed of very limited capital, and confine themselves chiefly to trades; their colonies can scarcely be called agricultural. The success which has attended their cultivation of the vine at Carmel, their soap factory, tannery, and brewery, show that European energy avails much in spite of all obstacles. Religious views induced them to come to Palestine, and they make no aggressive attempts to evangelise the natives, holding that example is better than precept, and thus they will become a power for good in the land. They have a school and hospital at Jaffa, and own thirty-six houses, and a steam flour mill, also threshing machines, a large number of carts and waggons, and improved agricultural implements. Their spring waggons ply regularly between Jerusalem and Jaffa, conveying passengers. At Jerusalem they own about five acres and thirteen dwelling-houses. At Mount Carmel they possess sixty-eight dwellings and many vineyards. Leather and soap have been considerably manufactured by the Carmel colony and even exported. The importing firm of Duisberg, Breish, and Co., of Jaffa, have been successful in introducing Marseilles tiles for roofing, and dealing extensively in Asia Minor and Austrian timber, besides supplying Palestine with European, and chiefly German, commodities and manufactures. In view of these facts, it is reasonable to surmise that Anglo-Saxon energy and enterprise, aided by judicious outlay of capital, would accomplish as much, and even greater things, in Palestine.'

"Would that religious views could induce some of our millionaires to expend a few pounds out of their millions on practical undertakings such as the above."

"Yours obediently,

"December 1st, 1879."

"H. GUEDALLA."

To the Editor of the "Jewish Chronicle."

"Sir,—In conversation, at Constantinople, with Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, that gentleman was kind enough to confide to me, for publication in your columns, the hitherto unpublished details of a scheme which he has been maturing for a long time past, which is known only to a select few. His scheme has received the (unofficial) approbation of Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, and that of several of our co-religionists. So far Mr. Oliphant has been delayed by changes of Government and by political crises, but the approximate probability that the Sultan will see his way towards encouraging an enterprise which can only redound to his credit, by securing him a large share of public sympathy all over the world, which will tend to dissipate the growing impression that he is opposed to all reforms, even when they in no way interfere with his sovereign rights, and are attended with no political danger, has induced Mr. Oliphant to break the silence which he has

hitherto preserved, and to give me the following outline of his plan, fuller details of which will appear in the introduction to his forthcoming book of travels in Palestine. There can be no doubt but that the Sultan's firman will shortly be given to a scheme, which can only be a source of profit to his Government in its great financial extremity, and of strength to his empire at large.

"Every scheme in which the welfare of the Jews is involved, which emanates from external sources, is, not unnaturally, regarded by our coreligionists with suspicion. I may as well, at once, state that Mr. Oliphant is actuated by no kind of religious feeling in the matter. Anxious to discover a means by which the Sultan might show that prosperity is possible under his rule, he has, after mature deliberation, hit upon the colonisation of Palestine by the Jews—a people composed of varied nationalities—as the only possible solution of his problem which should not offend political prejudices. Whether the success of his scheme may not prove to be the corner-stone, thus fortuitously laid, of the great restoration which we all hope for, it would be premature to judge. In any case, Mr. Oliphant was good enough to read to me the complete rules for the government of his projected colony, as well as the whole of the introduction to the book, before alluded to, and anything more matured, clearer, or more intelligent, it has rarely been my lot to listen to. Such details as Mr. Oliphant allows me to lay before your readers are given, as nearly as memory will permit, in his own words.

" 'A great opportunity,' Mr. Oliphant said, 'is now being afforded to the Sultan of manifesting the sincerity of his desire to introduce reforms into one of the Asiatic provinces of his empire, which stands in much need of it. I have submitted a scheme to the Turkish Government for the colonisation of the fertile and unoccupied tract of land lying to the east of the Jordan, now sparsely inhabited by tribes of nomad Arabs. This tract, which I myself have visited and examined, consists of the land of Gideon and of the northern portion of the Plains of Moab, which formed the former heritage of the tribes of Gad and Reuben. This country is far superior in productive capacity to the territory on the west of the Jordan, the mountains of Gilead rising to a height of upwards of 4,000 feet above the level of the sea, and being heavily timbered, well watered, and susceptible in the highest degree of agricultural development. They can scarcely be said to be inhabited, the plains in the south forming a lofty plateau about 2,500 feet above the sea-level, consisting of rich arable land, cultivated, in patches, by the Arabs; but, with the exception of the town of Es Salt, there is no resident population, nor landowners. The whole tract belongs to the Government, which, omitting only a small sheep-tax levied on the Arabs, derives no revenue from it. The entire region proposed for colonisation comprises an area of about a million and a half acres, which should become the property of an Ottoman company, through whose agency, in conjunction with the Turkish authorities, it should be administered. The advantages to the Turkish Government of the

