THE IMMOVABLE EAST

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P. J. BALDENSPERGER

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Tower of David, Mount Zion, Gihon, and Plain of Rephaim

THE IMMOVABLE EAST

STUDIES OF THE PEOPLE AND CUSTOMS OF PALESTINE

BY

PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER

EDITED WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

BY

FREDERIC LEES

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

"Slowly they wind athwart the wild, and while young Day his anthem swells,
Sad falls upon my yearning ear the tinkling of the Camel-bells."
The Kasîdah of Hâjî Abdû el-Yezdî.

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INTRODUCTION

Books descriptive of the East may be roughly divided into three classes. First, there are the volumes of "Impressions" of literary men who set themselves the difficult task, after a more or less lengthy stay in the Orient, of faithfully representing Oriental scenes, manners and customs. These are interesting principally on account of their authors—they are vivid, personal interpretations of Eastern life by men of undeniable power of observation and descriptive skill. Intended more for the general reader than the student, these impressionistic studies serve the useful purpose of revealing the brilliant and ever-fascinating surface of the East. Rarely do they take us to its depths. To gain a deeper knowledge of Orientalism, we must go to a second category of books,—those written by professional Orientalists, whose special linguistic studies and extensive travels entitle them to be ranked as authorities. But here again these writers do not tell us all. They too often view the Orient through Occidental eyes, and in certain vital respects fail to paint the picture in its true colours. Only by Orientals—or by those whose long sojourn in the East has formed their minds after the Oriental pattern—can the Orient be adequately described.

This third and necessarily small class of works is the one which must ever hold the place of honour on our book-shelves.

The following essays and stories belong, I claim, to this last special category of Oriental literature. Mr. Philip J. Baldensperger, owing to the peculiar circumstances of his career, is able to tell the story of the Fellahîn and Bedawîn as an Oriental would tell it. As his collaborator, the late Claude Reignier Conder, the author of *Tent Work in Palestine*, once said, "He is 'a voice from the East,'"—an accurate witness to many interesting and almost unknown sides of life in Palestine. Few men, as his biography shows, have had such excellent opportunities as he for accumulating facts regarding the people and customs of the Holy Land.

His father, Henry Baldensperger, of Baldenheim, Alsatia, was sent to Jerusalem in 1848 as a missionary of the Basel Spittler Mission. His mother, from Niederbronn, Alsatia, joined his father soon afterwards in Jerusalem, where they were married. Penetrated by the belief that they were called, under the protection of Divine providence, to teach the people of Palestine better ways, not by preaching the Word, but by exemplary life and work, Mr. and Mrs. Baldensperger soon left the Basel Spittler Mission to undertake an independent one of their own among the natives. They bought land and built a house in the village

of Urtas, on the borders of the Desert of Judæa,—a spot where the villagers had abandoned everything for fear of the continual incursions of the neighbouring Ta'amry Bedawîn. But on the Anglican Bishop Gobat founding a school for Arab orphan boys on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, he appealed to the Baldenspergers for temporary help as stewards, and it was only forty-four years afterwards that they retired again to Urtas. Meanwhile, their children were growing up. Philip Baldensperger was born on June 5th, 1856, in Zion's School, built on the ruins and rockscarp of an old fortress attributed to King David,—buildings owned by the Mission, and where natives are still educated by the Church Missionary Society. Mr. Palmer, a German, was headmaster, and there were also native teachers for Arabic.

The majority of the sixty or seventy boys were Arabs. As the school lay outside the present walls of Jerusalem, the pupils went to Christ's Church, inside the walls by Zion's Gate, on Sundays and feast days. The official language in the schoolroom was English, but Arabic was always used outside. Within the family circle German was spoken, though French was always held in honour. Thus did Philip, his brothers and sister become acquainted from their earliest years with four tongues.

Henry Baldensperger never forgot the dream of his youth. In 1869 he sent Philip and an elder

brother to Urtas to survey the lands he owned in Philistia, in Moab and in the Jordan Valley. The two youths thus passed many of their early days on horseback, riding across the country north and south, east and west, exclusively among Bedawîn and Fellahîn, in the camp and in the village, and considered almost as natives.

After the Franco-Prussian War, Philip Baldensperger volunteered to the country of his ancestors, in view of regaining Alsace, and was in the cavalry (Chasseurs de France) from 1875 to 1880. But he was glad to return to Palestine again, where from 1880 to 1892 he principally devoted himself to pastoral apiculture, carrying the bees from Jaffa to Jerusalem, or from Hebron to the Gaza district. His father kept bees on Zion and in the old castle above Solomon's Pools beyond Bethlehem, in the old clay hives of immemorial model. An English minister in search of bees, meeting him by chance, gave him a copy of the *British Bee Journal*, the first bee-paper he had ever seen. But he was too busy in the orphanage to devote himself to apiculture. However, when, later, in 1880, Mr. D. A. Jones, of Beeville, Canada, and Mr. Frank Benton, of the United States, came to Jerusalem for the study and exportation of Oriental bees, Henry Baldensperger was once more appealed to as a "bee-keeper." Philip's four brothers did not much care for the idea of this branch of agriculture until he came back from

France and went to Beyrut to meet Mr. Benton, with whom he stayed many months and thoroughly learned apiculture at the apiaries he had established in Cyprus and Syria for breeding queens to send to England and the United States. It was then that Philip Baldensperger's four brothers abandoned their other agricultural work, let out the family lands on hire, and devoted themselves exclusively to bee-keeping. The five brothers were associated in pastoral bee-keeping for several years, travelling up and down the country, carrying the hives and portable wooden houses on the backs of camels from the plains to the hills in summer, and back to the sea-district in winter ; camping and fighting the mosquitoes and the fever—a consequence of roaming about in unhealthy marshy places—as well as the vile tax-gatherers and Turkish officials ; now standing to face these despicable functionaries or escaping with bees, camels and everything else to another Pachalik ; losing bees and camels in the wildest of adventures, often caused by a hive suddenly thrown to the ground by one of the camels, spreading death and destruction on roads and passes, leaving donkey or mule dead by the wayside or pushing camels and horses as well as terror-stricken Arab assistants into caves for shelter against the infuriated insects. Disgusted by the officials' odious vexations and injustice, two of the Baldensperger brothers left the country, carrying part

of their hives and apparatus with them to Algeria. Another was drowned whilst bathing in the sea at Jaffa. Finally, Philip, exhausted by fever and doubtful of ever being able to change the mentality of the natives in the "immovable East," himself abandoned the task and, with his wife, an American whom he had married in 1883, and his children, came, in 1892, to Nice, leaving an only brother to continue bee-keeping in Palestine. The brothers who had gone to Algeria were soon glad to return home again, for Palestine is still "the land flowing with milk and honey." Two have died since Philip Baldensperger's departure to France, and again an only one is left, carrying his bees about as in the early years and with much better success, as the Turkish officials have become more accommodating.

Naturally, Philip Baldensperger's first literary work concerned bees and bee-keeping. The *British Bee Journal*, *Gleanings*, French and German periodicals have published a multitude of contributions from his pen. His first article on Palestine appeared in 1883 in a German-Hebrew book, entitled *Jerusalem*, edited by a blind Jew, A. Luncz. Since 1893 he has been a regular contributor to the "Quarterly Statement" of the Palestine Exploration Fund, writing principally on the unchangeable manners and customs of the people of the Holy Land. Many writers and travellers in the East have referred to these

scattered writings during the last twenty years, whilst Palestine Exploration Societies as well as authors have acknowledged the value of his observations. Among those who have cited him in their books are Mrs. A. Goodrich Freer, author of *Inner Jerusalem*, Mr. S. S. Curtiss, Professor of Old Testament Literature and Interpretation, of Chicago Theological Seminary, Professor R. A. Stewart Macalister, author of *The Excavation of Gezer*, and Dr. F. J. Bliss, who, on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund, collaborated with Mr. Macalister in exploration work in the Holy Land. Even in the Hebrew schools at Jerusalem some of Philip Baldensperger's ethnological notes serve as a text-book under the title *The Land of Israel: Present and Past* ("Arz Yeshrael ha-yom wa lafneem"),—a volume of extracts from contributions to the "Quarterly Statement" between 1904 and 1906.

The object of the work undertaken by Mr. Baldensperger and myself—and I would say at the outset that *The Immovable East* is in no way a *rechauffé* of previously published papers—is to give the general public the benefit of his intimate knowledge of Palestine, studied with the Bible in hand and under auspices rarely to be enjoyed by Europeans, since the facts here recorded can only be gathered in the company of natives, and out of the beaten track of tourists, who only hear and see in hotels, on railways, or with caravans

through the ears and eyes of their Dragomans, and who thus only half lift the veil which hangs between the Occidental visitor and the authentic land of the Bible—a land which is not even known to the modern Jews themselves. Our aim is also to show how intimately the three Mediterranean religions have taken root in the same country, on the same traditions and in the same language, basing their unity on the remote past, still lingering in one common belief, in the Jew, Christian or Mohammedan, not only as regards the shrines of Abraham and the patriarchs, Rachel, the prophets Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Zechariah, and so forth,—equally venerated by the three,—but in addition in a more immovable form in the occult world, or ghost-land, which differs from that of the past not even in smallest details. Just as Saul himself, when officially persecuting wizards and witches, went secretly to enquire of the witch at Endor, who brought up the "gods ascending out of the earth" (I. Samuel xxviii. 13-14) and Samuel in a mantle, so will the modern Canaanites (now Moslems) search out those with familiar spirits, who in turn see Genii (or gods) arise out of the earth with green mantles and white beards. If a Canaanite who died centuries before Joshua's invasion of the land could arise again after a repose of 4,000 years and not know that Baal has been changed, his altars given over to Jehovah's servants, who in

their turn handed them on to Greeks and Romans, the followers of Christ, and finally to the Moslems, —if that Canaanite wished to visit his sanctuaries he would find the venerated spot on Ebal still a place of devotion to the Samaritan Jews (now only about 150 persons in all), he would see Greek and Roman Catholic Christians go out in procession to Baal's altar on Mount Carmel. Moreover, he would perceive that every movement of the worshippers is the same: bowing, dancing, knife-cutting, sacrifices to the Saint. The only difference he would observe would be in the name. Elijah has taken the place of Baal. Rushing to the sacred platform of the Baal-Shamim in Jerusalem, again he would see numerous pilgrims in gaudy dresses sacrificing to Allah and his prophet Mohammed. He would avoid big centres to see his "green heights" far away from modern Moslem and Christian civilisation and look for the statue in the temple of Ashteroth in the lovely grove on the hill beyond the plain of Rephaim. Quietly he would enter and gladly see that nothing is changed. The small oil lamp in honour of his beloved goddess is still burning in the niche, but it is the Bedariyeh, the Moslem Aurora, who has taken the well-known place. Flying through the air, he would go north to Safed and find Jews dancing wildly around their sanctuaries, throwing shawls and clothing into the fire, drinking and howling, certainly in honour of Baal. How strange

that Canaanite's experience would be, and yet how very familiar everything would be to him! The towns bear the same names, the ancient sacred spots are still venerated, the holy waters are still visited, even if the saint has slightly changed his name. No, after all, our Canaanite could not, I think, but feel quite at home. The houses are built in the same way as when he trod the earth, the furniture is the same, the people, in spite of an outward change of religion, think just as his ancestors thought when Canaan was a land of many kings. If he were to go to Salem to see if some hospitable Melchisedek, Priest of the Most High, would offer the Stranger bread and drink as was the habit in his days (Genesis xiv. 18), he would find that an astonished Abd-el-'Hei-ben Sadek, a Moslem Imam, would offer him hospitality in the old, old way on the roof of the mosque. If he were to remember the small salt lake in the south which by its underground volcanoes on the Plain of Siddim encroached on the surrounding towns, destroying parts here and there, forming bitumen pits into which strangers slipped easily (Genesis xiv. 10), he would wonder, on finding the immense sea some forty miles in length and nine in breadth, what has happened. But shades of the Sodomites of the catastrophe period would join him and tell him that in the "immovable East" even this Dead Sea continues as in his days to destroy first the four towns and later on Zoar,

and that it is still killing and destroying animal life, forests and inhabitants, so that for miles and miles every town and village has disappeared. Then would the ghostly Stranger acknowledge that this land is really his own Canaan, and would retire contented to await the time when, centuries hence, he will make another tour of inspection.

Finally, our object has been to show that if a few names of places have been changed and confused, as Salem and Morah in Samaria, which were transported to Jerusalem, and Moriah in Judea for political reasons, yet thousands of villages have retained their names in Bethel, Bethlehem, Beersheba, Hebron, Gaza, Jaffa and Akka. Moreover, ancient manners and customs, parts of clothing, articles of common use and household furniture are still to be seen in spite of terrible and lengthy invasions from Egypt and Assyria, Greece and Rome, and in spite of the struggle between the Crescent and the Cross. The old Canaanite and his habits have outlived every nation and religion with their vices and their virtues. His was the most tenacious of all races. His descendents still reward in the old way, giving animals as a recompense, like Pharaoh and Abimelech (Genesis xx. 14), or changes of garment, as Naaman, the Syrian, did to Gehazi (II. Kings xxxiii. 4); burying the dead near sanctuaries, like the patriarchs in Macpelah out of the sight of the camp (Genesis xxiii. 4);

paying for brides or serving a term of seven years as shepherds (Genesis xxix. 20); writing verses on their standards according to the ancestor's signs and colours, like the tribes in the desert (Numbers ii. 2); or leading the sacrifice to a sanctuary for a vow, just like Samuel did in Bethlehem (I. Samuel xvi. 5). Travellers in Palestine can still find the prisons near Governors' palaces in every important town and see prisoners unshaven and unkempt, like Joseph or Jeremiah, pass through Gibeah; they can still visit places where there are unfriendly faces,—where no man, just as in the old days (Judges xix. 15), will receive the native-foreigner even for a lodging; they can still, on the other hand, on going further south, encounter people who are as hospitable as in the days of the Judges.

The ordinary visitor to the Holy Land is shown the so-called traditional "Holy Places," which very often have been invented for the necessities of communities established there, but he never or rarely steps aside to meet men living in tents as Abraham and Sarah lived, or to go to marriages where he would see a ceremonial dating from the days of Jacob. It is hoped that the following pages will induce him to venture from the beaten track and discover that the Bible was really written in this "immovable East," and that, with a competent guide, he can hear for himself the stories of bygone days. If we succeed in

doing that, and at the same time have written a useful commentary on the Bible and its days, we shall feel that our labour has not been in vain.

FREDERIC LEES.

CAGNES, A.M., *December 8th*, 1912.

THE IMMOVABLE EAST

I

THE GREY TRIO

I

PALESTINE is the land of greyness. Not only are you struck by the grey and eternal olive-trees, which spring up again from the roots when cut down and form new trees; by the grey rocks; the partridges and pigeons which climb and fly about the boulders in search of food, or fall a prey to numerous grey or dark rapacious birds, but most of all are you impressed by the grey-clad archaic Fellahîn, the grey ruins on every ancient site and the grey quick-moving Haradîn: those three living witnesses of the remote days when biblical events were first set down in words.[1] At almost

[1] Let me say, in explanation of a few Arabic words which are used throughout the following pages, that Fellah (Cultivator) is masculine singular, Fellaha feminine singular, Fellahîn masculine plural and Fellahât feminine plural. Khirby signifies a ruin and Kharaïb ruins. They must not be confounded with Kirby and Kirrub, the singular and plural for leather water-bottle. Hardôn and Haradîn are the singular and plural forms for the Stellio-agamide lizard, *Stellio cordylina;* whilst the singular and plural for shirt are Thôb and Thiab. In view of the fact that the nomadic tribes are known to English readers as Bedouins, or Bedawîn, I have retained the latter spelling, although the late Claude Reignier Conder, the author of *Tent Work in Palestine* and other invaluable works on the East, agreed with me that the correct form was Bedu. The feminine singular of this word is Bedawiyé, the feminine plural Bedawiyat.

every step, when you go to the denuded grey hills of the Holy Land, do you meet this grey and well-nigh inseparable trio. Within the shelter of a ruin, perched on a hillock or mountain top and telling the eternal tale of grandeur and decadence, the Fellah makes his home and installs his herds. Man and beast live in close community. A single room serves as kitchen, reception-room and bed-chamber,—a room provided very often with but one door and only occasionally a window, and the floor of which consists of two levels: the upper one for the owner, stretched, at night, on a straw mat or a carpet, the lower one for the animals. Sometimes, during the long winter nights, the latter are sheltered in a neighbouring cave, but more often the shepherd and his flocks are together in the same chimneyless, smoky habitation. An enclosure, protected by thorny hedges, surrounds them, and there, in the midst of refuse and manure and vermin, they live in peace and contentment, side by side with their faithful companion the Hardôn. You can see him on any sunny day, if you are careful to watch long enough and quietly, on the look-out for flies and insects near the dung-hill; or else, lying at the top of a conspicuous stone or rock, shaking the fore part of his body and lifting his triangular head as though in a trembling fit of prayer, until, warned by a sound of your presence, he darts away and hides in his hole in the crumbling ruins.

Nothing is so worthy of study, on the part of those who seek an illustration of the Bible narrative, as this grey trio. For is it not evident that the Book was written by immediate ancestors of the Fellahîn? Are not the Fellahîn themselves and their ruins the best proof of this? Do not even the exaggerations and mystico-religious tales of the Bible point to the same conclusion?—But how comes it, then, that Jeremiah, Amos, Micah and other lesser prophets, who give us the most minute and accurate descriptions of nearly everything else, never mention the Fellahîn? The omission is, I think, easily explainable.

It is said that when the Israelites under Joshua invaded Palestine they found seven principal nations occupying the southern and central mountains,—nations which, in order to show the greatness of the conquest, were enumerated as Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, Canaanites, Rephaims and Jebusites. But in my opinion these so-called nations were but groups of a single race, generally designated as Amorites,—tribes exercising different employments in one social agglomeration, with commanders or kings at every important town. The Amorites, or Speakers, were the leading families, who discussed the convenience of declaring war or of resisting the onslaughts of an enemy. The Hittites were the soldiers, ready to fight the nation's battles at a moment's warning. The Perizzites, or Villagers, were the peaceful country

folk, willing to take up arms, if necessary, but usually merely asking to be allowed to work and live tranquilly under their vines and fig-trees. The Hivites, or Encerclers, belonged to the Dervish class, were skilled in the art of magic and, like the modern Hawi, were serpent-charmers. The Canaanites—an important factor in the national life—were merchants, carrying goods and news from place to place. The Rephaims, or Giants, were the healers ; they were also called Jabburim, and, like the modern Jabbar, excelled in the art of curing broken limbs. Finally, the Jebusites were, as their name implies, the Drylanders,—a group worthy of mention not because they were more of a nation than the inhabitants of other towns but because they resisted the invaders for at least four centuries after all Judah had come under Hebrew domination.

As soon as the Hebrews had settled down or been absorbed by the older inhabitants, the people of Palestine mostly lived in a Perez, or village, and became an agricultural nation. But the name under which they were known—Perizzites—was a term of scorn, used to designate idolaters and enemies of the new regime.[1] It was not until

[1] History furnishes us with many similar examples of the original name of agriculturist being used to indicate people of past religions and as synonymous with anti-progressist. In England the refractory inhabitants of the heath were denominated as heathen ; in Germany, they became *Heide ;* in France the dweller in the country (*pays*) became a *paysan,* or, as he was called in old French, a *païen,*—a pagan.

later, when they had adopted the name of Hebrews or Israelites as a whole, that their name was changed into that of Fellahîn. Their story formed a parallel to that of the villagers of Arabia. These inhabitants of the Kefr, on Mohammed proclaiming Islam from the towns of Mecca and Medina, were at first refractory to the new faith, with the result that every infidel was styled an agriculturist or Kafir. But on the whole nation adopting the Prophet's teachings the term of opprobrium was changed to that of cultivator,—they became Fellahîn, a word based on the verb *filh*, to cultivate.

There was no place in the new Israelitic nation for the ambitious Amorite or the warlike Hittite, and the only wish of the Perizzite was to live in peace in the home of his forefathers, carrying on traditions, cementing his attachment to the soil, sacrificing in the Makam, or High-place, or Wely, going to every green tree,—in short, continuing the old forms of worship, praying to the presiding genius, with a slight change, sometimes, in the name, but caring little whether it was before a statue of some Baal or an invisible one called Sidna 'Ali or Sheikh 'Alem. Invasions swept over towns, the Amorites and the Jebusites disappeared, but the poor and continually robbed Perizzite clung fast to his crumbling ruins. Like the grey lichens on the old stones, he remained attached to the cradle of his ancestors, disdained

by the proud horseman, who, following the easier roads of the valleys, rarely visited the almost inaccessible and barren heights. Submitting outwardly to passing lords and masters, whose very tongue was unknown to him, the Perizzite remained faithful about the hearth and in the smoke-filled low rooms of his ruined home to the ways of his forefathers. We find the former niche of the idol represented by the Makam, and the modern Fellah "hears the voice" as distinctly as Moses or Joshua did, and "puts off his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stands is holy ground."[1] Never will he venture into the sanctuary with shoes which have gathered dust and impurities all along his way. Thus were traditional sites and ceremonies handed down, and thus are we able to study the immovable characteristics of the Fellahîn of Palestine,—characteristics which may perhaps (who can say?) be about to succumb now, as the overflowing populations of the Occident strive to fill the uninhabited corners of the earth and overthrow traditions which have resisted foreign influence for thousands of years.

