

certain city to establish a home for the children of peddlers. It was abandoned because the need seemed not to exist, the mothers of children confining their industry to neighboring districts, setting out after the children had been sent to school and returning in time to prepare their supper.

Benefit societies are found among Syrians in several cities. Many Syrians in various parts of the country belong to the Elks, the Grange, and other similar bodies. A Syrian chapter of the Elks has recently been formed in Atlantic City, and there is talk of a Syrian masonic lodge in New York, a number of Syrians having been Freemasons in their own country. Among the comparatively large Syrian population of Lawrence, Mass., and its environs, there are several benefit societies. The Zahleh Young Men's Society of Lawrence owns a printing-press, and publishes a paper. This society interests itself in poor Syrian immigrants meets them at Ellis Island, and gives them advice as to where to settle. The Syrian Roman Catholics of New York also have a benefit society. In Toledo there are several benefit societies, and one, the Syrian Rose, for charity. The members of this society propose to wear buttons, a step of which the more prominent Syrians of that city disapprove, as they do of everything which tends to increase the natural clannishness of their fellow immigrants. Such men in all parts of the country are anxious to see Syrians merge as soon as possible with the general population.

The Syrian Ladies' Aid Society of Brooklyn (non-denominational) was founded in the autumn of 1907, with the special purpose of looking after the girls and women who land at Ellis Island. Within eight months the society accumulated nearly a thousand dollars, a large part of the amount as the proceeds of a strictly literary entertainment, and established their own matron on the island. They were so fortunate as to secure the services of the widow of a Syrian long in the immigration service, and a member of one of the most highly-respected families of the earliest immigration. The society immediately took

steps to establish a temporary Home for Syrian Women Immigrants, and secured two rooms for the purpose while gathering funds for a building of its own. For this purpose the society has since given several other entertainments, among them a vaudeville, the original number of members, twelve, having increased to thirty (1911)—all of them women of education. The women of the newly-organized Syrian Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn—most of them members of the society just named—have recently organized a benevolent society of their own for the special benefit of Protestant Syrians. A port of entry like New York must always present cases for charity unknown elsewhere, those who fall ill, those too poor to go farther and temporarily unable to find work, or the like. Syrian women of St. Paul have founded a Women's Benefit Society. A group of Syrian ladies in Chicago have organized themselves as Guardians of Education.

The Syrians of Cleveland have their national Society of St. George (who is the patron of Syria as well as of England), of which the purpose is precisely analogous to that of such national societies as St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's. A number of attempts at social clubs have been made in New York, but the society there is little homogeneous, questions of sect having a prominence only too well known in Syria, though happily unknown elsewhere in this country, and all have been short-lived. A Society for Peace was founded a few years ago in New York to settle disputes and differences among factions of different sects. As one of the members sarcastically put the case, "It stirred up the greatest quarrel in our history, and died." The Crystal Society (to mention only one of its several names) was founded not long after to promote a better spirit and a broader range of interest in Arabic newspapers, and the elimination of "paid articles," that is, slanderous personals for which space was bought. It had much the same history as the other, but appears to have accomplished its purpose so far as the "paid articles" are concerned.

To study the moral status of the Syrian immigrant is like studying a caged bird let loose. However true it may be that all immigration is subject to economic law, nothing can be clearer than that the consciously impelling motive of Syrian emigration to the United States is not poverty, but a desire for the liberty, or more strictly speaking the opportunity, for which America is another name. There is a deep-lying sense of injury at the hands of the Turkish government in every Syrian heart¹ and incidents of wanton oppression sufficient to justify the feeling are known to every traveller in Syria, and to every one who has the confidence of Syrians in this country. But deeper than this sense of injury lies an instinct for liberty which has survived centuries of oppression, and which under American influence is rapidly coming to the surface. "It is interesting to note the tone of our (Arabic) papers these days," writes one of the most intelligent and perspicacious among them. "There is a widespread clamor for liberty. The Syrians are awaking to a realization of the importance of freedom in both religion and politics."