proposed scheme are as follows. It would bring into cultivation a rich tract of country, at present unproductive. It would be a reform involving no expense to the Porte, but, on the contrary, be the means of providing it with an immediate sum of money to be derived from the sale of the lands. It would prove to Europe that the Jews found greater facilities for toleration and protection in Turkey than in some Christian countries. It would in no way interfere with the sovereign rights of the Porte, as the administration would be under the auspices of an Ottoman 'Compagnie Anonyme,' and the colonists would become Ottoman subjects, while good government would be guaranteed to them by special regulations having the Imperial sanction. It is proposed to constitute the district set apart for colonisation into a separate *Sarjak* (province). The emigrants would not be exclusively Jewish, but an asylum would be afforded to many Muslim refugee families from Bulgaria and Roumelia, who have proved by the character of their farms, which they have been obliged to abandon, that they are excellent farm-labourers. The *fellaheen* would also flock over to be employed from Western Palestine, where they are in a state of extreme poverty. It is not intended, in the first instance, to utilise Jewish labour on the soil, but it is anticipated that out of the 200,000 Jews in Asiatic Turkey (to say nothing of the millions in Europe) enough men of more or less capital could be found to become landlords. As an investment, farming in Palestine, when properly conducted, is most remunerative. The colony could be connected by rail with the port of Haifa, by way of the Valley of the Jordan, which has a good incline the whole way, presenting no engineering difficulties.'

"It will at once be seen that Mr. Oliphant has hit upon the only present practicable plan of colonisation by the Jews. In their present condition of insufficient acclimatisation, they would only be capable of directing the economical labour of the *fellaheen*. Later on, practice and custom might make them agriculturalists *per se*. But when the whole of Mr. Oliphant's regulations come to be known, they will be seen to be replete with correct appreciation, and to be eminently practical in their character.

"The Sultan would clearly be conferring a great favour upon the Jewish race, for which they would be very grateful, in granting a concession of this nature. All they need is some kind of guarantee for protection and good government. They would, in all probability, respond to his invitation, and they would do their utmost to prove, by making their colony a success, that his generosity was not thrown away; and they would make it into a model of a peaceful and prosperous province, which might be imitated elsewhere, and be the beginning of a system which should extend throughout Asia Minor, and strengthen and consolidate the empire. The difficulty of dealing with the Arabs will not be found (Mr. Oliphant who has visited the district and dwelt amongst them says) to be as great as it would appear. The present comparative security which reigns there proves the beneficial results of the presence of a few troops.

“The fact that the Jews, as a race, are interested in the success of the project divests it of a British character. It is essentially of an unpolitical character in its bearings, and, inasmuch as the Jews are not struggling to acquire an independent national existence, it can be accompanied by no danger to the integrity of the Turkish Empire. Mr. Oliphant greatly hopes that when his proposed company is brought out, our co-religionists will show, by the liberality of their support, that they are not dead to all efforts which tend to secure some occupation by them of the land of their fathers, without involving any question of immediately charitable support of the occupants.

“Yours obediently,

“Odessa, December 21st, 1879.”

“SYDNEY M. SAMUEL.”

To the Editor of the “Jewish Chronicle.”

“Sir,—Having read with much interest the account which appears in your columns of Mr. Oliphant’s scheme for the Colonisation of Palestine, I should be glad to be allowed to contribute a few facts connected with the question.

“The character of the district selected for Colonisation, also gives good reason to hope for success. The plateau of Mount Gilead, elevated 2,500 feet above the Mediterranean, is always considered to surpass Western Palestine in the healthiness of its climate. Well supplied with water and with a rich arable soil, it also possesses considerable forests of oak trees towards the north, while a sub-tropical climate, giving facilities for the cultivation of almost every kind of fruit and vegetable, exists on the lower slopes above the Jordan. The country, though now entirely deserted, proved, as we know, once so attractive as to be preferred by some of the tribes of Israel to the Promised Land itself, and it is covered with the ruins of cities which continued to flourish even as late as the fourth century of the Christian Era. The ruins of Gadara, Gerasa, Heshbon, Madeba, &c., surpass in importance any remains existing West of Jordan.

“The district is bounded on the north by the plains of Hauran and Bashan, which are inhabited by the Druses. The corn of this northern district is of remarkably fine quality, and there seems no reason why crops equally magnificent should not be produced on Mount Gilead.

“The details of Mr. Oliphant’s scheme will, no doubt, show that the undertaking is founded on principles as safe as that which is laid down in your correspondent’s letter, one which I have already had the opportunity of noticing in your columns—the employment of the native population under Jewish landlords. I may however be, perhaps, permitted to point out one or two of the principal difficulties which are likely to be encountered, and of the evident dangers to be guarded against.