II

Legend relates that, when Islam was founded, a man had four sons and gave to each of them according to his desire. The eldest was Abu

[1] Exodus iii. 5.

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Ploughing in Judæa

Ehmad, the Fellah, who asked for a cow and a plough, and became the father of the Fellahîn. Abu Razek, the next, asked for a shop and became the father of town and city traders. Abu Othman, the third, received a horse and was the father of the intrepid Ottoman horsemen. Abu Swelem, the last, rode off on a camel and became the chief of the camel-possessing Bedawîn.[1] Evidently Abu Ehmad is the most ancient inhabitant of Palestine and has held to traditions much more than his brothers the horsemen and traders. A true son of the soil, he is distrustful of outsiders and, like the Hardôn, retires behind his crumbling ruins at the approach of a horseman. The Jindy, or Gendarme, is never the bringer of good news. He looks for culprits, announces that taxes are to be gathered, counts the heads of cattle and sheep, or inquires about the young men who are fit for military service. Abu Ehmad, though not a bit revolutionary, is a hater of innovations; his only wish is to be left under his vine and fig-tree undisturbed, as in the days when there was no king in Israel. He cares nothing about immense financial speculations, the preparation of formidable arsenals of war, the sinking of mines, the construction of factories and the building of houses possessing hygienic conditions. He seeks neither to accumulate incommensurable wealth

[1] *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund, January, 1903.

nor to obtain even a modicum of comfort. He is ignorant of modern astronomy and geology, history and geography, zoology and microbiology, in an Occidental sense. But he is sober to the extreme. Never does he use wine or strong drink, as he was commanded by Jonadab the son of Rechab.[1] He would be unable to understand if you told him that millions are annually expended in the Occident at *cafés*, public-houses and saloons. A single tiny cup of coffee is almost luxury to him ; his everyday meal consists of a simple plate of rice, with fresh meat and a few vegetables only on rare and quite extraordinary occasions.

The steep, rough and rocky roads have been the Fellah's best auxiliary for keeping away foreigners and holding ideas in check for centuries. Watch him as he drives his camels up and down these terrible roads and you will no longer wonder that progress has been so slow. He is continually reminding his beasts of burden not to stumble. "Ikhly !—Look out, mind the stones !" "Allah !—May God protect thee !" "Mahlak !—Slow up !" "Ya Hafed !—Oh Guardian !" and similar exclamations are repeated every few yards. But the roads—never mended, the result of centuries of footsteps and of infinite patience, for does not the Fellah say "El Ajjaly min esh-Shitân ?—Allah is with the patient and hurry is from Satan "—are quite as good as he desires.

[1] Jeremiah xxxv. 6.

They are full of convenient holes, made by generation after generation of animals, and which prevent them from slipping. The camels, with their soft feet and ever mobile head and eyes, are ever on the look out for the best place to step into, whilst donkeys and cattle know exactly every excavation or protuberance as they slowly march along. Besides, these rough ways serve another purpose. No one can approach the villages unawares. For centuries past the villagers have heard the struggling efforts of horsemen as they drew nearer, have seen, in the darkness of the night, the sparks fly from the rocks when struck by their horses' shoes.

Who can doubt that the ancient Perizzite climbed these hills with the same resignation as the modern Fellah, and in the identical costume we see to-day? Who can doubt, after a sufficiently long residence in the midst of the Fellahât, that the Perizzite women thus went down, with gay laughter, to the spring at the foot of the hill, carrying, besides the well-balanced jar on the head, or the Kirby on the back, the family clothes, to be beaten on the smooth stones of the stream and rid of their accumulation of sweat, fleas and smoke? Did not the ancestresses of this Fellaha girl thus lift their skirts to the knees and ask permission of the Water-genius to step in? Watch her. As she arrives at the edge of the brook she at once drops her bundle of clothes and the Kirby and proceeds to

her toilet. After knotting her long sleeves together and throwing them behind her back, leaving her brown and well-proportioned arms bare to above the elbows, she rubs her small feet and rounded calves vigorously ; then, with her joined hollowed hands she throws the fresh water—her silver and glass bracelets tinkling musically—into her weather-browned face. She dries herself with her long veil, and when this is done begins, with rhythmic blows, the work of the day. By the time the clothes are washed and rinsed the dry Kirby is soaked through and through. Dexterously, with one hand, the neck is opened, and rapidly, with the right hollowed hand, water is thrown into the leather bottle. When full, a rope is attached to the top and the bottom, and upon her back—like a soldier's knapsack—it is carried home to quench the thirst of the household.

III

As a rule, the Fellahîn are dark brown, black-haired and have long, broad beards, differing in this respect from the Bedawîn, whose beards are scanty and adorn the chin only. Certainly, in a country so often invaded by outsiders, there is a tinge of foreign blood. Here and there, and especially near big centres, you may be surprised to meet fair or even red-haired individuals. But the principal type is the brown one, with a thick,

hooked nose, a round head, thick lips, and of medium height, about 1m. 65 cent. The men have strong bones, broad shoulders, large hands, and are, as a rule, well in muscle,—neither too fat, nor too thin. The women are slightly smaller, with elegant bodies, strong hips, good-sized breasts, almost small feet and hands, dark eyes and long, thick black hair. Fellahîn and Fellahat usually wear a plain long shirt with wide sleeves which reaches, when not held up by the girdle, to the feet. The man's Thôb is usually white, the woman's blue, but they soon undergo a change. Water being always scarce about the village, white becomes grey, whilst the gaudy blue of the Thiab is toned down by the sun and by wear and tear among thorns and briars. The women's picturesque long veil, which serves so many purposes, such as the carrying home of provisions, likewise quickly loses its pristine freshness and takes on the dominant colour of this grey land. When out walking or at his work, the Fellah pulls up his Thôb so that it barely reaches his knees. But the higher he approaches in rank to those two important officials the Sheikh of the village and the Khateeb, or Priest, the lower he wears his shirt. In the case of the women, decency obliges them, whenever men approach or are likely to be near, as at home, to lower their Thiab to the feet. The Fellahat have a silken or woollen girdle, and this, with their veil, completes their full dress.

Shoes and mantles, jackets and fur-coats are luxuries, worn only on rare occasions.

The Fallah, with his leather girdle, hairy breast and arms, is the exact portrait of Elijah the Tishbite, who was "a hairy man and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins."[1] This girdle is the most important item of his dress. Though his bodily wants may be few, he requires a large number of articles ever to hand, hence the girdle serves the purpose of an indispensable store-room. Upon it are suspended chains, hooks, pouches and horns, to hold knives, daggers, clubs, powder and shot, flint and steel, tinder, packneedles and thread, pipes, tobacco and cigarette papers, razors and combs, handkerchiefs and documents. A man without his girdle was always considered in the East to be in a position of inferiority: very much as an Occidental would be in his night-gown. The command "gird up thy loins"[2] meant—be ready for an emergency, and the Israelites were ordered "to eat with their loins girded, shoes on feet and staff in hand."[3] Without his girdle, a man was unprepared either for war or for journeying. Of late the broad girdle of the Fellahîn has been diminished, but it is still to be seen in many out-of-the-way places.[4]

[1] I. Kings i. 8. [2] II. Kings iv. 29. [3] Exodus xii. 11.

[4] The history of the girdle in the East contains some very curious facts. One of them is worth mentioning. To distinguish the Mohammedans from Christians and Jews, the cruel and despotic Caliph Motawakkil of the 'Abbasids proclaimed a law

Photo J. H. Halladjian, Haifa

A Fellah and his Camels on the banks of the Kishon

Surrounding the Fellah's head and wound round his red Tarbûsh is a large grey and yellow turban. The women have a long, flowing picturesque headdress called a Khirkah, which falls over the shoulders and to the waist, like a shawl, and is often trimmed with plain or coloured tassels. Shoes are worn by the Fellahat only when on a journey, never in the village, and even when abroad they are carefully kept in the bosom-pouch to prevent them being soiled and disfigured. This pouch is also used as a receptacle for food when they are out at their work, and for other necessary things. Whilst visiting or on their way to towns, the women keep their Thiab decently tied round the body They carry their packages either on their heads or wrapped in the long sleeves of their gowns, the

in 235 A.H. (349 A.D.) that non-believers should wear a broad leather girdle, Zennar, and never be allowed to loosen it. They were further to be distinguished from the faithful by their black turbans and shoes. This Girdle Law led, in later years, to a strange error. The old French appellation for the Christians of the Holy Land—"Les Chrétiens de la Saincture"—was translated by modern writers "Christians of the Girdle," *saincture* being confounded with *ceinture*. When Baron d'Anglure visited Palestine in 1395 (see *Sainct voyage de Jhérusalem*, p. 99) he wrote in reference to the Holy Sepulchre: "Au dehors d'icelle saincte église, devant le portail, autour de la dicte place a quatre chappelles, la première est de Nostre-Dame, l'autre de Saint Jehan d'Euvangeliste, la tierce de Marie Magdelaine et la quatre de St Michel et sont gouvernées icelles chappelles par Grecz (Greeks) et par Hermins (Armenians) et par *Chrétiens de la Saincture* (Latins) et si y a chrétiens de la terre preste Jehan (Abyssinia)." During the "great blank"—that is, between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries—Palestine was almost forgotten and the French language having changed, *Saincture* became *Terre Sainte*.

points being knotted or held in the hand and the packet below the arm and the elbow.

The Schmaar is an item of the Fellah's dress which calls for explanation. It is a cord, sometimes ornamented with tassels but more often quite simple, and, worn cross-ways behind the shoulders, is used for keeping the men's sleeves tucked out of their way, for these, though wide, cannot be knotted together and thrown behind their backs.[1]

A brown and greyish striped sleeveless mantle, the "Abba," completes the full dress of the men when in society. It is impermeable to rain,—"his only covering wherein he shall sleep," as we read in Exodus,[2] where, in Hebrew, it is called Shalmat, evidently the black Bedawîn Shalat. This cloak is the Fellah's most indispensable article of dress at night, for when away from home he knows not where he may be able to find a lodging and may very likely be obliged to sleep upon

[1] The Schmaar, which was always part of the Fellahîn's costume, is mentioned as early as the days of the sons of Jacob. When Judah met a Kaddîshah, or consecrated woman, and had no ready money with which to pay for her services, she asked, as an *arboun*, or pledge, for his *fateel* (the woven *schmaar*), called in the Authorised Version "bracelets" but correctly rendered "cord" in the Revised Version; his staff and his signet (see Genesis xxxviii. 18)—three objects of essential value to the owner. The Schmaar was a keepsake woven by an admirer; the signet was necessary for the sealing of documents, as the owner was too illiterate to sign his name; and the staff, an old friend and supporter, was perhaps used as a talisman against serpents,—a Mehjané, the hooked almond stick.

[2] xxii. 27.

the ground, like Jacob, "with a stone for pillow."[1] The women have short red mantles, called Bisht, but generally known as "Abba"; they barely reach to the knees and are rarely used except by the Fellahat around Jerusalem, Siloam, the Mount of Olives and Bethany, who daily come to market to sell their agricultural produce. Out of these places not one woman in ten possesses them.

Though naturally polite and proverbially hospitable, the Fellahîn do not extend these good qualities beyond people of their own creed or tribe. As a rule, non-Moslems and non-Arabs are held at arm's length. Christian Fellahîn, possessing the same customs and laws of hospitality, enjoy the same in a Moslem village but foreigners—so often arrogant—have nothing to look for among the humble and simple country-folk. The women, exactly resembling Rachel and Rebecca, will offer a drink to wayfarers of the Arabic tongue but will keep at a distance from and look with distrust on the (to them) indecent clothing and hats of Occidentals, who pass by in disdainful attitudes, speaking a foreign language and displaying none of the beloved home-notes and manners. These strangers—people who claim that the land has changed, that the sweet singer of Israel no longer fills the air with his music, forget that nothing has altered, that they alone are foreigners who understand no word of Oriental sentimentalism, and who

[1] Genesis xxviii. 11.

come to teach the people their own history in distorted lessons. Provided you are one in belief or in language with a Fellah, I know of no one who could be more hospitable. Though his house be in ruins, he receives his guests with as much vanity and satisfaction as a Croesus living in a marble palace would, and treats them as generously as if he were the richest man in the place, even though he may have to go to his neighbour to borrow rice, a lamb or a goat, butter and coffee.

IV

But let us now turn to the second of our grey trio : the ruins of Palestine.[1] The entire country

[1] With these ruins of "fenced cities," lying in "ruinous heaps" (II. Kings xix. 25) may be grouped the heaps of stones which the traveller is ever encountering. These mark places where men have been killed, and are placed there with the idea of preventing the ghosts of the departed from appearing and frightening the passers-by : a relic of the stoning of the condemned referred to in the words "the people of the land shall stone him with stones" (Leviticus xx. 2). Do we not read, too, that when the King of Ai was dead he was taken down before evening, his carcass was thrown at the entrance to the city, and a great heap of stones was raised over it, "that remaineth unto this day"? (Joshua viii. 29). At the last execution I saw in Palestine, near the Jaffa Gate, in 1869, many of the spectators threw stones at the beheaded body, which was later carried away to be buried by night. The pilgrims of Arafat, near Mecca, stone Satan for his disobedience and he is often termed Esh-Shitân er-Rajeem. But heaps of stones accumulated under these and similar circumstances must not be confused with the witness stones which are heaped up in honour of a saint. These are set up stone by stone by pious believers when, at a distance, they first perceive a shrine. "Stone, I witness with you to-day, and witness with me on judgment day," says the traveller, as he places his stone in position. There are heaps of these witness stones in Bethel and between Laban and Jacob.

is scattered with them ;—there are certainly five or six desolated sites for every one that is inhabited. A curse is thought to adhere to old ruins, and the Biblical "cursed is the man before Jehovah that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho,"[1] if not regarded as law, has been carried into effect. All through the pages of the Bible do we find references to this characteristic feature of the Holy Land. Prophets threatened that ruins should be multiplied,[2] or promised, if the people turned away from their abominations, that they should be raised up.[3] The Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, Adama and Zeboim, disappeared in the well-known catastrophe. Zoar alone remained, but later that town also was swept away. Masada, the last fortress of the Jewish nations, is now in ruins. Likewise, on Engiddy, the older Hazazon-Tamar, being abandoned, the inhabitants withdrew to build Beth-Tamar, Beth-Sahur and Ebn-Obeid, which in their turn were deserted by the people, who are still wandering about, wearing, though they are half Bedawîn, the Fallahîn turban and cloak.[4] Tekoa has also become a great heap of ruins and the desert's sole inhabitants are now many species of lizards,[5] including the Waran (*Psammosaurus scincus*), the Thab or Mastiguer

[1] Joshua vi. 26. [2] Ezekiel xxi. 15. [3] Amos ix. 11.

[4] There are three tribes of these agricultural nomads: the Ta'amry, the Sawahry and the Obeidiyé.

[5] Canon Tristram, the author of *The Fauna and Flora of Palestine*, captured at least ten species.

(*Uromastix spinipes*), and our old friend the Hardôn whose life history we have yet to consider.

V

The *Stellio cordylina* lizard lives, as I have said, about the home of the Fellahîn and seeks security in any convenient hole which may present itself in the rough-built, unplastered walls. But he avoids the front part of the house and never on any account ventures inside, like his cousin the Gecko (*Ptyodactylus hasselquisti*). Abu Braise—the familiar appellation under which the latter is known to the Fellahîn—rids the dwelling of gnats, flies and mosquitoes. He is believed, as this name indicates, to engender leprosy,—a belief the origin of which is almost as old as his very existence, since it arises from his colour and protuberances, which, in fact, resemble the effects of that disease.[1] Nor is this the only injustice which is done Master Gecko ; the beautiful, useful little fellow is also accused of having indicated to Mohammed's persecutors the prophet's hiding-place at the Hejra (Anglicê Hegira), by calling out : " Shick !

[1] The ancient lawgivers, who were probably responsible for this belief, fell into error in almost all their observations concerning the minor animals and the causes of disease. For instance, they confused the appearance of saltpetre on the damp walls of houses with leprosy. See Leviticus xiv. 37 : " And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall ; then . . . " This superstition and the belief concerning the Gecko are as firm as ever in the country districts of Palestine.

wan-Nabi fish shick!" ("Geck! the Prophet is in the cleft!") Similarly, two acts of treachery are laid at the door of the Hardôn. He is said to have nodded his head above the same cleft, to indicate that it was true the prophet was there, because the entrance to the opening in the rock was obstructed by a spider's web and two turtle-dove's eggs. But the persecutors, not believing either traitor, passed on. The Hardôn is likewise accused of having carried wood to Jebel 'Arafat when the accursed mule was already loaded to go and burn the Angel Gabriel.[1] In consequence of these superstitious tales, whoever kills a Hardôn or a Gecko with his right hand is said to receive a reward in heaven, and the more Geckos or Haradîn he puts to death the more numerous will be his recompenses. Fortunately the Fellahîn are too busy or too fatalistic to attempt to destroy a single one, and thus large quantities of flies, beetles, wasps, field-bugs and ants, which would become a veritable plague

[1] Many other legends are related concerning the Hardôn, which is regarded by the natives of Palestine as a thinking being. A Fellah once told me the following story. One day, a serpent, accustomed, like her congeners, to feed on Haradîn, rushed upon a Hardôn. But the sly fellow, quicker than she was, promptly seized upon a piece of wood, which he presented crosswise in his mouth to the snake. Whichever way she turned, the Hardôn turned his head with the stick, thus preventing her from getting hold. At last the serpent, completely baffled, abandoned him.—Serpents are exceedingly fond of Haradîn. I have myself cut open a *Zamenis viridiflavus* and rescued one of them—a miniature Jonah—after it had spent perhaps three hours in the reptile's stomach.

to agriculture if left unchecked, are removed from the land. Nevertheless, the Hardôn, as though conscious of the alleged crime of one of his ancestors, runs fast on the approach of man and hides either in the cracked bole of an olive-tree or in his impregnable hole in a wall. His name means Withdrawer or Sly Fellow, and having got a bad reputation he feels that he has no time to wait and hear who is right or wrong ;—concluding that the judge will surely be on man's side, he promptly slips out of the way.

The male Hardôn is slightly darker than the female and generally stronger ; his thick tail is more spiny and his triangular head much larger. He wags his head periodically, but only when he feels in safety and is basking in the bright sunshine on the top of a stone. Sometimes he draws himself up like a sentinel and, seeming to say, "Here I am ! Come along. Look out ! Man is coming ! " appears to be attracting the female's attention. For Haradîn always live in pairs. And when the male thus walks high on his four legs the female can pass below him.

In June the female digs a hole about six inches deep in the dry, loose earth and lays from eight to ten yellowish eggs, about two centimetres long and with a semi-rigid membrane. Each is deposited separately and covered with warm earth, after which they are left to hatch in the sun. The young Haradîn (about four centimetres in

length when born) crawl out some two months later and immediately begin to fight life's battles for themselves by picking up ants and minor insects.[1] In view of their three to four months hibernation in the holes of ruins or olive trees, they store up, under their thick skin, a layer of fat. At one year of age they are about ten centimetres long, by the second year they may be nearly twenty, and at the end of the third year they attain their full growth, or nearly so,—a length of thirty centimetres. By this time the Hardôn has chosen a home of his own and, taken up with matrimonial duties, rarely, as far as I have been able to observe, abandons it.

Near Solomon's Pools is a mountain where Haradîn thrive so well that it has come to be known as Abu-l-Haradîn. That these reptiles have been a feature of Palestine since times immemorial is undoubted. But how is it, then, that they escaped the notice of the Fellahîn prophets, especially Micah, who lived in a Hardôn district? The fault is probably not with Micah but with his translators. The prophet, referring to the fleeing of the enemy, says, according to the

[1] They are also particularly fond of bees, and for that reason always abound near apiaries. They can sometimes be surprised in the act of standing in front of the fly-holes of the hives catching drones and workers. In the latter case they allow the bees to sting them about the jaws, so that the poison sack and its contents may remain in the wound and the bees be swallowed without venom. I have seen Haradîn with a dozen or more stings on their powerful jaws. Though comparatively small, their teeth are strong enough to draw blood should they bite your finger.

Authorised Version: "They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth," [1] But the Hebrew text is clearer: "Yelhaku 'afr kanahsch, kazahli arz yergazu mi massgarathihim," which, translated into Arabic, would read: "Yelhasu 'afr kal-hanash, kasahali (or Haradîn) el ard, yergathu min khuzuk il mussagerath,"—that is: "As a serpent they lick the dust, and as a lizard of the earth, they dance or run from their hiding-places."

Like many reptiles, the Hardôn, for protective purposes, has the power of slightly changing his colour. He is very dark when about the stems of olive-trees, grey when lying on rocks or ruins, and slightly greyer when near the ashes of the Tabôn, or oven, where, on account of the warmth in winter and the insects in summer, he delights to recline, and where you may hear the pitiless Fellahîn children singing to him :—

"Salli sallatak ya Hardôn
Immak mattat fi—tabôn." [2]

[1] Micah vii, 17. The Revised Version says "like crawling things of the earth."

[2] "Pray your prayer, oh Hardôn,
Your mother died in the oven."

II

IN THE BEDAWIN COUNTRY

I

THE high plateau of Moab, in Eastern Palestine, the maritime plains of Sharon, in the west, the central plains of Esdraelon and Jezreel, or the extremely fertile plains of Shittim, in the deep depression formed by the Jordan valley, may be called inexhaustible graineries. Year after year, without any artificial manuring, crops are raised, and as soon as the harvest is over thousands of animals are turned into the fenceless fields to pasture on the stubble—often over a foot high—which the reapers have left. These droves of camels, herds of fat-tailed sheep, or black goats with ears so long that they often reach the ground, all delight in the food they find, and, whilst roaming about day after day for many months yearly, manure the land naturally.

