

The numbers at the foot of Table VII show the number of days of rain in each year. The largest number is 175 in 1882; the next in order are 167 in 1883, and 163 in 1888. The smallest numbers are 135 in 1884, 137 in 1887, and 140 in 1885. The total number of days of rain in the 10 years is 1,515 on $151\frac{1}{2}$ days yearly.

ESSAYS ON THE SECTS AND NATIONALITIES OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE.

THE MARONITES.

By FREDERICK JONES BLISS, B.A.

It is not the object of this essay to discuss at any length the vexed question of the origin of the Maronites, or to determine their exact relationship to Rome throughout the middle ages, but rather to present a sketch of the sect as it is to-day. In touching briefly upon early historical points, we shall be satisfied with the conclusions drawn by the authorities in such matters. In a number of sections we shall speak of the geographical distribution of the Maronites, of their general council, of their clergy, of their monasteries and conventual discipline, of their liturgical books, of their feasts and fasts, of the customs pertaining to their rites of baptism, marriage, and burial, and of any peculiarities of the sect. A large part of the Lebanon has been visited by the writer, and most of the information contained in the essay has been obtained by word of mouth from Maronites, or from their own books. It is not easy in Syria to arrive at exact information, and the writer, not having had access to any large general library, would wish to apologise in advance for any mistakes that may be found, notwithstanding his careful attempts to verify every statement.

I.

THE MARONITES AND THE LEBANON.

The Lebanon is the stronghold of the Maronites. They are to be found in Aleppo, in Damascus, in Nazareth, in Cyprus, in Alexandria, and in all the maritime cities of Syria, but their home is in the mountains. The Lebanon follows the sea-coast in a general northerly direction from a point midway between Tyre and Sidon to a point somewhat north of Tripoli—a distance of about 120 miles. Its greatest breadth does not exceed 25 or 30 miles. Its highest peaks rise to a height of 10,000 feet.

The Maronites are scattered over the whole range, but they are found in greatest numbers in the northern part. The Kesrawan, north of the Dog River and Belad Bsherreh, below the cedars are almost exclusively Maronite.

A Maronite ecclesiastic¹ estimates the entire number of Maronites at 300,000. Probably almost four-fifths of these are to be found in the ranges of the Lebanon. In these mountains there are Druzes, a few Moslems, and Metawileh, Greeks, Greek Catholics, a few Protestants, and finally Maronites, who form about three-fifths of the whole population.

The Kesrawan possesses extraordinary scenery. Even from Beirut the view is unique. One looks across the bay to the ashen-grey hills rising almost sheer from the blue water, with perpendicular strata of limestone running up over their summits and on up to the sharp outline of the loftier rocky ridges, with jagged points, like the teeth of a saw. On every prominent knoll or ridge stands a convent; villages gleam at different altitudes—a beautiful picture always, but bleak and grey till touched by the sunset light, when the deep ravines cleaving the higher hills are marked by dark shadows, and the rock-embossed summits, glowing with purple and rose, are thrown out into sharpest relief.

Nor is a nearer view wanting in surprise. To one toiling up the steep foot hill rising from the Bay of Juneh, the Kesrawan gives little promise of fertility. The rich cultivation of the plain climbs the hill for only two or three hundred feet, giving place to a few scrub oaks scattered over the dry chalky soil. A backbone of rock breaks out at the top of this hill, and in it there is a square cut called "the gates of the winds." A few steps through this cut brings you to a sudden halt. The hill drops as abruptly upon this side as upon the other, but upon what a steeply fertile valley. Far below lie the red-tiled buildings of the Latin College of Antura; the bottom of the valley is a green nest of orange trees and other fruits; on the opposite valley wall a stately grove of pines protects a loftily-perched belfried nunnery; terrace rises above terrace, where the green mulberry shows gay against the white soil, in an extraordinary perpendicular series—it is a vision of hanging gardens, of a precipice in cultivation. The white buildings of the monastery of the Syriac Catholics seems fastened against the steep side of the hill to the left. Through the cut you look back at a wall of sea, palpitating with brilliant tints of amethyst and turquoise, the soft round clouds in the sky above mirrored on its surface like a gentle breathing upon polished metal. As you ride along the ridge, the views afford a strange mixture of wildness and fertility. The scenery impresses one as closely packed, as having a bewildering variety for a small compass; the effect of these pyramidal hills, with steep straths of pine and patches of oak falling on one side to the Bay of Juneh, and on the other to rich narrow

¹ See: Cereni *Storiei Sulla Nazione Siro—Maronita, etc.*, per G. Notain Der'anni Livorno; Francesco Vigo, 1890.

valleys, while the jagged slopes tower above, is startling, and almost theatrical.