Freedom to live his own life, to realize himself, appears to the Syrian, even when uneducated and comparatively unthoughtful, still more when educated and serious-minded, to be a boon so precious that for its sake he will endure every hardship to reach the United States, and will remain here even though he fail to realize his hopes of wealth. Thus, a Syrian who in his own country had at-

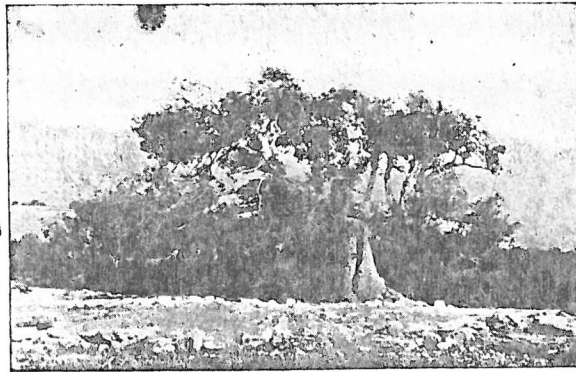
¹Written in 1908. Investigation since the Revolution of 1909 seems to show, at first, high hope, an earnest anticipation of better things, which later seems to have subsided into a certain doubtful waiting to see how things will turn out.

tained to prominence and prosperity by the practice of a learned profession, but who has found himself unable to make good his place among professional men in this country, said that he would rather live in one room in America than return to his luxurious Syrian home.

Considering, therefore, the mutual relations of government and governed in Syria, it would not be surprising if the immigrant on reaching America should fail to distinguish between liberty and license. The feuds and frays which from time to time furnish headlines for the newspapers would seem to show that he does confuse them. It is therefore with amazement that, collating the testimony of court and police officials and of city magistrates the country over

as to the amount of vice and crime among this people, one finds a bewildering unanimity to the effect that none exists, or next to none. With the exception of New York, it has been difficult to discover any record of arrests, still less of convictions. Syrians

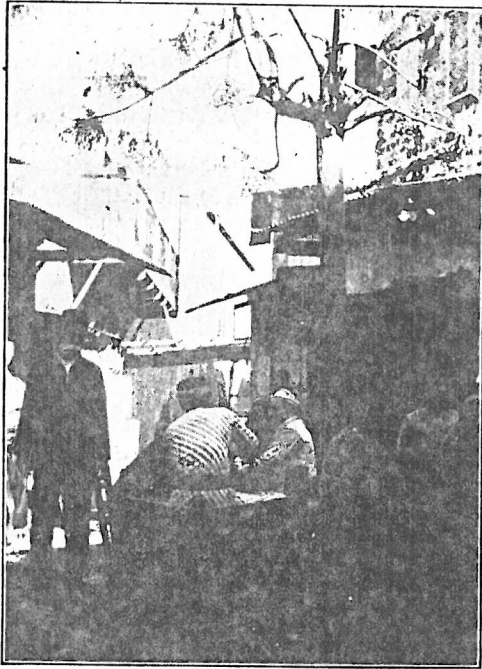
with more or less frequency fall into business dissensions and have one another arrested, but with the fewest possible exceptions the matter is settled out of court. In all such cases friends consider it to be their duty to intervene, and to help bring about an agreement. Court records in one city show three or four cases of such quarrels in fourteen years; in another, two cases of a petty dispute over railroad ties. But from nearly every city comes the emphatic testimony that Syrians are never in the courts; that they are far more peaceable and law-abiding than other immigrants, or even than Americans. Of the 8,000 Syrians in California, not one has ever been in prison. "They are a



THE "MOTHER OF RAGS," LEBANON.
A "Sacred Tree" of the Moslems, who keep it all a-flutter with rags, as remembrances of their prayers.

Quote

Assam
Lital



PLAYING BACKGAMMON IN THE STREET.
Typical Slight in Sidon—or in any other city
from Constantinople to Cairo.

peaceable and industrious people," is the usual testimony, often with the addition, "because they do not drink." "They are hard-working, saving, and perfectly honest," says a city magistrate, "but they don't fight fair."

