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Anniversary address

Sir Charles Warren G.C.M.G. F.R.S.

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THE SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS.

PALESTINE: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE AS THEY ARE.

BY SIR CHARLES WARREN, G.C.M.G., F.R.S.

THERE are few amongst us who are not still interested in the dreams and fanciful imaginations of childhood, and who do not look back with pleasure to the era when so much was dim and unknown, the blanks filled up with the creations and constructions emanating from our brain. And however much we have in later life grappled with stern realities, there are few, who still keep youthful hearts, who do not cling to the romances of old, ever ready to rehearse them again and discuss them with children. The matter-of-fact details of everyday life would pall upon and weary us if we could not dress them up according to our fancy and give them a pleasant guise—if we could not turn many of our gravest trials into ridicule, and make merry over our misfortunes. It is our power of sympathy with the foibles of youth and living again in our children and young people, that enables us to thoroughly appreciate the past.

So also with ourselves as a nation,—ever eager to look back to the wonderful old times that have passed away, of which we can so readily imagine the pleasure, and with so much difficulty realise the discomforts and difficulties. How many of us have loved to live and linger in imagination among the chivalrous Normans, the indolent and yet energetic Anglo-Saxons, the cultivated soldier-like Romans, the impetuous devotional Celts! How delightful it is to revel in those glorious old days, when all was mystery and uncertainty; to strip our thoughts of their modern garb, and discard the medium of our everyday associations;

to people the world again with fairies and gnomes and giants and dwarfs: or, to take another line, and find ourselves among the religious rites, and pantheon, and old civilisation of the Mediterranean shores.

What a wonderful world we appear to have missed, in which every rock and every fountain—even the teeming earth—were instinct with life *divine*; when the very festivals and religious ceremonies, dances, philosophy, and music were accounted but as means for withdrawing the thoughts from human occupations and business, and turning to the love and worship of God. In those days, however much divine worship was contaminated, yet it was a pervading portion of the life of the people; whereas to-day there is too great an inclination to put it off and on as convenient, or to conceal its very existence.

So it was with the science of Geography: when Strabo and Tacitus wrote, there was still a veil over all, and every discovery was considered a step further to the great unknown; the mind of man was full of enthusiasm, and his body filled with energy to compass the difficulties to be overcome. There were great works to be done—works worthy of heroes—and men nerved themselves to the task. In those days the exact sciences were little known, and men could give full vent to their reflective faculties, and learned to think and to speculate.

Little by little, discoveries have shown that everything is more prosaic than was conjectured, and though the results were most valuable to the people of the earth from a practical point of view, yet gradually the romance has worn away—we have awakened to the stern realities of fact—and there might seem a danger of the old enthusiasm gradually evaporating as a more matter-of-fact view supervened.

But, fortunately, our natures will not admit of this. As the delightful theories of bygone days pass away, we invent new theories—our search after the unicorn and the missing-link is scarcely over, and we start up some new idea sufficient to keep us in motion. Year by year there is less to discover and less to discuss as to the marvellous; but we are still starting up questions which occupy the attention of the enthusiastic. Now we apply our knowledge to engineering purposes, to cutting canals or constructing railways, or making huge inland seas, or draining marshes.

On all these matters the science of Geography comes to our aid, with the kindred sciences—leads us to explore untrodden paths, to scale hitherto inaccessible mountains, to descend into unknown depths, to pass through the Dark Continent, until we find, on looking back, that we have, as a nation, in reality, not one whit lost the spirit of our ancestors, but are still pressing on with the same vigour after the unknown, and with the same dauntless recklessness which has always characterised our race, still filled with the romantic experiences of the past, and looking forward to a bright future. While this continues—whilst the sons of Britain will give up their comfort and luxury to take part in the voyages of enterprise and discovery so constantly going on, and to render aid to those in difficulty and danger, we can have no fear that we are declining

as a nation, and we must accord to our Geographical Societies credit for assisting in keeping up the freeborn spirit and courage and self-devotion of our race.

At this very moment are two of our most intrepid countrymen offering to risk all in order to render assistance to that gallant Austrian lieutenant of Gordon's, now shut up and surrounded in the Equatorial Provinces of Africa.