Villages are thickly planted among these lower hills, notwithstanding a notorious scarcity of water. The upper Kesrawan has several celebrated springs, among which are the ice-cold Neb'a-el-Leben and Neb'a-el-'Asil, the fountains of milk and honey. I reserve a description of the Bsherreh district for the section on the monasteries.

That the Maronites have inhabited these Lebanon regions for more than 12 centuries is historically clear. The question as to how long their ancestors were there before them merges itself in the general problem of Syrian chronology, which is yet to be solved. With the exception of the Bedouins, of the Nusairiyeh, who are probably descendants of ancient heathen, and of the noble Druze and Moslem families, whose pedigree is Arab, together with the houses of Shehaab¹ and Bilenma, now Maronite, but formerly Moslem and Druze respectively; it is at present impossible to speak definitely of the ancestry of any given division of the people. Among the population we have descendants of the ancient Canaanites, of Jew, of Greek and Roman colonists, of Arab invaders, of Frankish Crusaders, and possibly of Mongols, but definitely to recognise each element is impossible. Religion is not enough to determine race. While in some cases the Moslem physiognomy points to an Arab origin, in others the difference of appearance between Moslem and Christian is only a matter of facial expression, induced by a different habit of mind. For the Moslems include not only the descendants of the Arab invaders, but of those Christians who yielded to Mohammed's sword. In the towns of Nebk and Yabrud in the anti-Libanus, Moslems and Christians are not easily distinguished,—features, expression, speech, dress, and habits being much the same. In fact they are but one people, one branch of which embraced Islam while the other rejected it.

Renan,² without giving his authority, asserts that the Maronites are descendants of an ancient Christian family of Antioch which took refuge in the Lebanon to escape the persecution of the Orthodox Church. He says that the Maronite clergy believe that the Lebanon was always Jewish or Christian, having accepted Christianity at its first preaching, but he adds that the Lebanon was one of the last districts to be converted. It is his belief that "the Lebanon is truly the tomb of an old world gone by, which has disappeared body and soul. A total substitution of race, language, and religion has taken place; Maronites, Greeks, Metawileh, Druzes, Moslems, Arabs, and Turcomans are there of recent date."

On the contrary, it is the opinion of others that in the Maronites we find descendants of the pagan tribes inhabiting the Lebanon at the remotest periods of Jewish history.

The Maronites date their origin from the days of the Abbot Marôn who, they say, died in the year 400 A.D. Gibbon says that "the rival

¹ The Hasbeya portion of this family is still Moslem.

² "Mission de Phenicie," page 335.

cities of Emesa and Apamea disputed his relics, and 600 of his disciples united their solitary cells on the banks of the Orontes." Whether the Abbot Marûn is historical or mythical is not clear, but it seems certain that this monastery of the Orontes became the nursery of Monothelitism. The warlike inhabitants of the Lebanon who were at the time under the rule of local princes, adopted the heresy towards the close of the 7th century. Justinian II employed the aid of these warriors in a campaign against the Khalif Abd-el-Melek, but after a decided victory over the common foe, the orthodox Emperor turned his forces against his allies, who would not give up their heresy, and who received the name of Mardaites or rebels, while those who remained attached to the Emperor were called Melkites or royalists, a name borne by the Greek Christians of Syria till the present day. The monastery on the Orontes was ravaged. Dr. Wortabet¹ argues that the name Maronite was prior to the name Mardaite, as the Lebanon were called rebels in consequence of their persisting in the heresy of Marûn. It is still a point in dispute whether their name is derived from the Monk Marûn, or from Yuhauna Marûn, their first patriarch, who they say was chosen in the year 685, and who died in 707. Most Maronites hold the former view. Notwithstanding the hostile Greeks on the one hand and the Saracen invaders on the other, the Maronites, under leaders whose exploits are celebrated by their own annalists, long retained an independence in their mountain fastnesses, and the acts of the Council held in the last century always referred to them as a nation. In these strongholds of the hills they have always maintained religious freedom, even under the Turkish rule, and have afforded an asylum for many who have been persecuted, religiously or politically.