With the exception of northern Sharon, Esdraelon and Jezreel, the southern, central and eastern lands belong to the wandering Arabs, who prefer to go on Ghazû[1] rather than cultivate their lands, which, owned by the whole tribe, are rented to the more diligent Fellahîn, on condition of yielding a portion of the produce to the owners. Indeed,

[1] Marauding excursions.

the haughty Bedawi considers it a dishonour to leave his camels or horses and take to the plough or the sickle, and with pride he sings :—

" Il khail lal bela
Il ebal lal khala
Wal baggar
Lal fuggur." [1]

He is always on the look-out for some " Fellah-el-Hitr," [2] willing to take his share of land, and, since he is often in need of ready money, to advance him on interest a few hundred Majidis. [3] Then he is free to jump on to his fine mare and follow his chief on one of the numerous expeditions, more or less legitimate, which form so great a part of his free, picturesque life.

Unlike these fertile spots of Palestine, the dry mountains of Judæa, where my father owned land, give but a poor return of wheat and barley. Consequently the Fellahîn of the villages often turn their thoughts and footsteps to the haunts of the Bedawîn. In doing so they are but imitating their ancestors. The children of Jacob departed to Egypt because the mountains gave no more grain, Abraham and Isaac travelled to the southern plains of Beersheba and Sharon,—Jacob and his children to Dothan, towards Esdraelon,—

[1] The horses are for trial (in war)
The camels are for excursions (or the desert)
But the cows
Are for the poor.

[2] Unfortunate Fellah, obliged to work.

[3] A Majidi is equivalent to about 3s. 6d.

and the father and mother-in-law of Ruth to Moab because there was famine in Bethlehem.

One day, when I was still in my youth, one of my father's Fellah-partners, Saleh el-Kaak, announced his intention of trying his luck on the plains of Jordan. He had come into relations with a high-born Bedawi of the tribe of the Aduan, Imhammad el-Talak, who, as a fully-equipped horseman of Sheikh Ali el-Thiab, was obliged to follow his liege lord wherever he was led, and the two men having come to the usual financial arrangement the departure was fixed for the month of November. My father, anxious to know more about the country and its resources, but unable to leave home, delegated me to accompany Saleh el-Kaak and assist at the ploughing and the sowing. When this work, which took only a few weeks, was over, I turned my face homewards, but with the intention of returning for the harvest when the Jordan permitted. There were no bridges over the famous river in those days, and even had there been any they would have been of no avail in early spring, as the river bed lies very low in a broader bed, covered with thickets, and when the snows melt on Mount Hermon, in Lebanon, the stream is sometimes miles in breadth. It would have been folly to attempt a crossing "when Jordan overflowed all its banks."[1]

It was not until May, when the river was

[1] Joshua iii, 15.

reported to be in a normal condition again, that Saleh el-Kaak, his two sons, his numerous relatives, and myself set off on our journey. We travelled in caravans, it being unsafe in those days to travel in small groups, owing to the ever-lurking Bedawîn, only too ready to pounce upon and rob the weak and unsuspecting wayfarer. Our own caravan was composed of men and women, with a number of animals, from Siloam. We started before midnight and by morning approached the treacherous river with apprehension.

All chattering ceased when the crossing of the Jordan began ; out on the grey waters everyone looked serious. Whirlpool and rapids were encountered at every yard, now rushing swiftly down in the centre of the stream, now dashing against the banks and hollowing them out. There was not a living being who did not reflect on the possibility of never reaching the opposite shore alive, for all knew that every crossing of the Jordan was fatal to one or other of the animals and sometimes to men and women. At times the dashing waters would so excavate the land that one of the marly hills,[1] with a mighty splash,

[1] According to a manuscript of Nowairi, the Arab historian, translated by Professor Clermont-Ganneau for the *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund of July, 1895, the chronicler relates a similar occurence. In the month of Jumad the First, in the year 664 (A.D. 1266), the Sultan Beybars "issued orders for the building of a bridge over the Jordan. . . . The bridge is in the neighbourhood of Damieh. . . . The Sultan charged the Emir Jamel ed Din Ibn Nahar with the erection of the

would topple into the stream, churning it into foam and increasing the anguish in everyone's breast, though all tried to conceal their emotion. Nothing was more revelatory than the manner in which various people faced the danger. The Moslems stepped into the water with a "Bism illah"; the Christians signed themselves with the cross. All drew near quietly, muttering prayers; jokes were forgotten, merry faces became grave; and not until the whole caravan was over could joyous laughter be heard once more.

There are very few swimmers among the Siloam Fellahîn, so that most of them had to depend on their Bedawîn partner to take them across. Our own swimming ford was fifty to

bridge, and commanded it to be made with five arches. . . . When the work was completed and the workmen dispersed, part of the piers gave way. The Sultan was greatly annoyed, reprimanded the builders and sent them back to repair the damage. They found the task very difficult, owing to the rising of the waters and the strength of the current. But on the night preceding the dawn of the 17th of the month of Rabce, the First of the year 666 (December 8th, 1267), the waters of the river ceased to flow, so that none remained in its bed. The people hurried . . . and seized the opportunity offered by the occurrence to remedy the defects in the piers, and to strengthen them. . . . They then despatched mounted men to ascertain the nature of the event. The riders urged forward their horses and found that a lofty mound (Kabar), which overlooked the river on the west, had fallen into it and dammed it up. . . . The messengers returned with this explanation, and the water was arrested from midnight until the fourth hour of the day. Then the pressure of the water became too great and the dam burst. The water rushed down in a mass equal in depth to the length of a lance, but made no impression upon the building, owing to the strength given it. The stream, however, carried away the apparatus used in the work of repairs. This is one of the most wonderful of events, and the bridge is in existence to this day."

sixty yards broad, and as the trees and rushes had often been cut down level with the water, these, to begin with, cut the soles of our feet like knives. It was like a visit to the dentist's : no one was in a hurry to go first,—everyone wished to see the effect of the crossing on him or her before venturing into the yellow water. Being a good swimmer, I crossed with numbers of Bedawiyat and Fellahât, with inflated Kirbies[1] on their backs. All entered the water fully dressed, the most passive and composed set of people I have ever seen. Fully confident in the strength of my young arms, these women let themselves be dragged along without a murmur, whereas all the men, without exception, showed signs of anguish or terror, as though on their way to execution. A woman of Palestine, again, will allow herself to be bound fast at the arm, and will keep at four or five yards distance from a swimmer, but a man, when the waters of the river seem to be dragging with too great a force, will always approach and try to save himself by taking hold.

[1] The Kirby is a water-bottle made of the skins of sheep or goats, tanned and sewn together. The neck is open to receive water. When full and securely tied up, it is carried on a woman's back ; or, if there are two Kirbies, on a donkey, one on either side of the animal. Inflated and bound to the back, these receptacles make excellent buoys for a non-swimmer. He or she having been provided with a couple of inflated Kirbies and bound, the swimmer takes the other end of the cord in his mouth, thus leaving his arms perfectly free. Animals are bound at the lower jaw and follow easily, as they cannot resist the slightest pressure on the jaws or tongue.

As I was the only swimmer in my group, the difficult task of carrying over the saddles and luggage, when the donkeys, camels and my mare had crossed, was left to me. I had all the Kirbies inflated and tied together, in sets of seven or eight, and on this original raft managed to get all our belongings across.

Each group was in the same predicament: there was but one swimmer, and he had to cross a dozen or more times—a good four hours' work. These duties were renewed every second day, for the grain—poured into the Kirbies and on a raft of inflated water-bottles—had to be got over.

I wonder how much a human being can support. Work under the conditions of those days was simply the most refined cruelty imaginable. Our Bedawîn companions crossed the Jordan stark naked and insisted on our doing the same.

"Dog of a Christian," cried an old scarred Bedawi warrior to me when I demurred,—he had only one eye left, several of his fingers were missing, and his body was marked with spear wounds; "are you better than ourselves that you should hide your nakedness? Uncircumcised dog, I will crush you like a fly"—raising his Naboot—"if you do not throw off every rag from your accursed body!"

And so, under a torrid sun—45 to 55 degrees Centigrade, with bare slashed feet on the burning sand, with enormous gnats and mosquitoes biting

our bodies, we worked. To drive away the insects, which stung our bodies until they bled, every swimmer was provided with a leaved willow wand cut on the banks, and with this he continually whipped himself. Near the starting-point,[1] where the grain was poured into the Kirbies by the non-swimmers, huge fires were kept up, and in the heat and smoke of these we sat in an almost vain endeavour to keep the insects at bay until, once more, we popped into the stream.

To show good-humour and also to rail at the cowardly non-swimmers when they were on the shore, we sang, either alone or in unison. But never a word was uttered when man or beast was drifting down the Jordan. Once, as a man was washed away, I cried out in terror, but I was quickly called to order by a Bedawi, who remarked, philosophically :—

"We are not blind and your shouting will only frighten the others. Besides, the victim himself will lose hope. You will neither draw him out nor give him encouragement. If luck is in his favour he will be washed ashore."

[1] On account of the river's rapidity we were carried hundreds of yards down stream. So we had always three points for starting and landing. A was the spot at which we started to reach B. Then we would walk up the bank to C and drop in the river to be carried to A again.

And sure enough, he was. . . . Ever afterwards, whenever I saw a donkey or a cow washed away, I thought of that Bedawi wise-man and regarded the loss without flinching. What matter!—it was only one more animal that had gone to feed the Cheetahs[1] in the jungle below.

II

Very little indeed was done for the comfort of the toilers in that fearful climate,—nothing for the security of either man or beast. There was absolute equality, in an atmosphere of indifference. We lived an ideal social life. As regards food, whoever had any gave it up, in true Bedawi fashion, for the benefit of the whole community. Everything was eaten then and there on the banks of the Jordan, so as not to have the trouble of carrying it the ten miles to our camp on the green banks of the Kaffrain.

I was often asked in after years why we did not build huts on the banks of the Jordan to protect ourselves against the sun—why we did not throw wire ropes across the river—why we had no planks for landing—and so on. The questioners had never come into contact with a Bedawi at home,—a Bedawi who will risk his

[1] Possibly the "roaring lion" referred to by the Prophet Jeremiah as "coming up before the swelling of Jordan" was the Cheetah. I am inclined to the belief that the lion never really existed in Palestine proper. The Bible contains various references to lions, but this is possibly due to negligence on the part of the transcribers.

life on a marauding expedition and on returning will present you with his share of the spoil in return for a compliment,—a Bedawi who will deliberately destroy any means of getting over Jordan easier, who will fell a tree fifteen feet high in order to obtain a stick which pleases him in the branches, who will hunt for days and nights in the jungle, slaughtering wild boar until he has found just the right pair of tusks for ornamenting his mare's neck, or who will climb a precipice in search of an eagle to provide him with the two bones for making a Neïyé,—a Bedawi who is as free as the air, careless as a four-year-old baby, cruel as a tiger, and yet so hospitable that it is impossible to find his equal anywhere in the world. No; a Bedawi would join you in carrying off wives, if you proposed it to him, but he would set fire to your huts, cut your wire ropes and throw your planks into the river—for the fun of it. He cares not a fig for progress. The wilder, the more inaccessible his region, the more secure is his life and the better he is pleased. His whole desire is to keep the civilised world and the Government official in search of taxes away. He is a "wild man," whose hand is "against every man," and, as was promised to Hagar concerning that Bedawi Ishmael, every man's hand shall be against him.[1] No one in our caravan had, I assure you, the courage to linger a single moment longer than was

[1] Genesis xvi. 12.

Photo J. H. Halladjian, Haifá

A Bedawi of the Kishon

necessary on the banks of the inhospitable Jordan. As soon as our work was over our only wish was to flee from the heat and the mosquitoes, and especially from any hostile Bedawîn, who, exactly like the Apaches in the suburbs of Paris, or the sharks which, hour after hour, follow the ocean steamers to snatch at the morsels falling overboard, might turn up in our rear to seize upon any loiterer, as indeed happened to myself, as I will later relate.

When we came to the Kaffrain, the Aduan had decamped for the cooler slopes of Moab. Immediately those of my own party entered upon an open-air life,—not only eating but sleeping in the open. But we built a few huts for the protection of the women and to hold the very elementary cooking utensils which Ghalié, a young Fellaha, had brought with her for our use. And thus we watched, rather than slept, in case anyone less favoured with worldly goods should attempt, under cover of the night, to run off with our animals or other property. During the day my mare was tethered, but in the darkness, as no one would take the responsibility of looking after her, she was attached to my wrist. Thus, every night, for two long months I lay on the ground, with the mare walking round and round me, and sometimes gently pulling, lest I should forget myself in too deep a sleep. Never once did the faithful, cautious animal so much as graze my outstretched

limbs, except when, imagining that I had no more breath, or that some wolf or jackal was approaching too near, she would draw near and snort in my face.

We were divided into two separate camps, situated some distance the one from the other, one with and the other without tents; and Imhammad el-Talak, Saleh el-Kaak's Bedawi partner, was with us. His wife, N'amy, and an eleven-year-old son named Swelem were in the other encampment, but he was accompanied by his old mother 'Hamdiyeh, who used to sit almost all day near her hut, smoking a long pipe and surveying the harvest. Enveloped in her dark blue clothes and dark head veil, she sat so motionless that, at a distance, no one would have taken her to be a living being. Only on drawing near and seeing the rings of smoke pass from her tattooed lips, with an occasional sideway glance of her wild eyes, could you be sure that she was not a statue.

Comparing our life with that of the harvesters in the tent camp, we lived in "the land of the lotus-eaters." We had both wheat and barley; the well-nigh impenetrable Dôm-forest was full of Dôm-apples; whilst innumerable Senegal and collared turtle-doves, which filled the air with their ceaseless cooing, provided us with meat. Never before or since did I eat so many pigeons as during those two months on the outskirts of the forest. But to penetrate the thorny thickets

in pursuit of birds or in search of fruit was no easy or agreeable task. We had not only to contend with the sharp hooked thorns of the Dôm or Lotus tree (*Zizyphus spina Christi*), which stuck to our clothes "closer than a brother," tore them into holes all over, and scratched our hands and faces,—we had to keep a sharp look-out for snakes, which hid in the high grass and fed upon the birds. I did not then know the difference between the deadly Daboia, the huge and lively Esculap, and the black and shining Hanash; and when I shot a gigantic brown Esculap, measuring more than five feet, and which had blown out its neck at me from the top of a Dôm-tree, I thought I had had a narrow escape. The small Dôm-apples—hardly bigger than a hazel nut—would have been disdained elsewhere, but on the banks of the Kaffrain every Bedawi gathers them, or leaves his wife and daughters to collect a store for winter use.

Dôm-gathering—an occupation not to be recommended to those with delicate hands—and Swelem, the eleven-year-old son of Imhammad el-Talak, are ever connected in my memory. In the invention and carrying out of impish tricks that youngster was a past master. He used to upset the trays containing the Dôm-meal, scatter sand on the drying tobacco leaves, pour water into his grandmother's tobacco-pipe, set loose the cows and the donkeys of the Fellahîn when they were most wanted for threshing, and defile the waters of the

Kaffrain at the very moment when the women, a little lower down the stream, were filling their Kirbies. One day, when he had been assisting in the gathering of the Dôm-apples and had been well scratched on his arms and legs, he revenged himself by setting fire to the bush. The Sharkiyé, an east wind, happened to be blowing slightly, so that in a very short time the whole of the thickets in our neighbourhood was a sea of fire, killing young birds by thousands in their nests and scorching hundreds of serpents to a cinder. For once Swelem escaped a thrashing. Everybody agreed that his act was a stroke of genius. For the result was that a way was opened in the impenetrable forest, the defences of the *Zizyphus spina Christi* were broken down, the dangerous reptiles were annihilated, and hundreds of thousands of Dôm-apples hung—roasted—on the leafless trees.

The news of Swelem's fire spread almost as rapidly as the flames he had set ablazing. Bedawiyat came down from the mountains to fill their gazelle-skin bags with roasted Dôm-apples and, returning home, heavily ladened, sent others or came again themselves. The fire was a god-send to all except myself, who had now to go much further afield in search of game.

Being the only European, it was thought, in those days (1874), to be safer for me to wear Bedawi-clothing : a long shirt with broad, pointed sleeves hanging to the ground, a Sayé, and, on my

head, a silken Kafiyé. With the exception of the girdle, which held the shirt and the Sayé together, the 'Akal, or head-cord, wound around the Kafiyé, and a fringe of hair hanging over my forehead, in accordance with the fashion among Bedawîn youngsters, I was a figure in spotless white. In order to be able to walk more easily whilst on the march, I used to gather up the long folds of my dress and stick them in my girdle, leaving my legs bare. No wonder that one day four Bedawiyat, gathering Dôm-apples in the forest, fled with loud screams at my approach. They had never seen a white boy before and must have imagined that a Jân, or guardian of the forest, had appeared to drive them home. Fearing that their silly behaviour might be wrongly interpreted in the camp, I shouted to them at the top of my voice to stop. They obeyed, a little through feminine curiosity, a little through fear; then, timidly, in response to my parleying, they advanced, until at last they had drawn near enough to pinch my arms and legs and make certain that I was an authentic son of Adam. To account for my white skin and white Kafiyé, which is often dark with the Bedawîn, I explained to them that I was a Frank. Never before had they set eyes on a "Franji" and once more, impelled by curiosity, they stretched out their tattooed arms to touch my body. To seal our friendship every one offered me Dôm-apples until

I had as many as I could carry, wrapped—Bedawi fashion—in the long sleeves of my ample gown. But I am inclined to think that, after all, they were not quite convinced. For they retreated cautiously, with many backward glances and the youngest, a girl of fourteen, attempting to hide behind the others, until they finally disappeared behind the half-burned bushes.

III

There was little variety in our meals in camp; the only striking change was when Ghalié, having baked the bread in the ashes in the morning and at noon, treated us in the evening to the luxury of bread made on a Saaj, an iron plate, above the fire. Pigeons and bread and Dôm-apples followed each other in regular rotation. Vegetables were unknown.

The only plant the Bedawîn care to grow is the fragrant Hassanbaki, *i.e.*, tobacco, which they cultivate in small enclosures. But so impatient are they that they never wait for the plants to attain their full growth. Nor have they the patience to wait for the leaves to dry; hardly have they begun to wither than they cut them up with their pocket-knives. As clay pipes can only be obtained in the towns, they make a Ghaliun of a reed stem, boring a hole in one side through which to draw the smoke. It would be too much exertion on hand and brain to fashion a pipe-stem

out of a reedlet. A Bedawi may be said to suck rather than smoke his pipe, which he enjoys, however, every bit as much as the wealthy townsman does his silver filigreed narghile or a European his amber-mouthed meerschaum.

Once we moved our camp up stream, in order to have the protection of a ruined site,—beloved of the Fellahîn,—and the luxury of a wall against which to build Ghalié's hut. Imhammad el-Talak had now departed with his chief; Saleh el-Kaak and his sons, Khaleel and Ehmad, were actively engaged in cutting the wheat and the barley; Ghalié had almost all the threshing to do; and nearly everybody, save myself, had his appointed duties. As long as the sun shone hot on the straw heap I enjoyed little society. I had to content myself with Murjane, a freed slave about my own age, and Sa'ad el-Kaanass, a youth several years older, and, since he was a good shot, a fairly frequent companion.

One of our excursions, when time hung heavily on my hands and the eternal doves and pigeons of Kaffrain palled on my palate, was to the Dead Sea, about a two hours' walk away. I noticed that whilst visiting that dangerous district the Bedawîn were much more particular about their health than either the Fellahîn or myself. They carried with them tiny bags filled with tar which, as soon as they entered the swampy regions, they stuffed into their nostrils. It was an excellent

preventive, they told me, against the Wakham,[1] which, unfortunately, we mountaineers disdained. I think I may say that fully fifty per cent. of us died or were sickly for years after through not taking the necessary precautions against fever. It is not only the poisonous emanations of the volcanic region which cause trouble, one must take into account the great heat in the depression in which the Dead Sea lies, nearly six hundred feet below the level of other seas, and, in addition, its unhealthy waters.

But, in spite of the danger of that part of Palestine, what a fascination it has for the naturalist and the sportsman! Birds, reptiles and plants—some of them known only in that tropical climate—abound there. We brought home both red-legged and sand-partridges, francolins and grakles; we admired the tiny sun-birds—smaller than some butterflies—and the golden frogs which, at our approach, leapt into the warm waters of Calirrhoë and other sulphurous springs east of the Dead Sea; we watched the slow mastiguer, with its horny tail, creep along the sand; and sat at the foot of the *Asclepia gigantea*, or *Caletropis procera*, fifteen feet high, with broad thick leaves, like a good sized man's hand, and an orange-like fruit, containing those silky fibres of which legends have been told by all ancient writers from Josephus to Tacitus. They, and even some modern writers,

[1] Malaria.