This, if true, may be due largely to the conditions under which they have lived for several centuries. Not being a part of the Turkish army, the Christian people of Syria have never been trained for war, and on the other hand they have always been forced to submit. The natural result of such conditions would be a lack of physical, and to a certain degree of moral, courage. Moreover, the processes of justice in their own country are proverbially uncertain and costly, and the New Testament injunction, "Agree with thine adversary quickly," is supremely the part of wisdom in Syria today. Conditions such as these, prevailing for generations, would naturally to a large degree account for the fact that though under excitement they may be brave to stab or shoot, they prefer to settle quietly for money rather than take

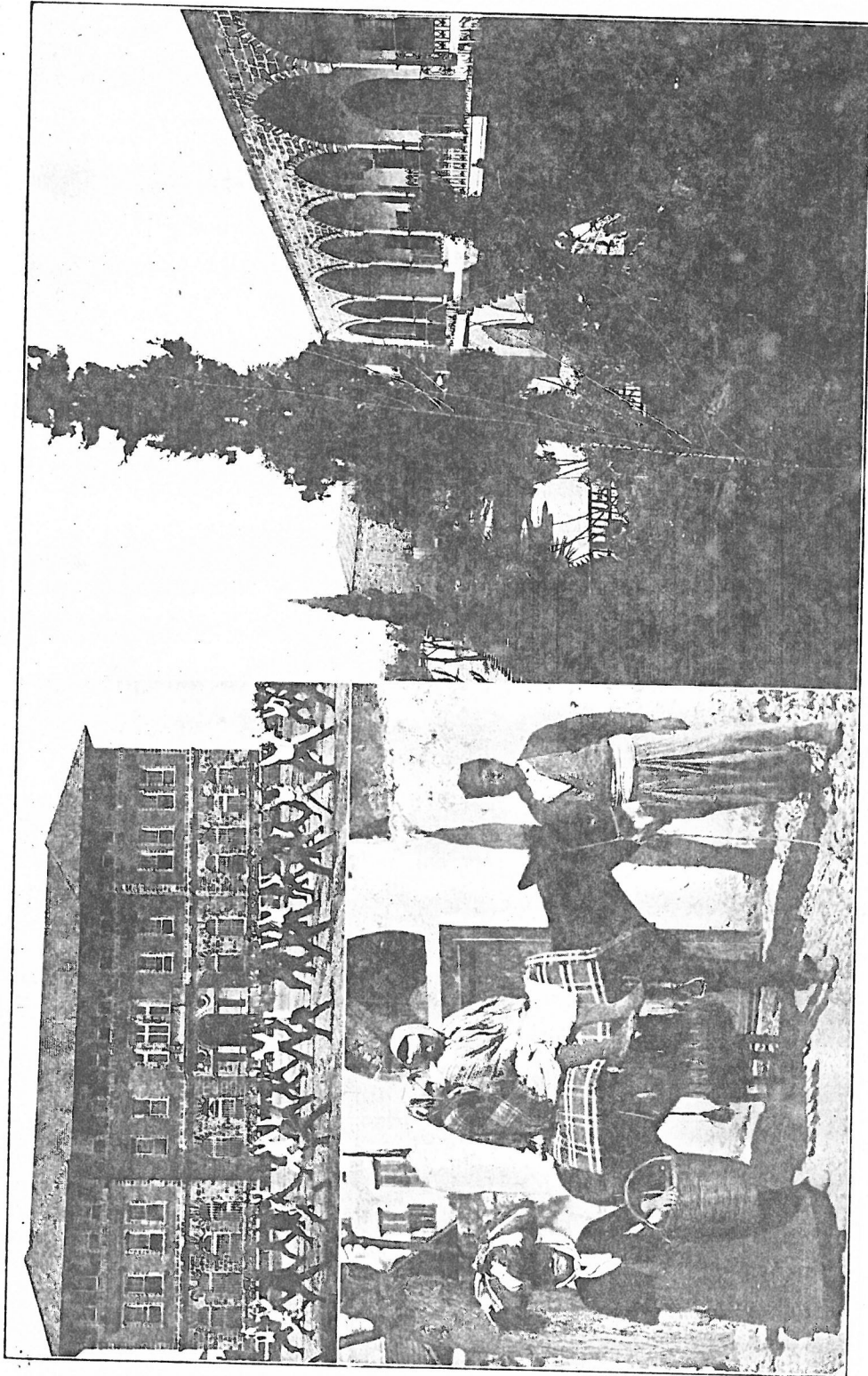
the case into court. Difficulties of this kind are not however of frequent occurrence.