The Maronites not only glory in an early nationality but they deny that they were ever heretical. Maronite scholars trained at Rome, such as Faustus Nairon (in an elaborate treatise: "De Origine Nomine ac Religione Maronitarum," Rome, 1679), Gabriel Sionita, Abraham Echelenis, &c., have tried to vindicate their church against the charge of Monothelitism. Against their position we have the testimony of William of Tyre, and of Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Tyre, in the 12th century. I give the passage from William of Tyre as quoted by Dr. Wortabet: "A Syrian nation in the province of Phœnicia, inhabiting the cliffs of Lebanon, near the city of Biblos, while enjoying temporal peace, experienced a great change in state. For having followed the errors of one *Maro*, a *heresiarch*, for nearly 500 years, and so as to be called after him Maronites, and to be separated from the Church of the Faithful and maintain a separate worship, through divine influence returning now to a sound mind, they put on resolution and joined themselves to Americus, the (Latin) Patriarch of Antioch."²

Jacques de Vitry, in his "Historia Hierosolymitana," speaks of "a people called Maronites from the name of a certain man, their master,

¹ "Religion in the East," p. 104.

² "Religion in the East," p. 106.

Maron, a heretic, who affirmed that there was in Jesus but one will or operation. They remained separated from the Church nearly 500 years. At last, their hearts being turned, they made profession of the Catholic faith in the presence of the venerable Father Amaury, Patriarch of Antioch, and adopted the traditions of the Roman Church."¹ Dr. Wortabet adds the testimony of John of Damascus, who "pronounced the Maronites to be heretics, with whom he could have no communion;" also of Timothy, a Presbyter of Constantinople, who wrote a service for the reception of repentant heretics into the Church, including Maronites; also of an Arabic MS. in his possession of the History and Acts of the Councils, "in which the Maronites are expressly mentioned by name as being of the number condemned by the Sixth Council for Monothelism."

This historical evidence is convincing, and Mosheim says that leading Catholic scholars are agreed that the origin of the Maronites is tinged both with Monothelism and Monophysitism. Out of respect, however, for Maronite traditions, Rome, while she has not canonized the two Maróns, has practically recognised the local patron saints of what is now a loyal portion of the Church. The position is illogical, but admirably illustrates the adaptability of Rome. In various Papal documents addressed to Maronite Patriarchs, it is affirmed that the Maronites have remained loyal to the Roman Church from the earliest days of Christianity.

The union with Rome was at first loose; indeed the celebrated Jacobite writer, Gregorius Bar-Hebraeus, known also as Abulpharagius, who died in 1286, speaks of the Maronites as Monothelites.² The formal act of union took place at the Council of Florence in 1445, when they acknowledged the supremacy of Rome in ecclesiastical discipline. Churchill, in speaking of the period previous to the union, says³: "For three centuries there existed a church in the Lebanon Popish in all its forms and doctrines, saving the cardinal point of submission to the Pope."

At this time the Pope Eugenius IV. gave the Maronite Prelates a general sanction to hold Provincial Councils for the regulation of matters of faith and discipline, the proceedings of which should be transmitted to the Pope by a legate present at the Council. Such a Council was held in the year 1736. Its acts and decisions form the constitution of the Maronite Church to-day. These were printed in Arabic in 1788, at the press of Mar Yuhanna, a Greek Catholic Convent, situated in a rocky valley opening into the Dog River Gorge, and in Latin early in the present century at Rome. The versions differ enough to give rise occasionally to varying interpretations, in some cases the text being fuller and more explicit in the Arabic version, and in others in the Latin.

¹ The date of this union is given as 1182.

² "Assemanus Bibliotheca Orientalis," tom. ii, p. 292.

³ "Mount Lebanon," vol. iii., p. 75.

Accordingly, to avoid trouble between Maronites and the mother church, a translation of the Latin text has been recently made into Arabic—in press at the date of writing. It is interesting to notice that the Latin version will serve as the single standard.

