

NOTES ON THE JULY "QUARTERLY STATEMENT."

By MAJOR C. R. CONDER, R.E., D.C.L., &c.

THE stones figured p. 201 are like many examples described in the Memoirs. Dr. Thompson, in the "Land and the Book," described the sort of mill to which they belonged, and I think there is no doubt they belonged to an oil mill.

The article by Mr. P. J. Baldensperger is one of the best sets of answers returned as yet to the questions which I arranged for the Society. The replies of school teachers and educated natives have not been satisfactory, but the present correspondent shows that he has had the intimate acquaintance with the peasantry which is requisite. I hope he may go on with the other questions, and give us the full benefit of his experience.

The unlucky character of the fig tree was well known to me. The natives always objected to camping under figs, saying it was bad for the eyes. The account of the *Jān* contains many new details not to be found in Lane, and recalls very closely the statements of Akkadian tablets as to demons from below. The Akkadians also expelled such from the *toes* of the possessed, driving the demon gradually downwards out of the body. No doubt this was to prevent injury of the more important organs just as the demon was leaving. The Akkadian demons were also said to refuse to do any useful work, and to lurk under couches and floors. The great antiquity of these superstitions is thus illustrated. The Akkadian demons were, however, neither male nor female.

The sign which is called "Solomon's Seal" in this paper is, I believe, rightly the *Scutum David*. Solomon's Seal, which was a common mason's mark in the 12th century, had five points, not six.

The answer to Question 12 is of interest as illustrating the account in the Bible (2 Sam., xiv, 26) of Absolom's "weighing his hair" annually when he cut it. He was courting popularity by giving the weight in money to the poor—an explanation which has long been known. Lane mentions the weighing of children's hair.

The eagle owl, who is an enchanted woman, is also an interesting character. Lilith, the female demon mentioned in the Talmud and in the Assyrian magical tablets, was the enemy of new-born children, the "night female": the word is, however, also used for the screech owl in the Bible. I think *Sitt Leila*, one of the female saints of Palestine, must be a Lilith.

The superstitions about horses are numerous. I used to ride a horse which had on its forehead the sign of sudden death for the rider. I bought it cheap in consequence. It threw me badly over its head once, but this my servants naturally expected. On another occasion, an Arab sheikh with me was much frightened at my horse pawing the ground,

and kneeling down to drink. No doubt he thought it was digging a grave.

The legend of Muhammad in the cave (of Mt. Hira) covered by the spider's web, is told of David in Talmudic literature, when he fled from Saul.

Ghouls do not seem to be familiar to the writer. There are several haunts of ghouls marked on the Western Survey, and east of Jordan all the dolmens were known to Arabs as "Ghoul's houses." Another ghoul lived in the Jordan valley in 1874, and I have been in a ghoul's cave near Jericho. The word, however, appears to be Turkish rather than Arabic. It is more commonly used among Arabs than among the Fellahin.

I believe the *Murid*, or candidate for admission into a Dervish order, usually appears naked at the ceremony of initiation.

The carrying about of boats is not a ceremony which I have seen in Palestine, but I have heard of it in seaside towns, such as Tripoli, and have witnessed it at Constantinople.

My impression is that it is very difficult to get natives to talk on such subjects at all, and that information can only be got from residents who have had the special experience of Mr. Baldensperger. Those who live in towns like Beirut do not, as a rule, know anything about the peasantry.

ZION (OR ACRA), GHON, AND MILLO.

(*All South of the Temple.*)

By the Rev. W. F. BIRCH.

PATIENT investigation has clearly shown me that Zion, *i.e.*, the stronghold of Zion, captured by Joab and afterwards named the City of David, was situated on Ophel, due west of Gihon (Virgin's Fount). Any theory at variance with this conclusion will (I am satisfied) on careful examination prove to have been founded on some mistake.

We, the defenders of the Ophel site, are, as were the Jebusites, few in number, but like the conies we make our houses in the rock (but rocks, R.V.), and so are quite able to hold our own against all comers at all times. Our opponents have indeed the Press on their side. Canon Tristram, Sir C. Warren, Major Conder, Rev. A. Henderson, Mr. G. St. Clair, and, lastly, Sir Charles Wilson in the Dictionary of the Bible, are scattering their Pseudo-Zions far and wide. In vain I urged the Bible Society not to be afraid, but boldly to put the City of David where Nehemiah places it, *i.e.*, south of the Temple (*Quarterly Statement*, 1885, p. 61), the virtual reply in "New Bible Maps" was no plan of Jerusalem, and En-rogel misplaced at Gihon. Another Society that prints for the million was equally timid. Meanwhile, my publisher