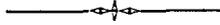


- "Suppl." 312. 'Tis this upholdeth human polities,
This their one safeguard—to hold fast the laws.
- "Fragm." 970. For silence is an answer for the wise.
The parents' failures on the children's heads
The gods bring back.
[Compare the Second Commandment.]
- 842 Virtue, best prize of all within men's power.

HENRY HAYMAN, D.D.



ART. III.—MR. OLIPHANT'S "LIFE IN MODERN PALESTINE."

Haifa, or Life in Modern Palestine. By LAURENCE OLIPHANT. Blackwood and Sons.

MR. OLIPHANT'S new work is a reprint of a series of letters which were originally contributed by him to the *New York Sun*. The author being the owner of a property on Mount Carmel, upon which he resides, has had opportunities seldom enjoyed by an English gentleman of observing the customs and character of the people, of investigating antiquities, and exploring ancient sites, and of forming opinions on many social, religious, and economical questions of great importance in connection with the prosperity of the Holy Land. His book is full of information, not always new, but always given in an agreeable and attractive style. It is likely to find many readers.

The last thirty years have witnessed many changes in the condition of Palestine. Increased facilities of communication with the Western world, and greater security for the lives and property of travellers, have caused a great influx of pilgrims and tourists, all of whom leave money behind them. The religious interest which attaches to the country has induced Christians as well as Jews to turn thither, in the hope of establishing themselves as settlers, and more than one great Christian power fosters the foundation of important enterprises, the aim of which is to extend the influence of the Greek and Latin Churches, and through them of the nations by which they are protected. Around Jerusalem alone a dozen places can be counted in which new convents, hospices, and schools have been erected under French or Russian protection during the present generation, and the consular representatives of those countries are accustomed to attend in great state the Easter and Christmas ceremonies of their respective Churches. Official France ignores religion at home, but makes use of the religious zeal and enthusiasm of its people to further its political aims abroad. "These French consuls," writes Mr.

Oliphant, "are all very pious men in Syria. The French Government, which has been ejecting monks and nuns, and closing religious establishments, and making laws against religious instruction in France, is very particular about the religious principles of their representatives in Syria." The activity of French Roman Catholics in that country, and the enormous sums which they expend in building, are a hindrance to the humbler and more spiritual work of Protestant missionaries, and at the same time a principal cause of the tendency of certain of the Oriental Churches to seek alliance with the Church of England. It is a subject which in our own country has not yet received the attention it deserves.

Mr. Oliphant writes:

Within the last two years it has occurred to the Franciscans to make excavations (at Sefurieh) with the view of restoring the ancient cathedral and of renewing its fame as a holy place. . . . An influx of pilgrims to this point will have a threefold effect. It will bring money to the Franciscan treasury; it will probably be the means of converting the resident local population, who have been fanatic Moslems, but who, I was assured by my ecclesiastical informant, had benefited so much by the money already spent that they were only deterred by fear, and by its not being quite enough, from declaring their conversion to Christianity to-morrow; and, thirdly, it would give the French Government another holy place to protect. For it is by the manufacture and protection of holy places that Republican France extends and consolidates her influence in these parts.

Of the colonies established during the last years by Jews from Russia and Roumania, Mr. Oliphant speaks hopefully. "So far as energy, industry, and aptitude for agricultural pursuits are concerned," he says, "the absence of which has always been alleged as the reason why no Jewish colony could succeed, the experience of more than two years has proved that such apprehensions are groundless, and that with a fair chance, Jews make very good colonists." There are already eight or nine Jewish colonies in various parts of the country, and the agricultural college near Jaffa, established some fifteen years ago by the Israelite Alliance, educates young Jews for agricultural pursuits. But it is difficult to find openings for the pupils on the completion of their training, and many "on leaving college engage in some more profitable and congenial pursuit than tilling the land. As a rule, middle-aged men, with a limited education and large families, make better agriculturists than ambitious and well-educated youths." "The best material for farmers," we read, "is to be found among those Jews who have been bred and born in the country, who are already Turkish subjects, who speak the language, and are familiar with all the local conditions."

A good deal has been written of late against "proselytizing" among the native Christians of Palestine. Mr. Oliphant's

account of the feast of St. Elias on Mount Carmel, and "Easter among the Melchites" at Haifa, goes far to show how much need of religious enlightenment there is in the Christian communities. "Devotions which consist chiefly in dancing and drinking, with an occasional free fight, all through the small hours of the morning," can hardly be said to indicate a satisfactory state of things. "As I passed through the outskirts of the town," he says, "I came upon the male Melchite population indulging in their circular dance and their discordant chants. They continued on the following day, stimulated by a plentiful indulgence in intoxicating liquors, thus to glorify God, and to celebrate the resurrection of the Saviour among men."

The chapter on the Druses will be read with interest. It tells us little that is new about this strange race, but narrates some remarkable incidents illustrative of their character and customs. "They are a sober, fairly honest, and industrious people, and have their own notions of morality, to which they rigidly adhere." It is a curious fact that there are no Moslems on Carmel proper. There are five or six Moslem villages on its base, but the population of the mountain itself "consists of two Druse villages, numbering together about eight hundred souls, and about fifty Christians, besides the twenty-five monks who inhabit the monastery."