Palestine has not been so prolific a scene for adventures as many more inaccessible countries, but yet it has afforded our countrymen, and many of other European nations, opportunities for suffering privations and hardships in searching after information. And of all countries it is *the* one in which there is most food for speculation, the use of the imaginative faculties, and for gratifying the devotional aspiration of our race. It is not only the cradle of our own religion, but it is that of the Jew's, and in some measure of the Moslem's also. It possesses an ancient people, using the same language, and with the same manners and customs, possessed 3000 years ago. Owing to various reasons, its ruins in many parts have not been touched by man's hand for full two thousand years. There are whole towns still existing in ruins just as they were destroyed by the earthquakes in the early centuries of our era. It is therefore the country through the medium of whose people and manners and customs one has most opportunity of looking directly into the past, and living again in ancient worlds.

Palestine of to-day may, both as to its people and its monuments, be compared to a museum of antiquities gathered together from all parts and of all ages. Of some ages there are but the minutest fragments and vestiges, but yet sufficient to allow experts to allocate them their proper epochs. Palestine contains the remains of people and monuments of many kingdoms and empires now vanished for ever, or entirely changed—the Canaanites, Hittites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Samaritans, Greeks, Romans, Arabians, Turks, Crusaders, modern Egyptians, and Hebrews.

Some of its people are still distinct in race, and many of the monuments are just as when originally built, save for the destructive earthquakes. I can do no more this evening than call attention to a few items of information as to the past, and say to each of you what I believe is scarcely necessary in such an institution as this.

If you want to have a lasting interest to carry you through life—one which will pervade all your works and your ways, one which will enable you to interest yourself in a great variety of subjects hitherto unthought of—take up the subject of “Palestine: its people, its history, and its geography,” and give it a careful study. By doing so, you will not only understand our great Book of life more thoroughly, but will also learn lessons concerning the races of Europe, and the influence of Judaism and Christianity upon the world, which will be of lifelong advantage. I am sure you will not think that in making these remarks I am wishing to

infer that most of you do not this already, in this seat of learning of North Britain, where, of all people in our realm, you have paid such close attention to all matters connected with holy writ; but, while on the subject, I cannot withhold testimony on the advantages to be derived from this study.

Palestine is a small territory, about the size of Wales, of strange configuration, and peculiarly situated. To the east a desert, to the west a harbourless sea-shore, Palestine was the thoroughfare between the great Assyrian and Egyptian Empires, and has been termed the "battlefield of nations." And yet, owing to its mountainous character, it was shut out from other people. The Israelites were enabled to remain a secluded people, and successfully to resist the assaults of other nations so long as they were true to themselves and worked together for one common cause. Their ruin was internal dissensions—they were their own enemies.

The result of the peculiar position of Palestine is that it has become pre-eminently the "Land of Ruins" of all nations—so much so that, for miles and miles in all directions, there is scarcely a hill-top which is not covered by the remains of fort or fortress of bygone ages.

But Palestine is not only most peculiarly placed; it is also most singularly configured geographically. There you have the greatest varieties of climate. The Jordan, rising at about the level of the Mediterranean Sea, flows into the sea of Tiberias at a level of 600 feet, and into the Dead Sea, at a level of about 1400 feet, below the ocean. In journeying about the shores of the Dead Sea, you may see clouds floating far above you which you know are below the line of the ocean. No doubt this great fissure on the earth's surface was once connected with the Red Sea, and the water was level with it. When the ground rose near Akaba, the water was cut off, and, evaporating, diminished in volume, gradually exposing Lake Huleh and the Jordan Valley, Lake Tiberias, and eventually the Dead Sea—until the time arrived when the evaporation was balanced by the amount of water which poured in by the Jordan and other rivers.

Since then—that is to say throughout the historical period—the height of the Dead Sea has remained nearly the same; some years falling, and again rising a few feet, according to the rainfall in the hill country. The salt which was left in the soil has gradually been washed out in places, but in others it still remains, and prevents verdant vegetation until it is washed out by means of irrigation. It would be possible now, by means of a cutting from Tiberias, to irrigate the whole of the Jordan Valley and put it under cultivation, giving a large area for growth of grain, but this cannot be done under the present Government. Meanwhile the land lies enjoying a long Sabbath, except near the river-side on the Jordan banks, where corn has been grown since the earliest time—for certainly close on 4000 years.

Palestine can be divided physically into many portions. There are the rich loamy plains along the Mediterranean sea-shore, whose soil grows

the most splendid corn ; then the swelling hill country ; and again the mountainous districts, rising to about 3000 feet ; then a steep fall of 4500 feet into the Jordan and Dead Sea Valley ; a rise again of 4000 feet to the land of Gilead and Moab, a narrow district of hilly country ; and then the great level plain forming the desert of Arabia—desert enough in certain seasons, but in others a beautiful grass country, in which corn is grown without difficulty. To the north rise the twin mountain ranges of Libanus and Anti-Libanus, with the tall white peak of Hermon overlooking the rise of the Jordan, a country rich in fruits, and in ruins—and in remnants of ancient races.

