

REPORT ON ANSWERS TO THE "QUESTIONS."¹

ONE of the earliest sets of answers received from Palestine to the questions as to the inhabitants of the country, drawn up for the P. E. F. Committee, has been sent by Mr. Joseph Jibrail, who has personal knowledge of the Druzes, the Metawileh, and other elements of population. Some of the answers are meagre, and, as regards the nomadic Arabs, he appears to know less than the English explorers, who have spent years among them. An abstract of the more interesting points of information thus obtained may, however, serve to show what may be expected from this method of research. Answers to questions as to the Samaritans have already appeared in the *Quarterly Statement*.

The Druzes.

Mr. Jabrail reports that he has been inside the Khalwehs or Chapels of the Druzes when living as a teacher among those on Mount Carmel. The Druzes are intelligent, and allow strangers to eat and drink with them; they desire education for their children, and allow them to learn parts of the Bible by heart. They believe that there are many Druzes in China, and that the religion of Queen Victoria is the Druze religion though its votaries are not known by that name in England.

Note.—This I have before heard stated. The connection of the Druzes with the Buddhists of Central Asia and China is noted in "Syrian Stone Lore," p. 347.

On attempting to enter a Khalweh on Thursday (the usual day of meeting for the Druzes) Mr. Jabrail was attacked by two Druze women standing by the door, and the congregation came out and cursed and stoned him, not recognising him as a former friend.

Note.—The Druze meetings are secret. The women evidently were sentinels such as writers on the Druzes have described as posted outside the Khalwehs during meetings.

The Sheikh objected to the Druze children being taught that the world was made in six days, asserting that God created it all at once. Mr. Jabrail mentions the well-known fact that the Druzes conform outwardly to any creed which suits their purposes for the time.

Note.—Both these observations connect Druze teaching and customs with those of some of the early Gnostic sects of Syria.

Nothing is found in the Khalwehs of Lebanon except a stove. Texts from the Koran are written on the walls. It is generally reported that the "calf" is an image found in the Khalwehs. When asked about it the Druzes cursed it.

Note.—This agrees with the reports of previous writers, who say that the Druzes called Derâzeh "the calf" (جمل) instead of "the wise"

¹ See *Quarterly Statement*, 1885, p. 216.

(عاقب) and curse him as a heretic because he quarrelled with Hamzeh, although he was the real founder of the sect on Hermon.

They take figs and raisins into the Khalwehs and eat them in company. If a man sins he brings raisins as a sacrifice into the Khalweh. He further says, "I have seen them presenting figs to one another when they met."

Note.—The fig is said by some writers to be a token among the Druzes. Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of the "detestable ceremony of the fig" (Catech. Lect. vi, 23) among the Manicheans of the 4th century in Palestine.

They believe China to be a Holy Land, and that when a Druze dies he will be re-born in China. They say no man can enter China, and when told that many people have done so, say it was not the true China. They believe that Gog and Magog will come from China to destroy Mecca and all Moslems and Christians.

Note.—This seems to be a survival of the old legend of Gog and Magog shut up beyond the wall in the north, which has been fully noticed in the *Quarterly Statement* for 1888.

They meet in numbers in secret, women being present. They then pray, eat figs and raisins, and discuss their affairs. They are divided into two classes—عقال "wise," and جهال "ignorant." The 'Akkâls, again, are divided into خاصّة and عامّة or "special" and "ordinary," who have different degrees of initiation. There is a yet higher initiation—that of the Munazzahîn منزهين or "purified." Some 'Akkâls are celibates. None of them drink intoxicating liquors or smoke. They wear a white turban عمامة ('mâmah), and a cap without a tassel. Women may be 'Akkâlah's, and then wear dark stuff on the head.

Note.—This agrees with what is known of the various degrees of initiation among Druzes. (See "Syrian Stone Lore," p. 347.)

They observe the two Moslem feasts, and a third special to themselves in spring time, called "Egg Thursday" خميس البيضات.

Note.—Perhaps to be compared with the widespread custom of the Pasch eggs or Easter eggs.

They know the signs of the Zodiac and names of certain stars or planets. They believe that war will occur in any country when a comet appears, and that the country towards which its tail points will have abundance.