A great part of the house property in the town of Haifa is owned by the monks of Mount Carmel, who consider the whole of Carmel, from the monastery at the western extremity of the mountain to their chapel at the place of Elijah's sacrifice at the other end, as a sort of private reserve, and push their religious pretensions to such an extreme that they look with the utmost jealousy upon any foreigner who attempts to buy land in the mountain, and oppose any such proceeding with all their energy.

The policy of the Turkish Government, also, is to prevent foreigners buying land there, or in any part of Palestine, although they are entitled to do so by treaty; and it is this more than anything else that renders the improvement of the land by European enterprise so slow. Every legal device is taken advantage of to raise difficulties. At the Jewish colony of Zimmarin, we read, "they refused permission to build houses, on the plea that the colonists had no right to the land. This claim was based on the allegation that the proprietor of the property, who was an Austrian Jew, in whose name it was bought for the colonists, had died childless, and, according to Turkish law, landed property reverts to the Turkish Government under these circumstances."

The chief reason of this reluctance of the Sultan's Government to facilitate the formation of colonies is the fear that each colony held and inhabited by subjects of a foreign power will become a source of legal difficulties and disputes, and be

made an excuse for the interference of foreign consuls. Nor should the Turks be judged too harshly in this matter. They are quite ready to welcome Jews, and even Christians, who desire to settle in Ottoman territories, provided they are willing to renounce their old nationality and become Ottoman subjects. The settlement of Bosnian Slavs among the ruins of ancient Cæsarea is an interesting episode of modern history. They are Moslems, and when their country was handed over to Austria they preferred migrating into the dominions of the Sultan, where they would be under Mohammedan rule. They are building houses for themselves out of the remains of the old city, and, unfortunately for travellers in that region, have not quite given up their old predatory propensities. The Circassians also, who have settled of late years in the neighbourhood of Mount Hermon, are a lawless and thieving set, and some stirring instances of encounters between them and the German colonists of Haifa are narrated.

Mr. Oliphant's archaeological researches took him to some seldom-visited localities, and rewarded him with many interesting discoveries. Near the plain of Buteha, which is an alluvial expanse about two miles in length by one in breadth, in the country north of the Sea of Tiberias, where a battle was fought by Josephus against the Romans under Sylla, he discovered the ruins of a synagogue and indications that a very large city had once existed there. The natives of these regions are very suspicious of strangers, especially such as measure and sketch. "See," they cried, "our country is being taken from us." His request for old coins only frightened them the more. "They vehemently protested that not one had been found, an assertion which, under the circumstances, I felt sure was untrue; nor did the most gentle and reassuring language, with tenders of backshish—which was nevertheless accepted—tend to allay their fears."

The author has given much attention to the proposal to construct a railway from the Bay of Acre to Damascus, which would open up the great corn-growing plain of Esdraelon, the fertile country around Beisan and in the Jordan Valley, and the Hauran. For the present, the negotiations with the Sublime Porte for a concession seem to have been broken off. But there is some reason to hope that the scheme may before long be carried out, especially as the Sultan himself is the owner of much land in that district, and would be a personal gainer. The general impression conveyed by this book is that there is still much land to be possessed in Palestine which would yield rich returns to capitalists, and many ancient sites still need exploration which only need excavation to afford valuable results to investigators qualified for the task. The industry

and learning of the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund have furnished an immense amount of information, but there are still isolated spots whose hidden archæological treasures are still waiting to be unearthed.

It is disappointing to find no allusion made in the book to the beneficial effects of evangelical missions: the schools and colleges, preachings and Bible distribution, hospitals and orphanages of Germans, Americans, and English, which are exercising an important influence all over the country.

THOMAS CHAPLIN, M.D.



ART. IV.—THE CHURCH AND THE JUBILEE.

BEFORE another number of *THE CHURCHMAN* appears the Jubilee Festival of our loved and honoured Queen will have been celebrated, and we shall be once more settling down to the routine work of life. It is not an inopportune moment to ask with what thoughts and dispositions it becomes an English Churchman to regard the event and the rejoicings. The past half-century has been one of considerable trial and many searchings of heart for the Church. It has been no time of rest and peace; our enemies have been always active and often confident; attacks from without have been supplemented by dissensions within; and even the brief period of respite from assault during the past few months has been signalized by an amount of distress among the rural clergy of which few except those in actual contact with it—and not all of them—have any idea. Nevertheless, our alarms have been greater than our dangers; want of faith has been more to blame for our fears than the strength of the foe; no weapon that has been formed against us has wounded us to our real hurt; the work of the Church is better done than it was; clergy and laity are more in earnest; we have taken seriously in hand to purge out the old abuses; our position in the country is a far higher one to-day than when the Liberation Society was formed forty-three years ago; and, I would ask confidently, who is there amongst us that would exchange our present strife with the world for the former torpor of acquiescence in the world? In looking back fifty years we, indeed, of all men, have good cause to be thankful for the blessings, open or disguised, bestowed upon the Church during the reign of our present gracious Queen. And for these special blessings it is desirable that clergy and laity should combine to provide some thank-offering—perhaps more than one—worthy of the occasion. This, however, is somewhat apart from