THE RESOURCES OF PALESTINE.—It is estimated that Palestine at one time supported a population of at least ten times that which it supports at present. When one comes to view the existing ruins, it is evident that this is not over-estimated, and that the population may have been twenty times its present amount. Then the question arises, Why is it now so comparatively unfruitful and unhealthy ? The reply is most simple : A government which cares not for the people ; its only object being to screw the highest revenue it can wring from them.

The results are no roads, wagons, harbours, boats. Justice is too uncertain to allow of capital being employed in cultivation. Great carelessness has arisen as to husbandry, knowledge has departed, and a proper succession of crops is unknown. There are not sufficient people to till the land. The terraces on the hill-sides have fallen into decay, and have accumulated in the valley bottoms. The rain which once percolated into the mountain-sides now rushes down those bare slopes, and plays havoc with the vegetation below, running rapidly to the sea. Consequently the perennial fountains have ceased to flow in many cases, and in others the supply of water has been greatly reduced. This has reacted upon the atmosphere ; clouds cease to hover over the country at certain seasons, as in former days ; and, lastly, the rain has ceased to fall in proportion to the requirements of the land.

This cause and effect is not hypothetical ; it can be traced out in the minutest details. As regards Palestine, it may be fairly said that, up to a certain point, the more people it has the more it will support, always supposing a just government ; but at present the people are oppressed and wronged, there is no security of property or person, no justice, no honesty among the officials, no freedom of the press. Bribery and corruption, in our sense of the word, are mild terms to use ; and unfortunately, the maladministration commences at the top—no Pasha can afford to be honest, no Governor-General can venture to be just.

Unhappily, the days are gone by when the Moslem rulers were tolerant of creeds, and fostered the trade of Jews and Christians. During the days of Saracenic learning, both Jews and Christians were permitted full freedom of religious worship, and a certain amount of civil liberty, but Siljuk the Turk scared liberty away full eight centuries ago, and it has

not returned. It was the Turks who, by their intolerance, brought the arms of Europe to bear against them in the Crusades ; and it is the Turks who now oppress the people of Syria—not the Christians and Jews only, but also the Arab Moslem. For the Turk to the Arab is an alien and a barbarian. The Arab is, as it were, a Moslem by nature ; the Turk cannot even become a Moslem by art. If a peasant grows rich and looks fat, he finds himself put in prison and eased of his wealth—for the Pasha can only live by his extortion. Immediately the fellah begins to cultivate, he is taxed heavily, not on what he obtains as fruits of the soil, but on what he is going to obtain several years hence.

Now, as to the present condition of the country. In the plains the soil is wonderfully rich, and wells can be sunk, though at considerable depths ; the hill-sides are bare, the soil having tumbled to the bottom of the steep deep valleys, but there it lies ready for redistribution. The fountains are dry, the hill-tops are denuded of their trees, the clouds are wanting. This is not the condition of the country as the Promised Land.—Moses promised them a “land of brooks,” not of dry valleys as now exist, but of pools, fountains, and running waters.

The white skeletons of the old system of tenancy still visible on the bare mountain-sides, and the roots of trees still peering from the rocky fissures, attest the fact that the hill country of Palestine was once cultivated in a satisfactory manner. The system was very simple. Walls of rough stones were built round the hill-sides, 3 to 4 feet high, according to the steepness of the slope, and the space between them and the hill filled in with fat loam ; then another wall, and another from bottom to top, until the mountain-side presented the appearance from the opposite hills of a series of steps—from the bottom it looked like a stone wall, from the top it looked in Spring like a green plateau where the trees did not hide it. Any one who has seen the terraces in France, Italy, or Spain will understand the system.

On these terraces were planted the fruit-trees—figs, vines, mulberry, apple, and others, those of a more delicate nature being planted on the northern side, so as to be less exposed to the full effect of the scorching sun's rays. These trees would thrust their roots into the rocks. The rain in falling would, instead of rushing down in torrents to the valley, lie on the terraces and percolate over to the roots of the trees, and thence into the mountain-sides, and from thence would issue again by and by as perennial streams. The water which remained in the soil about the roots of the trees enabled them to spread out their leaves in thick groves over the land, thus protecting it from the sun. The soil was therefore not burnt up and parched, but gave out moisture daily, rising above the trees, and, on reaching the higher and cooler atmosphere, was condensed into clouds, thus protecting the trees and land as it were with an umbrella.