One criminal case in the history of the Chicago Syrian colony throws an interesting light on their moral standards. A Syrian killed a man in self-defense and he was acquitted on that ground, to the horror of his fellow-countrymen, who thought that he should have been hanged. In Syria no plea of self-defense is admitted; to kill a man under any circumstances is to commit murder. "But he did kill him," was the invariable reply in this case when an attempt was made to justify the verdict. The man himself was ostracised, and a fellow-Syrian, who having been present and knowing all the circumstances testified for the accused, was deemed as guilty as the other.

The almost universal testimony is that our Syrian citizens are quiet, peaceable, and law-abiding, and, considering their antecedents, remarkably able morally to stand alone. They do quarrel, chiefly on religious grounds. A few instances of assault by Moslems are recorded, due to the inability of the latter to understand that in America Christians have equal rights with themselves; but under the circumstances such cases have been remarkably few, and generally the Moslems appear to be as law-abiding as the Christians.

Beyond the few stabbing and shooting affrays, the only serious accusations brought against Syrians in the United States have been a certain number of smuggling cases, and a single case of embezzlement. A Syrian lawyer has been disbarred for transgressing the ethics of his profession. A city magistrate who has had an extensive acquaintance with them says that no Syrian has ever been even accused of larceny, forgery, libel, bigamy, desertion, or any carnal crime. Two cases of suicide have occurred. One was caused by extreme grief at the death of a brother; in the other, a well-educated youth was led to gamble, lost more than he could pay, and killed himself.

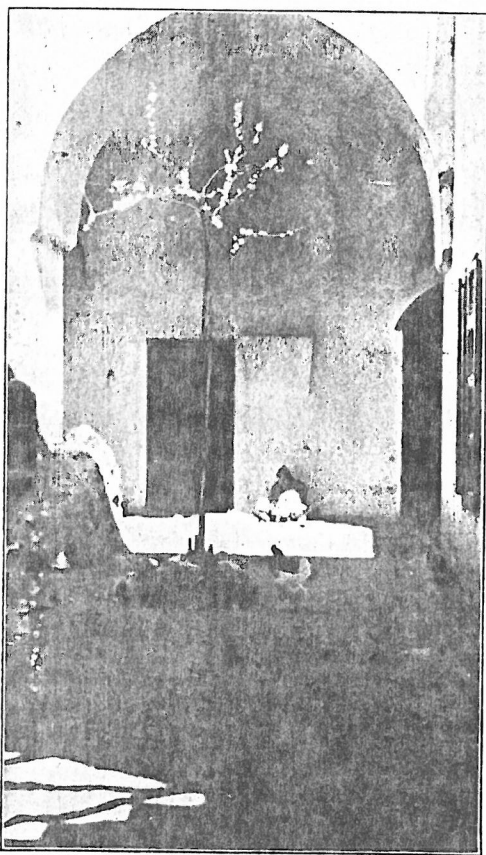
A New York daily paper has stated that numberless shootings and stabbings occur among Syrians which never get in-



BLISS HALL, SYRIAN PROTESTANT COLLEGE, BEIRÛT.

LEBANON GIRLS SETTING OUT FOR SCHOOL.

GERARD INSTITUTE, SIDON, FROM THE GARDEN.
This school prepares for college, but industrial work is obligatory.



COURT OF SYRIAN HOUSE.

The woman holds her work with her toes and uses both hands in sewing.

to the newspapers. Police station blotters by no means bear out this statement. On the contrary, a careful investigation discovers that every such case has furnished scare heads and sensational narrative far out of proportion to its relative importance.