At the end of this version there are printed various ancient documents, such as Papal Bulls, Indulgences, and Acts of Maronite Synods. Among these we may note the Synod held by Serkis, Patriarch of Antioch, March 19th, 1596, in which the anathema of the Maronite Prelate is hurled against errors ascribed to him and his nation, as well as against his defamers; these include: Monothelitism, procession from the Father alone, denial of purgatory, denial of original sin, view that one may deny the faith with his lips but hold it in his heart, view that Confirmation is not distinct from Baptism, view that divorce may be permitted for fornication or because of incurable disease. Serkis had evidently been suspected of Greek orthodoxy. The Council of Trent is quoted, and at the close Papal Confirmation is asked.

Under date of 1562 we find the Pope Pius IV granting authority to the Patriarch to absolve certain heretics of the Maronite nation. He compliments the Patriarch upon his devotion to the See, and begs him to leave a warning to his successors to report carefully to Rome. In 1577, Gregory XIII sends to the Patriarch an Arabic translation of the Decrees and Canons of Trent and of the Catechism for Parish Priests, that errors may be more carefully avoided. Paul V, evidently in the interests of the individuality of the Maronite Church, writes to their Patriarch in 1610 concerning the restoration of certain Maronite rites which he had changed—"ancient customs not contrary to the Catholic Faith." In 1713, Clement XI declares the deposition and resignation of the Patriarch Jacob null and void, and commands the Bishops to yield him obedience and subjection. These references are enough to show that the Papal See kept careful watch over the Maronites after the Council of Florence.

According to the correspondence between the Patriarch and the Roman Prelates with reference to the Lebanon Council, given at the end of the Latin edition, the initiative was taken by the former. In letters sent to Pope Clement XII and to the Propaganda, under date of July, 1734, the Patriarch Yusif el Khazin and the Maronite Bishops speak of things in their nation which ought to be reformed and corrected; they acknowledge that they need the help of Rome, and to this end beg that the learned Yusif el Sim'any (called at Rome Josephus Assemanus), their fellow countryman, may be sent to co-operate with them in the work of reform. In the introductory note the Maronite Prelates are represented as desiring to preserve intact the dogmas of the Catholic Faith as received by St. Peter, and recognising that some foreign elements have crept in they are anxious for reform. A year later the Propaganda issued a decree empowering Assemanus to visit the Lebanon as an Apostolic Legate to assist the Maronites in arranging their discipline, according to the instructions to be given him by the Propaganda,

and, if it should seem necessary, to call a General Council, in which he should have a vote together with the Bishops; matters of grave moment to be referred to Rome. Assemanus was librarian of the Vatican and *Prælati Domesticus* to the Pope. He was a distinguished scholar and author of many works, chief of which is the "Bibliotheca Orientalis," in four handsome volumes, published respectively in 1719, 1721, 1725, and 1728; it is a Thesaurus of Syriac literature, containing the lives of different authors, orthodox, Monophysite and Nestorian, and extracts from their works, with comments. In a letter to the Patriarch, Clement XII speaks of the piety and wisdom of Assemanus, and especially of his learning in Oriental subjects and the rites of the Maronite nation, which the Pope likens to a rose among thorns, and to a rock in the midst of the sea standing firm against the raging waves of numerous heretics, schismatics, and infidels, vehemently persecuting the Patriarchate of Antioch.

Assemanus arrived in Syria July 17th, 1736. It seems probable that he had prepared fully beforehand the Constitution to be presented to his fellow Maronites, for when the Patriarch came from Qannûbin to the Convent of Raifûn in the Kesrawan in July, he appointed there private meetings, beginning September 14th, at which were presented "the propositions decided by the Apostolic Seat" and others not yet defined. At Raifûn there arose certain differences regarding the distribution of the chrismatic oil, the extent of dioceses, &c., &c. The Patriarch belonged to the famous feudal house of Khazin, and his relations seem to have supported him against the Legate. Assemanus, to avoid contention, withdrew to the Convent of Lowaizi, above the mouth of the Dog River, accompanied by the missionaries and other clergy. Here, on September 26th, the Patriarch suddenly followed him, and a friendly discussion of three days ensued, followed by the announcement of a General Council. This was opened at the Convent of Lowaizi on September 30th, and lasted for three days. There were present the Syriac Catholic and Armenian Catholic Archbishops of Damascus and Aleppo, the Abbots-General of the two Orders of Lebanon Monks, with their directors, Latin missionaries of four orders, sixteen Heads of Monasteries, the Maronite Bishops with many of the lesser clergy, chiefly nobles from the house of Khazin, and sixteen from the house of Habeish.