Thus, where there is now a glaring sun, dry winds, dry earth, and absence of vegetable products, were once fleecy clouds floating through the balmy air, the heat of the sun tempered by visible and invisible

vapours, groves with moist soil, trickling streamlets issuing from the rocks, a verdant vegetation, and an abundant population—and with a good government this might be brought about again.

In spite of the government, the influx of Europeans is altering Palestine for the better, and I have seen changes take place under my own eye in the space of three years, and I can point out places where cultivation has been fostered by Societies, and where the whole climate has altered. One great result of terracing the mountain-sides is the increased amount of water in the fountains at the foot available for irrigation purposes, and the raising the water in the wells in the plains nearer to the surface. At present, a great portion of the water which rushes in torrents down the wadies forms into unhealthy lagoons along the coast, and is thus almost worse than useless.

The soil in the plains is so exceedingly rich that it still supports a great number of villages, but the ruins of others are visible in all directions. In each village there is at least one common well, with a wheel revolving night and day, worked by animals supplied by the villagers. The water is not only used for ordinary purposes, but also for irrigating the fruit-trees.

One of the great dangers to the plain is the rolling sand, blown up from the sea-shore, and advancing in mighty billows thirty to forty feet high. They have taken hundreds of years to grow to this height, and if not checked will in time engulf the richest portion of the plains. In some parts, as down near the Suez Canal, they have reached the height of several hundred feet, and have quite covered up the old Land of Goshen. Here is, then, a most extraordinary sight—a series of wells which existed in the earliest times, and which, by the labour of the inhabitants, has from time to time been kept clear of sand, until at the present time it exists at the bottom of an enormous crater of sand. In the same way, in the plain of Philistia, you may ride over miles of sandy dunes, rising and falling exactly like waves of the sea, which have been suddenly solidified, and in journeying on you come to craters in the sand with, at the bottoms, fruit-trees, then to a cottage, with its little garden—all surrounded and engulfed in sand, which the peasant, by toilsome labour day after day, keeps off his treasures. No doubt these isolated farms are but the remnants of villages which have been completely covered over, and as time goes on some of the fairest lands of Palestine will thus be lost. In parts where the winds are very violent, the tops of these sand dunes have a rapid motion, travelling several feet in a year, so that in some places I have seen telegraph posts hanging in the air suspended by the wires, while those which had been in the troughs are nearly covered over by sand.

THE PEOPLE.—Fellahin are the farming population of Palestine. They differ in race from the townspeople, and differ among themselves. There is no reason for suggesting that they are Arabs of the desert. History gives

us no warrant for supposing this. All testimony goes to show that they are the people of the country from the earliest date. What is the admixture of Hebrew, Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, or Latin blood, we have no means of ascertaining, but we have every reason for supposing that they are the direct descendants of the hewers of wood and drawers of water who were left in the land at the time of the conquest under Joshua. Language does not serve as a certain guide, but in this instance there is a survival of the ancient names, which goes far to show that the fellahin are of the old race, with subsequent admixture ; and the remnant of idolatrous worship also supports this view.

Our own insular manners and customs are in many respects of ancient date—quite two thousand years old ; and therefore it should not be surprising to find in Palestine a people but little changed for at least three thousand years. Although a sturdy independent race, yet they are accustomed to bow and bend, and not to present stiff necks to the storm.

They have been credited with many bad qualities and vices : let me say that perhaps we think the worse of them because they are not ashamed of themselves—they know no better. And yet this is a matter for consideration. We are civilised and Christians, and know right from wrong, and are full of vices ; they are very little worse than ourselves, and are ignorant of right and wrong. Many accusations against them fall to the ground when inquired into. It is constantly stated that they are liars pre-eminently. I cannot concede this. I believe there is no liar like the European ; he never knows when to stop. The Arab lies in the most barefaced manner until a certain point ; if he once speaks the truth he sticks to it, and will not vary his statement. It was this knowledge of his character which enabled me to unravel the mystery about Professor Palmer in 1882. It is a characteristic of most native tribes. I must confess that I hear fewer lies when among savage races than in Europe. Here we have the story varied in every conceivable manner ; among them the story can have but few varieties—their memories are so good that they can relate what they are told word for word, so that you may have exactly the same story from a dozen sources. In Britain they would all differ. I know scores of Arabs and savages into whose hands I would venture my life. They have their code, and we have ours. An Arab will risk his life to save that of one he vouches for.