By permission of *The American Colony Photographers, Jerusalem*

By the Dead Sea

have contended that this Apple of Sodom, in memory of the destruction by brimstone and ashes of the neighbouring Sodom and Gomorrah, contains nothing but smoke and ashes. But I found that Sa'ad el-Kaanass and the scientists were wiser. My companion, who told me wonderful stories of the 'Oshair, showed me that the slight explosion which results from the touching of the fruit was a characteristic of all Asclepias,—one of Nature's wonderful methods of disseminating the seeds of the plant, which are thus shot forth and borne away by the wind to fructify in a thousand different places. Far from the *Asclepia gigantea* being associated with the idea of death and destruction, it was, to Sa'ad's mind, the symbol of life. "Was not its name," he asked me, "'Oshair,—the pregnant-maker, and had not a barren woman once sat within the shade of the tree and soon after had a child?" And to prove that life was indeed its essential element, he showed me how a thick milky juice could be made to flow from the plant like opium from the poppy. Sometimes we would shoot at the wild boars, but as they disappeared in the Jordan jungle we rarely attempted to follow them, for Sa'ad thought that the tusks were hardly worth the risk of being attacked by the Cheetahs who prey upon the boar. Sometimes a grouse would call out, "Naagged! Khanafer! Ghittit!" tempting me to follow. But the prudent Sa'ad would dissuade me, saying: "It is wiser not to

look for 'the she-camel of Khanafer which is lost.' Maybe the bird is merely leading us on to destruction. We had better return to the camp."

On another occasion, when approaching the sea and whilst it was yet dark, a ball of fire, like a huge star, rose from the water, and, after ascending several hundreds of feet, vanished. Again Sa'ad thought we had better return home. It was a Will-'o-the-wisp, common over the surface of the Dead Sea, but to Sa'ad it was a sign of the presence of the Jân.

Superstition is very deeply rooted among the Bedawîn. Old Im-Imhammad, the soothsayer of our camp, was a very good example of this. She was a curious mixture of sagacity and ignorance, of cunning and a genuine belief in her powers. She could extract balsamic oil from the date-like fruit of the oleaster (*Elœagnus angustifolius*), and used it for healing wounds, though the Zaqum (as the Arabs call it) with its spikes often over an inch long, is said to flourish in hell and furnish fruit for unbelievers.[1] There were many other plants whose virtues she knew and whose secrets she carefully kept to herself. But her forte was prophecy. She foretold calamities or good news with imperturbable peace of mind, passing the while a long straw through the stem of her pipe to enjoy the nicotine which she thus collected, or sucking rather than chewing tobacco when the

[1] The Koran, Sura, xvii. 62.

other was lacking. Like every soothsayer, she was extremely sober in words, and thus was never compromised,—the same prophecy could be made to apply to good or to evil.

IV

At last the time came for us to raise our camp and return home. Row after row of black goat-hair Fardies, filled with wheat, stood waiting to be loaded on to the backs of the camels. Everything had been packed ready for the departure, which had been fixed for an early hour of the morning. Amidst the wailing of the jackals and the darkness of the night, we had lain down to take our last rest in the old camp, filled with a feeling of sadness at the thought that, in spite of all its discomforts, we were about to leave it for ever. Suddenly, just as the last cooings of the turtle-doves were lulling us to sleep, the sound of a tiny bell was heard in the distance. Soon the tinkling was accompanied by a light, which rapidly drew near. Looking anxiously in the direction of the sound, old Im-Imhammad muttered through her teeth :—" Maskeen ! Bara esh sharr !—Poor fellow ! Evil.

A horseman with bell and torch dashed up. It was as the old soothsayer had expected : a Bedawi boy had been bitten by a viper and according to custom a messenger had been sent with bell and torch to announce the sad news and search

for a remedy. Im-Imhammad quickly prepared Zaqum-oil and fruit plaster, and inquired when the accident happened. The envoy told her "many hours before," whereupon a grave look came into the old woman's eyes. She knew that the boy would be dead before the remedy arrived.

Im-Imhammad's last words as we started in the half light preceding dawn were :—

"La ter'haloo yôme er'heelhum.
Wala tughussloo yôme ghaseelhum," [1]

and gravely shaking her head at me, she added :— "My child, Allah yesahhel 'alaik !—May Allah smooth the way for you ! "

As this was the general retreat of the Fellahîn of the Kaffrain, there was a great commotion on the banks of the Jordan when we reached the great river. Fellahîn and Fellahat were busy pouring the grain from the great Fardies on to out-spread sacks ; others were filling the Kirbies. Camels and donkeys were being stripped of their saddles and bound at the jaws. The swimmers stood in readiness and the non-swimmers had small inflated Se'în [2] on their backs to help them across the stream. A fierce June sun poured its rays upon us.

At last everybody had crossed. Those of my

[1] "Forbear to start on their starting day,"—that is, the day on which the soul leaves the body. "Neither wash on the day they are washed,"—a reference to the washing of the dead before entombment.

[2] Small Kirbies.

caravan had already started on their journey, leaving me—the last as usual—to cross the Jordan once more and fetch my mare. Just as the last Fellah with his animals disappeared round the marly hills I popped into the water and struck out for the opposite bank.

But no sooner had I clambered ashore than I heard a sound of galloping, and the next moment a fully-armed Bedawi, with his spear pointed towards me, drew up.

"Very glad to meet you," he said, sarcastically. "I see you are a perfect swimmer, and I am glad to have arrived in time for I know nothing of your art. There is myself, my mare, a valuable she-camel and her young to be carried over the river. Now, you will set to work at once to get us across, beginning with the animals. And take care you don't lose any, otherwise your mare and rifle will be confiscated. Moreover, if you play me any tricks, I shall leave your carcass to the Cheetahs and let your soul go to hell-fire, which is your ultimate lot, dog of an infidel!"

Dismounting and seizing my mare by its bridle, he sat down on the sand and began, in a menacing tone, to give me further orders :—

"Now, set to work cheerfully. You had better begin with my 'Hamra,[1] which you'll tie very fast on the other side. Then hurry back to take over her young, for if you are lazy the mother will

[1] A red cow-camel.

break loose and cross over to her calf. Then you would have to begin over again. This being done you will fetch me. I know you would not risk running away with my mare on this side the river, but you might do so on the western side and then join your caravan. So you take my mare the last—and then do what you like, for I shall have no further need of your services. Come now, hurry up!"

And hurry I did. At every crossing he threatened me with death should any of his animals slip and be drowned.

Never shall I forget that crossing of the Jordan with the Bedawi's red cow-camel. She bellowed continuously for her calf and pulled in the opposite direction, endeavouring to return. All the time the swift current of the Jordan was carrying me down stream, trying my muscles—weary with four hours' swimming—to the uttermost. How I raged, inwardly, at that ironical savage, and how ashamed I felt at being treated like a vile slave! There was nothing for it, however, but to work hard and cheerfully.

When, finally, I landed the camel she was simply raving, and I had great difficulty in making her kneel down under the shadow of a lofty poplar and binding her knees, so that she could not rise. My second crossing was easy,—the calf, like a Bedawiyé, followed calmly and with a look of confidence in her baby eyes. And no sooner

had we landed than it galloped towards its mother, crying as though they had been parted for months.

The Bedawi was waiting for me on my return. He was stripped and equipped with Se'în on his back. On his head, in a broad packet, were his personal belongings and my rifle.

"This," he said, pointing to the bundle, "is the safest way. Allah is indeed great to have sent this infidel to work for me."

As we stepped into the Jordan, a grim thought flashed through my mind: "Suppose, when we reach mid-stream, I let him go?" But the next moment my Christian training corrected me. "No,—that would never do: he is a man, with a soul, after all. Besides, the act would be a cowardly one. . . . Could Im-Imhammad but see me in that position would she sanction the abandonment of a fellow-creature? No. She would say: 'Why did you start when there was a funeral? But you *would* have your own way, and now you must bear the consequences.'" Musing thus, I tightened my grip on the cord, and a few minutes later dragged the Bedawi ashore.

"You have worked nicely," said the savage, who, in spite of his authoritative words, looked terrified at the crossing. "Now you can fetch my mare, a prize animal; and as a reward I will remain with you until you reach your caravan."

I thanked him for his generosity, went back for the most valuable animal of all—himself

included, and brought her over, as docile as the young camel. When all were gathered on the western banks of the Jordan I gave a great sigh of relief. Then I went to fetch my faithful mare, Athene.

It took me but a moment to dress on getting back, to seize my rifle which the Bedawi had placed against a willow, and to vault into the saddle. At that moment a boar and sow, with seven or eight little ones, came rushing by. The Bedawi, already on his horse, at once set off in pursuit, shouting to me to follow. But all I wanted was to flee from the scene of my adventure and reach my friends. A word in Athene's ear was enough,—with a snort of joy and a bound she was off, galloping at the top of her speed across the plains and scattering the jerboas, porcupine mice, and other small rodents which burrow in the sand, in all directions.

Saleh el-Kaak, his sons and the other Fellahîn of our caravan were waiting for me near the ruins of 'Ain-Sultan, beyond Jericho, wondering what had become of me, but, suffocated by the heat, making no attempt to find me. They cursed the father of the Bedawi for having detained me ; then dismissed the matter from their minds.

A long six hours' ride up the stony roads of Judæa, a few ascents and descents on Mount Olivet, down the Kedron, up Moriah and Zion, brought these episodes of my youth to a close.

V

"Why has Philip not come?" anxiously asked my father, in Arabic, when we arrived and his eyes glanced from one to the other . . . Wild and sunburnt indeed I must have looked to have thus been unrecognised by my own father! He could not believe that a two months' sojourn in the Bedawîn country could have produced so complete a transformation.

* * * *

"Is this the result of too great a strain? Is it the dreaded Wakham, or malarial fever, that has put the boy in this condition?" asked the English doctor of Jerusalem when I awoke after three weeks unconsciousness. "However, the danger is over now. We shall pull him through, after all."

Yes, the danger was over then, but I had to struggle against my illness for nearly six months more.

It was many years before I went into that death-trap of the Jordan again, and then only for a day or two at a time, on tour and under vastly different conditions.

III

SONS OF THE PHILISTINES

I

MUHAMMAD MOOSA was at his prayers, and as he prayed he combed his flowing pepper-and-salt beard. More than usual fervour entered, on this August evening, into his praying and his combing, for he was about to make a journey on which it was meet that Allah should lovingly watch over one of the descendants of his Prophet and that this descendant—no other than the handsome, black-eyed, aquiline-nosed, dark-skinned Sherîf Muhammad Moosa himself—should be impeccable in his personal appearance.

"Blessed be the name of Allah, who protecteth his servants in the hour of danger," murmured the kneeling Muhammad Moosa. "Watch, oh! all powerful one, over Sherîf Moosa and his companions. Grant that the camels stumble not,—that they travel to Jerusalem unheeded and unharmed. Thrust aside from our path all with inquisitive eyes, for thy servant is a man of peace, who loveth not the use of force. But should, perchance, the enemies of thy servant stumble in his way, give him—oh! protector of those who bring forth fruits from the soil—the strength to smite and put them to shame."

A sound of footsteps at the entrance to the hut made the kneeling Fellah turn his head. It was Khaleel Ibrahim, a dark-skinned, eagle-nosed, black-bearded man of thirty-five, dressed and equipped as though for a journey. His principal clothing consisted of the Thôb, a white shirt with open front and wide sleeves, which revealed his hairy breast and bare arms almost up to the shoulders. On his head was a red cap, surrounded by a large yellow and grey striped turban ; on his feet were raw camel-hide shoes, known as Watta. Encircling his waist was a broad leather girdle, and to this were attached a number of iron hooks, to which were suspended a powder horn of solid wood, a long chain with a knife dangling at the end, a leather bag to hold lead and bullets for firearms, a tobacco pouch with a pipe, and a smaller pouch containing flint and steel and tinder, made from a composite plant called Soufaan.

Khaleel Ibrahim had come to tell his chief that the hour for departure had arrived. Bringing his prayer to an abrupt termination, Muhammad Moosa rose to his feet and, as he arranged his immense green turban (a sign of his claim to prophetic descent) gave his orders. A complicated piece of work—this arrangement of the Sherîf's turban, his caps and their contents ; and one that took much longer than the giving of a few brief instructions regarding the loading of the camels. Besides the white cap, or Takîyeh, he

wore the red Tarbûsh, and between these the grey felt Lubbaad. Between the Lubbaad and the Tarbûsh, Muhammad Moosa kept his cigarette-papers, his tax-papers and other documents, and tucked away between the three caps and the turban were little bottles of tar or scent and the wooden comb with which, whilst saying his prayers, he daily combed his beard.

The loading of the six camels was already well advanced when Muhammad Moosa issued into the open air. His five companions were quick and skilful workers. Khaleel Ibrahim, with his wide sleeves folded out of the way under his Shmaar, set them a constant example. Besides, was he not Moosa's right-hand man and feared almost as much as the master ?

A more homogeneous band than this little party of camel-drivers it would have been difficult to find in the whole length and breadth of the plains of the Philistines. Personal interests, family ties and the sympathy which springs up between men of the same town or region indissolubly bound them together. Khaleel Ibrahim was a native of Ashdod, one of the chief towns of Philistia. Ehmad Jabber, a young man of twenty-eight just home from military service, was also from that place. Ethman Abd el-'Hei, although born in Gaza, had so long lived in Ashdod, where he was married to two wives, Halimé and Fatme, that he was regarded by Khaleel and Ehmad

as a brother townsman. Abdallah Saleh, about thirty years of age, was from Shuweikeh, the Biblical Shochoh, where David slew Goliath.[1] And the twenty-year-old Yesmaïn 'Ali, whose black beard was just sprouting, hailed from 'Ain-Shams, the Beth-shemesh of the Bible.[2]

Yet these sons of the Philistines were singularly diversified in their personal characteristics—and to a certain extent also as regards their accoutrements. With his dandily-trimmed fair beard, grey eyes and regular Grecian nose, Ehmad Jabber was an Apollo in comparison with Ethman Abd-el-'Hei. Ethman, a man of close upon forty, had a thick Egyptian nose, a dark but scanty beard and moustachios, and a physiognomy which well accorded with his warlike equipment, consisting of a goodly selection of his comrades' arms and a formidable Naboot, an oak club, all in one piece, which could be used either against an enemy or simply to induce the camels to increase their pace. Ehmad's favourite weapon was a curved, double-edged dagger, modestly designated by the name Shibriyeh—the span long,—although, as usual, it was twice that length. Its sheath was ornamented with a brass plate, bearing his name, and this detail indicated a certain coquetry which appeared also in his dress. As a rule, his clothing differed but slightly from Khaleel's. But on the present occasion his turban was smaller and

[1] I. Samuel xvii. [2] I. Samuel vi. 9.

adorned with red stripes. His shoes—or Surma, as they are called in Arabic—were of blood-red, tanned sheep-leather, with camel-hide soles and very pointed turned-up toes. And instead of the Abba, that brown and grey mantle almost universally adopted by the Fellahîn of Palestine, he wore a dark blue and black cloak, called a Shaale.

Abdallah Saleh's short and almost red beard, his blue eyes and fair skin, sunburnt and freckled, suggested descent from one of the Crusaders. His equipment was much the same as that of the others. But his turban was brown, and behind the right ear the end of his hair-tuft, the Shushey—by which Mohammed the Prophet will take up his own people on the day of judgment—was peeping out. Over his shirt he wore a short yellow and white jacket, and on the third finger of his right hand was a silver ring with a huge stone, on which, as he was a municipal councillor of his native village, his name was engraved. With this ring, at times, he sealed official documents, thus dispensing with the signing of his name, which he would have found a difficulty in doing. For, like all the others, including even Sherîf Moosa, he was illiterate. Long ago he had known a few letters, but all he could do now was to make out numbers, which he called "Indian figures." His Shmaar, too, was ornamented by a couple of multicoloured tassels, made by a girl of Shuweikeh when, years ago, he had silently courted her.

There was evidence of a feminine hand also on young Yesmaïn 'Ali's dress. His white cap, which he took good care should extend well below his red Tarbûsh, was neatly trimmed with silk-laced ornaments,—delicate work by one of his admirers of which he was mighty proud. There was a quaint mixture of refinement and savagedom about Yesmaïn 'Ali. Like every Fellah, his ears was diminutive and bent down by his caps and turban. His Thôb was always pulled up under his girdle, leaving his legs bare to the knees, and in the pouch thus formed by his shirt he carried his handkerchief, his tobacco, and sometimes—since he often went barefooted—his shoes. In his waist-belt was stuck a Tubbar, an iron-headed hooked club, leaving his hands free to handle his gun, with which, when after partridges, or any big bird, he was an excellent shot.

Muhammad Moosa himself took part in the loading of the last camel. Like Eleazar, he called it by its name and ordered it, with a guttural sound, to bow—" Ikh !-ikh !-ikh ! "

At the sound of its master's voice the animal knelt upon the level ground. Meanwhile, Khaleel and Abdallah had brought forth the huge black goats' hair sacks with which it was to be loaded,—some four to five hundred pounds weight in all, and these everybody assisted in hoisting into their places. The camel, besides a halter and a long guide-rope with which to lead it, was provided

with a pack-saddle, with a deep cavity in the middle for the hump and two thick poles attached right and left, and longer than the saddle proper. To these sticks were tied the ropes to hold the load in place and a girdle to keep the saddle in position. The load was divided into three: two big ones right and left, and one resting on the saddle's flat top.

"Howell!" cried Sherîf Moosa, when everything was securely fixed, and the camel rose, to take its place with the others in a long file, the halter-rope of one attached to the tail-strap of another.

II

The final preparations for departure had been made and Sherîf Moosa, with his hand on the guide-rope of the leading camel, had given the order to start. Slowly, in the half light of evening, the little band moved over the plains of the Philistines.

Long, wailing sounds were beginning to fill the whole of the lowlands: the voices of jackals hunting about for carcasses or other débris. One jackal responded to another,—then two, then ten, then twenty, and finally hundreds, all howling together. No one is afraid of them, since they never attack man; nor are they afraid of men, who pass them by unheeded.

On these fertile plains, from Jaffa to Gaza and from Ascalon to Zoreah and the rock of

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A Line of Camels

Etam, the hiding-place of Samson,[1] are miles upon miles of beautiful wheat and barley-fields. There are tobacco plants, too, growing from two to six feet in height, and the dry leaves of which the Turkish Government buys and monopolizes. But the modern Fellah of Palestine is a true descendant of the Philistines,—he has in no way changed in character, and he starts—like Sherîf Muhammad Moosa and his companions—to sell his tobacco by smuggling it into Jerusalem. He knows that, on the long way winding up the Vale of Sorek (Wad-es-Sarrar) and on the lowlands, no Government agent would dare to venture. It was common knowledge that anyone approaching a party of smugglers would be shot down without mercy. This was *their* land and *their* tobacco,—not the hated Turks'. They were legitimately defending their own possessions, the fruit of long hours of toil under the broiling sun. It was war to the bitter end should any intruder attempt to bar their way between Ashdod (Sedud) and the Plain of Rephaim, near Jerusalem.

Although they knew that they were in all security in these byways (unless some spy should denounce them, which was unlikely), Moosa's men did not neglect to keep a sharp look out to right and left, and with their guns ever ready.

"Masha Allah! By God's will, our camels are strong and good," said Ethman Abd-el-'Hei

[1] Judges xv. 8.

to Abdallah Saleh, who was immediately in front of him.

"And Allah, in his goodness, has put out the moon for us," replied Abdallah.

"Truly everything is in our favour," chimed in young Yesmaïn 'Ali. "But we have yet to get the tobacco over the walls of Jerusalem."

"All in good time," exclaimed Khaleel Ibrahim. "Allah will not abandon his servants in the hour of need. Besides, Ehmad Jabber and I have a plan for tricking the tobacco-inspector. We will talk about that later."

Sherîf Moosa was too occupied with the camels to take part in the conversation. From time to time he encouraged the animals to maintain their pace for four kilometres an hour with a sharp cry of "Allah! Ya musahel!—Oh! leveller of the road!" Sometimes he would utter the warning "Ikhly!—Look out, mind the stones!" whereupon the leading camel would carefully avoid the obstacle and, pricking up his short ears in the act of listening, would turn his large intelligent head in the direction of the voice, chewing the cud the while. To kill time, Moosa also played a monotonous air on his Neïyé, a double flute made of eagle-wing bones and ornamented with a few primitive drawings. The camels much appreciated this music, lifting up their heads and affecting a few dancing steps, until "Ikhly!" once more reminded them to beware.

Shortly after midnight the smugglers passed near to one of the tobacco growing villages. As there was still room on the camels, Moosa decided to increase his store by means of a trick well known to tobacco-thieves. A lizard was his accomplice, —the big thorny stalue-lizard, the well-known Hardôn of Palestine, which is about seven inches in length, with long claws and a very resisting tail.[1] It runs up the walls very quickly and lays hold of any stone or bush it can find. Catch it by its tail and pull, and the harder it tightens its grip. Knowing this peculiarity, Moosa took advantage of it in the following manner. Khaleel Ibrahim, who always carried a couple of stalue-lizards with him in a leather bag, produced one of them, and, attaching a cord to its tail, tossed it on to the flat top of one of the village houses, where the smugglers suspected that tobacco leaves might be suspended on strings to dry. The Hardôn, in its endeavours to escape, attached itself to one of the strings and held tight. As soon as Khaleel's experienced hand felt that his living fishing-tackle had got a firm hold, he pulled hard— and down came the Hardôn with the coveted tobacco.

In the terrible Wady Esmaïn, the road led through the dry river bed, strewn with huge washed-down stones. The only sign of the past winter's moisture were a few *Agnus castus* plants.

[1] See *The Grey Trio*, p. 20.