After mass and the reading of correspondence, the Council opened with a solemn subscription to a Confession of Faith, including the Nicene Creed, and referring to the Councils in detail, ending with that of Trent. A sermon was preached by a Jesuit father. At the six sessions of the Council, which occupied the mornings and afternoons of three days, the decrees were read and approved.

In a letter to the Propaganda the Jesuit at the head of the 'Antura Mission says that not a few abuses were corrected; he praises the wisdom, learning, and long suffering of the Legate, by which he overcame difficulties raised by Bishops, Governors, and the Patriarch himself, to the satisfaction of all. As the Canons fill 350 pages in the Arabic edition, there could have been no discussion at the Council itself. They are

divided into four parts:—Part I is on the Catholic Faith; the first sentence is as follows: “Among the especial benefits with which Almighty God has wished, by reason of his unspeakable goodness, to adorn the Apostolic Church of Antioch and our Syrian Nation of Maronites, is one to be perpetually remembered by us with due gratitude to His Majesty, namely, that the Orthodox Faith from the first preaching of Peter, the chief of the Apostles, in the region of Syria, has remained intact and unchanged to these times, so that, among the great changes wrought by heretics, schismatics, and infidels, it has suffered no loss of the sacred, Catholic, and Apostolic truth.” It contains chapters on the Creed, on Preaching, on the Use of books, on Fasts and Feasts, and on the Reverence for Saints, Relics, and Images. Part II treats in detail of the Sacraments, Indulgences, and Penances, and of the sins which can be absolved alone by the Bishops and Patriarch. Part III treats of sacred offices, from Sacristan to Patriarch. Part IV treats of Churches, Convents, and Schools, with a concluding chapter on the rules of the Council, in which, among other things, it is said that this book has been derived from the rules of the Pontiffs, the decision of Councils and ancient fathers, and the rites of the ancient church of Antioch; the customs of former Maronite Prelates are to be followed with veneration, except as they may be contrary to the present Constitution, but their censures are to be revoked and only those sanctioned by their Council are to have force; the present Constitution is not to limit the authority of the Patriarch or of the Provincial Synod.

In theology the book is strictly Tridentine. All traces of heresy have long ago disappeared from the Maronites, nor are there to be found among them any peculiarities of belief. Their difference from Latin Catholicism to-day consists not in doctrine, but in the language and form of their ritual, and in the permission given to their parish clergy to marry.

The subscriptions include not only the names of the Maronite Prelates and Nobles, but those of other Catholic clergy present. The Maronite Bishop of Damascus preached a closing sermon from the text “Jesus began to do and to teach,” upon the necessity of good works.¹ The benediction was pronounced by Assemanus.

An example of Oriental hyperbole appears in a letter written after the close of the Council by the Patriarch to the Pope: “God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son; so most Blessed Father thou hast loved us as to send us a man most acceptable to thee and to us.” Assemanus reports on his Mission in a letter dated January, 1737, in which he says that the decrees are to be sent to the Pope, to be changed, corrected, amended, and confirmed.

¹ I cannot forbear quoting an amusing and unique illustration used by the Bishop. He probably preached in Arabic, but I copy from the Latin version: “Qui enim docet, nec facit, similis est fictitiis dentibus, quorum usus est ad verba proferenda, non ad cibum sumendum.”

We learn from the Bull of Benedict XIV, found in the Arabic version, dated September 1st, 1741, which confirmed the Council, that there arose some difficulties between the Patriarch and the Legate (who after the Council had made a tour of inspection among the churches and monasteries) in regard to putting in force some of the decrees of the Council, namely, the complete separation of Monks and Nuns; the money given to the Patriarch and Bishops for the distribution of the chrismatic oil; and the extent and permanency of Episcopal Sees which had been somewhat altered by the Council. The Patriarch consulted Rome by letters in 1737, and later by special envoy. The matter came up finally before the Apostolic Court, when the following questions were put and answered:—

- 1st. Did the Lebanon Council meet legally? Answered affirmatively.
- 2nd. Is the Council's regulation for the separation of women and nuns from Monks to be confirmed? Answered affirmatively.
- 3rd. Does the regulation forbidding the Patriarch to take money for oil deserve confirmation? Answer: It does, but the Pope will graciously make up the loss to him.
- 4th. Is the rule requiring the residence of Bishops in their Sees to be confirmed, and what is to be said as to the divisions of the Bishoprics and as to the permanency of a Bishop in his See? Answer: The Canonical decrees on this point are to be confirmed.
- 5th. Shall the Pope be asked to confirm the Council by a Bull? Answered affirmatively.