A striking commentary on the Syrian reputation for honor appeared in the case of the most notorious religious feud in the history of Syrian immigration. It culminated in murder, and a certain man was clearly the murderer; but the jury having been instructed to bring in a verdict to that effect, was divided on the ground of palliating circumstances. A new trial was ordered and the accused was released on bail. Before the new trial could come on, the wife of the accused, becoming ill, was ordered to Egypt

by her physician. The accused asked and received from the judge permission to take his wife there, promising to return when wanted, and at the present writing he is in Egypt.

"Do you suppose he will come?" was asked of the policeman who had made the arrest.

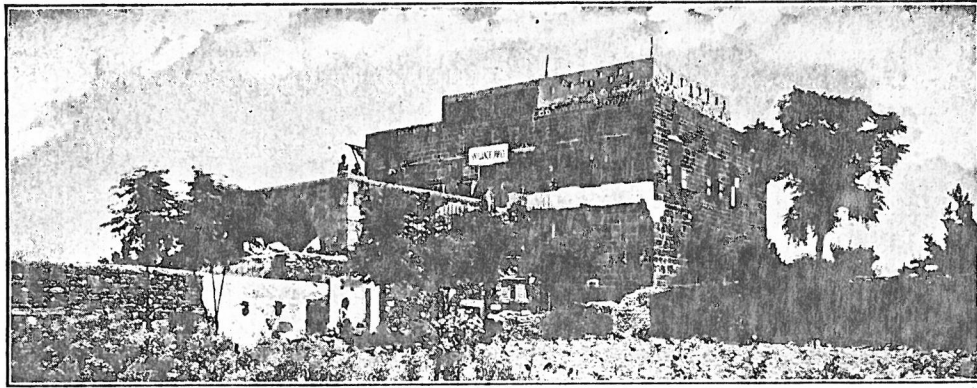
"Sure!" was his confident answer.¹

It may be added that this policeman, who has known the Syrians in their own country, and who served for years in the precinct which includes the Manhattan colony, where all the outbreaks and feuds have occurred, has a high opinion of the moral status of this people, although he strongly condemns those religious leaders who by universal consent are at the bottom of all these difficulties.

The question of the moral status of Syrians naturally involves that of the good and evil of colony life. There is but one record of any crime or misdemeanor—and this was quite exceptional in all its circumstances—committed by Syrians who live scattered among Americans or among other foreigners, but this fact does not necessarily involve condemnation of colony life. Nor do the facts appear to warrant the inclusion of Syrian colonies in that condemnation of immigrant colonies recently uttered by a peculiarly competent student of another immigrant race in this country, namely, that they are hotbeds for the propagation and growth of false ideas of political and personal freedom, of depravity and physical disease, as well as of labor congestion.

Concerning the good and evil of colony life there are two opinions among intelligent Syrians. Some of the most thoughtful and far-sighted pronounce it on the whole a good thing, since the whole community holds itself responsible for the acts of its members, and the social conscience is strong to maintain a high moral standard. In Syria social consciousness is exceptionally strong. As one Syrian expressed it, "They don't know 'mind your own business'"—the weal or woe of one is the concern of all.

¹Given in 1908. The wife later died in Egypt, and the accused returned to this country, where he now is. The new trial has not yet come on.



WALLACE HALL, OLD OPHTHALMIC HOSPITAL AT SIDON.

This building has been done away with, and the hospital is now located near Junieh.

This strong social consciousness and the high value they set upon reputation keep Syrian immigrants safe in the midst of unfamiliar surroundings. Especially, they put a hedge around the women, and guard their virtue in the extra-perilous business of peddling. The sense that the eyes of the colony are upon them is a potent influence against bad conduct in man or woman. When they leave the colony they are likely to meet the worst element of the general population and to become Americanized in the worst sense. For example, a Syrian came across a free lunch counter. Greatly impressed with American hospitality he patronized it freely, and as a result took to drink. Had he been in the colony the thing would have been explained by those longer in the country, and he would have been saved.

The other view, held by a much larger number, is that colony life is a mistake. The new immigrant, they say, should live among Americans, and though it would be very hard in the beginning, it would be much better in the end. In colony life he cannot grasp American ideas. In the Americans who surround the colony he sees American vices, but not American virtues.

