

olive trees, oaks. A species of cactus forms thick, impenetrable hedges and grows to an astonishing height. In the Jordan valley grow also acacia and papyrus. Cultivated are wheat, barley, sorghum, rye, corn, beans and peas. Cotton and sugarcane and also flax are cultivated in several places. Besides, these potatoes, cucumbers, onions, melons and numerous other kinds of vegetables. Almonds, granates, oranges, lemons, plums, nuts, and other fruits adorn the gardens, while the "Johannesbrot" grows wild. Vines grow everywhere and yield a wonderfully abundant crop.

THE FAUNA.

Among the tame animals sheep are the most important. Mutton is an essential dish on the table of the Syrians, and the sheep milk is highly estimated. The goats are kept more for the sake of the milk than for the flesh. The oxen are kept in order to pull the plows, but their flesh is not desired. In fact, many of the oxen I have seen, did not seem to have any flesh at all. They were merely skin and bones, unable to move except on the stimulation of the sharp goad of the inhuman drivers. Pigs are only kept by "Christians." (The association of ideas is not exactly beautiful but correct.) The horses and donkeys, mules and camels perform the work, elsewhere done by railways, slowly but truly. Cats, dogs, chickens, pigeons and bees are well utilized, also "tame" animals. The animals give not only meat, milk, clothes and means of transportation, but also fuel, the dried excrements being extensively used for that purpose.

Wild animals are bears, wolves, hyenas, jackals, foxes, boars, gazelles, hares and others. This is a country where the sons of Nimrod need not lack work.

The Mediterranean and the Lake of Tiberias abound in fish; snakes, and scorpions are very numerous, as are also various kinds of birds.

I will say nothing of the thousands of little lively animals which are found in every Arabian house and carried round by every native as his nearest bosom friends.

MINERALS.

Nowhere is mining carried on to any extent worth mentioning. I have not heard of any place where the precious or common metals are being found, but perhaps nobody has searched the mountains for them. In Lebanon are found sandstone and marble, brown coal, amber and bitumen. Also in other places coal is found.

Taken all in all, Palestine has yet all the resources which it anciently had, and which made it a country "flowing with milk and honey." With the blessing of God, it sustained during the time of David and Solomon about five millions of people (compare II Samuel 24: 9), or between 400 and 500 to every square mile; a proportion such as is now found in Yorkshire, England. The present Syria is about four times the size of the kingdom of David, and has only two millions, and even these

are supported with difficulty. The reflections are easily made.

THE INHABITANTS.

Anciently Syria was inhabited by Jews, Phœnicians and Arameans, all of Semitic origin. It has always been the scene of mighty commotions, now in the hands of one nation, now of another. Thus a mixture of races has been the result, and the origin of the present population is in many instances not traceable. The Roman and the Byzantine conquerors have not been able to imprint their marks on this population to any extent compared to what the Arabs have done. Since their invasion, 636 A. D., they have given the population their language, their customs and, in a majority of cases, their religion. The crusaders, although swarming here for 200 years, have left no other marks hardly, than some old ruins.

The greatest part of the inhabitants of Syria are therefore now called Ulad Arab, sons of Arabs, that is, Arabian speaking Syrians. Their dialect is different from that of the Central Arabia and from that of Egypt, but Arabian scholars assert that the difference between the various dialects of the Arabians is not so great as the difference between the dialects spoken, for instance, in various parts of England, a rather remarkable fact, when you consider the great distances of the country, the bad communications and the non-education of the people. The northern parts of Syria are inhabited by a Turkish-Arabic speaking population or by Turkish speaking Armenians and Kurds.

In Palestine a number of strangers reside who keep themselves strictly separate from the Arabs. Particularly noteworthy are the Jews who have emigrated from Poland, Galicia, Roumania and other parts of eastern Europe, and who speak the ugly dialect known as Jews-dutch, a dialect which is sometimes dignified with the name Hebrew, although that is a bad libel on the beautiful language of Moses and David. These Jews are numerous in Jerusalem, Tiberias and Safed, estimated at some 10,000 souls. Germans, mostly from Schwaben, have settlements in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, and amount to some 1,200 souls in all.

The Bedouins have also preserved their race from intermixture with strangers and are easily recognized by their dark complexion and characteristic features. Their number is estimated at 200,000 souls. Mixed as is the population, so are the religions. Besides the Mohammedans with their various sects and nuances of belief, we find Greek orthodox, Syrian-Jacobites, American orthodox, Greek-Catholic or united Greek, Syrian, Catholic or United Syrian, Armenian, Catholic or United Armenian, Maronites, Roman Catholic, Protestants of different sects, Jews and Samaritans. This is a long edifying list, illustrative of the doctrine of the unity of the Church, the one body under one head. It is a wonder, indeed, that the Christians have been able to mutilate the "Church" and to

strew her limbs about in so many directions, and it is a still greater wonder that they are not ashamed of themselves when looking at their work.

The Turks must be lauded for their tolerance. Although they do not like proselytizing (and I do not blame them "under the circumstances," if I am allowed to borrow friend Zane's words), yet they let everybody alone in their worship. True, there is no constitution guaranteeing sacredly everybody liberty of worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience, but this right exists *de facto*, and that is, after all, the chief point.

HABITATIONS.

The houses are mostly built of stone with narrow openings or holes for windows. The form is simply that of a box. A roof is here a simple thing. A few pieces of timber laid one way, a lot of rubbish the other way, and the whole covered with earth. The poorer people have only one for themselves and their animals; the better off have a lower floor for their animals and an upper floor with one or more rooms for their own dwelling. The houses of the wealthy portion are built on the same principle, but with this difference; they have a whole complex of boxes put together, generally arranged round a yard, and the fronts are ornamented with over-built balconies. The furniture is always very simple. The floors of cement are covered with carpets and mattresses; the bedclothes are stowed away during the daytime and at evening spread on the floor. In the cities, the wealthy people add such luxuries and ornaments as their fancy suggests.

THE DRESS.

In the cities, particularly among the "Christians," the European customs slowly begin to appear, but the Oriental wide clothes with their manifold and gay colors are prevalent. The most prominent part of the apparel of the gentlemen seems to be their trousers. If the reader will please to imagine a big sack with two holes at the bottom, from which a couple of feet and ankles protrude, he has a correct idea of that necessary piece of apparel. The upper part of the body is covered with a waistcoat and a short jacket, sometimes nicely embroidered, or with a waistcoat with sleeves. Round the waist a long shawl or plaid is slung as a girdle. This is often of silk. The head is covered with the red *jez* or *Jarbusch*. The Arabs also wind a cloth round this *jez*. Old men and ministers like a black head-ornament. The so-called *Druses* and learned men wear snow-white turbans, and the descendants of Mohammed wear as a peculiar mark of honor, green ones. The common foot covering is the European. But also a kind of wooden shoe, of which very peculiar shapes are seen. It must, however, be added that a full set of clothes is worn only by the wealthy ones. It appears that any of these articles can be disposed of without inconvenience, except the head covering. That is essen-