up to the Arab invasion, the northern part of the eastern plateau, between Orontes and Euphrates, was made habitable and even fertile by storage of rainfall. It supported a large number of villages and small towns, whose remains are remarkably well preserved, and still serve to shelter a sparse pastoral population.

*Flora.*—Two distinct floral regions meet in Syria, that of the Mediterranean and that of the west Asian steppe-land. The first, to be seen on the coast and the western slopes of the highlands, is characterized by a number of evergreen shrubs with small leathery leaves, and by quickly-flowering spring plants. On the lowest levels the southern forms, the *Ficus sycomorus* and the date-palm, appear, and increase in the direction of Egypt (see Lebanon and Palestine). The steppe region, whose flora begins to appear east of the western ridge, is distinguished by the variety of its species, the dry and thorny character of its shrubs, and great poverty in trees. Between these regions the greatly depressed valley of Jordan shows a subtropic vegetation. Among cultivated trees, the olive is at home throughout Syria, except on the steppe; the mulberry is planted extensively in the lower Lebanon; and all sorts of fruit- trees flourish in irrigated gardens, especially on the Phoenician coast, in the Palestinian plain, in the oasis of Damascus, and in the Buka'a. The main cereal regions are the Hauran, and the plains of Antioch and Commagene; and the lower western slopes of the coast range are largely devoted to the culture of tobacco. On the northern inland downs liquorice grows wild and is collected by the peasants and sent down to Alexandretta.

*Fauna.—*The mammals of Syria arc rather sharply to be distin­guished into those which range only north of Mt Carmel, and those which pass that ∏mit,. the first class includes the isabelline bear, badger, polc-cat, ermine, roe and fallow deer, wild ass, Syrian squirrel, pouched marmoset, gerbill and leopard. The second class will be found under Palestine; and it includes a sub-class which is not found outside Palestine at all. In the latter are the coney, jerboa, several small rodents and the ibex. Only in the Jordan valley do intrusions from the Ethiopic region appear. Elsewhere the forms are Palaearctic with intrusions from the east; but the length of the Syrian strip and the variety of its surface relief admit of considerable difference in the species inhabiting different districts. The Lebanon and the hills of north Galilee offer the greatest number of mammals.

*Population.—*The actual population of Syria is over 3,000,000, spread over a superficial area of about 600,000 sq. m., *i.e.* about 5∣ persons to the square mile. But this poor average is largely accounted for by the inclusion of the almost uninhabited northern steppe-land; and those parts of Syria, which are settled, show a much higher rate. Phoenicia and the Lebanon have the densest population, over 70 to the square mile, while Palestine, the north part of the western plateau east of Jordan, the oases of Damascus and Aleppo, the Orontes valley, and parts of Com­magene, are well peopled. The bulk of the population, so far as race goes, is of the Semitic family, and at bottom Aramaean with a large admixture of immigrant Arabian blood, which is constantly being reinforced, and a comparatively small strain of Hebrew blood. The latter appears mainly in Palestine, and has of late been considerably strengthened by immigration of Europcan Jews, who have almost doubled the population of Jerusalem, and settled upon several fertile spots throughout the Holy Land. But how far these, or the indigenous “ Jews ” are of Hebrew rather than of Aramaean origin is impossible to say. We only know that as long ago as the ist century b.c. true Hebrew blood was becoming rare, and that a vast propor­tion of the Jews of Roman times were Hebraized Aramaeans, whose assimilation into the Jewish community did not date much further back than the Maccabaean age.