At one moment an Arab may cut your throat without compunction ; a moment after, if he has given you his plight, he will save you at the risk of his own. I have employed the most unmitigated scoundrels from the most cut-throat villages in Palestine, and have found them to be as docile and harmless as any one could wish. Many a time have Sergeant Birtles and I been entirely at the mercy of two or three of our fellahin workmen—lowered down by ropes by them into deep gullies, when a slip would have lost our lives, and been accounted a mere accident. I have the utmost faith in the Arab peasant if he is taken in the right way. At the same time I will allow that he thinks nothing of

stealing behind a stranger, and despatching him with a blow on the head. An Arab will beat round the bush, and tell all manner of lies, until you drive him to the truth; when he once tells it, it is finished—he will say to all your cross-examination, “I have told you, it is finished.” He is wonderfully enduring, but he has his limits, and seems to make his mind up, before he endures, how far he will go. I heard of one man who stole and concealed a piastre ($2\frac{1}{2}$ d.), and, after having received one hundred strokes of the bastinado, he spat the piastre out of his mouth—he had arrived at his limit. I cannot agree that they have no sense of humour—they are brimming over with humour, and are as full of chaff as a Briton. I found chaff the great lever for working among them. When I have been set upon by a village, I have always endeavoured to make one of the people look foolish before the others; as soon as this was accomplished, they would laugh at him with me, and I was safe. On one occasion I was on the top of a small hill or ruined heap, which they tried to carry by assault. I had a stick, and the first assailant had a stick, and we came to blows! The others watched. I managed to avoid showing the pain I felt when struck; but, whenever I struck my antagonist, I made a face, and jeered at him to come. He could not stand it, and looked foolish; they all laughed at him, and then crowded round me in great good humour—having come to laugh with me and become my friends. They will readily sympathise with Europeans, especially our countrymen, and very soon attach themselves to us. One has to humour their little peculiarities. They will not sell bread, and they are too poor to give it. How is one to get it from them? One has to go through a ceremony—make them a present of the value of the bread, and they will bring the bread shortly down as a present; one can trust them to do that. With them trust begets trust. After I once knew them, I made no bargains as to wages, but paid them what we considered necessary, and got their receipt. If it was a question of renting land, a receipt was absolutely necessary—otherwise they would come again next year and claim payment; but we hear sometimes of bills being sent in a second time even in Europe!

Though called Moslems, their religion is certainly derived from ancient sources. Mixed up with the Moslem creed, they have certain customs of very ancient date, which have a strong smack of the worship that obtained at the time that the Israelites entered the land.

They have their sacred places, generally on heights, which they call after some saint, known or unknown. Here is built a small square building, with domed roof—called a waly, cubbeh, or Makâm. The ground is sacred, and the trees around are sacred. A man dare not tell an untruth when on this spot; his promise made here is sacred; articles left here are, as a rule, perfectly safe. On one occasion, however, I was on a journey with a Bedouin sheikh and imaum. The Bedouin wanted corn, and we came to a Makâm, where some corn had been left. Our horses were knocked up for want of food. The imaum rehearsed an incantation,

and desecrated the ground. They took what corn they required, and then reconsecrated it, and passed on their way. They said it was an unusual action. The spirit of the sheikh inhabits the sacred spot, and blesses or curses the people—and here vows are made.

DWELLINGS.—The people are divided into two distinct classes, according as they dwell in tents or houses. The tent-dwellers, like the Israelites before entering the Promised Land, are nomads, shifting their tents from place to place, as it seems most desirable to them. The house-dwellers are, of course, fixed in position, and therefore more under control. Ibrahim Pasha, when he governed Palestine from Egypt, some forty years ago, recognised this great principle, and reduced the lawless Bedouins to immediate subjection by causing them either to live in houses or to vacate their territories. There are in the Adwân country, at the present time, the stone houses which they were forced to occupy at that time, and at which they looked with the greatest disgust and abhorrence ; for not only was it disagreeable to them to live in so foreign a manner, but it also deprived them of their power to inflict injury on others, as their women and children and chattels were always to be found. The houses, about which I am now going to speak, range in magnificence from straw huts to stone mansions. They are, as a rule, flat-roofed, as in so many parts of the Mediterranean. They are in many cases constructed with a battlement or parapet wall, to prevent any one falling over it by accident (as is provided for in Deut. xxii. 8). These flat roofs are used for a variety of purposes—drying figs, raisins, and other fruits ; airing the corn and flowers, talking over business matters, and sleeping. When I was in occupation of Tor in 1882, our Marine sentinel was obliged to step over the prostrate form of a slumbering archbishop, whenever he marched round on his beat. In villages, the proclamations are usually made from the housetop of the sheikh, just as occurred in early days.

