

apart for the use of the Holy One of Israel.

Haifa is in these days visited by not less than 300 French pilgrims: priests and members of various sister and brotherhoods, clergy and lay people, ladies and gentlemen—any of these classifications will do. They have spent two days in the monastery at Mount Carmel, worshipping, or "honoring," as it must be called, the Prophet Elijah. I have been wondering what that gentleman would have done had he happened to notice all the meaningless ceremonies of such visitors to his supposed cave. The Prophet was not noted for clemency when he had to vindicate the honor of God against the crazy priests of Baal, and heaven alone knows what he would do today if he had the time or inclination to glance at the wrong-doings of the half-brothers of his ancient antagonists.

The river Kishon might once more be made to carry blood into the Bay of Akko; but I suppose as we live in a new covenant and near the final judgment, such idolatry will be tolerated until that day, and then judged. Palestine is swarmed with pilgrims. Some are rich, some poor; some can pay for a horse, others walk; some are young, some old, some pray, others curse and seek their inspiration from well filled bottles. But all seek by coming here and kneeling upon and kissing certain spots, by burning candles, by saying prayers (though not praying), to please God and to secure happiness hereafter. O, when shall the light of Zion break forth and all the ends of the world see the salvation of God!

From Sivas, in Asia Minor, the news comes that two brethren have been arrested and sent prisoners to Constantinople. Their sin was this: One had painted an inscription, thus, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand," and the other had carried this inscription around the town, causing the people to crowd together. When arrested they were examined, with the result that they were transported to Stamboul to await, I suppose, further decisions by higher authorities. I have not yet learned any additional particulars, but it is possible that the brethren, in speaking of the kingdom of heaven, have been suspected of meaning something political; perhaps the officials feared a plot of some kind. At least this seems to be the only possible explanation, considering the radical steps taken. What the consequences of this persecution will be to the mission in Turkey generally I have of course no means of knowing. But then, God rules everywhere, and the final issue will always be according to His wisdom. It is impossible to blame the Asiatic nations if they should think it necessary to commit acts of violence against their fellow-countrymen for embracing a new creed, seeing what Europeans and Americans have been able to do by way of fanaticism, notwithstanding their boasted civilization and liberty. *Auf Wiederschen.* J. M. S.

HAIFA, May 15, 1889.

LETTER FROM TURKEY.

Something quite strange to this country—and, indeed, it may be said, for the whole of Turkey—has happened. It is nothing more nor less than a strike among the weavers. The poor fellows have been reduced to a really pitiable condition, as will be seen by the following figures:

For the past year their wages have been reduced to about one-third of their former pay, so that at the present time they receive from about 25 to 50 paras per roll for weaving gingham or cotton goods, each roll containing about five yards single breadth. This price per roll would make from about 2½ cents to 5 cents, United States currency. (10 para 1 cent, 40 para - 1 piastre, 1½ piastre - 5 cents, and 25 piastre - 1 dollar). Let us now examine into the condition of the laboring men, according to this scale. After having made some little inquiry among the people of Aintab, your correspondent finds that the various tradesmen are working for about the same wages, so that the employes in the different handicrafts are in much the same position so far as a livelihood is concerned. Therefore, we will leave the weaver and speak of the tradesman's general condition, and mention only that the weavers struck for an increase of 20 paras per roll and obtained about 10 paras. Thus their wages are liable to be increased from 8 piastres a day to 4 piastres. Their case is an almost hopeless one, because they have no means to continue any prolonged effort.

The employes earn about 4 piastres per day on the average. Now, admitting that they are favored with health, they will work about 300 days each year and earn 1200 piastres during that time. These 1200 piastres have to cover the following bill of imperative expenses: Food for two persons (not counting children) one year 600 piastres. Ransom tax for each male one year 42 piastres. Government tax on the earnings one year 50 piastres. Government tax on furniture one year 25 piastres. House rent one year 200 piastres. Total for one year, 917 piastres.

Extract 917 piastres from a man's earnings of 1200 piastres, and it will leave him the sum of 283 piastres for the other matters. Six hundred piastres only cover bread for husband and wife, and if they should be favored with a family of children, the common heritage of the poor, it will be seen at once that the earnings would be absorbed in bread alone; nothing else as a rule can be thought of. This state of earnings accounts for the following facts: The poor people's clothes are as a rule very inferior, consisting of rags and patches. Poverty prevents them from paying their taxes and house rent, and keeps them in constant beggary. They are therefore always in need of assistance. When they trade they will bicker for a mite, 2½ paras, and daily there are many transactions for a mite. With a

position like this in the world, where could a man's hope be, what is there to inspire him to look for days of comfort when age will demand rest? Nothing whatever. The result is that the poor feel quite hopeless and look only for fate to assist them, knowing that nothing awaits them but poverty and the prison, to take their respective turns in making life a burden.

Prison life here in Turkey is not so much a disgrace after all. The poor man goes to prison for several reasons, which he calls persecution in the place of prosecution. For instance, he claims the Turks impose an almost impossible tax; and I have no doubt that we would term a similar tax persecution. A poor man is supposed to pay fifty piastres on 1000 piastres earnings. Compare this with American institutions. Suppose a man earns \$1000 and that he has to pay fifty dollars income tax besides his property tax, as he does here—then if he be a Christian he pays forty-two piastres in addition for a ransom tax for not serving as a soldier, would we not consider it an imposition? Without doubt we would. The poor man, not having this tax money, goes to prison until some friend helps him out, either by paying the tax or becoming his security for some portion of it. Hence he starts off again with a promise upon his lips that he knows circumstances have already decreed that he must break. In this way many here break their promises and obligations with impunity, so that few are believed even in the smallest matters.

But sympathy for the poor has a great claim upon a man in this country, and to be kind to the poor is considered a great virtue. Hence they have a way of paying this ransom tax which is quite praiseworthy. Every man must be a member of some religious denomination or other, and each denomination in this neighborhood has contracted with the government to pay the ransom tax for each male member of its congregation. Therefore to meet this tax the congregation has a tax committee which levies a tax on each man according to his ability, and thus a well-to-do man may pay a ransom tax for several men besides his already personally heavy property and income taxes.

As the system of registering births and deaths in Turkey is very imperfect, all manner of tricks are resorted to to swindle the government of its man. This is practiced alike by Christian and Turk. The Christian purposely forgets to have his boy recorded, to save the ransom tax, and the Turk screens his son sometimes till he reaches twenty years of age before he tells that he has a male increase in the family. This accounts for so many grey-headed soldiers in the Ottoman army. The Turk, of course, claims a double chance by his trick. First, the chance of life at home while his life is worth the most, and should he die before being drafted, so much the better; if not, he considers the loss of less importance anyway.

It is very doubtful if anyone born and brought up in a land of plenty