

2 inches deep, in which apparently the teeth of the millstone ran in order that the stuff already crushed by the heavy stone should be more finely ground. Similar mills are still used in the country. These millstones and others of less interest which I found in the ruins had apparently nothing to do with the upright stones.

What might these have been? A question which everyone who sees them asks. My companion said it was an entrance to a house, and the holes were for the bar for shutting it. But a door it was not, as can be very easily shown.

One might suppose it was a press for oil or wine, but the grooves would then be useless, and it is difficult to see in what manner the actual pressing could be done.<sup>1</sup>

## PEASANT FOLKLORE OF PALESTINE.

### *Answers to Questions.*

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

QUESTION 1. *Describe the Sacred Trees.*—The sacred trees are the Lotus tree (*Zizyphus spina christi*) *سدر*. Welys live in them as soon as a tree has reached its fortieth year, and woe to the man who then cuts such a tree: the Wely ruins him. It is said these trees are usually to be seen lighted on Thursday evening, and that the music of the sacred instruments of unseen spirits is occasionally heard there, as at the group of trees south of Nâ'aneh and those north-east of 'Akir, the lights are seen visiting each other by night, on Thursdays.

The Tamarisk (*Tamaria syriaca*), *قتل*, is very holy. They are also haunted (*مسكون*), and whenever the wind blows across them, it is distinctly heard, how they call Allah! Allah! sighing! Cutting such trees is at least as sinful as cutting the lotus tree.

The Olive tree is most sacred as giving food and light. It may be inhabited or not; if a man cut an olive tree down he would have no peace afterwards. The difference between the olive-tree cutter and the others is that the last receives the punishment direct from God.

Palms (*نخل*) and Cactus (*صبر*) have drunk of the water of life (*ميه الحيه*) and are, therefore, of the same substance as a human being.

Other trees may be sacred, but then they are generally such as grow round the Makam, or Wely, or some spot belonging to a martyr, as the

<sup>1</sup> Similar stones exist at Khurbet en Niâteh and will be figured in M. Clermont-Ganneau's forthcoming work.—[ED.]