The informant also states that the Druzes practice circumcision. He gives some information as to their belief in the reincarnation of Adam, which is already well understood from the works of De Sacy and others. He refers to their feasts at the shrine of *El Khudr* and to the lighting of lamps on tombs. They are not particular as to food, and will eat meat

prepared by Christians or Moslems. Their morality is described as good, few women being unchaste, and very few illegitimate births occurring.

They have sacred trees on which rags are tied; and he mentions a holy spring where the sick are said to be cured in the Lebanon. They have many legends of demons and spirits—one Druze stating that he passed by a spring at night and heard cries and found people dancing, who gave him a drum, but disappeared when he repeated the name of God. Some people they believe can talk with spirits. They fear the Ghoul, whom they imagine a furious beast. They dance in honour of Welys and Nebys (Saints and Prophets), but not for the dead. The women dance in a circle alone. The chorus of one song is given thus—

شيل يا جمال وشيل شيل وسجمل حريير

"Bring forth, O camel driver, bring forth, bring forth the silk Mahmal"
(an allusion, perhaps, to the annual sending of the Mahmal to Mecca, though otherwise explained).

Another song runs thus (freely rendered)—

See her at the well of Taha and give her good-day,
And if her father will not give her, take her by night and fly.

The men dance by themselves and sing war songs.

Next follows the curious legend that *Belk's* (the Queen of Sheba) asked Solomon for a jug of water neither from Heaven nor from Earth. He gave her one filled with the sweat of a horse.¹

The custom of giving the weight of a child's hair when first cut to the poor is noticed.

Note.—This is noticed by Lane, in "Egypt."

They believe in the Evil Eye and wear charms against it. They believe in men being changed to beasts, &c., by enchantment. They turn their gold and silver in their pockets at the new moon. They consider the crow and owl to presage death. It is unlucky to see an old woman first thing in the morning, or to dream of a camel (an instance is given of the latter). The Sheikhs pray over those supposed to be bewitched by the *Jân*, and charms are worn against such bewitchment. It is irreligious to steal what is placed in a *Makâm*. Eggs are used as a charm on house walls against the Evil Eye, and charms written over doors against the *Jân*. They have books for the interpreting of dreams.

¹ This is explained by a story given in Landberg's "Proverbs et Dictons," p. 161. The youth who is to marry the riddle-asking princess asks her how he could have drunk water neither from heaven nor from earth—

و شرب مياه لامن ارض ولا من سما

The answer, which she could not discover, was that in the desert he took the sweat from his horse and licked his hand to moisten his mouth.

Personal property in land is inherited, and the Sheikh has no power over such property. The Carmel Druzes say that they came from Aleppo 150 years ago. Some of the Lebanon Sheikhs claim descent from Arab tribes named ركين (*Rakin*) and خميس (*Khamis*). Others say they are of Persian descent. They call themselves بني المعروف (*Beni el M'aruf*) and الموحدون "the Unitarians." The better families are of pure race. They all wear the beard long.

As regards language, several colloquial words are given, but these do not seem interesting or peculiar. They do not distinguish easily the Arab gutturals, which are so carefully pronounced by educated Arab scholars.

They are healthy as a rule, suffering, however, from ague, small pox, and sore eyes and fever. They have native doctors, and use medicines, such as mustard for a purgative, poppy as a sedative, and camomile, and they let blood, and use charms written by the Sheikh, against sickness. The old women are clever in making simples of fruit, vegetables, and herbs. The commonly known poisons are preparations of arsenic and mercury. The sick are regarded as bewitched or suffering from the Evil Eye. Plague and scarlet fever are unknown. The 'Akkals use prayers, charms, and medicines against disease.

The rotation of crops is to a certain extent understood, and pruning of trees.

The Druzes do not beg from strangers.

As regards dress, the women of the Druzes in the Lebanon are veiled, but not elsewhere.

Note.—I remarked that the Druze women on Carmel were not veiled.

The women wear sometimes a flat silver plate (قرص) on the head.

They use Kohl and Henna, but do not paint or tattoo the face.

They do not shave the hair in sign of mourning.

They cultivate silk and keep bees. The Lebanon and Haurân Druzes serve as soldiers.