These flat roofs were in most instances made of mud, resting on brush-wood, supported by joists of fir or other timber ; but in towns cement is frequently used, or a kind of salt mud, beaten in diligently for many hours. In the Lebanon, earth is often used of considerable thickness, and on each roof is a roller of stone, with a moveable wooden handle, which can be taken off and transferred from one roller to another—each roof having its own roller. Immediately rain falls, these rollers are put into use so as to fill up the cracks, and prevent the water from entering the houses. The seeds from grasses and weeds wafted in the air, or brought up with the fruit and wine, take root in the roof, and quickly spring up, and as quickly wither away from want of moisture, giving rise to the saying, "As grass upon the housetop."

At Jerusalem, we read that people lived on and used the housetops for various purposes ; and it has been cited as singular that at the present time the housetops are for the most part domed, and not flat. The reason

of this is very apparent. During the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, the wood for several miles around was cut down to supply the various engines of war—battering rams, etc. The country was denuded of its trees. Up to this time all the houses were flat-roofed ; but from henceforth, in rebuilding the city, a new feature was introduced into the houses. There being no wood readily obtainable, and stone being cheap and easily procured, the houses were built with stone domes, and very thick walls to support them. The result of this has been that the ruins of the various Jerusalems destroyed since the time of Titus are much more bulky than those of the Jerusalems which preceded his time. One of the proofs of the erection of stone roofs in Jerusalem in early days is the discovery, during our excavations, of a stone roller for a flat roof, exactly similar to those in use now in the Lebanon, which must have been buried some centuries before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. In the villages the houses are built of sun-dried bricks, and consist of one or more rooms on the ground floor. In cases where there is only one room, there is often a raised dais, on which the family live, while the cattle occupy the remainder. On the roof, in summer-time, are erected booths of leaves or mats, for sleeping and living in. The doors and window-shutters are of rough wood, and there are no chimneys ; the wood fires do not require it. One gets very soon accustomed to the wood smoke. The bricks are made of mud, with chopped straw intermixed, and sometimes a little cow-dung. In some parts cow-dung is flapped against the walls to dry in the sun, to be used subsequently as coal ; but when wood is available, the cow-dung is much used for making boxes and jars, by mixing it with mud and straw. Each house usually contains one or more enormous amphorae, made of mud and cow-dung, in which the corn is kept ; and square boxes are also made of the same material for other stores. The furniture of the poor is usually most simple, consisting only of rush-mats, bedding, and cooking utensils. All houses are plentifully supplied with pottery-jars for holding water, and the potter is constantly at work, for jars are continually broken. One of the most certain indications of an ancient site in Palestine is a heap of broken pottery. Herodotus tells us that, in his day, jars of water were taken from Egypt into Syria ; but this refers, probably, only to those parts of the desert bordering on Egypt. In Jerusalem the potter makes his clay from the red virgin earth found in the limestone port-holes in the neighbourhood, mixed with yellow clay from Olivet, in certain proportions.

Glass has been in use in Palestine since very early times. During the Roman period it was common. It is still made at Hebron ; but it is only now made into glass bottles, and into bangles and bracelets for the women.

Soap is also made in Jerusalem for the people, of olive oil and soda. The soda is derived from saliferous plants by burning them. In the villages are generally many beehives of pottery or bark. Bees are easily kept in Palestine ; and in some parts they hive in the rocks, and honey may be sucked out of the rocks. Travellers have in some instances

found the honey exuding; the Moslem, not requiring the grape for wine, makes it into "dibs" or treacle, so that the culture of bees is not so necessary with them.

In many parts the villages are surrounded by groves of olive-trees, and in some cases, particularly in the mountains, by fruit-gardens. The fellah is a good husbandman, and will work all day in the fields with happiness.

JEWS.—It is constantly stated that the Jews are returning to Palestine in great numbers. This is true, but as they only go there to die, when at an advanced age, the Jewish population does not naturally increase, although, no doubt, there is a steady increase. They occupy four holy cities—Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias. They are also to be found in the towns on the coast in small numbers. Few of them belong to Palestine—that is to say, they have for the most part returned to Palestine in later times, having been wandering or located in other countries.