Along the high cliffs and in the almost impenetrable brushwood a few leopards—the last of their kind—lay in wait for any stray animal, such as a goat or a lamb, that might come that way.[1]

Day was about to break when, on the second day of their march, the file of camels reached Battir—the Bether of Solomon's Song.[2] Moosa and his men, tired and dusty, camped under the olive-groves. Weary, too, were the animals, requiring no invitation to kneel down and be relieved of the sacks of tobacco, which were promptly hidden away in the thickets near by, to be ready in case of emergency. Soon, everyone (even the guardians) was sound asleep,—everyone save the young sportsman Yesmaïn 'Ali, who, ere he lay down to rest, slipped away with the quietness of a leopard in the direction of one of the vineyards, now full of Hamdany, the largest and most luscious grapes in Palestine. As quick as lightning, he lifted the hedge and filled the corner of his Abba with sufficient fruit to last the party for the day. In a few minutes he was back again ; a moment later he himself was slumbering. And for two hours the only sounds that could be heard were the heavy breathing of the sleepers and the crunching of the brushwood by the frugal lowland camels.

[1] Since the building of the Jaffa to Jerusalem railway in 1892 leopards have entirely disappeared from this region.

[2] ii. 17.

III

Khaleel Ibrahim and Ehmad Jabber had unfolded to Sherîf Moosa their plan for frustrating the vigilance of the tobacco-inspector of Jerusalem and it had received the chief's approval. They had talked the matter over whilst eating Yesmaïn Ali's grapes, and the outcome of their conversation was that Ehmad Jabber had been deputed to set out immediately and with all speed for Jerusalem, a distance of eight miles from Battir.

The day was still young when Ehmad, having passed through the fertile Valley of the Roses with its many fountains—one of which, near Welejeh, is said to be Philip's Well[1]—reached his destination. The Fellahat were still passing in and out of the Jaffa Gate with their round baskets of vegetables, or, squatting on the ground in the street, were offering them for sale. Ehmad lost no time in proceeding to the house of the Inspector, situated near the Damascus Gate, and found the Bowaab,[2] clothed in a spotless white gown and with an equally immaculate turban on his head, sitting at the entrance, reciting his prayers and marking the repetitions on his rosary.

"Sabhak bil kher,—Good morning," said Ehmad.

"Allah ye sabhak bil kher,—May God grant *you* a good morning," replied the Bowaab.

[1] Acts of the Apostles, viii. 36.

[2] One of the black janitors of Takrur, who, on account of their reputation for faithfulness, are universally employed as guardians.

"Is the Effendi at home?" asked Ehmad.

"Wallah musch 'aref,—By God, I know not," answered the janitor evasively, for like all Orientals he was cautious in replying to direct questions.

Ehmad Jabber made a sign to the keeper of the nearest coffee-house to bring him two cups of moka and a small chair. When he had sat down in the street and begun sipping the hot coffee with evident delight, he made further preparations for a lengthy stay by ordering two narghiles. Whilst the rose-water in the bottles of the pipes was gently bubbling and the smokers inhaled long draughts of the sweet-scented Persian Tombak (the only tobacco fit for a narghile), they conversed about the scarcity of water in Jerusalem, the danger of a locust invasion and the trying times, as though the Inspector had been long forgotten. But he was ever uppermost in Ehmad's mind, and he kept wondering how he should once more introduce the subject. . . . Better speak of the matter no more, he decided;—it would be much more simple and infinitely pleasanter to sit there patiently until the Effendi appeared. So, when his first pipe was smoked, he called for a second, which the Kahwadji, or coffee-house keeper, prepared and presented in the orthodox manner. The Tombak was washed, the darkest water was squeezed away, the tobacco was piled on the pipe's head and the live coals were applied. Then, with his hand on his breast, the Kahwadji

set down the pipe in front of his customer—a wealthy customer indeed, since he could afford to sit there and smoke two consecutive narghiles!—and respectfully offered him the long tube of beautiful green leather, with its ivory mouthpiece. "Tefaddal—If you please," said the Madani, or townsman, in his own manner and idiom. "Eesht,—May you live for ever,"—replied the countryman, briefly. And he instantly resumed his conversation with the Bowaab, hoping every moment that the Inspector would not be long. By this time he had learnt that the janitor's name was 'Hadj Imhammad Abu Bekr and had heard how he had come by his title,—viz., by a seven years' stay in Mecca. A white man can receive the title of 'Hadj (pilgrim) after a single pilgrimage, but a negro must be present seven times at the great feast of 'Arafat to be entitled to add it to his name. And Imhammad Abu Bekr commented on this manifest injustice until Ehmad, whose thoughts were elsewhere, was conscious only of a meaningless torrent of words.

At last, about twelve o'clock, Ehmad's patience was rewarded. There was a sound of quick footsteps along a corridor and the Inspector, a small-statured man with a clean shaven face and diminutive moustache, and dressed, save for his fez, like a European, appeared through the entrance. Ehmad rose, and with a deep bow said :—

"I have grave news, Effendi."

" What is it ? " asked the Inspector, whose name was Abd-el-Kareem. A note of distrust and disdain, ever present in relations between townsmen and countrymen, or *vice versa*, was apparent in his voice.

" I have information regarding some tobacco smugglers," replied the Fellah, in a low tone. " But we must speak apart, if you would hear all."

Abd-el-Kareem, who was in the custom of receiving information from outsiders—spies and traitors who readily sold themselves for a few pieces of silver—walked a little way down the street, with Ehmad at his side. When well out of earshot, Ehmad Jabber told a circumstantial story of how he had discovered that certain " enemies " of his were on their way from the direction of Damascus with a consignment of tobacco ; how he had followed them under cover of the darkness and, through overhearing a conversation in an olive-grove, had learnt the hour at which they intended to smuggle their cargo over the Golden Gate.

" With the swiftness of an eagle, I left them to talk over their evil designs," continued Ehmad. " For I was anxious that the Effendi should receive the news and be ready to place his all-powerful hand on these miscreants. But I have a condition to make—and only on that condition can I lead you, at the appointed hour, to the place where the

smugglers will pass their goods over the walls,—namely, that you come alone and that when I have pointed out the band you will allow me to depart and hide. For I fear the vengeance of my enemies and would flee from them as before a leper."

Abd-el-Kareem Effendi readily consented to this quite natural condition. Ehmad was a born actor and the manner in which he displayed fear at every mention of his terrible enemies would have deceived a much astuter man than the Inspector. Besides, the Effendi was in a condition, psychologically, to be deceived. For months he had been on the look out for an opportunity to distinguish himself and win protection; and here, at last, he saw his chance of rising to a higher position and escaping from his generally humdrum life.

The two men promised each other strict secrecy, and the Effendi having told his informant to be sure to call him at the appointed hour, they parted. And whilst Ehmad, with a faint smile on his handsome face, hied to a favourite coffee-house, where he knew he would be sure to meet more than one person interested in the illicit tobacco trade, the overjoyed Inspector hastened away to give orders to all his forces to lie in ambush near St. Stephen's Gate and to keep a sharp look out in the direction of the Damascus road, whence the Fellah had told him the smugglers were coming.

V

Meanwhile, Muhammad Moosa was still in camp at Battir, south west of Jerusalem. The evening meal was in course of preparation,—a frugal meal of grapes and cakes baked on coals, just like those prepared for the Prophet Elijah.[1] Every wayfaring Fellah, carrying his flour in a leather bag, the Jrab, made of the skin of a kid, knows how to prepare these unleavened cakes and, like the children of Israel,[2] bake them on a roadside fire.

When the sun had set, the sacks of tobacco were again brought forth, and quickly and silently the camels were loaded. The men inspected their weapons. Swords were slightly oiled, so that they could be easily drawn from the wooden scabbards. The flints of the firearms were tested, and every gun and pistol was loaded, so that, in case of need, everyone would have firearms in double. There is no more suspicious person in the world than a Fellah. Friend or foe, smuggler or honest camel-driver, are all to be avoided in the darkness of the night.

The three villages of Battir, Welejeh and Malha could be passed without being observed, for all are about a mile or so from the main road or the dry river-bed, and Fellahîn go to bed early. The German colony on the Plain of Rephaim presented no very serious difficulty, although the colonists

[1] I. Kings xix. 6. [2] Exodus xii. 39.

had lights and, even up to a late hour, were about their homes, or in the beer-houses. Foreigners in Palestine know little or nothing of the doings or even the language of the inhabitants of the country. But there was some danger in crossing the Valley of Hinnom and in skirting the walls of Jerusalem,—past Zion's Gate, the Dung Gate, Ophel and the corner of the Temple. The sentinels, however, were dozing and the night was fairly dark, consequently all these danger points were passed without incident.

Since the doors of Jerusalem close about sunset, so that nobody can enter the city save through the Jaffa Gate, on the western side, the Turkish sentinels posted near the five other entrances are not habitually vigilant; the nearer midnight approaches the more they are inclined to slumber. On the August night when Sherîf Muhammad Moosa and his six camels drew near to the walls of Jerusalem they were all sound asleep. The only watchers were Abd-el-Kareem Effendi and Ehmad Jabber, waiting above the Golden Gate, and the Inspector's soldiers at St. Stephen's Gate, futilely peering into the darkness and straining their ears to catch the sound of camels and men on the march,—a sound which was never to come. The only other wakeful living things on the eastern walls of the Holy City were hundreds of ravens which croaked and flew up and down the fortifications as though conscious that this quiet

place was for once to be the scene of some unusual occurrence.

Nearer and nearer the silent-footed camels approached. Moosa and his men spoke not a word. All their thought and energy was centred on the idea that they might have to fight,—on the danger of their enterprise,—on their eerie surroundings. They could not suppress a kind of superstitious terror, inspired by the indistinct outlines of the walls and buildings. The round head-like stones which project over the tombs in the Mohammedan cemetery (the tombs of believers haunted by the ghosts of those who had done evil in their lifetime) looked like so many guardians peeping out to detect them ; the sacred dome of the Mosque of Omar on the Haram above seemed like a gigantic mountain ready to topple over and crush them. Sherîf Moosa wondered whether Ehmad Jabber had succeeded in his mission. Where was the Inspector and his soldiers at that moment ? Would they have to fight, after all ?

The Muazzin on the minaret beyond the precincts of the Temple called the faithful to prayer : "Hei u 'alla saleh,—Awake and to your prayers!" It was midnight.

Just then the well-known voice of Ehmad rang out through the stillness of the night :—

"Friend or foe ?"

"Friend," answered Muhammad, who was still with the leading camel.

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Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

And quietly and quickly he ordered his men to make the camels kneel against the walls, awaiting the signal for passing the tobacco into the city.

"They are here, Effendi," whispered Ehmad to Abd-el-Kareem. "But they must have deviated from the Damascus road and so escaped the attention of the soldiers at St. Stephen's Gate. However, they shall not slip through our fingers. I have an idea. I will let you down the walls by a rope; then I will go and inform the soldiers at St. Stephen's Gate; and whilst you are meeting them below I will rouse the sentinels, who surely must be slumbering at their posts. In this way we shall cut off their retreat—they will be as though within the meshes of a net. Quick, Effendi!—we must act promptly, otherwise the enemy will escape us."

Already Ehmad had drawn a rope from beneath his Thôb and was fastening one end around Abd-el-Kareem's waist. The Inspector, over-anxious about his future, at once fell in with the Fellah's proposals, and a few moments later was being slowly lowered over the walls. But when half-way down his progress stopped. The cunning Ehmad Jabber had gained his ends. Securely fastening the rope to a projecting piece of rock, he left the Effendi to swing in the air and grapple against the wall's rough masonry.

A few minutes later, and not fifty yards away from where Abd-el-Kareem, foaming with rage,

was hanging, Ehmad's strong young arms had assisted Yesmaïn Ali to scale the walls of Jerusalem. Together they hauled up the sacks of tobacco and passed them through the Temple to the well-known shops.

Sherîf Muhammad Moosa's camels and camel-drivers were half-way home again when, late the next morning, the scorched and exhausted Inspector was delivered from his trying position. His first impulse was to make known this outrage on a Government official and seek out the offending Ehmad and his accomplices, but, feeling as foolish as a fox taken in by a hen, he wisely decided to say nothing more about it, and thus the truth was long withheld from the public.

IV

EHMAD IMHAMAD'S VISION

I HAD just read the 96th verse of the 2nd Sura of the Koran and was puzzled as to its exact meaning. European translators have not always been precise, either in their translation of the Torah (Pentateuch) or in that of the Koran ; in spite of all their efforts, oracles have remained obscure. However, here is very nearly the wording of the original text which set me thinking :—

" They (unbelieving Jews) have followed the works which the demons prepared against King Solomon. (These works, as Yahia explains, were books of magic which the demons had hidden under the throne of Solomon. After the king's death they brought them forth and made the people believe that the king's knowledge came from these books.) Solomon remained fervent and the demons alone were unbelievers. They taught men the art of magic and the knowledge of the two angels Haroot and Maroot in Babylon. (Haroot and Maroot, Yahia continues to say, were sent to the earth, to Babylon, to teach justice. They indeed judged with equity until Venus, in all her splendour, came to plead against her husband. The Angels were dazzled by her beauty and charms, and told her of their feelings, whereupon she vanished. Consequently they were condemned

to remain in Babylon until Judgment Day.) The Angels told everybody before teaching him: We are the temptation, do not act against the belief. They taught concerning those things which bring forth division between a woman and her husband. But, without Allah's will, they could harm nobody. They taught what was harmful, nothing useful. They did not know that whoever buys books of magic cannot possess manners and clothes in a future life."

How comes it, thought I, on reading this condemnation of magic, based on an older passage in the Hebrew Bible,[1] that Ehmad Imhamad, a dervish of the Bedawi order who had given me much information regarding those of his calling, should possess books of magic and foretell events by reading them in the sand? Immediately the idea of consulting him on the subject occurred to me. But where was he likely to be found? As he was a wandering dervish and gained a livelihood by his art, he might be wandering about the Plains of Sharon, somewhere between Ekron, the ancient Baal-zebub,[2] Naby-Rubîn, near the mouth of the River Rubîn, and Sheikh Sidna 'Ali, north of Jaffa. Unless he were on the banks of the green River 'Auja? There was but one way of deciding the question,—to jump astride my horse and seek

[1] Deuteronomy xviii. 10-11.

[2] II. Kings i. 16. Flies (zebub) are so numerous there that it is no wonder they were considered as a power, and power is a god.

him out. Accordingly I rode to his native village, Beit Dejan, near to the place where Dagon had his temple in the days of the Philistines. But he had departed that morning towards the south, possibly to Lydda or Ramleh, where he had many clients. However, after another hour in the saddle, I espied him sitting near Bîr-ez-Zeibak, known as the well where St. George met the dragon.

He was dreaming in the sun, his short spear, ornamented with green and red ribbons round the base of the blade, stuck in the ground near him. His long black hair, parted in the middle, fell over his shoulders, and, since it had been freshly anointed with oil that very morning, shone in the sunshine. He wore only a white flowing garment with a leather belt. Beside him lay a black mantle and a satchel containing several tin cases, in which he kept his dervish diplomas, a few pieces of incense and alum, a few dates and figs, and a small square book, tightly wrapped in green and red cloth and tied with silk strings. His bare feet, as well as his brown face and arms, were scrupulously clean, for he had not forgotten any of his regular five prayers, including his ablutions, for a very long time. In his right hand he held a short almond rod, the Mehjané, which most dervishes carry about with them, since it is said to have the power to heal the sick and drive away serpents. It reminded me of the rod of Moses.[1]

[1] Exodus vii.

Alighting from my mare, I tethered her to an olive tree and walked towards him with a greeting.

"Good morning, oh Sheikh!"

"A hundred mornings with peace be yours, Abu Tuna," replied Ehmad Imhamad.

He called me by the name under which I generally went in the East: Abu Tuna,—*i.e.*, the Father of Fortuna, the name of my eldest daughter.

I handed him my tobacco-pouch and apologized for having forgotten the matches. Without wasting words, he opened a small leather purse and bringing out a square flint stone, a piece of steel and the fibres of a dry plant set them down beside us. After we had rolled our cigarettes in silence, he struck fire and handed me the small brand, saying:—

"May its heat spare you."

"And may you never feel its evil," I replied, as I prepared to light my cigarette.

A few more compliments passed between us, after which we sat smoking in silence; and as the blue clouds went up in circles both of us meditated, —I thinking of how to begin the conversation and he of the questions that the Franji (Frank) had come to ask him. It was Ehmad who at last broke the silence.

"Peace to you. How are you?"

"God's peace be with you," said I. "Thanks to Allah, the Lord of the Universe,—Il Hamdu

Photo J. H. Halladjian, Haifa

A Dervish

lillah Rab el 'Alameen,—I came merely to see about your health."

"Allah be praised! True friends find each other. Your politeness and good education speak out of you."

"Oh! Sheikh, I am but a child compared to you and your exquisite ways. Now that I have seen you, I beg you to allow me to continue on my way."

Saying which I rose and stretched out my hand. But he took it and pulled me down to him, saying:

"Stay awhile. It is some time since we talked. Are you in a hurry? Remember that Hurry is from Satan. God preserve us! Put away your Franji ideas and let us have a chat."

Only too willing to do as he bid me, I sat down and touched his bag.

"Ah! Sheikh, how full of knowledge this is. What is there unknown to you?"

And I took out his book of magic.

"No," he said, "avoid that evil work. You know that, though I read it and by its help find the clue to many mysteries unknown to the sons of Adam, it really is wicked to use it. And I have taken a secret oath that I will destroy it as soon as Fate (Naseeb) calls me to a better way. To tell you the truth, they (the Jân or Genii) have revealed to me so many startling things that I think it is more comfortable not to know anything more about them. You know, quite as well as myself,

that when Iblis (the devil) lived quietly in Paradise, long before there were human beings, he had many children, who went about in peace in gardens with running waters of eternal life, purified wives and contentment, side by side with Allah who looked with love on his servants. But when Allah created Adam and Eve, and commanded Iblis to worship Adam, he refused and blasphemed with his children,[1] whereupon he was called Shatam, or Blasphemer, and sent to Earth with all his people. But as he drank Eternal Life Water he roams about until Resurrection Day doing whatever harm he can to the sons of Adam. He it was who taught Haroot and Maroot the art of sorcery and magic, so that harm would continue."

I was glad that Ehmad Imhamad had touched on the subject I had at heart, and I knew that once he had started he would tell me much more, provided that I did not show eagerness to know his secrets at once.

"You know the 'Ajami whose shrine is up in the hills of the Jerusalem region," he went on, in a low voice. "Well, thanks to my book and cabalistic signs, he appeared to me right in his shrine, in the forest above Beit-Mahsir. It was a Thursday evening and I sat there beating my drum, accompanying cymbals and drums which were being beaten by unseen legions in honour of the Wely, as the spirits of departed dervishes

[1] Koran, Sura ii. verse 32.

usually do when humans do not accomplish their devotions. I was just in the act of burning incense when suddenly a bright yellowish light burst forth near the Mehrab (prayer-niche) and the 'Ajami himself appeared in long flowing robes, amidst the clash of golden cymbals and the beating of a silver drum covered with gazelle hide. He bowed and rose, surrounded by green and red fires, the smoke of which filled all the Mosque (Jame') ; only, unlike ordinary smoke, it did not hurt the eyes but gave forth a precious odour of rose-water and myrrh. 'Neither move nor speak,' said the 'Ajami, in a solemn voice. 'Beware of interrupting me, either by signs or by words. Listen to all that I have to tell you, otherwise, at the least indication of awe or astonishment, I shall strike you—perhaps dead—and all will vanish.' Acquiescing in my heart, I felt soft silk cushions all about me, and when I was tired my position was changed, as if someone had guessed my feelings. At the same time the 'Ajami began to speak in a clear voice, softer than the evening breeze which murmured in the fir-trees round his abode, more melodious than the song of the thistle-finch and yet as energetic as if his words had been of steel. He gave me permission to repeat every word of what he said, if I chose to do so when back again among humans ; but at the same time, as I was then a sorcerer, he called upon me to abandon magic and follow God.

Of course, as long as I lived by my wicked art, I could not utter the name of Allah. My 'God preserve us from him'[1] was not efficacious, so I left that for others to pronounce. But thanks to Him, the Creator of the Universe, I am back again, and thanks to my Lord the 'Ajami, though I am not of his dervishes, I found the right way once more.

"'Listen,' said the 'Ajami. 'If I change my place or go further off, do not attempt to follow me, for I will let you hear me no matter how far away I am.' And saying this he took breath and stood above the ground, with his spear turned in the direction of El Kuds esh Shareef (Jerusalem). 'My name is 'Ajami and a Stranger I always was. I know that the sons of Adam think my name means "a Persian" or "the bearer of date-stones," but I know best. I was created in Paradise with legions of other beings; and in his wisdom Allah knew that some would be his servants for ever, some were destined to go down on Earth and be human beings for a time, as prophets, saints, welies; some would revolt against his orders for a fraction of eternity and be converted again, whilst others would be turned into hell-fire and, with Iblis, do harm among mankind. Paradise is the garden above the skies and from the central roots of the central tree flow brooks of milk and honey. As I was among the Just, I was allowed to drink

[1] Ehmad Imhamad would not willingly repeat Satan's name. He almost invariably said either "him" or "them."

the water of the Kowthar River, the principal stream in Eden, which flows in a bed of precious stones with the very banks all strewn with gems. Its water—giving eternal life—is sweeter than honey, whiter than milk, colder than snow, softer than cream, and I carried it to my lips in silver cups deposited there for the use of the Just. As I was a Stranger, El Kadri, El Badawi, El Dsuki and El Erfa'i were jealous that I should receive the same privilege as many others of the Just and always strove against me, knowing that I was destined to go to Earth and become a Wely. I again met these leaders of dervish orders in Palestine and they fought against me and still continue to do so.

