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EVOLUTION.

The sun had set, and in the mellow light
 Suffusing all the west—the after-glow—
 One star was faintly shining, hanging low
 On the horizon's edge; advancing night
 Drew shadows through the air and o'er the
 height;
 When, in the east, a ruddy fire, and lo,
 New light! The full-faced moon was
 climbing slow
 The sullen sky. The star, one moment
 bright,
 Plunged trembling down the void.

Can this thing be,
 That from our sombre life, as silently,
 One life fades out, swung down by cosmic
 law,
 Which lifts another up? Do all things draw
 Sequent to nature's movement, and are we
 But parcel of the earth, like rock or tree?
 CHARLES F. JOHNSON.

LETTER FROM PALESTINE.

The great event of the day here is the conversion of a young lawyer from the Greek persuasion to Islam. The gentleman in question is of a good family, well educated, and as such, his friends can see no motive for his embracing Islam. That he does so from honest persuasion people do not believe. There seems, however, to be a little romance at the bottom of it. A woman who has already had several husbands has captured his heart, and as she asks him to embrace the doctrines of the Oriental prophet and suffer him self to be circumcised as the price of her charms, he has agreed to do it, and the prophet has secured one more follower. That his friends view the matter with suspicion need not be said. I was told the other day that the young gentleman has undergone quite a change since his conversion. Through his eyes some think they can perceive the "other side" peeping out, and have arrived at the conclusion that the conversion in question has been produced by witchcraft. The young man, they say, has been bewitched, and his sweetheart must be a sorceress. It is fortunate that she does not live in that bygone time when witches were roasted alive for the entertainment of fat monks and superstitious priests. To me it seems no surprise that a man can leave that form of

"Christianity" which is represented by the Greek church and prefer even Islam. For, with all that can be said against this Oriental religion, one good side it certainly has: it teaches men to worship one God and to hate idolatry. In this respect Islam is far ahead of Catholicism at least.

It seems to be the fashion of visitors to the Orient, and also Occidental settlers here, to represent the natives of the Orient and the Arabian tribes in particular in very dark colors as to their morality. They are said to be cunning, covetous, and unscrupulous in their modes of acquiring means, and so on. Now, after several months stay in Palestine, I do not feel to join in this common hue and cry. It is true that individuals are found who may properly be described as cunning, unscrupulous, and so on; but where on this globe of ours are such individuals not to be found? In England? In Germany? In America? In the whole Christian world? I think not. Travelers who have an opportunity of testing the kindness, the generosity, the virtues of the dregs of "Christian" countries, will, I hope, admit that the shady sons of the sunny East are not worse than their pale, ragged brethren in the West. I suppose it will be admitted, too, that a people is not to be judged from the exceptional cases of villainy that may be picked up. As far as my experience goes, I can say that, although I have seen traits of character that are very bad, I have also found men and women of the Arabian population who, for kindness, trustworthiness and intelligence compare very favorably with any set of people I ever met with. Many of the Arabs are really thirsting for progress. They want to go forward on the road of civilization, and they have proved their faithfulness by adhering to the "Christian" doctrines for centuries, often neglected and subjected to hard trials and persecutions. People who like the Arabian Christians are able to remain faithful to such doctrines as they have been taught, and this under a long, dark night of oppression, must have metal within them of high value.

To the Latter-day Saints who by revelation know that they descend from Israel, the Arabian population

in Syria should be of special interest. For of these, although called Arabs, many must be (shall I say?) our nearest relatives, our real brothers and sisters. For there can be no doubt that many of the natives here are direct descendants from one or the other of the ten tribes. Anyone who will reflect a moment on the history of those ten tribes will understand that. If genealogies were not lost, some of the natives here would, no doubt, be able to prove that their fathers had dwelt here from the time Joshua entered Canaan.

This relationship of the Saints and this people must somehow or other even be visible on the surface. For it was only the other day that a Jew with whom I conversed told me that from my appearance he took me to be a Galizian Jew, to which compliment I was able to say that although I was no Galizian Jew, yet I claimed to be a descendant of Israel, which claim he did not contradict, as it was supported, he thought, by my features. Well, I thank God for the relationship.

But taking it for granted, does it not involve responsibilities? Have the Latter-day Saints got a greater light, greater privileges, wider prospects of an eternal glory? Should they not then hasten to reach a helping hand to their brethren wherever found, in order that the promised day of glory might come the sooner?

Through the courtesy of a young friend here I had the pleasure of being present at an Oriental wedding, an opportunity not always, I believe, accorded to visitors. As the ceremonies now in vogue are in the main features very much the same as they were here at the time of Christ, such a wedding will be found to be the best illustration of the parable of our Lord, relating to the ten virgins who went to meet the bridegroom. Accompanied by my friend I proceeded about three o'clock in the afternoon to the house of the bridegroom. Here we found several guests already gathered, all dressed in beautiful Oriental costumes. The bridegroom, however, was not there. He had gone to fetch his bride. Three musicians, one playing a many-stringed cither-like instrument, one playing two little drums, and one playing the tam-