Eighteen hundred years ago the Jewish nation had spread in colonies over Assyria, Asia Minor, Arabia, Northern Africa, Greece, Italy, and Spain; and six hundred years ago they were in great force in Arabia, governing districts, where they were 300,000 strong, and had spread from Russia to India and China, and from Arabia to Abyssinia and Nubia. They had also settled in Germany in great numbers. Since then they appear to have been greatly absorbed or to have died out, as they are now chiefly represented by the Jewish population in and about Poland, and the exiles from Spain in Morocco.

The Jews are divided into two powerful sects in Palestine—those from Germany, Russia, and Poland, called Ashkenasim, and those from Morocco (exiles from Spain), called Sepherdim. There is also a small sect of reformed Jews called Careites, who reject tradition, and adhere only to the Scriptures.

The Jews in Jerusalem may perhaps number 10,000, of whom 6000 are Ashkenasim, and 4000 Sepherdim. The latter, coming from a Moslem territory, are rayahs—*i.e.*, ordinary Turkish subjects; while the former, coming under the Capitulations, are treated as foreigners, and are looked after by the consuls. The Sepherdim assert that they were colonists in Spain at the time of the crucifixion, and are in no way responsible for the rejection of the Messiah; and reason, in a very subtle manner, that as He was rejected He could not be the Messiah. And one of the rabbins informed me that the second advent of the Christians will be the coming of the Messiah to the Jews. They dress in Oriental costume, speak the Spanish language, and have the same features as the Jews of Morocco. They are a light-haired, sometimes red-haired, race. They are robust, industrious, accustomed to hard work, honest, straightforward, and are fond of agriculture—which liking they have derived from their sojourn in Morocco, where they till the ground. The Ashkenasim are a very peculiar people, full of the wild fanatical zeal which distinguished the

race so many hundred years ago ; full of religious fervour, and at times so carried away by impulses of passion that they are not amenable to reason.

They are fragile in appearance, but their courage and fortitude make up for want of stamina. Many of them are entirely supported by the *hallukah*, or money sent to them for their prayers for those in other parts of the world, who cannot afford to come themselves. With all their fanaticism, there is a frankness and straightforwardness about them, with which our countrymen cannot fail to sympathise ; and I am bound to say of the Jews generally in Palestine, I found them of great assistance to me, and most friendly, even in matters where their religious conviction might have arrayed themselves against the work I carried on.

Since the destruction of the temple by Titus, the Jews have been in the habit, whenever permitted, of collecting together in Jerusalem to mourn over the lost glories of their ancient city and the house of God ; and in early times were allowed to enter the temple enclosure once a year, to anoint with oil the " protruding rock " of the Sanctum Sanctorum, and " make lamentation, with groans, and rend their garments, and so retire." But in the fourth century they were turned out of the temple enclosure, and only allowed to approach its walls, and there lament, as at the present day. The portion of the old temple now set apart for this purpose is on the west side, and is now called the Wailing Place ; and here the Jews on Friday evenings congregate, and read the book of Lamentations, and rock themselves, and shake their bones in anguish ; for they still follow in this the practice of their forefathers.

LANGUAGE.—The language spoken in Palestine among the people is Arabic, differing in dialect from the Bedouin people of Egypt and of Damascus. The Turkish officials talk Turkish, and some of them do not know Arabic, and are looked upon as aliens by the native population.

GERIZIM AND THE SAMARITANS.—Much has been said and written on the subject of the fertile Gerizim and the sterile Ebal, the Mountain of Blessings and the Mountain of Curses ; but there is little to choose between them. They stand side by side, north and south, the southern slope of each being equally barren, the northern slopes being fertile, on account of their springs, more numerous on Gerizim than Ebal. But inasmuch as the town of Shechem lies between the two mountains, and derives all its water from Gerizim, the idea has gradually been formed by travellers that there is a difference between the two, accounting for their being chosen for the blessings and curses. It is asserted by some writers that Gerizim is identical with the land of Moriah, where Abraham took Isaac, and some go so far as to say that Gerizim was originally intended as the spot where the ark of the covenant was to rest, but that circumstances subsequently forced Jerusalem or Zion upon the people. Of one matter we may be quite certain—of all places in Palestine there is no more fitting place to be found for the ceremony there enacted. In the gorge between the two