They will eat all sorts of food, including cats, hyenas, and jackals.

Note.—I have seen Arabs eating a jackal.

They think thyme is good to eat for making men wise. They drink cinnamon water, and the devotees abstain from coffee, from figs, and from grapes. On Fridays the Druzes eat a peculiar dish of wheat and molasses boiled. They are fond of sweets and raisins. They use rosaries, but are said by the informant to do so only as an amusement.

Note.—This I have also heard said of Moslems.

Among themselves they salute by kissing hands, and bow to others with the hand on the breast. They swear by God, *Shaitb* (Jethro), *el Hâdi* (their expected Messiah), and *el Hokmah* ("wisdom").

They lend to each other without interest. They are rarely artizans, generally farmers. They have pet dogs and cats, and a few rich people

have birds in cages. They give human names to such pets (*e.g.*, *Ferha*, a woman's name, given to a goat).

Note.—Many Moslems object to such names for animals.

A few make pottery and silk, or are silversmiths and brass-workers, gunsmiths and carpenters. None are merchants.

Note.—The informant says no one in Syria makes glass, but this is incorrect, as it is made at Hebron.

The house walls are occasionally painted by the women to represent palm trees, birds, &c.

They play cards and listen to stories of *Antar*, *Zir*, and the *Beni Heldl*. The elders are familiar with such tales and with stories about the *Jân*.

An instance is given of a prince wandering in the desert, who reaches a building full of beautiful girls, daughters of the King of the *Jân*. The earth swallowed him with them, and he was carried to the city of the *Jân*.

The formula for the commencement of such tales is given. "Once upon a time, it happened, as we will tell to-day—and to-morrow we will sleep—I will tell of troubles and lamentations; of Dibs esh Shadid, the man of Baalbek. It was in the days of one of the kings of old."

The Druze children are said to play quoits, and ball games, seesaw, and with swings, prisoners' base and dancing, also Mankalah (a sort of draughts).

The men are famous *Jerid* players. They hunt and shoot, and make a hiding-place, *تقلوم* to await the game, of stones and rushes. They hire gipsy performers to amuse them. The showmen have bears, monkeys, goats, and apes, which perform.

Note.—I have seen a showman with a performing bear in Syria.

The showman goes to a village to the Sheikh's house and begins to sing and to dance with his animal. He tells his animal to drink in the Sheikh's honour. The snake charmers sell oil to the people as a preventative against snake bite.

The men also play chess, draughts, and *Deris*—a game which the informant afterwards describes.

At birth the children are rubbed with salt and with a powder of *Rihân*; the child is suckled from six to nineteen months.

The Druzes have only one wife each. Their children inherit equally. The families are small. The men marry about 18 to 22, the women at 14 to 17 years of age. Sisters, nieces, and aunts are forbidden as wives. They beat their wives, and, in case of divorce on the fault of the wife, the dower money is paid back to the husband. At the weddings riddles are asked by certain singers called *قوالى*

Note.—This illustrates the old custom (Judges xiv).

Presents are given by the guests to the bridegroom. The bride rides on a horse in procession round the village. Rice, corn, raisins, and cakes are thrown after her. When she enters the house the bridegroom holds

a sword over her, while the guests fire off guns and dance with swords and *Jerids*. The women make زغليت or shouts of joy. The girls all weep when the bride enters the house.

The funerals are like those of Moslems. The corpse is perfumed. Swords are carried before it. The coffin is left in the grave—contrary to Moslem custom: it is of wood, and not inscribed. Professional mourners bewail the dead, but not for payment. They wave cloths and handkerchiefs after the coffin like Christians.

Note.—I have seen Moslems doing so near Beit Jibrin.

The family mourn from seven to forty days. Sheep are killed, and the guests and poor are fed after a funeral. Cairns are raised over the graves.

Mr. Joseph Jabrail then gives various proverbs, some of which are very pithy and characteristic of the East, but many are to be found in Landberg's "Syrian Proverbs." He repeats some of these as in use among other Syrian nationalities:—

من الدلفه لتحت المزراب

"From the gutter under the spout," *i.e.*, "out of the frying pan into the fire."¹

نصّ الدرب ولا كلها

"Half the road and not all," which the informant renders, "Better late than never."²

"Does the scribe write himself among the wicked," is suggestive of the East.