“In the first place the constitution of a New Sanjak or ‘Standard’—a Government whose ruler would be directly responsible to the governor of Syria, Midhat Pasha, should give the opportunity for instituting a reformed system of administration.

“It does not yet appear whether the governor would of necessity be a Turk or (which would appear possible) a member of the Colony, but it is evidently of the greatest importance that the choice of the officials working under him should depend in great measure on the Colonists, and that the laws regulating the levying of the taxes should be modelled on European custom, rather than on the unjust and ruinous practice of the Turkish administration—that the Colonists, in short, should be preserved from the official corruption and licence which are so rapidly reducing the Syrian peasantry west of Jordan to a condition of desperation.

“A difficulty which would not be experienced west of Jordan arises on the east, namely, that of dealing with the Bedawin or nomadic Arabs who roam over the deserted country. The great tribes of the Sukr, the Anezeh, and the Beni Sakhr, have for so long remained undisturbed occupants of the country ‘beyond Jordan,’ that they are in the habit of affixing their tribe marks to all buildings where treasure is thought to lie hid, a simple indication of their claim to the possession of the country and all its products.

“These warlike tribes will resent and possibly resist the incursion of Colonists. The attempt forcibly to expel them would lead to long feuds and constant guerilla warfare, which would prove very damaging to agricultural prosperity. On the other hand, the Arabs have learned the value of money. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that many might be induced to settle down as cultivators, while others would become breeders of cattle in pastoral districts. There is plenty of room for the Bedawin farther east, but it must not be forgotten that they are a distinct race from the Fellahin, a race always nomadic, never agricultural, and claiming a hereditary right to the country which it is proposed to colonise.

“The construction of a railway from the port of Haifa is one of the first requisites for the success of the scheme. The Colonists would find themselves in the first instance almost entirely dependent for supplies on the country nearer the coast. Caravans of camels might no doubt be at first organised to communicate with the interior, but the competition with the country already cultivated would only be possible through the existence of rapid means of communication.

“The railway presents some engineering difficulties connected with the passage of the Jordan valley, but they are comparatively unimportant. From Haifa in 15 miles it would rise gradually only 250 feet. In the next 15 it would fall about 900, following the broad passage down the valley of Jezreel to the Jordan. Thence by the line of the ancient Hieromax river it would ascend 3,000 feet in about 30 miles. The Jordan once crossed branches to Damascus on the north, and along the pilgrim route southwards to Moab would in time be made with the greatest ease. Haifa has long been proposed as a terminus for the Euphrates valley railway, and although the northern line from the Orontes possesses more important advantages, there is no doubt that a railway from Haifa might easily be extended northwards to Aleppo,

and from the main line of communication throughout Syria, north and south by Damascus and Hamah.

"I may perhaps note that, in the opinions of engineers, a light steam tram is considered far better fitted in the first instance for a semi-civilised country than a heavy line requiring greater initial expenditure.

"Heartily wishing success to a scheme which appears to be founded on sound principles, and supported by influential and able men,

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieut. R.E."

THE EMPIRE OF THE HITTITES.

Reprinted from the Times of January 23rd, 1880.

ONE of the most curious results of modern research has been a belief in the existence of a great and influential Empire in Western Asia, the very existence of which had been forgotten in the days of classical antiquity. Even the name of the people who founded it, the Hittites, was known only from a few stray notices in the Old Testament, and none suspected that it had once been a name of power and terror to the nations of the ancient East. We hear in Genesis of a small and obscure Hittite tribe which inhabited the south of Palestine in Patriarchal times, and whose literary character might perhaps have been guessed from the title Kirjath-Sepher, or "Booktown," given to their capital Debir, west of Hebron. Twice, again, in the Book of Kings is mention made of the "Kings of the Hittites"—once as purchasers of the horses imported from Egypt by the merchants of Solomon (1 Kings, x. 29), and once as the dangerous rivals of the Syrian Monarch (2. Kings, vii. 6). So little, however, was known of their history, so utterly ignored was their existence by Greek and Latin writers, that Professor F. Newman once urged these two references as evidences of the unhistorical character of the passages in which they occur.

But the very statements which Professor Newman believed to damage the truth of the Biblical narrative have been turned into arguments in its favour. The kings of the Hittites not only existed, but were powerful enough to threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and to carry the arts and culture of the Euphrates to the Euxine and Ægean Seas. The Hittites, called Kheta by the Egyptians and Khatti by the Assyrians, first appear on the monuments of the Egyptian monarch Thothmes III., in the 16th century before the Christian era. Thothmes had reduced the greater part of Western Asia beneath his rule; Nineveh and Babylon paid him tribute, and the Hittites, who occupied the north of Syria, formed part of his empire. It is probable that they had but recently established themselves so far to the south; at all events their place is taken by the inhabitants of Aram-naharaim or Mesopotamia in the wars of Thothmes I., and by the Rotennu or