" 'Now recollect that when Allah created the first Angel as was revealed to our prophet later, he was so enormous that he had 70,000 heads and each head had 70,000 faces, each face 70,000 mouths and each mouth 70,000 tongues. Each tongue could speak 70,000 dialects, and as God's praise was being sung by every tongue a new spiritual creature, an Angel, was formed. Thus were the seven heavens peopled. But one of the clans had Iblis, with his children, the Jân, as chief, and when Allah finally created Adam and ordered Iblis to worship this last creation, he refused and was turned out of heaven with his host to live on the islands and on the mountains of the earth,[1] or

[1] Koran, Sura ii. 32.

to go to and fro on the face of the earth,[1] where they will have time to repent until Judgment Day, whilst the most wicked were sent to Jehunum (Hell) to fill that place.[2] "Aouzi Billah!—My strength is in God!" exclaimed the 'Ajami at this point, and his voice thundered through the stillness of the night, for the dervishes had vanished and only the sacred yellow light continued to illuminate the abode clearer than the brightest July day.

"'Adam was as tall as a palm tree and Eve was very beautiful,' continued my teacher. 'But they ate of the forbidden fruit and were put down on earth.[3] As the sons of Adam multiply and die the righteous go back to Paradise, where, as a recompense, Allah has commanded that the most delicious fruits shall be presented to them on a silver plate by an angel. None but good believers and such as have observed the Koran and fasted in Ramadan will receive the fruit. The Moslem who opens it sees a splendid Houri come out. These Houris are of four different colours, the sacred colours of Islam: the first white, the second green, the third yellow, and the fourth red. Their bodies are composed of saffron, musk, amber and incense; and should they spit on the ground the whole place will smell of musk. They have no veils and show their black eyebrows; they rest under pearl-embroidered tents, containing seventy

[1] Job i. 7. [2] Sura vii. 178. [3] Sura vii. 23.

couches of rubies, each with seventy mattresses, on which seventy slaves attend them, with their maids, each holding a new suit of light transparent clothes for a change; and they are transparent unto the bones.

"'But in spite of all heavenly delights, those children of Allah came to the earth and took wives from the sons of Adam,[1] and though they had been taught Allah's laws and religion, they soon followed the teachings of the Jân and the Shairîm, who led them to evil.[2] They worshipped Baal and Ashteroth, and put up idols on the high mountains, upon the hills, and under every green tree.[3] Of course, my abode here in Beit-Mahsir is like the abodes of all the Just men and Welies spread all over Palestine; we have simply taken the places of the older gods. For, in spite of the efforts of the lawgivers to break down the altars, destroy the pillars and burn the groves, mankind has always liked these retired places best and come back to them. Now, when they continued, Allah sent the Torah by Moses. To him be prayers and peace! But without success. The Jews continued in the old ways and worshipped the gods whom their forefathers had worshipped. Once he changed them into monkeys for having worked on a sabbath on the shores of the Red Sea. But still they continued in their idolatrous

[1] Genesis vii. 2.
[2] Leviticus xvii. 7.
[3] Deuteronomy xii. 2.

ways. After showing patience for 500 years He found them worshipping Shairîm.[1] So Allah sent the Gospel (Ingîle) by 'Esa, the son of Mary. Prayer and peace be to him. But the Christians again set up idols in their temples and worshipped in the high places. Finally, the Prophet—to him be prayers and peace!—came and received the Koran from the heavenly table.[2] But still the people believed that they (the Jân) could be worshipped and still they continue to believe in their power—Christians, Jews, and Moslems alike.

" ' The Jân were submitted to Solomon. Peace be to him! They were ordered by Allah to work for him, and how could he have built the temple, the pillars, the molten sea and his palaces without their aid?[3] When Solomon was overlooking his Jân workers, now and then one would disobey, and immediately he was sent to hell. They were so frightened by this severity that when 'Ozraël the Angel of Death, cut short Solomon's days, as he was sitting leaning on his stick, he remained for forty years in the position of an overseer though dead, and had not a worm gnawed the stick, causing the dead king to fall down, they would never have known what had happened and would have continued their work.[4]

" ' When 'Esa was on earth (to him be prayers

[1] I. Chronicles, xi. 15. [2] Sura vii. 1.
[3] Sura xxxiv. 12. I. Kings vii. 13-22.
[4] Sura xxxiv. 13.

and peace!) the Jân, in a group of seven, as they always like to be, took possession of Mary Magdalene and were driven out by him.[1] Of course, some were converted to Judaism, others to Christianity, and when the Prophet (to whom be peace!) was reading the Koran at daybreak under a palm-tree, seven Jewish Jân listened and were so impressed that they rose and were converted to Islam [2] and continued to preach and make converts among their sectarians, so that many became Moslems.[3] And whenever Mohammed prayed these Jân would respectfully arise and listen in awe. They first lived in Arabia and Nineveh, but by and by approached and followed in the traces of mankind. They tried to enter Paradise again, but were repelled by meteors, which we still see.

"'Happily there are innumerable good angels, of whom 70,000 pray daily in the celestial Kaaba. They have brought down to Mecca the model of an earthly Kaaba, which was built by Jân by divine order. Every man has his guardian angels: two by day and two by night, who write down every deed and carry it, alternately, to the throne of Allah, awaiting Judgment Day. Every believer looks at his angels at the end of his prayers; he turns his head right and left, for then they are on his shoulders.

"'In his divine providence, He has allowed

[1] Luke viii. 2. [2] Sura xlvi. 28. [3] Sura lxxii. 13.

the different spirits to take different forms to accomplish their various functions; and as they generally live in caves and all places underground where the sons of Adam live, they very often share not only human joy and sorrow but also partake of human food and on solemn occasions use human garments. For instance, should the imprudent, when sowing or reaping, threshing or carrying things home, pouring out or preparing bread, laying it in the oven or putting it before the family, drinking or lying down to sleep, rising or washing, starting from home, dressing or undressing, omit to say Bism Illah (In the name of Allah), the ever-ready Jân have a good opportunity and carry away their share to feast on it. And good times they have, for there are many wicked people among the three churches here in the land. Certainly the Jân make no difference between them. Every denomination has to use its own formula—they cannot approach a Jew who has Adonai in mind, nor a Christian who never forgets "the name of the cross." They seem to take pleasure in teasing imprudent believers, but will not trouble with freethinkers.

"'As on earth, there are men and women among the Jân, and sometimes they intermarry with humans. Does not the Torah say that they came to marry? [1] Female Jân sometimes fall in love with humans, and are very jealous and

[1] Genesis vi. 2.

strike them, if they smile at other women, so that these men have the "earth's sickness." [1] When living in human habitations they prefer the hearth and the threshold; therefore, humans never step on the threshold on entering a room, and never pour water on the hearth, which would be followed by immediate punishment, as the Jân will not suffer their dwelling-place to be soiled. They have always lived there. Some are believers,[2] and as you do not know them you had better never interfere with them. This was always known. Did not the old lawgiver Moses (to him be peace!) forbid his people to revile the Alhîm, which are the same as the Jân.[3]

"'Wherever Nature has been most wonderful the Jân will certainly be found. Springs of water, waterfalls, rivers, wells, deserts and curious rocks, cliffs and seas, caverns and mountain tops are all Maskoon (inhabited by Jân). They are able to take whatever form they please. Thus, in Tiberias, legions of Jân warm the hot springs and are vigilant not to miss the imprudent intruder if he forgets his duty. But, curious to say, there no "Bismillah" is necessary. In olden days on Mount Sinai it was forbidden to take the name of Jehovah in vain,[4] but the command becoming useless, as the people continued in their evil ways, they all of them now, in synagogues, mosques or

[1] Epilepsy. [2] Sura lxxii. 14.
[3] Exodus xxii. 28. [4] Exodus xx. 7.

churches, use and abuse it. But Allah is merciful and of great kindness.

"'The precious metals, mines and treasures are specially guarded by Guardian Spirits or Rasads. All take forms: here as a ram butting, there as a camel or a foal, again as an old Sheikh or a young bride.

"'Away from high roads and human habitations, on sandy wastes and rocky regions there is the Ghûl, which, as its name indicates, is insatiable and often devours women and children. Most of them have names of animals and are called dog, cat, wolf, fowl, lion, ram, camel, raven, eagle, serpent and so forth; therefore you must never say to a child "I will give you to the wolf" or "Raven, come and take it," as they obey to the letter. The Ghûl will certainly appear in the form of a wolf or that of a raven and seize what, thoughtlessly, he was bidden to take away.

"'As Paradise has living beings, water, food and trees, animals have not been altogether excluded. But only such as have been of use to Holy Men during their sojourn on earth have received admission and can be seen there. First of all there is the ram, which was sacrificed by Abraham on Moriah, feeding in the meadows, as well as the lamb of Ishmael, the cow which Moses presented to the Israelites,[1] the whale which swallowed Jonah, the ant which Solomon set

[1] Numbers xix. 2.

forth as an example,[1] the hoopoe which was in the temple at Jerusalem, the ass which carried Jesus to Jerusalem on Palm-Sunday, the horse which carried Elijah to heaven, and which was the same as El Khadr (St. George) used to fight the dragon, the dog which watched at the entrance to the cave of the seven sleepers, the camel which carried away Mohammed in the Hegira from Mecca, and finally the bees which have healing virtues in their honey.'[2]

"The 'Ajami now paused a moment to see what effect his words had had upon me. Being spiritualised, I could read his thoughts, and knew that he would now take me through the air and under the ground, to shrines and sanctuaries, and show me every spot in the length and breadth of the land. On my forehead he set an amulet of paper on which was written, 'We gave Solomon power over the tempest; it blew morning and evening,'[3] and, taking me up on his shoulders, left the Makâm.

"In less time than it takes to tell you, we were worshipping in the Beit el Makdas, the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem, where we saw myriads of spirits at their devotions. We flew to the Dead Sea. The Jân were there, dancing and making merry as in Lot's days. Suddenly I found myself on Mount Carmel, where the wicked spirits of the

[1] Proverbs vi. 6. [2] Sura xvi. 70.
[3] Sura xxxiv. 11.

prophets of Baal were still delighting in the worship of that god. Then we came to the borders of Egypt, south of Gaza;—a country overflowing with Jân, who become more numerous once you are out of the Holy Land. It was there that I noticed how many Jân followed the humans, just as though they were their shadows, with their feet stuck to their feet and their heads below the earth. We saw them sorrowing at funerals, rejoicing at weddings, and playing mischievous tricks, especially among the young people. Passing a number of cemeteries, I saw old and young men and women spirits roaming about on the graves. 'Ajami put his finger to his mouth and said in a whisper, 'Speak not a word should you see departed friends, for they are waiting here for Judgment Day and would be only too glad to take any human to their miserable company.' We could see Christians, Jews and Moslems, living in Ramleh, pass along the road and never turn round to look, or say a word; they knew that on Thursday nights ghosts were more lively there, and that a harsh word or mockery at the souls would result in their being snatched away by them. Ah! yes, I have seen the green-mantled Welies on the green heights, the white-bearded, hook-nosed prophets in Hebron and Safed, and the cross-marked armoured knights, all vigilant guardians of the places in which they were buried centuries ago. And, side by side, were horned

monsters, which I knew to be Baals, all appearing and disappearing at will, and I wished in my heart I had been at home with my wife and children. But the 'Ajami thought I had not yet seen enough, so he set me down on the walls of the pool of Mamilla,[1] where I could overlook the vast cemeteries belonging to departed Moslems. There also was Zion with its Christian tombs of every denomination, and, possessing the power to see through the slopes to the Mount of Olives, my eyes fell on slabs without number in Hebrew which told me that they covered the Jews waiting around the Sanctuary for the sound of the trumpet to arise and be judged by Mohammed.

"Whenever I had a wish the 'Ajami knew it. Having had no explanation about 'that which divides a woman from her husband,' he once more carried me to the Moslem quarter, above the Damascus Gate, and showed me ugly female spirits accompanying pregnant women and newly married damsels. 'That is the Kariny,'[2] said

[1] The upper pool of Gihon.

[2] Perhaps "Kariny," (كريبة), is derived from the word Kara, "to hate." The "Kari-Chang" is a Chinese law of abstinence and devotion, containing twenty-seven articles. During this kind of Lent season, strictly observed in Formosa, no serious transactions are allowed, such as building, beginning an enterprise, selling hides, sowing, manufacturing arms, marrying or having intercourse with women, giving names to the new-born, or going on a journey. The law had its origin in an ugly Formosan who, mocked by his people, prayed to be removed to heaven, where he became a divinity. Transgressors of the law were severely punished. (Chinese myth.) The "Carines" were women of Caria who were hired to mourn the dead. (Greek legend.)

the 'Ajami. 'She puts hatred between man and wife; she makes women miscarry, or barren; she makes men impotent and turns their minds towards other women, or women towards other men.' I trembled, for I knew that this must be the loathsome Kariny mentioned in the Koran and already known to Solomon, who taught people to wear amulets to hinder her detestable work.

"Seeing my fear, the 'Ajami hurried me through space and then below the earth, where Jân were gathered in bathing establishments, oil-mills and cemeteries,—in short, in all those public places where Jân gather most freely. We went to sanctuaries and saw the presiding saint assuming any form he liked. In Dair esh Sheikh he was a swarm of bees defending his abode; at another holy spot was a mounted horseman with a flowing beard, a green mantle and a spear in his hand. We saw the guardians (Rasads) taking the most fantastic forms and humans of all denominations respect them; then thousands of years passed by and the same religious forms in the very same places reappeared. The worshippers spoke of Baal, El, and Allah,—that was the only change, and this change was so slight that they hardly noticed the difference from one generation to another. Then I knew that I was in the Immovable East and was glad to have been born to live and die in my pure Arabic creed and language.

"Above and below the earth we travelled;

Photo J. H. Halladjian, Haifa

Grotto of Elijah, Mt. Carmel

into churches, mosques, synagogues, and ruined sanctuaries we entered. Then we flew back to Zion. There, as in Mamilla, down in Kedron, and on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, myriads of phantoms and spirits of all forms moved about. Jebusites and Amorites, Hebrews of pre-Babylonian days, Machabees, Greeks, Romans, Moslems, Franks, and Palestine Christians were all congregated there, anxiously waiting, with eyes turned towards the East, for the Day to come.

"Once more the 'Ajami took me up and set me down,—this time on the minaret of Naby Daoud. The tomb of David was the best observatory he could have chosen. From this holy elevation, sacred to all human beings, he again pointed to the East. 'The night is far spent,' he said. 'Light will come very soon! Put away your books and once more follow the ways of Allah, unless you would partake of the fate of those you will presently see.' He spoke in such a solemn tone that I could not resist the temptation to look round. But my guide had disappeared.

"Suddenly sulphurous fumes and the odour of bitumen filled the air, just as if the submarine volcanoes of the Sea of Lot (the Dead Sea) were in action. The earth trembled. Iblis with his legions of Shaiateen (Demons), clothed in fire and with fiery hooks in their hands, trooped from the desert of Judah, dancing and whirling round and

round,—whistling and shrieking as they approached. Small, hairy Shairim (satyrs) hopped around them, pulling each other's ears, hair and tails, with indecent demeanour. The troglodyte Ghules, perfectly globular, rolled up the hills on the long spikes which surrounded their bodies, hedgehog fashion. Their glowing red eyes, formed of bright glow-worms, sent forth piercing looks, whilst in their huge stomachs the half-decayed bodies of devoured children could be seen rolling from one side to the other. Towering Mareds,[1] with evil looks, passed by me with rhythmic paces, now blowing up their ethereal bodies until they were miles in height and had become as thin as lofty palms, now settling down and becoming like flat wheels laid on their axes, producing the while the queerest and most terrifying sounds. My blood stood still. Yet the terrible procession continued as noisy as a great cavalry charge. Bulls rushed forth, blowing fire from their nostrils; camels, foaming at the mouth with rage, shot forth their tongues until they were several yards in length; black horses with steel hoofs galloped wildly over the flint pavement, sending sparks like meteors flying about the graves, and I knew that these were disguised Rasads (guardians). With hideous grimaces, monkey-like Krâd and Afarîd climbed trees, cemetery walls and tombs, peeped into ossuaries, dragged forth skulls and

[1] Sura xxxvii. 7.

limbs, and hurled them at each other with satyric laughter. In the rear came the Jân, grimacing at each other, yelling and howling, now approaching and fixing their eyes upon me, now withdrawing with distorted dances. How I wished, as I felt their hot breath upon my face, that I was again in my native village! I thought my last moment had come, and that there was no more time to repent. For behold! on the walls of Zion, with a shining sword in his hand, stood 'Ozraël, the Angel of Death, to cut short my days. Alas! I concluded, it is my fate to go down to Hell-fire.

"But suddenly the scene changed: the monsters and hideous apparitions left the Sacred elevation and were replaced by new forms which poured in by myriads from the north, south, east and west. They came and gathered as it were for Judgment on the platform of the holy rock. Their odour was so old, so mouldy, that I knew at once they had been lying in the earth many thousands of years, long before our oldest writers on the Canaanites and Themudians, long before Abraham and Ishmael. From Wad en Nar and Er Rahib a procession of Baal-worshipping horned forms came, bearing with them an odour of burning flesh, the result of their Moloch abominations; from Kedron trooped millions of beings each with a triangle and four strange letters on his or her forehead; and from all the battlefields, near and far,

there marched past, in rank and file, soldiers marked with crescents and crosses. Everywhere gravestones were upheaving. The Greek ossuary on Zion let out its confused cross-marked forms ; the rock-tombs of Hinnom, the most heteroclitic figures, for the strangers arriving at El Kuds had been buried in the foreigners' graves ; the Well of Souls (the Bîr el-Arwah) opened wide its mouth beneath the Sakhra and the souls of departed believers stepped out with joyous countenance, for they knew that Mohammed had promised to save his own nation ; the tombs of the Prophets, of the Judges, and of the Kings sent forth their contingents in solemn procession to be judged.

" This El Kuds is a veritable city of tombs and dead, thought I, ready to give up the ghost to 'Ozraël. If I have time to repent, shall I be amongst the chosen ? Verily I am of the Ummy (nation of the Prophet).

" At that moment a loud roaring all over the universe was heard. It came from the south. My flesh began to creep as I heard its voice say, ' The people have not believed our teachings.' [1] The monster which called out with this awful voice was more fearful to behold than the apocalyptical ' red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns, whose tail drew the third part

[1] Inn in-Naas kaanu biayatina la youquanun—Sura xxvii. 84.

By permission of *The American Colony Photographers, Jerusalem*

Dome of the Ascension

of the stars, dragging them to earth.' [1] This one came from Mecca and was covered all over with long stiff hair and feathers. It possessed two wings and was as brown as a bear. The half of its body was like a cat, its breast was that of a lion, its tail that of an enormous fat-tailed ram, and its head that of a bull. It had the eyes of a pig, the ears of an elephant, the horns of a stag, and an ostrich's neck. Its broad feet were like a camel's, and as it thundered over Jerusalem it crushed the unbelievers with its immense hoofs. There was a general flight towards Siloam and the desert in the east, towards Birket es-Sultan, [2] and the valley of Hinnom, in the west, where centuries ago the ancestors of the Hebrews offered human and other sacrifices to Moloch. Standing on my observatory, I was paralysed with fear. Oh! how I wished I had never bought those forbidden books!

"As the wish passed through my mind, a faint streak of light above the Mount of Olives announced the arrival of the Bright Spirit. 'Aouzi bi Rab il fallaq' [3] I exclaimed. The Angel Gabriel, with his yellow turban, filled the sky and his sword brought forth the dawn. I passed my hand through my beard, as is commanded when daylight is announced, and with a loud voice I cried, 'Eshhad ino la Illaha ill Allah wa

[1] Revelations xii. 3-4. [2] The lower pool of Gihon.
[3] "My protection is in the Lord of the Dawn." Sura cxiii. 1.

Muhammad Rasûl Allah!'[1] scanning every syllable and moaning in my anguish.

"And lo and behold! I saw the fir-trees above the 'Ajami's abode moving slightly to and fro as, in the first streaks of daylight, the morning breeze passed through the branches and proclaimed the name of Allah. Whereupon I repeated my confession of faith, proclaiming his glory at Dawn of Day.[2] I realised, then, that I had never moved. I was still sitting on the same spot above Beit-Mahsir. Yet my spirit had seen the world and what is in and above it all over the Holy Land. And so I promised to leave magic and try, by better ways and reading the Koran, to gain eternal life."

The sun was fast declining and about to plunge in the Mediterranean when Ehmad Imhamad came to the end of the story of his vision, and as the last fierce rays struck the Mountains of Judah they seemed to be alive with the spirits he had evoked. I rose and thanked him.

"Ehmad Imhamad," said I. "You have done a better day's work than you would have done by necromancing. Come and let us have another talk in Jaffa very soon."

[1] "I witness that there is but one God, Allah, and that Mohammêd is his Apostle."

[2] Sura xx. 130.

"In Sha-Allah!—If Allah wills!" I heard him say as I mounted my mare.

Then I turned my face homewards, to arrive after darkness and put down these notes as faithfully as possible for the benefit of those occidental readers who do not fully comprehend oriental knowledge and belief.