كل عنزه تتبع قطيعها

"Every goat belongs to her flock," *i.e.*, "Birds of a feather flock together."

"Ask one who knows, and do not forget the Hakim."

Our informant remarks that they know special names for very few natural objects, *e.g.*, among birds, only the bee-eater, hoopæ, owl, raven, jackdaw, eagle, and a few others, calling all others عصفور "sparrow," when small, or طير when large.

¹ "Landberg," No. xxi—

هرب من تحت الدلفه قعد تحت المزراب

He fled from the gutter and sat under the spout.

² "Landberg," No. clxxxiii—

نصف درب ولا كلها

The vulgar pronunciation of *Nusf* is *Nuss*.

Note.—This agrees with my experience ; only conspicuous or dangerous animals are distinguished by the Syrian peasantry. The remark has considerable philological importance, considering how the origin of race is commonly sought in the distribution of names for fauna and flora.

Science is confined to علم النجوم or astrology. Eclipses are said to be due to a dragon (تندين) eating a piece of the sun or-moon.

Note.—The common Chinese and Mongol explanation of an eclipse.

The Metâwileh.

The answers begin with a legend of 'Aly descending into a well to fight the Jân, which has no great interest, and continue with another about Muhammad kissing Hasan on the mouth and Hosein on the neck to show that one should die by poison, the other by the sword. The informant gives also the well-known story of Muhammad slaying the Monk Buheirah while drunk. The next story told by the Metâwileh is interesting because it comes from the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy (in Arabic, chap. xxxvii), which appears to originate in Persia. It relates that Jesus as a boy was apprenticed to a dyer and dyed all the cloth blue, but gave it to each of the colour he desired. Another, which relates of the weaver who refused to come out to meet Sitti Miriam that he was condemned to be hungry for ever has probably a similar source.

The Metâwileh sing, dance and light lamps at their Makâms. They observe the Moslem feasts. Their Imams are called *Fakih* or persons who can repeat the Korân by heart. They refuse to eat with any not of their own sect, and consider anything touched by an unbeliever impure (instance given). They all observe the Moslem practices and hold the cardinal dogmas.

Note.—The Metâwileh inhabit the country east of Sidou and part of Upper Galilee. They are Shi'ah or Persian Moslems, and all that is noted by Mr. Jabrail agrees with the distinctive practices of the Shi'ahs.

The Metâwileh put bread and water as offerings at the tombs of Sheikhs.

Note.—I have seen such bread offerings at the 'Ain Eyûb, near Khan Minich.

At the annual feasts they kill sheep and give to the poor, and present cakes to their neighbours' children, and place flowers on the tombs.

Mr. Joseph Jabrail states that they give names to the days of the week, calling them—

Sunday :	Yôm esh Shems	...	...	Day of the Sun.
Monday :	„ el Kamr	....	....	„ Moon.
Tuesday :	„ el Marikh	....	....	„ Mars.
Wednesday :	„ 'Atârûd	....	....	„ Mercury.
Thursday :	„ el Moshitari	....	....	„ Jupiter.
Friday :	„ ez Zohrah	....	....	„ Venus.
Saturday :	„ Zohal	....	....	„ Saturn.

They call these planets the سبع كواكب or "seven stars."

Note.—This is peculiar. In Syria, generally, the days of the week have no names.

Astrology, علم الابراج is studied, and the expression محبوب نجمه "his star is lucky," is common. They say each man's star is over his head in heaven. They know the Pleiades and the Morning Star, and judge the time of night by the position of the former. They believe comets to portend war and plague, and meteors to indicate war. They are circumcised, and have no images or pictures, regarding all such things as wicked. They have the common Moslem beliefs as to the future, and curse Omar and Abu Bekr.

The Metâwileh are distinguished by a little hair on the forehead, and by the ears, shaving the rest of the head. They wear the Shusheh, or tuft. They only wipe or sponge themselves before prayers, and do not wash like the Sunnis. In prayer they do not adopt the second attitude of the Sunnis, with the hands behind the ears. They carry with them certain sacred stones and sacred earth, and keep these treasures in their houses, with their money and valuables to secure a blessing.