In apology for speaking at such length of this Council, we may say that it is important because it settled the constitution of the Maronite Church as it is to-day, and because it shows the methods by which Rome deals with a distant branch of the Church. It occupies a unique position among the Syrian churches. Until the breaking down of feudalism during the last century the Maronite Church and nation were one. The Patriarch was often chosen from a noble house, thus more truly representing the nation. The Greek Bishops are often imported, though less frequently than formerly, but a foreign Maronite prelate would be a contradiction in terms. The Maronite ritual in Syriac and Arabic is peculiar to the sect, and the ancient ecclesiastical polity is preserved. This feeling of nationality comes out in the chapter of the Council of Lebanon, which treats of the Maronite College at Rome, in the anxiety lest the attractions of the Latin ritual tempt the students to desert their own. They are forbidden to receive the Sacraments of confirmation and ordination by any rite except the Maronite, or to enter Monastic orders. A student whose loyalty to his own church is doubtful is instantly to be sent back to the Lebanon.

Though the Maronite Church has home rule, yet there are indications that Rome is strengthening her hold upon it. The Pope's Legate, who lives at Beirût, has a superintendence over all the Catholic Churches of Syria. Churchill, writing in 1852, speaks of his influence among the Maronites as slight, and of the despotic authority of the Patriarch, from which there is no appeal. The last forty years have worked change. Within a few years the monks of the Lebanon division of the Order of St. Antony, withdrawing from the Patriarch, put themselves under the protection of the Legate. At their last triennial Council he endeavoured to dictate in the election of Abbot-General, and when the monks did not comply he closed the Council. The matter was referred to Rome. The Legate was appointed Patriarch of Jerusalem, and a *locum tenens* was appointed to the duties of the Generalship till the next election. I understand that the Order now wishes to return to the allegiance of the Patriarch. Every Maronite to-day has the right of final appeal to Rome. A case in point was related to me. A certain convent in the Kesrawan had been built by the family of Zwein. It fell under the control of the Bishop, but the family of the founders reserved the right of appointing the Abbot, and claimed its support for their sick and poor. Upon the death of the Abbot, not many years ago, the Bishop and Patriarch seem to have demanded the unrestrained management of the convent. The family of Zwein, supported by the Legate, appealed to Rome, and a deed of possession was sent to them.

Speaking of the election of the Patriarch, Churchill says, "the debates usually last for many days, and even weeks." Here, again, we may contrast the past with the present. For after the death of the Patriarch this last spring his successor was elected on the ninth or tenth day, it being understood that if within that time the Bishops had made no choice the right of appointment would revert to the Pope. It was even hinted that Rome would have been pleased to prove the ineligibility of each Bishop in order that in failure of a choice within the given time, she might declare the Legate competent to assume all the patriarchal functions, thus giving a death-blow to Maronite independence. The Jesuits are doing much in Syria for the mother church. Besides their superbly endowed college and Medical School in Beirût, their schools are found in the principal Maronite villages. It is said that the churches of the Lazarists and Jesuits in Beirût are fuller of Maronites than are their own churches. It has become the fashion to confess to Latin fathers, and also to observe the Latin fasts rather than the Maronite.

The Maronites may usually be distinguished by their features and general appearance. Whatever their early origin, a sense of nationality has probably done much to preserve them intact for over a thousand years. They are apparently more unified than any other Christian sect in Syria. The Arabic spoken by the Maronites in the remote and lofty regions of Bsherreh preserves some peculiar vowel sounds of the Syriac. It would have been strange if the Kesrawan and Belad Bsherreh had not

produced a type; until recently the inhabitants have seldom left their mountain homes, marriages have taken place within narrow geographical limits, often within the same family, and intermixture with other sects has been rare. In the Kesrawan the following type is common: face broad, but square rather than oval; thick, rather curly, black hair, with heavy beard and moustaches appearing early, at first glossy but apt to become grizzled and stiff; well-set eyes, almond-shaped, black or brown, with clear whites; nose inclined to be broad; straight mouth, with regular white teeth; complexion a healthy olive, with almost no red colour; medium stature; good shoulders; a fine, free carriage, and a dignified smile. Fair complexions and blue eyes occur, but they are an exception. In Bsherreh the women are handsome, with round faces and a pink and white complexion.