V

THE GARDENS OF SOLOMON

I

"I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit: I made me pools of water, to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared."

ECCLESIASTES ii. 4-6.

WHENEVER the month of Rabee comes and the subtle influence of the Spring begins to make itself felt, I hear the call of the Orient. A thousand times a day the sweet summons drags me from mundane occupations and carries me back to the scenes of my youth. It comes to me—clear and irresistible—from a multitude of sources; it makes its welcome appeal through all the avenues of sense. The sight or scent of a flower on one of the slopes above my Riviera home, the configuration of a hill or the geological nature of the soil, the blue expanse of the Mediterranean as I turn to rest on my peregrinations towards the Maritime Alps, the taste of a fruit, or sometimes the very breath of the air, are all allurements, to set the stream of reminiscence flowing and make me yearn for the East. How my thoughts fly back, and how I feel inclined to cry, with Matthew Arnold:—

"Quick, thy tablets, Memory!"

In a moment—and on those occasions all physical

ties to earth seem to be severed—I am back, once more, on Mount Hermon, tracing the three springs of the Jordan and paying homage to the magnificent snowy peak of Djebel-esh-Sheikh.[1] Once more, the valley of El Ghor and the Mountains of Moab are spread out before me. Once more, I am wandering along the Bedawîn-infested shores of the Dead Sea, or swimming with my brother to the island which has since disappeared beneath its bitter waters.[2] Mountains and valleys, rivers and seas, ruins and shrines,—all the old familiar places of the land of my birth pass, one by one, like moving pictures, during those spring-time dreams.

There is always, however, one vision that predominates when Rabee stirs the blood. It is that of Urtas,[3] a little village within a few miles of

[1] "The chief of mountains," as the Arabs call it.

[2] The disappearance of this little island, which was situated about half a mile from the shore at the northern end, is a proof of the interesting fact that the Dead Sea is increasing in size. The maps of the Palestine Exploration Fund of twenty years ago clearly indicated it, and it is also shown in a photograph taken about 1882.

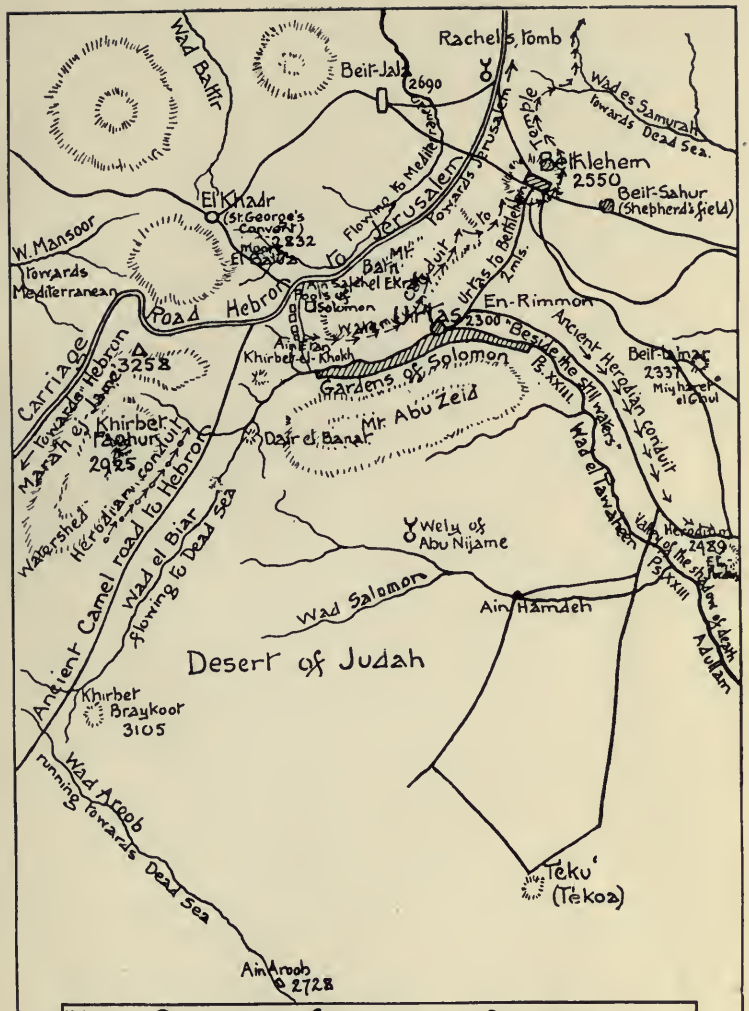
[3] Referring to Urtas, Edward Robinson writes (*Biblical Researches in Palestine*, Vol. II, pp. 168): "The place is still inhabited, though the houses are in ruins,—the people dwelling in caverns among the rocks of the steep declivity. Here are manifest traces of a site of some antiquity,—the foundation of a square tower, a low thick wall of large squared stones, rocks hewn and scarped, and the like. If we are to look anywhere in this quarter for Etam, which was decorated by Solomon with gardens and streams of water, and fortified by Rehoboam along with Bethlehem and Tekoa, and whence, too, according to the Rabbins, water was carried by an aqueduct to Jerusalem, I know of no spot so probable as this spot."

With all due deference to this authority, I am of the opinion that Robinson was misled by the ruins of a fortress just above the

Bethlehem,—a seemingly dry and barren spot, but one, in reality, whose loose grey calcarious gravel makes it pre-eminently suitable for the production of fine fruit. And within its narrow glen, enclosed to right and left by rugged hill-slopes, and watered by an ever-running brook, the most luscious apricots, peaches, pears, figs, and other kinds of fruit were indeed grown, when, as a youth, I lived with my brothers in the flat-roofed, fortress-like house which stood on the eminence above our plantations. Those fruit trees of Urtas, gay with innumerable blossoms or weighed down by fruit fit for the tables of kings and princes,—the bright blue sky seen through the branches as I lay beneath them dreaming,—the singing of the birds,—the murmur of the brook,—and the fragrant odour of the plants on which our bees found so plentiful a harvest[1] made up a never-to-be-forgotten picture. When told that this was the site of the Gardens of Solomon, who can wonder that I accepted the statement as something more than an old wife's tale? Who can wonder that I read

Urtas spring, and that Etam was really situated about a mile away, on the site of Khirbet el-Khokh, near 'Ain Etan and the lowest of the Pools of Solomon. Had the author of *Biblical Researches in Palestine* observed the remains and the spring of Etan he would, I think, have modified his views in favour of my theory, which, I may add, has been supported by more modern authorities.

[1] The thyme honey of Urtas is comparable to the renowned honey from Mount Hymettus, in Greece, and was probably well known in Solomon's time for its delicious aroma. See the Song of Solomon iv. 11, "Thy lips, my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue."



MAP OF GARDENS OF SOLOMON AND ENVIRONS.

The numbers indicate feet above Mediterranean according to Ordnance Survey. P.E.F.

Names and drawings from P.J.B's personal observations.

and re-read the Song of Solomon and found in it a confirmation of that legend? If the great king's pleasure-grounds were anywhere, where else could they be save in the little paradise of Urtas? What other place so well accorded with the words, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."[1] Many other passages of the Song of Songs seemed to me to be inspired by those lovely surroundings. "My beloved is gone down into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies . . . I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded. . . . Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth . . ."[2] And what of Solomon's Pools, situated near the Saracenic castle of Kâlat el-Bûrak, some half an hour's journey from our ruined village? Could there be any doubt in my youthful mind, nourished on Maundrell, Robinson, and other writers, that these colossal waterworks and the hidden "sealed

[1] The Song of Solomon ii. 10-13.
[2] The Song of Solomon vi. 2, 11; vii. 12.

fountain" near by were the "pools of water" referred to in Ecclesiastes and part of that gigantic system of irrigation which transformed the whole of the region into a veritable earthly paradise? . . . No; it was beyond dispute that there before me lay the gardens of the great and wise king.

But before the days of Solomon another of my favourite Bible heroes had trod the sacred soil of Urtas. The young shepherd David, leading his flocks there from Bethlehem, must surely have been inspired by the streams and rugged landscapes of my home; and it pleased me to fancy that, as he played upon his Neïyé,[1] he composed there his 23rd Psalm, since he speaks of "the Lord his Shepherd, who made him lie down in green pastures and led him beside the still waters."[2] In no other place near Bethlehem do you find either pastures or a constant supply of fresh running water. Completing the picture, I could see him descending the picturesque but dangerous gorges of Adullam and, as he thus walked "through the valley of the shadow of death," entrusting himself and his sheep to the hands of God. He had already encountered wild animals in those solitary places and by courageously attacking them with his "comforting" staff[3]—the Naboot of the Arabs, which every modern Palestine shepherd still carries—had killed them.[4]

[1] See *Song and Dance in the East*, pp. 249–252.
[2] Psalms xxiii. 1-2. [3] Psalms xxiii. 4.
[4] I. Samuel xvii. 34-35.

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A Shepherd

When David became king he had no time to occupy himself with the pleasures which his son and successor was to enjoy. But on taking Solomon on excursions to Urtas he must have called his attention to its natural advantages, for as soon as he succeeded to the throne the new sovereign chose Etam as one of his cities for chariots.[1] Moreover, Josephus tells us that Solomon was particularly fond of the place because of its "beautiful gardens, its fine springs, and the extreme fertility of its soil."[2] Etam, then, possessed several springs—possibly three in all: 'Ain-'Etan at the Khirbet el-Khokh, above Urtas, the "sealed fountain," 'Ain Saleh, above Etam, and the 'Ain Urtas—then 'Ain Rimmon.[3]

[1] I Kings x. 26.

[2] *Antiquities of the Jews*, viii. 2, p. 340.

[3] 'Ain Rimmon has never been identified by explorers, and Urtas has never been pointed out as corresponding to any known Bible locality. My reason for identifying 'Ain Rimmon with Urtas is based on the following passages: "Judah received Ain, Remmon and Ether and Ashan" (Josh. xix. 7). Evidently the transcriber knew nothing of the country, since he takes Ain and Remmon to be two different places. In the parallel reference (I. Chron. iv. 32) a more careful scribe makes Ether into Etam, and, besides giving 'Ain Rimmon and Ashan, adds Tochen. Now, we find 'Ain Etam and 'Ain Urtas and Wad et-Tawaheen in the actual topography. Later, Nehemiah speaks (Neh. xi. 29) of the villages of Judah, and groups 'Ain Rimmon, Zoreah and Yarmuth, though they are far apart. But he says the children of Judah dwelt together from Beersheba to the valley of Hinnom (Neh. xi. 30), an extensive country. Rimmon means Pomegranates, and in his Song, Solomon speaks of his "Fardas Rumaneem" (Song of Songs iv. 13), "the pomegranate gardens." And last but not least the prophet Zechariah, in his vision, foreseeing a time when the land round Jerusalem should be made flat for the judgment of the nations says: "All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of

But you must imagine Etam, in Solomon's days, as something more than a place of mere rustic beauty. From the many nations which surrounded his kingdom, the king selected wives and for every princess of the blood he built a palace.[1] These houses he placed here and there, so as not to profane Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem.[2] His Moabite wife dwelt on the Mount of Olives; his Egyptian spouse was at Gezer;[3] whilst his Edomite princess, on account of the nearness of her native country, must have been at Etam, to which Solomon, with a brilliant retinue, rode out every morning. Josephus gives a very picturesque description of these rides to Etam. "Thus King Solomon," he writes, "was able to add four hundred chariots to the thousand chariots and twenty thousand horses which he ordinarily kept. And the horses which they sent him were not only particularly fine—they surpassed all others in swiftness. Those who rode them made their beauty still more apparent; for they were young men of very tall stature, clothed in Tyrian purple, armed with quivers, and with long hair covered with gold dust, which, when the rays of the sun struck them, made their heads

Jerusalem" (Zech. xiv. 8-10). Now, Geba is as far north from Jerusalem as Urtas (Rimmon) is south of that place, making a very symmetrical plan which fits in suitably with the vision. See my communication to the *Quarterly Statement* of the P.E.F., October, 1912, pp. 209-211.

[1] I Kings. xi. 8.

[2] II. Chronicles viii. 11.

[3] I. Kings ix. 16-17.

ablaze with light. This magnificent retinue accompanied the king every morning when, according to custom, he left the town, seated in a superb chariot and clothed in white, to go to a country house near Jerusalem called Etam . . ." [1]

On the death of Solomon, the Israelites revolted, and the Edomites in the south made so many incursions that his son Rehoboam was obliged to fortify the frontier towns, including Bethlehem, Etam, and Tekoa,[2] and place garrisons there. The gardens of Etam remained royal property as long as the kingdom of Judah lasted.

During the time of anarchy which followed the deportation of the princes and notables, and until Herod the Great came to the throne, the nation was occupied in defending itself, sometimes against the governors, sometimes against foreigners in general. Herod himself, a foreigner and an Edomite, had a predilection for the favoured district of Urtas and, after his victory over the Jews, in the neighbourhood of the Frank Mountain,[3] built a palace near by. As there was nothing but rainwater to be obtained near his castle, and as rain is very rare in this part of the Desert of Judah, he had the water from the important spring of El Arroub brought by means

[1] *Antiquities of the Jews*, viii. 2, p. 340.

[2] II. Chronicles xi. 6.

[3] So called since 1453, when Felix Fabri relates that the Franks, after the battle of Hattin, withdrew there and found sufficient water to grow corn and vegetables, thanks to which they withstood a siege of at least a year.

of a conduit and an extensive system of reservoirs to Solomon's Pools. This conduit was so big that a horse could easily pass through it. It became smaller as it advanced, but still was sufficiently large to enable workmen to stand upright in it when undertaking repairs. It passed by way of the Wady el-Biar, or Valley of the Wells, and skirted the flank of the mountain of Batn-el-Ekra' and Mough-arid-Khalid, north of Urtas, where the surplus water flowed into a large number of reservoirs which stretched as far as the Urtas spring. The solidly cemented remains of a portion of these gigantic works are still to be seen to-day on our family property at Urtas. After the Valley of Urtas, properly so called, comes the Valley of the Mills, Wad et-Tawaheen, and there again are other remains which clearly formed part of Herod's extensive system of irrigation, the surplus water from which was probably used for the turning of numerous mills.

After Herod's death his successors were unable, for a multitude of reasons, principally lack of resources and incessant troubles with their enemies inside the kingdom and the Romans coming from without, to occupy themselves with Etam, so that the paradise of Urtas quickly fell into ruins. The remains of a marble palace, discovered there about 1865 by Mr. Meshullam, a colonist who followed in my father's footsteps, and known to the Arabs as El Hammam—the Bath—led some to suppose

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Solomon's Pools and Caravansary

that the Emmaus of the Gospel[1] was situated at Urtas. But baths, or Emmaus, abound in Palestine. There are two to the north-west of Jerusalem, where the Emmaus celebrated for the appearance of Jesus to two of his disciples after his death has already been placed. Another is at the warm baths of Tiberias; whilst a fourth and a fifth are at Calirrhoë and Arnon, to the east of the Dead Sea, where Herod, a few days before his death, sought relief from his sufferings.

II

Until the arrival of Tancred and the hundred knights who came to the rescue of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem—that is, before the taking of Jerusalem—the gardens of Urtas remained buried in oblivion. It was then that the name "Hortus Conclusus" was given to the place by the monks of Bethlehem,—a name which has been preserved in their archives until now.[2]

We possess no exact information regarding the history of Urtas during the Christian occupation from 1099 to 1187, but the remains of Deir el Banat, or the Nuns' Convent, a few kilometres above the village, near the Wady el Biar, and the

[1] St. Luke xxiv. 13.

[2] It is not for me to attempt to decide whether the name Urtas is a corruption of Hortus, or *vice versâ*. But I may remind my readers how notoriously careless the Crusaders were in the translation and pronunciation of local names. The question is a difficult one to settle, and is further complicated by the fact that there is another Urtas near Antioch which has certainly nothing to do with Hortus, a garden.

plan of which is fairly clearly indicated, show that the building was placed under the protection of St. Jean d'Acre or the Templars. A stone, marked with a cross, which I saw there about 1870, leaves no doubt in my mind on that point.

The kings of Jerusalem probably possessed the privilege of including Wady Urtas in their possessions, but the cultivation of its fertile soil, recommenced in 1099, must have been suddenly stopped when, after the Battle of Hattin, in 1187, the last Christian king of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, fell into the power of Saladin. Urtas was captured by the Saracens on September 5th, 1187. In Hugues Platon's words, "Le jor qu'Escalone fu perdue, li rendi l'on tous les Chastiaus qui environ etoient." During the Sultan's pourparlers for the possession of Jerusalem and the siege, which lasted but a fortnight, all the churches and convents in the neighbourhood were destroyed by the invaders. Deir el Banat and the Church of the Garden fell at the end of September. For more than a century had the sound of bells[1] been heard in the district, and the destruction was so complete that almost every trace of the church, which I believe was situated near the centre of the present village, disappeared.

During that period in the history of Palestine

[1] More than seven centuries elapsed before Christian bells were once more sounded. In 1894 the Convent of St. Mary of the Garden was built at Urtas.

which is known as "the great blank"—that is from the fall of Jerusalem to the re-introduction of Christian missions into the Holy Land—the story of Urtas is very incomplete. A few interesting fragments have, however, come down to us.

Between 1573 and 1575 the valley was visited by a distinguished botanist, Dr. Leonardus Rauwolffus, who, enumerating the most remarkable plants, "in horto Salomonis prope Bethleëmam," includes the pomegranate, the orange and the fig. Oranges are no longer grown there, or anywhere in Judah, except at the village of Tanour, near Beit-'Etab.

Because of the conduit which led the water from Solomon's Pools and the springs 'Ain Etan and 'Ain Saleh to the Mosque of Jerusalem, the inhabitants of the village were exempted from taxes during the whole of the domination of the Arab sultans. The Mosque of Urtas was itself dedicated to the same Khalif Omar Ibn Khattab as the one in the Holy City.

The chiefs of the village, exonerated from all burdens, possessed not only a certain independence but even enjoyed the right of distributing justice to neighbouring villages and tribes,—a right which they abused to such an extent that at last a revolution was provoked, and they were overthrown. Nevertheless, under their authority Urtas again prospered. These kinglets forced a

good deal of the commerce of the district to pass their way ; they possessed a palace of justice, a large prison and a gibbet for recalcitrant ones. The Mosque was situated in the centre of the village ; the palace of justice was to the east. Forty years ago a portion of the donjon, with the large iron rings to which prisoners were attached fixed in the walls, could still be seen.

Conflict with the people of Seïr, near Hebron, resulted, at the close of the Middle Ages, in the almost total destruction of the inhabitants of Urtas. Those who escaped the massacre took refuge with distant relatives or in the fortress near Solomon's Pools. The stronghold was ceded to them on condition that they saw to the proper working of the water supply and the protection of the road from Jerusalem to Hebron,—duties which they carried out in a far from satisfactory manner. Frequently they were guilty of pillaging the caravans of traders and isolated pilgrims who passed their way. From time to time, however, punishment came. The Ta'amré Bedawîn descended upon their hives and fruit gardens, so that at last they were obliged to transport the former to their hill-top fortress and definitely abandon the latter.

During the long civil wars of the red and white factions of the Kesi and Yamani, which lasted throughout the eighteenth and a part of the nineteenth centuries, the inhabitants of Urtas

carried contraband arms and ammunition first to the one and then to the other party. At the beginning of the nineteenth century and until the reign of Abdul Medjid they paid their taxes with great irregularity and were continually in revolt. But in 1830, on the invasion of Palestine by Ibrahim Pasha, they sided with Sultan Mahmood II and valiantly defended the territory.

III

The modern history of the Gardens of Solomon I date from 1837 when Robinson made his researches in Palestine. The road then passed in the middle of the valley " through gardens and watered fields," but doubtless all the water of the springs of Urtas was not utilised, for the author of *Biblical Researches in Palestine* continues to say, " The little stream was soon absorbed in the thirsty gravelly soil of the valley, and the gardens ceased."

In 1848 my father came to Urtas, bought land there and built a small house. But the inhabitants came to him only during the day to work in our plantations, and, for fear of the Ta'amrés, retired as soon as night came to their fortress. Later, a second colonist, Mr. Meshullam, joined him, gave a further impetus to agriculture, and succeeded, through sheer force of character, in introducing relative security into the district. Other colonists, Americans and Germans, followed the example of these two pioneers, but remained only a short time. From 1859 to 1863 the son of my

father's associate, Mr. Peter Meshullam, lived at Urtas and to a certain extent ruled over the locality. He attempted to introduce a special system of forestry, obliging owners to respect their forests and protecting those which belonged to the community. Furthermore, he himself dealt out justice to delinquents. Tyrannical, but at the same time exceedingly hospitable by nature, he often took what he needed for his guests from the first shepherd he saw. He was a protector of widows and orphans, and any woman who was oppressed by her husband or relatives could always count on finding a safe home in one or other of the numerous country houses which he possessed at Bakoosh and Faghur in the Wady el Biar. Considering the jealous and vengeful nature of the Arabs, it is not surprising that Peter Meshullam at last became their victim, although his death is still enveloped in mystery. Whilst riding to Tekoa, south of Urtas, he fell at 'Ain Hamdeh, near the Frank Mountain, from his horse and broke a leg. The friends who were accompanying him returned to Urtas for help, leaving him in charge of a servant ; but on their return they found that he was dead and that the servant had disappeared.[1]

[1] For an interesting account of the early life of Peter Meshullam and his extraordinary authority over the Bedawîn, whilst yet only a boy of sixteen, see Van der Velde's *Narrative of a Journey through Syria and Palestine in* 1851 *and* 1852, vol. ii, chap. 1 (William Blackwood and Sons, 1854).