On the tenth of Muharram they rub charcoal on their faces and hands, and begin to weep, beat themselves, rend their clothes, and bewail Hasan and Hosein. They knew of Hosein's Tomb as being at Kerbela (here spelt Kermela).

They bear a bad reputation, and a proverb says—

مثل المتوالي الت قلبه ولا غلبه

"Like a Metuali, a thousand wriggling and nothing gained." This is the Christian saying.

They are said not to be strict as to conduct, but illegitimate children are rare.

They tie rags to sacred trees when sick and expect to recover. They believe such trees to be haunted by some Neby. They have a rock sacred to Sheikh Hosein, before which lamps are lighted at night—in a village near Sidon. In another village a very large stone is believed to have been carried by Sittna Fatimah, while pregnant.

Note.—A similar legend attaches to the great stone at Baalbek in the quarry.

Another story follows of a Metuâli boy who saw Sittna Miriam in his dream. She told him where to dig for water. He discovered a spring, to which the sick were afterwards brought to be cured, Christians as well as Metâwileh.

They believe in spirits living in the water and in dark places. A common curse is **قروډ يضر بک** "the devil strike you." Other expressions are commonly known, which here follow.

The old women relate stories such as that of Shâtir Hasan, the son of a merchant, who pursued a bird which changed into a girl, and gave her name as Bedr et Temâm, daughter of the King of the Jân. They went to the country of the Jân, where he was recognised as human by his smell, but married the princess.

Note.—A version of the wide-spread story of the swan-maiden.

The Metâwileh dance in honour of their saints, arranging themselves in a circle. Their songs are generally war songs, of which a specimen is given. They have been seen dancing round a tree. They have a story that when the Beni Helâl girls used to dance the circle was as far as from Haifa to the Haurân.

They hang to their necks the **خرزرة زرقه** or "blue bead," as a charm against the evil eye. They have a pond of sacred fish called Birket 'Ain Tûl. They think it unlucky to pay or borrow money in the morning. They hate the owl, but consider serpents lucky.

The observations on land tenure contain nothing new. The Metâwileh say that they came from Kesrwân, a district of Lebanon, but they never lived in cities, being agriculturists.

Generally speaking, they have blue eyes and light hair. They have little hair on their faces, and do not shave the head when young as Sunnis do.

Their language is Arabic, differing somewhat from the Christian dialect. Like other peasants they get confused between the Arabic gutturals, except that they distinguish *Alif* and *'Ain*.

Skin diseases are common among them because of their dirtiness. They trust mainly in their sheikhs to cure disease. They apply canomile externally for rheumatism, and use convolvulus as a purgative.

A charm against fever for a boy called Abdallah is given—

اخر منى يا حمي	توكات علي الله
من عبد الله	ابن حسين

"I have rested upon God,
Away from me, O fever,
From Abdallah,
Son of Hosein."

This was kept in a leather purse.

They have a few sayings about plants and flowers, as when the *Kadib er Reii* appears the fellah knows winter is coming (it flowers in September). They say that on the leaves of the sycamore is written "he who falls hence shall never get up again." The infusion of *لسان الثور* ("bull's tongue," a plant), is good for a cough.

Among the Imams some called *Seiyad* *سياد* who claim descent from 'Ali, wear green turbans; the rest of the *Metawileh* wear white. The rosaries of the *Metawileh* have some religious words on them. They practice *Kheirah*, or "choice," by dividing the beads and counting whether odd or even to decide their action. (Instance given where the question was as to whether a medicine was likely to do good.)

The women dance and sing, the men play *Mankalah* and draughts, also the game *Deris*, which is played by two, each with nine seeds of a colour. The game consists in placing the seeds over numbered places in consecutive rows.

Note.—Like our game called "go-bang."

The dowry among the *Metawileh* is not returned when the wife is divorced. They say—

اذ المراد زنت حقها لا يرني

"If the woman has sinned yet her right does not sin." Some marriage customs of interest follow. The friends of the bridegroom after feasting go to demand the bride. Her people bring a large stone, and if his friends can lift it, the bride is allowed to go with them. The bride is pelted as usual, and is carried into the house and a sword held over her. The bridegroom draws a sword or stick over her. Second, and even third or fourth marriages, are said to be allowed.

