

THE JEWS IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA.

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The question is constantly asked of one returning from Syria to the United States : What is the number of Jews in Syria and Palestine ? Is it true that they are flocking back by thousands and tens of thousands to the land of their fathers, and that soon they will take possession of Canaan, restore their kingdom, and rebuild their temple ?

Let us look at the facts in the case, and try to consider them impartially.

The only way to obtain accurate statistics in Palestine with regard to any particular sect is through the religious heads of the sects. The Ottoman Government has made repeated attempts to obtain an accurate census, but finds it difficult excepting in the case of the Mohammedans, whose male offspring are carefully registered at their birth on the military conscription lists. The other sects notoriously evade the census-takers, and give false reports in order to escape taxation. Very stringent regulations have now been adopted by the Ottoman officials, and by another decade they will probably have a fairly correct census.

Owing to the conflicting and exaggerated reports prevailing in Europe and America with regard to the Jews in Palestine, Her British Majesty's Consul in Jerusalem, Mr. J. Dickson, a most conscientious and worthy man in every respect, and Rev. Selah Merrill, D.D., United States Consul in Jerusalem, made careful and independent investigation in the year 1891 as to the numbers and location of the Jews. Dr. Merrill is too well known to need any word of introduction or praise.

After several months of searching every possible source of information, they arrived at substantially the same result, viz. :

Jews in Jerusalem.....	25,000 to 27,000
“ Jaffa	2,700
“ Ramleh.	196
“ Hebron.....	1,200
“ Nablus.....	99
“ Tiberias.....	2,900
“ Safed.....	6,126
“ Acre	200
“ Haifa.....	1,640
“ all the colonies, less than.....	3,000
Total.....	45,031

These statistics cover Palestine proper. There are Jews in Damascus, Beirut, and Aleppo (in Syria proper), numbering some 23,000 in all. The Jews of Aleppo and Damascus have lived there from time immemorial,