

SYRIAN STONE LORE.

THE title of this work is intended to indicate its character. It is an attempt to build of stone rather than of paper, to restore ancient Palestine from the monuments rather than from ancient literature, to show what we should know of Syria had the Bible been lost, and also how such knowledge illustrates the Hebrew Scriptures. The inquiry is, however, carried down to later times, with the object of tracing the survival of ancient conditions to modern times, and in the later chapters contemporary literature has been allowed to assist in forming an estimate of the various ages.

The subjects under consideration are social and ethnographic rather than geographical, so that the danger of repetition of the author's previous books is small, though many scattered monographs have been used up. The authorities read and abstracted for the volume amount to some one hundred and twenty or more. In each age the questions of race, language, religion, literature, art, architecture, social status, trade, arms, costume, and manners are illustrated. The following is an abstract of the chapters composing the book :—

1. *The Canaanites*.—Turanians, including Hittites. Semitic tribes, including Amaur, Egyptians, and Philistines. The religions of Syria. The prosperity of the country in 1600 B.C. Spoils and tribute. Names of deities worshipped. The Hamathite hieroglyphs. Rude stone monuments, &c.

2. *The Phœnicians*.—Their origin, alphabet, colonies, religion, temples, dress, tombs, dances, architecture, arts, ships, commerce.

3. *The Hebrews*.—Evidence of their condition before the Captivity. The Siloam Text. The wealth of Hezekiah. Early Hebrew literature. Tribal sanctuaries. Tombs and beliefs as to the dead. Art, science, civilisation.

4. *Jews and Samaritans*.—Condition of Western Asia sixth to fourth century B.C. Invention of coins. Condition of Persia. Reason of the Captivity. Samaritans. The ten tribes and Gog and Magog. The Aramean alphabet. "Speech of Ashdod." Usury. The Pharisees. The condition of Jerusalem.

5. *The Greek Age*.—Early trade with India. Jewish coins. Greek influence on the Jews. Early Hebrew inscriptions. The palace of Hyrcanus. Jewish architecture.

6. *The Herodian Age*.—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. Languages. Syrian trade. Coins. Herod's temples and cities. Herodian architecture. The Roman policy before Nero.

7. *The Roman Age*.—Trade of the age. Condition of the Jews. Roman coins of Jerusalem. The Syrian Emperors. The Nabatheans. The South Arab immigration. Buildings of the Antonines roads, Palmyra. The Gnostics. Jewish remains and inscriptions.

8. *The Byzantine Period*.—Survival of paganism. Chrysostom's and Cyril's description of Syria. The Eastern rites, baptism, &c. The heresies of the age. Superstitions. Byzantine trade. The alphabets employed. Luxury and poverty. Architecture of churches.

9. *The Arab Conquest*.—Early monumental history of the Arabs. The Persians in Syria. The rise of Islam. The sources of the Koran. Arab civilisation, architecture, literature, trade. The Dome of the Rock. Kufic and Neshki alphabets. Coins of the Khalifs. Toleration of the Christians.

10. *The Crusaders*.—Sketch of Crusading history. The origin and character of the Crusades. The Latins and the Eastern churches in Syria. Architecture. Government, trades, dress, and armour. Civil and ecclesiastical division of the country. The great castles. Literature, art, coins, seals, pictures. Decay of the Franks. Richard and St. Louis. The military orders. Assassins, &c.

In order to make the narrative as continuous as possible, details and *excursi* are confined to foot-notes, where authorities are quoted. The book is illustrated with three maps, taken from non-Biblical sources, representing Syria in 1300 B.C., in 500 A.D., and in 1300 A.D. There are besides about thirty illustrations, chiefly the author's own drawings from the original objects, including plans, inscriptions, statues, rude stone monuments, views, &c.

The book is dedicated by permission to H.R.H. Prince Albert Victor C. Edward of Wales, K.G., in memory of his interest in Palestine during his visit to the Holy Land in 1882. A good index is to be added, with description of illustrations and list of principal authorities. The author has striven to avoid controversy, and to render the work as completely as the limits allow a picture of Syrian civilisation in the various periods under notice.

NOTES BY CAPTAIN CONDER.

I.—BRONZE VASE FROM NABLUS.

THIS curious jug, now in the office of the Fund, I purchased in Nablus. The three heads represent some Pagan triad, but there is nothing to show date.

I observe, however, a representation on an engraved gem from King's Gnostic collection (Plate IV, Fig. 5, p. 209, King's "Gnostics"), very like my vase. Mr. King calls this a Bacchic vase.