Note.—I think the question may have been misunderstood.

They wash the dead carefully, pare and clean the nails, dress the body, and place charms upon it. Before burial witnesses are brought, and if they say the man was a good man and charitable, this is written on palm leaves buried in the grave. The corpse is perfumed with henna. The procession halts thrice on its way to the grave. The coffin is not left in the grave. Prayers are written on the shroud.

Mr. J. Jibrail gives a sketch of a tomb with the text, "In the name of God the merciful, the pitiful. Has been carried to the mercy of the Most High Hasan Ibn Aly Ahmad, in the year 1200 of the Muhammedans." The mourners eat bread at the grave, and make a feast for the poor. Flowers are grown in sand on the grave and watered.

Several questions have the same answers as among the Druzes. A few proverbs follow :—

"The grasshopper asked for food of the ant." "What were you doing in the summer said the ant." "I was making verses said the grasshopper."

"He comes with one hand in front and one behind."

من لا يخاف من الله خاف منه

"Fear him who does not fear God."

حبل النفاق قصير

"The rope of hypocrisy is short."

الذى ياكل العصى موش مثل الذى بيعدّها

"He who gets the stick is not like him who counts it."

See for this proverb Landberg No. cxvii.

يلّي ياكل العصى موش مثل يليّ بعدها

The meaning of one of the others is obscure.

تراب الجوره يطمها

Said to mean "I have enough for use," lit., "the mud in the hollow suffices."

واحد ايده في النار وواحد في ميّ

"One hand in the fire and one in the water."

The Metâwileh say the world is flat, and no one knows where the sun goes when it sets. The explanation of earthquake is the common Moslem idea of the bull supporting the earth, who trembles when God looks at him. A fish, *حوت* swallows the sun or moon during an eclipse.

The tambourine, lute, harp, and, according to Mr. Jibrail, the bagpipe, are used by the Metâwileh.

The Seiyids among them claim descent from Hasan and Hosein, and have a right to a tenth of the lands, money, cattle, &c. They own lands also in Paradise and will sell to others. As an instance, a man bought from a Seiyid two yards of Paradise for 500 piastres (£4), but, being poor, wished to have his money back. The Seiyid said the lands of Paradise were not recoverable.

If a woman of the Metâwileh to whom you call, answers *N'am* ("yes") she becomes your wife. The common answer, therefore, is *شو بوك* "What do you want?" It is sinful for a Metuâli to be without a wife, and he hires one for a month or two if he has none.

Note.—This connects them with Persia where even the Nestorian Christians make temporary marriages.

The story of a dutiful son of the widow who fell short because he failed to get a new husband for his mother follows.

They say if a girl passes under a rainbow she is changed to a boy, and *vice versâ*. This is also given as a saying of the Bedu. They hang blue glass and pieces of bone to the necks of animals as a defence against the evil eye. The women are specially careful not to show their hair.

Note.—Some of these customs approach to those of the Oriental Jews.

The Bedu.

These answers translated by Captain Mantell from the Arabic, contain fewer points of interest, as the informant has evidently not lived among the nomads of the desert, and what he says refer rather to the Fellahin.

A story of Iskander is given. He used to slay the barbers who shaved his head to preserve the secret of his ram's horns. One barber whispered the secret to a well which went on repeating "Iskander has two horns,"

اسكندر له قرنان

Note.—Compare the story of Midas which is known to the Kirghiz Tartars.

When a man dies his star falls from heaven. The Arab ordeal by hot water is noticed with another ordeal of standing in a circle drawn round an ant hill. The accused say, "By the truth of the stick (العود) and by the Lord worshipped in the circle of Solomon."

The story of change of sex under the rainbow (قوس القزح or قوس السحاب) is repeated.

Several other proverbs are given—

وجه تعرفه ولا وجه تـتعرف به

"Know the face and be not known by the face."

رغيف برغيف ولا تخل جارك جوعان

"Loaf for loaf, and do not leave your neighbour hungry."

حبل الكذب قصير

Note.—Landberg gives (cxviii)

الرغيف برغيف ولا ببات جارك جوعان

"The rope of lies is short."