Like the rest of the Lebanese, they are engaged chiefly in the cultivation of wheat, the vine, mulberry, &c. Many hundreds of the women and children are engaged in the silk factories. In the large cities there are wealthy Maronite merchants. Within the last few years there has been an extraordinary craze, especially in Zahleh and the Bsherreh districts, for going to America and Australia. It is not an emigration; very few have any intention of settling in those countries. Most of them go as adventurers, often taking with them their women and children. They carry goods from Jerusalem, as well as cheap Parisian jewellery, and peddle them from State to State. As they manage to live in America on a few cents a day, making sometimes a few dollars, they return to the Lebanon with what are considered large sums of money. Hasrún and other towns are full of fine, new houses built by these returned adventurers, who went away as poor peasants. While many succeed more are reduced to beggary, and the slums of New York are full of these Lebanon Maronites and Greeks. This exodus is discouraged by the Lebanon Government.

The three chief noble houses of the Maronites are those of Khazin—by far the most important—Habeish, and Dahdeh. Churchill says that the Habeish Sheikhs are the oldest, having been allies to the Crusaders. The feudal power of these families is altogether lost, but they are still very particular about their family alliances. During the last century the Lebanon branch of the Shehaab emirs became Maronites.¹ The emirs of the house of Bilemma' were originally Druze, but became Maronite shortly after the Shehaabs. They have been for centuries in the Lebanon, and remains of their castles are to be found in five towns, but several have passed out of their hands, the massive castle at Solíma having become a Latin school. The style of building is solid and simple,

¹ Their faces furnish a good illustration of the stamp given to physiognomy by religion. Their race is Arab (they boast descent from the Koreish) almost unmixed, as their alliances have been only with old emirical families, and yet we must look closely to distinguish them from other Maronite Christians. The Hasbeya Shehaabs are still Moslems, and show this clearly in their faces.

but the gateway at Falugha is a piece of elaborate carving in the Persian manner, with rude lions, platters of fruit and Saracenic border. From being feudal lords, with almost unlimited power, these emirs are now reduced to comparative poverty, having no political influence except what may accrue to offices held under the Pasha of the Lebanon.

The origin of the Khazins is obscure; their power in the Kesrawan began towards the close of the 16th century. The celebrated Emir Fakhredeen Ma'n, whose career is one of the most romantic in Lebanon history, passed his early years in a sort of exile under the roof of Sheikh Abu Nadir el Khazin. Later, when the Emir became head of the Lebanon, he made Sheikh Abu Nadir lord of the Kesrawan. The Khazins rapidly became the acknowledged leaders of the Christians. They built palaces, churches, and endowed many monasteries. They made alliances with the French Kings, who became protectors of the Maronite nation. Churchill gives the text of letters of protection issued by Louis XIV and Louis XV, enjoining French Consuls in the Levant to look after the interests of the Maronite Patriarch and people. For a long period the agents of the French Government in Beirût were chosen from among the Khazins. Sheikh Naufel el Khazin received as gifts from Louis XIV a sword and a ring. Rome conceded to them the right of giving investiture to the Patriarch-elect.

The Lebanon nobility exercised far into the present century all the rights and privileges of the feudal system. They regulated the dress and manner of living of the peasants, demanded personal service as well as homage, and appropriated lands very much as they liked. On the other hand, they kept open house, and extended royal hospitality. The power of the Khazins, though somewhat abated, lasted till the year 1858, when the peasants, restive under the feudal yoke, instigated by the Patriarch and the French agent at Beirût, arose in insurrection and drove out the Khazins from the Kesrawan. Some years later they returned, but their power was gone.

The last remnants of feudalism were destroyed when the Government was reconstructed after the massacres of 1860. In regard to the civil wars between the Druzes and Christians in 1845 and 1860, it may be said that the troubles were political rather than religious. It is a matter of surprise to those who know how greatly the Maronites outnumber the Druzes that the latter should have had the advantage. Two things must be remembered: first, that the Druzes were far more united than the Maronites, whose present tendency is to follow local rather than national leaders: and, second, that the Druzes rightly relied upon the inaction, if not upon the sympathy, of the Turkish troops, a state of things, of course, paralysing to the Christians.