Among this Semitic folk is to be observed a great variety of immigrant stocks, settled in isolated patches, which have done much to contaminate the masses about them. In the extreme north (Commagene) the highlands are almost entirely held by Kurds who entered from beyond Euphrates in comparatively recent times. Kurds live upon the Commagenian plains here and there, as also in the northern trans-Euphratean plains. Among them in the Tauras and Amanus, and outnumbering them on the plains, are Armenian communities, the remains of the Rupenian invasion of the 10th century λ.d. (see Zeitun). These are found as far south as the plain of Antioch and the basin of the Sajur. To the north of Aleppo and Antioch live remnants of pre-Aramaean stocks, mixed with many half-settled and settled Turkomans (Yuruks, Avshars, &c.) who came in before the Mahommedan era, and here and there colonies of recently imported Circassians. The latter are also settled numerously to the west of Jordan. Mid-Syτia shows a medley of populations of more or less mixed origin, in large part alien, for which see Druses; Maronites and Lebanon. In the Phoenician coast towns arc many Greeks (to be distinguished from Orthodox Syrians, called also Greeks on account of creed). In the steppe-land and in the southern trans-Jordanic districts are numbers of true Arabs, mostly belonging to the great Anazeh family, which has been coming northwards from Ncjd in detach­ments since the 13th century. These are mainly nomadic, and include offshoots of the great tribes of Ruala, Walad Ali, B. Sokhr, Adwan and Bishr, the first two roaming mainly in the north, the last two in Moab and Ammon. Ottoman Turks, scattered gipsy communities, German settlers in north Pales­tine, and all sorts of Europeans make up a heterogeneous and incompatible population.

*. Religion.—*The religious types also are strongly divergent. The bulk of the population is Mahommedan; the Bedouins have not much religion of any kind, but they profess Islam. Besides orthodox Moslems there arc also Shi'ite sects, as well as a number of religious communities whose doctrine is the out­come of the process of fermentation that characterized the first centuries of Islam. To this last class belong the Ismailites (Assassins), *q.v.,* Metawali, Nosairis, Ansarieh, and especially the Druses *(q.v.).* In many cases it is obvious that the political antipathy of the natives to the Arabs has found expression in the formation of such sects. The Ansarieh, for instance, and no doubt the Druses also, were originally survivals of the Syrian population. The Jews are found mainly in the larger centres of population. The Christians are an important element, constituting probably as much as a fifth of the whole population; the majority of them belong to the Orthodox Greek Church, which has two patriarchs in Syria, at Antioch and Jerusalem. Catholics—United Greeks, United Syrians and Maronites—are numerous. The mission of the American Presbyterian Church, which has had its centre in Beirut for the last sixty years, has done much for Syria, especially in the spread of popular educa­tion; numerous publications issue from its press, and its medical school has been extremely beneficial. The Catholic mission has done very good work in what relates to schools, institutes and the diffusion of literature. The Christians constitute the educated portion of the Syrian people; but the spirit of rivalry has produced stimulative effects on the Mahommedans, who had greatly fallen away from that zeal for knowledge which charac­terized the earlier centuries of their faith.

*Language.—*The language throughout southern and middle Syria as high as Killis is Arabic, which has entirely ousted Aramaic and Hebrew from common use, and tends to prevail even over the speech of recent immigrants like the Circassians. The last survivals of Aramaic are to be sought in certain remote villages of Anti-Lebanon, and in the Syriac known to the clergy. From the upper Sajur northwards Turkish prevails, even among the Armenians; but many Kurdish communities retain their own tongue.

*Government.—*The political status of the country is controlled by the Ottoman Empire, of which Syria makes part, divided into the vilayets of Aleppo, Sham or Syria (Damascus), the Lebanon *(q.v.)* and Beirut, and the separate sanjaks or mutessarifliks of Zor and Jerusalem. Ottoman control is imperfect in Lebanon, the Houran, and over the Armenian mountain region of Zeitun and over the eastern steppe-lands, whose nomadic populations can withdraw themselves out of reach. But considerable success has been achieved in inducing the Syrian Arabs to settle and in supplying a counteracting influence to their unrest by the establishment of agricultural colonies, *e.g.* those of the Circassians in Bashan, Ammon and Moab.

*Communications* are still very imperfect, but have been greatly improved of late years. Railways run from Beirut to Homs, Hamah, Aleppo and Damascus (French), and to the latter also from Haifa (Turkish). From the termination of the Damascus- Mzcrib railway a line (the “ Mecca railway ”) has been laid by Ottoman enterprise east of Jordan to the southern limit of Syria and beyond. From Jaffa a short line runs to Jerusalem, and a