بين الحقّ والبطل اربع اُصـبـة

"Between truth and error four fingers," said to mean the breadth from the eye to the ear.

The Christians.

The answers are somewhat meagre in this section, yet contain points of interest such as the curious legend of Noah gathering the animals to the ark by the sound of the *nakûs* or wooden board used as a bell, and of the cave covered with inscriptions where Daniel once lived. Relics appear to be used, especially bones of St. Antony. New clothes are bought at Easter (a custom in Antioch in the 4th century according to St. Chrysostom). The Makâm of Seiyida el Muntarah has walls which sweat, and this moisture cures the sick. The crow, owl, camel, and wolf are considered unlucky by the Christians. Blue beads are kept with money for luck. Those supposed to be possessed by the devil are bound and kept in churches. Before Easter a child is taken in a coffin round the village to represent the death of Christ; but the Italian representation of the "manger" at Christmas is unknown. Bonfires are lighted at the time of the feast of Holy Cross.

Some Christians have light hair and eyes, which is popularly ascribed to Crusading lineage (no doubt it represents Aryan blood). The priests are supposed to be able to heal the sick by medicines and by written amulets.

The ancient idea that various kinds of food affect the intellect survives among Christians as well as among Moslems. Plain food is thought to improve the memory. Fish is said to weaken the body.

Glass or pottery jars are placed over the door of a house. The cross is marked on the door. Trees and birds are painted on the walls.

At birth a Christian child is rubbed with salt and with oil, and charms hung to its neck (just as in Antioch in the 4th century). The ring is used as well as the crown in marriage both by Greeks and (apparently) by Maronites. The old custom of fighting for the bride survives, and is said to lead sometimes to serious wounds, and even to death of her relatives. The bridegroom rides round the village, and is pelted by the women with cakes, grain, and scent. The old customs seem to be dying out, but the bride is said still to receive a piece of dough which she sticks on the door of the house.

At a funeral hired mourners are still engaged (as in the middle ages), and cloths are waved after the bier. The relatives rend their clothes at the grave, and visit the grave every day for a week (probably a survival of the old idea that the soul haunted the tomb for some time after death).

The belief in magic survives among the Christians, and their ideas as to astronomy are very ancient. They believe the world to be disc-shaped, and they beat drums and fire guns at the time of an eclipse to frighten the dragon who is swallowing the sun or moon.

This is but a *resumé* of the most remarkable points noted. Much valuable information as to peculiar words and expressions, and articles of dress, furniture, &c., is given, with songs and legends, some of which are

already well known; but there are questions concerning which further explanation is very desirable.

Biblical Illustrations.

The following Biblical questions are illustrated by these replies :—

1. Worship of the calf and of trees.
2. Forbidden food.
3. Rubbing children with salt.
4. Weighing the hair when cut.
5. Riddles asked at weddings.
6. Hired mourners at funerals. *Handwritten: 1, 1, 2, 9*
7. Rending the clothes.
8. Certain proverbs mentioned in the Bible.
9. The use of amulets.
10. Crowns worn by brides.
11. "The corner of the field" left unreaped.

These are, in some cases, not well-known customs as survivals in Syria. and it seems probable that many other interesting notes may be collected by the same method. There was nothing in the questions to lead to the recovery of such illustrations of the Bible in the form of leading questions.

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NOTES BY MAJOR CONDER, D.C.L., R.E.

I.

PALESTINE PEASANT LANGUAGE.

IN "Tent Work in Palestine" I called attention to the importance of studying the local dialects in Palestine, which preserve much that is archaic and which has been lost in the literary language. A good many further notes have accumulated in my hands since then, and a new and most interesting work has been published by C. Landberg, a Swedish scholar, who has given special study to the subject, and whose first volume appeared at Leyden in 1883.

The words commonly used by the Palestine peasantry, and not found in standard dictionaries (such as those of Lane and Freytag), are in many cases the same words used in the Bible or on the Assyrian monuments. Some of these I have noticed previously, others are pointed out by Landberg in his grammatical study of the dialects. The contempt with which the early Arab authors and grammarians regarded the *لسان العامة* or speech of the common people (*עמ ה ארץ*), has caused such dialects