Both these views appear to have elements of wisdom. The newly-arrived immigrant seems to need the moral support of those who, while speaking his language, have learned how to guard him against the snares and pitfalls of an unfamiliar social and industrial environ-

ment. But without question, the best which America has to give to the immigrant cannot be given him in colony life.

Whether within or without the protecting hedge of the colony, the chastity of the Syrian woman, by universal testimony, is beyond question. Even in communities where they are least in favor, it is heartily admitted that not a breath of scandal has ever touched them. "A Syrian prostitute was never known," is the testimony of city missionaries, charity organization officials, city magistrates, above all of policemen. The home custom of the too early betrothal and marriage of girls to men ten or twelve years older than themselves, and whom they hardly know, still prevails to a certain degree, and is greatly to be deprecated. It is dying, out, however, and this evil will eventually rectify itself. These wives are not always happy, but the testimony, even of those most inclined to judge Syrian immigrants severely, is that they are always faithful.

Two exceptions to the business probity of Syrian women are known.¹ One is a very notorious and most successful adventuress, the other a very beautiful woman of high social standing who has been convicted of smuggling in collaboration with her husband, and who has

¹A third possible instance may be doubtful. In a western city certain American ladies spoke quite severely as to the lack of probity of a Syrian woman carrying on a somewhat large business. Careful inquiry failed to discover anyone who really thought she herself had been cheated, yet the opinion that the woman was not quite honest seemed still to prevail, and may not have been quite groundless.

suffered the legal penalty. No doubt the business dealings of peddlers with their customers are not always up to the American standard. Fixed prices are unknown in Syria—with possibly the recent exception of a few first-class stores in Beirût and Jerusalem—as they were unknown on the continent of Europe thirty or forty years ago. The dealer expects to chaffer, and the customer almost demands it. Some time is necessary before immigrant peddlers can understand American business methods, and no doubt some who buy of Syrian peddlers get the worst of a transaction.

It has already been observed that the social consciousness of the Syrian is acute. American reticence and self-control in view of the calamities of others puzzles them, or they attribute it to callous indifference. The calmness which prevails in a community when a neighbor dies amazes them. At home a death is the affair not only of the whole village, but of neighboring villages, and they are unable to understand why the mere fact that communities in this country are larger than in Syria should stifle natural sympathy. The weal or woe of one is to a remarkable degree the affair of all. Commenting on the cases of suicide already mentioned, a Syrian observed that neither case could have occurred at home; friends would never leave a despondent man alone, but would surround him with comfort and suggestion, and thus save him.

In many other respects than the purity which has before been mentioned, Syrian home life has many features of loveliness. Nothing can exceed the beautiful manners of well-bred Syrians, and in a sense they are all well-bred. There are peddlers walking our streets today who can trace back their ancestry five hundred years or more, perhaps to English or French crusaders, and are proud to do it. More beautiful family relations than those of Syrian mothers and children it would be hard to find. In many Syrian homes in this country, which by our standards may seem almost squalid, sons and daughters and daughters-in-law rise when the mother enters and remain standing until she is seated, and

all household customs are on the same plane of high breeding.

The Syrian's home customs have not taught him to care much about the surroundings of his house; the character of Syrian village architecture forbids him to do so. Except in Beirût and Damascus, and in a less degree in Sidon and Tripoli, the grounds surrounding very luxurious houses are apt to be neglected and cluttered. Therefore it is rather surprising than otherwise that while the majority in this country are still indifferent, so many Syrians have caught the present interest in well-kept surroundings, which was not particularly prevalent even among Americans a generation ago. Though many of them are still disregarding of outside surroundings, yet one city missionary writes, "The cleanest yards I go into are where the Syrian families live."