mountains are two natural theatres, half a mile in diameter, and facing each other, forming one amphitheatre, in which the assembled hosts of Israel could meet face to face, to hear and respond to the law read by their leader Joshua. Up the valley, and beyond the theatres, is the ancient city of Shechem, now Nablous. It is a peculiarly favoured spot, and its position is lovely—here alone in Palestine at the present day does water ripple in ducts through the streets and courtyards in sufficient quantities to enable the inhabitants to use it liberally without regarding it as a luxury. At all seasons of the year the fountains gush out in never-failing plenty. Mahomet has said—"The place which He (Allah) loveth most in the district of Jerusalem is the mountain of Nablous." This city is the headquarters of the Samaritans, whose existence at the present day at the foot of those holy mountains is one of the most astonishing existing testimonies to the historical accuracy of the Bible. A few years ago this interesting people had outposts and colonies in Damascus and other cities of Syria, and a few centuries ago they extended into Egypt. Gradually they have dwindled in numbers, until at length there are but a few families, numbering in all 130 persons, left as a testimony.

They still cling to the sides of these holy mountains, where they continue to eat the "Passover," as they have done without intermission, except for forty years, for over 2500 years. It is the only known instance of a continuance through so many years of a religious rite. In the fourteenth century we read that they wrap their heads in red linen cloth, as a distinction from the others, and this, or brown, is their present distinguishing badge. In the twelfth century, Benjamin of Zudula speaks of the 100 Cutheans, who are called Samaritans, occupying Gerizim. Josephus tells us that they were Cutheans sent to replace the tribe of Ephraim, transported into Assyria. And we read the same account in the book of the Kings. It is supposed by some that they are of the tribes of Israel, but it cannot be doubted they are Cutheans, sent by the King of Assyria, augmented by recruits from the children of Israel and renegade Jews, taught by priests of the Israelites, sent from Assyria, to lead them to the worship of the living God.

The Jews, since the destruction of the temple, have celebrated the Passover with mutilated ceremony, but the Samaritans have continued it in the original manner.

Their religion is remarkable in its simplicity. It is founded on the five books of Moses, the book of Joshua—beyond this they do not go; it is their all. They are Sadducees—believe in no resurrection; therefore they require no prophets as to the future—no Messiah—no scheme of salvation. It is simplicity itself—a code of morality in this world—and there it all ends!

They are bitter enemies of the Jews, and their possession of a volume of the Pentateuch differing in some respects from that received from the Hebrews is a remarkable confirmation as to the antiquity of our own version. The old scroll purports to have been written by the great-

grandson of Aaron. That it may have been copied from it, is probable, but this in particular is generally ascribed to the thirteenth century. Their old Pentateuch is spoken of by the early Christian Fathers. There are many reasons for supposing that the present scroll is a direct descendant of that brought to them by the Israelite priest. The characters used by the Samaritans closely resemble those on the Moabite Stone and the Assyrian Lion weights. Altogether, the Samaritan customs and records are the most interesting to a biblical scholar that the world possesses at the present day.

I have had the good fortune to be present at the Passover, and to see it celebrated ; and, without any hesitation, I would say it is the most remarkable sight now to be seen on earth—it is the one existing connecting link with the far-away past.

CONFIGURATION OF THE CLYDE SEA-AREA.

Read at Meeting of British Association, 1886.

BY HUGH ROBERT MILL, D.Sc., F.R.S.E., F.C.S.,

Chemist and Physicist to the Scottish Marine Station.

IN a previous paper¹ I was obliged to preface the discussion of temperature and salinity in the deep-water basins of the west coast by a short account of their physical features. The present paper deals more fully with the bathymetrical conditions of the Clyde sea-area, and may be viewed as an extension of the descriptive part of Mr. Cadell's discussion of the configuration of the Dumbartonshire Highlands.²

TOPOGRAPHY.

The general appearance of the Firth of Clyde and its associated lochs is familiar to every one, and the variety and beauty of the scenery it presents are appreciated by all. There is probably no other region in Great Britain so much traversed by visitors bent on business and pleasure, and there is no other which is such a perfect museum of physical geography. On examining a map of this district we see a wide channel running nearly due north between the peninsula of Cantyre and the mainland. The island of Arran lies nearly in the middle of it, and at the upper end it is bounded by the deeply indented peninsula of Cowal. The western corner of the wide channel runs straight up as Loch Fyne, at first to the N.N.W., then curving towards N.E. The eastern corner is prolonged in a N.N.E. direction into Loch Long, and is joined abruptly by the estuary of the Clyde, which runs W. by N. from Bowling. Thus from a purely topographical point of view the water system known generally as

¹ *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vol. ii. June 1886, p. 347.

² *Ibid.* p. 337.