

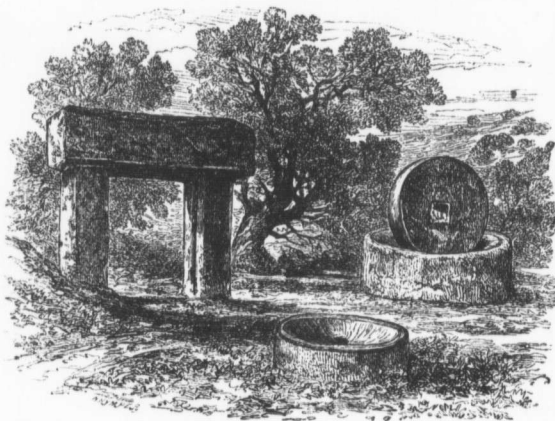
SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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OLIVE TREE AND OIL PRESS.

Agriculture in Palestine.

THROUGH all the battles and sieges, the marshalling of hosts and the trampling of armies on the soil of the Holy Land, the great features of nature are unchanged. The golden sunshine falls, the sapphire seas expand, the wheat and barley green and golden on the plains, the vine and fig, the olive, citron and orange ripen their luscious fruit. Probably no country in the world of the same extent has so great a variety of climate; from the perpetual snow of Mount Hermon, to the sultry shores of the Dead Sea, where we encounter a tropical heat and a tropical vegetation. Yet the curse of Turkish oppression has for so many years brooded like a malign spell upon the land that many portions which, under proper cultivation, would bloom

as the garden of the Lord, are condemned to comparative sterility. The lack of security in the possession of the land and of its products, and the oppressive burdens of taxation, have rendered barren many a spot once fragrant as a field which the Lord hath blessed. The agriculture is still of a most primitive character, the soil is scratched to a shallow depth by a rude wooden plough, and the seed carelessly scattered—some by the hard-trodden wayside, some among thorns, and some in stony places, and some in good ground. Where this last is the case it still brings forth fruit "in some thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundred fold."

The reaping and threshing are also of the rudest description. The threshing-floor is an elevated spot, about eighty or a hundred feet in diameter, where oxen trample out the grain or

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