By universal consent the Syrians' standard of home life is higher than that of others earning the same wages. Even where they do not make a better appearance they enjoy more comfort, and though they invariably save, their expenditure is relatively generous and always of a character to benefit, not impoverish, the community. In the least orderly houses one finds evidences of a refined taste. Thus, in the better homes of the relatively poor St. Louis community, there are some beautiful brasses, and few are the homes in any place where some bit of oriental luxury is not cherished. They are not so much concerned with the environment as with the interior of their houses, and they sometimes buy houses in relatively bad neighborhoods. Yet being in such cases the only residents who own their homes, their influence upon their environment is sure to be sooner or later uplifting. The excellent, though unconscious, influence of the Sherman street colony in Chicago upon its environment has already been noted.¹

It is certain, however, that Syrians in their own country, though exceedingly clean, are generally not orderly according to the standard of the American housewife. They have so little furniture

¹See THE SURVEY of July 1.



AFTER THE BENEDICTION.

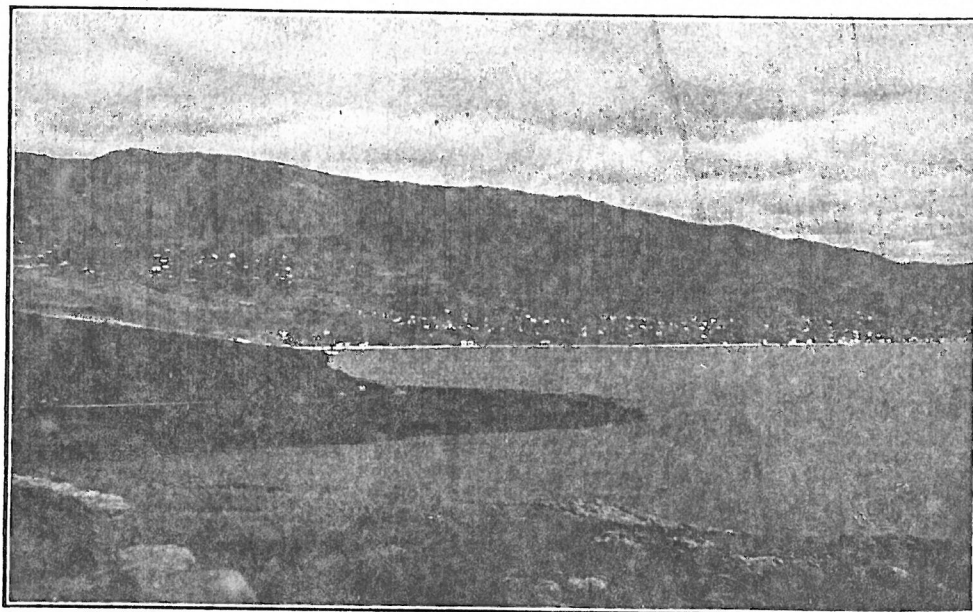
A wedding in Damascus. Syrian Greek Orthodox Patriarch with two priests, Syrians, on either side. Bride and bridegroom and friends behind.

in their houses that it does not matter much. The survival of home customs in this regard often gives a false impression of squalor and shiftlessness. It is neither poverty nor indifference, but simply habit conspiring with necessity to make the best of circumstances which leads them, when occasion requires, to sit on the floor or eat from a common dish; nor does the latter necessarily imply disgusting or uncleanly processes. They accept the limitations of circumstances and environment without apology, and with a dignity which might move to envy many a well-bred American.

A sudden impulse of hospitality, moving a small shopkeeper in a western city, brought an unexpected stranger guest to the presence of his wife at the moment of serving dinner on washing day. She was barefooted, but her hair was elaborately dressed, after the almost invariable custom of Syrian women. No apology of any sort was offered for the

somewhat primitive table furniture or for the dress of the hostess, who presided at her table with charming dignity. It proved that the husband had been a teacher in a noted preparatory school in Syria; his brother, who boarded with him, was a college graduate. No professional situation having offered in this country, they had gone into business without capital, and were struggling upward. The college graduate was the peddling member of the firm. He will abandon peddling as soon as may be, and the family, like other Syrians, will adopt American ways as rapidly as income permits. They will all continue to furnish their rooms more sparingly and to live more simply than Americans of similar income, but they will not sacrifice comfort to frugality, though doubtless their ideas of comfort are not precisely ours. As one of them writes, "Most of us live in nice clean houses now, and draw a calm life as if we were at home."