As to mental and moral characteristics, habits and manners of life, the Maronites differ little from the other Christians of the country. They are more bigoted than the Greeks, and in purely Maronite regions Protestant missionaries have been unable to establish schools. We may trace the sources of their bigotry in their sense of national pride, as well as in real

devotion to their religion. Toleration is the child of broad-minded charity, but it may be the child of indifference as well. The Maronites are certainly not indifferent. Believing in the infallibility of their Church and of its dogmas, and cherishing a deep attachment for it, it is no wonder that they resist anything which they suppose to be hostile to its teaching. They share with all Syrians of whatever creed a vivid sense of God's Providence. In the West a belief in Providence is intellectual rather than practical, but with the Orientals the weather, health, sickness, affliction, good fortune are all referred directly to a Divine source. Repining or rebellion against God's decrees would be never thought of. On the other hand, it must be said that spirituality is at a low ebb. Of course, it is not necessary to add that there are many exceptional cases. The priests are formal in the discharge of their duties. Piety is more apt to take the form of devotion to the ceremonies of the Church than of growth in spiritual life. A lofty, disinterested ideal of character does not seem to be contemplated. The Bible is in no sense a household book. In the smaller villages preaching is unknown, and it is rare anywhere. The Virgin and the Saints are exalted practically to the loftiest rank, and share in the devotion which might otherwise be devoted to God alone. However, as will be seen further on, there are embedded in the Maronite ritual many passages of spiritual force and beauty. It is impossible to forecast the future of the Oriental Churches, but if they ever become vitalised again the Maronite Church will have preserved in its ritual germs of great spiritual power.

(To be continued in April "Quarterly Statement.")

REVIEW.—*The Life and Times of Joseph, by the Light of Egyptian Lore.*

By the REV. H. G. TOMKINS.¹

SUCH a book as this might be adduced as in itself an illustration and a defence of the work which this society and scholars in Assyrian and Egyptian lore have been accomplishing during the last quarter of a century. It is not too much to say that such work has absolutely given life to dry bones. The history of Joseph, as we read it in the Bible, is intensely human, even to the most careless readers. It presents a character drawn in firm, strong outline. But it stands against the sky. There is no setting—no background—no atmosphere. These things are given to it by the discoveries of modern times. We see, by the help of Mr. Tomkins' pages, Kharran, the "road," in the country of Padan Aram, by which passed continually the caravans, the pilgrims, the tribes, the armies on their way. It was not in the desert that Joseph grew up. Again, when Jacob moved south and settled at Shalem, it was not in a green wilderness, but in the road of trade and travel.

¹ The Religious Tract Society.

Again, it was not because Joseph was a favourite that his father dressed him in a coat of many colours, it was because he was the son of "Jacob's wife" (Gen. xlvi), the first-born son of the wife—not the son of Leah, or of Bilhah, or of Zilpah, but of Rachel. His dress marked his position in the household. The Egyptian pictures show that the Semitic nations of Western Asia wore coats and kilts of richly-coloured designs, and that the chieftain was distinguished by the especial form and ornamentation of his tunic. Again, in a small but significant illustration, in Joseph's dream, his sheaf arose and stood upright—in Egypt the sheaves are not set upright, but are laid flat on the ground. Again, as to the vision of the sun and moon and eleven stars, Lenormant and Sayce give sets of twelve stars taken from the ancient monument.

When Joseph is sold it is to Ishmaelite traders from the land of Midian going down from Gilead into Egypt. Their trade was in spices, of which an enormous quantity was wanted in Egypt for embalming the dead and for incense in the temples.

It would not be fair to the book to pursue the history any farther. We have here called attention to the work because such a book is in itself a justification, if one were wanted, of our work. What has been done by Mr. Tomkins for Joseph here, and in a previous work for Abraham, may be done for Joshua, for David, for any of the Biblical characters; that is to say, they can now be presented to the reader as they were, moving among the men of their own time, clothed in their own dress, speaking their own tongue, obeying their own laws. The chief danger in such a restoration is, of course, that we are prone to forget that their laws were not ours, and that their ideas, on subjects which have now become by the development of religion, vital to Christians, were not ours.