A marked feature of Syrian homes in



VILLAGE OF JUNIEH, ON THE BAY OF JUNIEH.

this country is the absence of books and magazines. The fact that so many Arabic newspapers can live shows that intellectual sluggishness is not the cause. Comparatively few women and by no means all the educated men read English, and few Arabic books are available here. Yet a certain number of Syrians are forming libraries, in which French and English books find a place among Arabic works brought from the old country.

A good deal of social life of a certain sort prevails among Syrians. In country towns and in western cities the men like to gather in the evening in the store of some leading spirit, and talk. In New York and a few other cities the restaurant offers such a meeting place, and in these one occasionally finds a wife taking part in the after-dinner conversation of her husband and his friends. Where this occurs, however, it is entirely due to American influence. The influence of Islam, and of age-long eastern custom, discourages, if it does not forbid, the mingling of even Christian men and women in social pleasures in Syria, and it is natural that home customs should hold their own at least with the first generation of immigrants. Syrian women in

this country like to visit one another in large groups, as they do at home. Dinner parties are becoming frequent among those who are fairly well-to-do, but Syrians do not generally frequent the theater and except in one or two cities they have no public amusements of their own which men and women can attend together. Those who can afford it, however, are developing a love for concerts and other purely musical entertainments.

There are a number of cases of Syrians marrying Americans, and a few cases of Syrians and Greeks intermarrying, but in general, where Syrians marry outside of their own race, it is with Americans or thoroughly Americanized foreigners. In the west they mingle socially with Americans and to some extent with Greeks and Italians, and of this custom the leading minds among them approve.

Their social status varies with the town in which they live. In one Massachusetts town where they are well-to-do and flourishing they appear to be on a par with the best Americans, but this is exceptional, especially in the eastern states.

Though they are surprisingly quick to

Assim.
 adopt some American customs it must inevitably take them some time to become thoroughly Americanized. They come from homes which have been occupied by their ancestors perhaps for fifteen generations, surrounded by the same neighbors, having the same ways. Here they receive new ideas from a dozen different races. It must take time to digest them all. Yet there are many among them who say that in the next generation it will be impossible to distinguish Syrians from Americans. This is so generally the opinion that there is little doubt that the colony life, which on the whole appears not to be the best for them, is pretty sure to disappear within a generation or two. "They are quick to adopt American ways," writes one observer, "except where their own seem to them to be better." It is quite conceivable that in some cases their own are better.

Religion plays so important a part in every circumstance of Syrian life, the rivalries of the various sects in the home land are so bitter, that it would be strange if these conditions were not to some degree perpetuated in this country. "Syrians are good," observes one who knows them well, the immigration superintendent of the International Young Men's Christian Association, "but religiously they are bad." Accordingly, to find religious dissensions and

rivalries at the bottom of those quarrels and crimes which have given a bad notoriety to the Syrian colony in New York is what might be expected. In certain cities religious differences seriously affect commercial interests. A Protestant will not enter into partnership with a Maronite or a Greek Catholic, though his keen business instinct may show it to be desirable. Yet these animosities are rapidly fading away, especially where a wise religious influence is brought to bear upon them. For example, the forty Syrian miners in the region of Altoona, Pa., are divided between the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic sects and Islam, yet they work together most peacefully, the one priest of their race being a wise and good man. The thirty Syrian quarrymen of Slatington were originally Greek Catholics (Papal Greeks) and Maronites. Under the sympathetic influence of a Scandinavian pastor nearly all have become Protestants, no priest of their own churches being at hand, but those who have not done so live and work in perfect peace with their former co-religionists. The tendency of immigrants from a given village to settle in the same place tends to prevent feuds, since in Syria, with the exception of Protestants, a village, unless pretty large, includes members of only one sect.



THE EXECUTIVE MANSION IN BET-EIDEEN, MOUNT LEBANON.
 Summer Palace of His Excellency, Youseff Pasha, Governor of Lebanon.

September 2, 1911.