In 1858 H.R.H. Prince Alfred, a son of Queen Victoria, visited Urtas and purchased a few acres of land to the south of Urtas on the side of a mountain called Abu Zeid. Arranged in terraces, the land was planted with vines and almond-trees; and these remained under the superintendence of Mr. Meshullam. For many years, in the summer, Mr. Finn, the British Consul in Jerusalem, used to come to Urtas with his family to spend a few days there. It was thanks to his aid, both financially and morally, that at least one kilometre of gardens were added to those already existing, and that the reputation of Urtas for fine fruit and vegetables became known far and wide.

Europeans have done much to make the modern reputation of the Gardens of Solomon. They have greatly ameliorated the fruit trees; and as to vegetables, the Venetians as early as the seventeenth century—as words of Italian origin clearly show—introduced a large number which were totally unknown to the Arabs, such as tomatoes (in Arabic Banadora, from *pommi d'ore*), egg-apples (Betinjan, from *melongena*), peas (Bizelle, from *picella*), and haricot beans (Fasulia, from *faciolla*). As regards fruit, Urtas is specially famous for its pears, peaches and figs, which, during July, August and September, attract thousands of people to its picturesque orchards.

In 1850, my father, called to other duties in

Jerusalem, and having disposed of his first house at the bottom of the valley to Mr. Meshullam, built a new one in the very centre of the village and on the perpendicular rock above the stream. The site he chose was that of the ancient church of the Crusaders. As the Arab builders whom he employed set about their work, they pulled down a certain wall painted with frescoes, representing the figures of saints. Little did my brother and I, as we looked on with boyish amusement, guess the inestimable archæological value of those twelfth century remains.

Little Urtas, which occupies the attention of some two hundred Moslem inhabitants, apart from the handful of Europeans who still make it their home and the inmates of the convent, built in 1894, has been connected with Jerusalem by a carriage road since 1901. Although the new route is much longer than the old one along which the camels used to stumble in the days of my youth, it is now possible to make an afternoon excursion to the Gardens and Pools of Solomon, where the contemplative visitor cannot fail to be rewarded by a host of vivid impressions and fruitful reflections.

VI

MURDER AND MARRIAGE IN URTAS

"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death."—Exodus xxi. 12.

There is hardly a village in Palestine, no matter how tiny, but has "blood between families." Even when killed by accident, a man must be revenged. Bible, Koran and modern population entirely agree on this point. As a rule, the manslayer must pay for the crime with his own blood, but should he be found unworthy, another man of his kindred may be taken in his place. An uncle or cousin—even a distant cousin—is still responsible, though the murderer himself is preferable. With Oriental patience a Bedawi once waited forty years for his Ghareem, but seeing he could not find the identical murderer he killed a cousin. A quarter of an hour later he met the Ghareem himself. How he regretted that he had acted too hastily!

Urtas was no exception to this rule. When my father came to the village and bought land there in 1848 the four Hamulies, or groups of families, Shahini and Mashani, Rib'i and Ehseini, were in conflict, but lived together in the castle above Solomon's Pools, coming down to Urtas only during the day to look after their gardens, and retiring

at sunset for fear of the neighbouring Ta'amré Bedawîn. In the course of a few years these four families, regaining confidence owing to my father's example and the more settled state of the country, returned to their ruined sites. But no sooner had they once more settled down and the Ta'amré power had been destroyed by the Turkish officials at Jerusalem—no sooner had a kind of authority been set up by the Pashas than they began to think about their own bloody feuds again. From generation to generation retaliation—that Thar which requires that no murdered man shall remain unrevenged—had been practised.

Now, at the time our story opens, a part of the Shahini family, tired of this eternal vendetta, had left the village, looking for aid and refuge at some Tanîb in the south.[1] Returning home from Bethlehem one day, they met, near the ruins of Etam, Ibrahim et-Taiesh of the allied Mashani and mistook him for a member of the adverse Rib'i family. Suddenly, Khaleel Abu-l-Ghreir struck Ibrahim on the back with an axe and almost severed his vertebral column. "Ah! Son of a dog," said he. "We have met you at last!" Falling to the ground, Ibrahim, then a vigorous youth of about twenty, cried out to the men that they were mistaken and prayed them not to soil their hands with innocent blood,[2]

[1] *Cf.* Deuteronomy xix. 5.
[2] Exodus xxiii. 7.

and thus give rise to a new Thar. But Abdallah 'Odey, advancing in his turn, almost scalped him with his sword, crying: "Are we children, son of a whore? May God have no mercy on thy parents, nor on thy martyrs—Allah la yer'ham wâldache walla shahdâche!" By this time Hassan Ehmad had drawn his sword and, putting his knee on Ibrahim's breast, endeavoured to cut the wounded man's throat. In his anguish, Ibrahim protected his neck with his hands and by so doing only received severe wounds on his knuckles. But it would have gone ill with him had not a shepherd boy, just at that critical moment, been heard playing on his Neïyé whilst climbing the rocks with his goats. The three murderers suddenly interrupted their ghastly work and fled. Ibrahim endeavoured to rise, held up the scalp which had fallen over his face, and with a loud voice cursed his retreating assailants,[1] at the same time calling for help. The shepherd boy, hearing the curses and calls, in turn called out in every direction: "Jei ya Naas jei —This way, oh! people!" The call was repeated from mountain to mountain, until friend and foe hurried towards the place where Ibrahim was found lying in his blood.

As the murderers were known and the mistake was acknowledged, negotiations were carried on between the parties and a blood gratification was

[1] Judges ii. 7.

agreed upon. A reconciliation feast was held, garments were exchanged and it was declared openly that there should be no thought of any further revenge.

But peace never reigned for long in Urtas. Some months later, one of the Ehseinis, Hassan by name, was captured by the Pasha's tax-gathering troops when they were passing near the pools of Solomon ; he had been denounced by a Mashani as having revolted against the authorities. As justice was very summary in those days, he was beheaded there and then on the road and his body abandoned. Brought to Urtas, the dead man was buried and immediately a fresh cause for Thar arose. But patiently the Ehseinis waited for an opportunity to take their revenge.

Years passed, during which the Rib'i and Mashani struggled for supremacy. Ibrahim et-Taiesh was now head of the latter and Salem er Ro'hmane chief of the former. The presents of Salem to the authorities in Jerusalem, with whom he was anxious to remain in favour, were more numerous and more choice than those of Ibrahim, and consequently he was held in greater consideration at the Seraiya of the Governor. When it was rumoured that Ibrahim had come into the possession of wealth,[1] he endeavoured to make capital out of it, but as there was no proof he accused the Mashani of theft, robbery, murder

[1] See *Ibrahim's Wealth*, pp. 127–138.

and all kinds of crime, real or imaginary. As he had been previously elected responsible Mukhtar, this new position of mayor gave him more power, which Sheikh Salem used and abused until he had alienated the whole village with the exception of two or three persons.

A perfect type of the old Fellah chief was Sheikh Salem, with his enormous turban, spotless white Thôb, red silken Kaftan, red pointed shoes and sheepskin jacket. As a rule, he wore a pair of pistols in his girdle ; and being of a combative nature, was feared by both great and small. He had two wives, both foreigners. Helwy, his first helpmate, was from ʿAjur and was a long time before she had living children. He therefore married a dark Bedawiyé of the Taʿamré, by whom he had three boys and a girl. The fair Helwy, like Rachel, was beloved and was ever jealous of her Durra, the dark co-wife. ʿAlia the Bedawiyé retained her dark Bedawi clothes, whilst Helwy imitated the more gaudy Bethlehemite women in her toilet. The whole family lived in one small room and sometimes additional guests would help to fill it, especially during winter nights or rainy days, when members of the clan would squat round the fire, smoking, drinking coffee and planning the subjugation of the Mashanis.

To possess Bawardi[1] and thus strengthen the party is a greater ambition with a Fellah than to

[1] Armed men.

have wealth. So Salem looked out for a girl in the adverse camp suitable for his nephew 'Ethmane, who had been unfortunate in his first marriage. His wife was barren. Besides, through ill-treating her, she had left him and gone to her father's house. More than one episode in her life reminds us of Michal, Saul's daughter,[1] especially her return again when 'Ethmane was more powerful.[2] After much searching, Salem found the girl he was looking for in the Shahini family. This family consisted of four men with their wives and numerous children and for the time being was on good terms with Salem and with Ibrahim. Mustapha Shahine, the head, agreed with Salem that the girl, Sarah, fifteen years old and the daughter of Khaleel Ibrahim, should be betrothed to 'Ethmane as soon as the sum of Os. 40[3] was paid, in addition to the usual garments and marriage offerings. However, after lengthy negotiations, this arrangement was abandoned in favour of a more family one. Khaleel, besides having a son who was Khateeb of the village, had another, Sliman, who was also of an age to marry. So, as 'Ethmane had an unmarried sister, Sa'ada, the parties agreed that the bridegrooms should exchange sisters, each one giving presents to the other party as wedding garments.[4]

[1] I. Samuel xviii. 27; xix. 12-17. [2] II. Samuel iii. 13-16.
[3] The Ottoman pound sterling is equivalent to 23 francs.
[4] II. Kings v. 22.

The marriages were fixed for the seventh day of the month of Rabee—the spring. The first crescent of the moon was high in the sky when, by the women's Zagharît[1] the festivities were announced. From the flat roofs of 'Ethmane's and Sliman's houses the ululations echoed from one side of the mountain to the other over the deep depression which divided the village in two. Before every Zaghroot[2] the women or girls announced the forthcoming feasts and generosity of the bride-grooms, the young men firing all the while and the elderly men, in low voices, accompanying the Sa'hjy, that all-in-a-row dance in which ten or more men join. At last, after seven evenings of dancing, singing, coffee-drinking, smoking and firing, the wedding day arrived.

Both brides, in their best clothes, ostrich feather crowns, and all their furniture, were set on camels and led to their prospective homes. As the village belonged to the Kase faction, the two women wore thick red impermeable veils over their faces, the first and last time, according to Fellah custom, they would be veiled. Sarah's camel was led by her cousin Jouseph, who, had he exercised his right, could have claimed her as his wife; Sa'ada's camel was in charge of her cousin Moosa Salem, who could likewise have asked for her hand and obtained it. Following the camels were the brides' kin, singing and firing as they marched

[1] Ululations. [2] Singular of "Zagharît."

along. When the two processions met, the young men had a mock fight, and Jouseph and Moosa received a Majidi each, a supposed payment for releasing the brides and allowing the " foreigners " to take them. Meanwhile, to avoid the effects of the Evil Eye, the heads of the families, Salem and Mustapha, each representing their respective bride and bridegroom, stepped aside and, with Sheikh 'Awad, the Khateeb, to give his blessing, secretly tied the marriage knots. Quietly the processions entered their new homes, where the camels were made to kneel down and the brides alighted, still covered with their veils.[1] The evening was spent in preparing the supper for the guests ; there was more singing, ululating and shooting ; and the young couples were then considered to be married.

During the preparations for these festivities and for some months afterwards, everything seemed forgotten between the rival factions of Urtas, for Salem's party was now strengthened by many Bawardi. But a year was hardly over than new troubles once more broke out. Ibrahim continued to feign poverty, in order to escape the notice of the friend of Salem, Jouseph Agha, the captain of gendarmes. One day, however, he was arrested, bound together with his wife and dragged to prison. Whether Jouseph Agha found him innocent or whether convincing gold helped Ibrahim

[1] Genesis xxiv. 64-65.

out is not known. Anyway, he was released and at once began to plan his revenge on Salem. Thoroughly on his guard, Salem alleged that cattle-lifting and burglary were being carried on to his detriment, and in his endeavour to convince the authorities that almost all the village had united against him, he became so disliked that, during his absence in Jerusalem, a plot was formed and the "tyrant" was condemned to death. As there were several roads leading to Urtas, armed men were placed in ambush everywhere. Fellahîn are almost as keen as Indians, and Salem suspected the trap. Therefore, on his way home, he suddenly turned off the road, near Rachel's tomb, and set off in the direction of Bethlehem to join friends there and escape. But, unhappily for him, two of the plotters, Jabber and Sliman, followed from afar, and, seeing him take another way, hurried into the olive-groves, where they soon overtook him as he rode slowly along on his ass. With a well-directed blow from Jabber's Naboot, Salem was knocked from his animal, whilst Sliman, his nephew, drew his Shibriyé and cut his throat.[1] An old Bethlehemite, an involuntary witness of the murder, became dumb with terror and was unable to report what he had seen until the next day, by which time the murderers had escaped through the groves and reached home. This happened in the afternoon, so the body was

[1] *Cf.* II. Samuel iii. 30.

soon discovered and the news, like wildfire, spread to Urtas. Less than an hour afterwards the dead man's people came and carried him home. Friend and foe joined in the procession : some to mourn, others secretly to rejoice. As the Khateeb of Urtas was suspected of being one of the plotters, the Khateeb of El Khudr was called in to officiate at the funeral service. The body was thoroughly washed, sewed up in a fresh shroud and carried to the tomb that same evening. A dead body must never remain unburied lest the land be defiled,[1] and it be unprepared to answer the questions put by Naker and Nkêr, the examining angels in the grave, who awaken the dead man, inform him that he is dead, and then ask him about his good and bad deeds. It is for this reason that the Moslem graves have empty spaces and that slabs are put over the bodies to avoid the earth touching them.

The Khaled family provided for the funeral supper given to as many as chose to be present and show their sympathy for the bereaved. Before this supper every man present embraced the other as a token of reconciliation in the presence of death, and the bereft were greeted with the words : "Salamet Rasak—Your head is safe."

Since the introduction of Turkish laws into Palestine cases of murder such as this were ordered to be judged at the Tribunal at Jerusalem.

[1] Deuteronomy xxi. 23.

The family council, however, thought that they ought to act by themselves and take their own vengeance so that "the shame be put away." Nevertheless, friends and a few remaining allies were inclined to put the matter in the hands of the authorities. The outcome was that Jabber and Sliman were kept in prison for several years, and whilst they bribed the officials to obtain better treatment 'Ethmane and his friends used bribes to keep them where they were. When the finances of everyone were exhausted, when their lands had been mortgaged and no more money was to be procured, both prisoners were dismissed "for want of further proof."

Sliman, the throat-cutter, escaped further judgment. But what happened to him eventually? Spots came out on his body, then ulcers; a toe or a finger became bent and withered; and finally he was declared a leper. His wife went home to her brother and obtained a divorce. His own people avoided him. Was this a punishment from Allah, as some said; or was his malady hereditary, as more enlightened folk concluded? His father and grandfather had been physically sound, with the exception of a crooked limb or so, and the itch—the legacy from another generation. However, Sliman had to join the band of miserable lepers at the Jaffa Gate, to live on alms given by merciful passers-by, until, one by one, his fingers and nose, ears and toes disappeared. Every

evening he retired to the common lazar-house above Job's Well, near Siloam. He had refused to join either Jesus Hilf, the German hospital for lepers, or the Leproserie de St. Lazare, both so well kept by devout Protestant and Catholic Sisters. There he feared to be obliged to become a Christian and pray after Christian manners. So, when almost every limb was infested, when his voice had become extinct, and you could no longer tell whether his hideous face was smiling or crying, he continued to decay away and was buried far from his home.

VII

IBRAHIM'S WEALTH

I

THE Plain of Rephaim, south of Jerusalem, was full of waving corn. In spite of the prevailing heat, the harvest could hardly be expected before July. As usual, not a drop of rain had fallen since the end of April, and none could be expected before the end of October.

Immense flint-stone rocks cover all the mountain and the declivity south-east of Rephaim. In the twilight these stones, scattered in all positions, could easily be mistaken for man or beast, and many a legend has been woven around their fantastic forms, legends which could not fail to pass through the mind of a young man who, in the early light of morning, was quietly lying in a sheltered and dominating position above the road.

Owing to the youth's special point of vantage, the dryness of the weather, and other natural causes, noises from almost every direction could easily be detected by him from afar. Moreover, in the rapidly increasing light, he could see, a mile or two away, the silhouette of Mar Elias, the Greek convent of Elijah, so called from the print in the rock left by the holy body of the

Prophet when he fled from Ahab and lay down to rest on his way to the wilderness.

Jabber es-Saleh, the young man in question, was from the village of Beth-Safafa, at the entrance to the Valley of the Roses, just opposite the place where he was sitting. From his observatory he could survey the road and distinctly hear the voices of passers-by even when at a great distance. A company of donkey-drivers stopping near the Sabeel[1] of Mar Elias could be heard by him with remarkable distinctness, and amongst the voices he felt sure that he could distinguish the harsh vocables of his cousin Ibrahim. He was right. Ibrahim-et-Taiesh, of the village of Urtas, was indeed on his way to Jerusalem, driving his donkey before him, loaded with two long baskets of tomatoes for the market.

Dawn had come. The first streaks of light in the distance, behind the mountains of Moab, east of Jordan, announced the rising sun. As the glorious sight appeared to his eyes, Ibrahim, as every Moslem believer does when "God sends the morning," stroked his beard and, in a loud and rhythmical voice, exclaimed: "Eshhadu inno la Illaha ill-Allah, wa Muhammad Rasoul Allah!—I witness that God is the only God and that

[1] This Sabeel, or well, was set up by the authorities of the Greek Convent to supply water to travellers, who, flocking there, often cause a great uproar. These roadside wells are considered such a great blessing in this dry land that the Turkish Government exempts those who set them up from the usual duties on the land and properties adjoining.

Mohammed is His Prophet!" Then, in lower tones, he murmured the Fatiha, or opening chapter of the Koran, interrupting his prayers now and then by pushing and cursing the donkey, "He! He! Yallah!"—to encourage him to hasten forward and reach the gates of the Holy City before sunrise.

When Jabber had come to the conclusion that his keen ears had not deceived him, he descended towards the main road and, enveloped in his grey and white Abba, sat down on a rock to await Ibrahim's arrival. As soon as his cousin was near enough, he rose and advanced to greet him with an "Allah ye sabhak bil kher ya Abu Muhammad."[1] Ibrahim at once recognised the voice of his cousin Jabber es Saleh, and answered his greeting. "Ja saba'h el kher, ya Abu Abed! —Oh! morning with plenty—Oh! Father of Abed," he said. And both men walked silently for a few moments in the direction of the town.

The arid mountains around them were tinged a roseate colour and by degrees the white-washed mosque of the village of Beth-Safafa came into view. As it did so a prayer, addressed to the patron-prophetess El Badariyeh, was muttered by both men. Little did they think that the venerated Badariyeh of the Moslems was a Christian saint before the Aurora of the Greeks,

[1] "God give you a plentiful morning, oh! Abu Muhammad." Every Oriental enjoys the title of Abu, which corresponds to our Mr.

and probably before that dedicated to some Ashteroth of the Israelites and Canaanites, since most sanctuaries in Palestine can be traced to the dawn of history.

When their prayer was at an end, Jabber hastened to unburden his mind of the information which had prompted him to go to meet his cousin on the road at such an unusual hour. He disclosed to Ibrahim that his brother, Saïd es-Saleh, was in prison at Jerusalem.

"Wa hayat hal Badariyeh!—By the life of the Saint!" said he, lifting his hand in the direction of the rose-tinted mosque, "I declare that poor Saïd is innocent; and he has sent me to ask you to go see him, bring him some food and help him out of his position."

Lowering his voice, as if the surrounding fields had ears, he added:—

"He is suspected of having stolen a huge sum of money from the Latin Convent at Jerusalem. You are known to have influence with the officials, so do your best to deliver him."

Money questions are always interesting, and especially were they so to Ibrahim, whose crafty mind at once detected a gold mine. But he feigned to disregard the pecuniary side of the matter and take an interest only in the prisoner's welfare. Poor Saïd! Another innocent one within the clutches of the hated Turk! Promising to do what he could, he advised his cousin to leave

him there and then, lest they should be seen together and arouse suspicion. So Jabber promptly left him and crossed the plain towards his native home.

II

Immediately Ibrahim drove up the hill towards the Jaffa Gate, where he was met by a greengrocer, who gave him a piaster and a half for breakfast, and thus prepared him favourably in view of the purchase of his tomatoes. Before they had reached the little plateau in front of the gate the grocer called out to the Kahwadji of a neighbouring coffee-house to bring two cups of coffee, and, stopping Ibrahim's donkey, pointed to two low stools. When seated, the grocer offered his companion thirty piasters Sagh[1] for the thirty rottels[2] of tomatoes. After a good deal of cursing and swearing "by his eyes and his head, his children and his own presence" that this offer was "a total loss" to him, they agreed and rose to continue their journey through the gate. Very soon they reached the grocer's shop and the tomatoes were poured out on to the floor, with a few crushed fruit at the bottom. This gave rise to new imprecations.

"I have no distilling shop here, son of a dog," cried the grocer. "Do you think I am about to

[1] About 5s.
[2] A rottel is equal to six and a half pounds.

set up a drinking den, you dirty Fellah. Accursed son! Kafer! Infidel!"

Finally the irate tradesman gave Ibrahim twenty-eight piasters and, to boot, almost flung him out of the shop.

As though quite accustomed to this treatment, Ibrahim coolly moved away with his donkey towards a Khan, where he hastened to put up the animal before hurrying to the Saraia, or Governor's Palace, which, as in olden times, was adjacent to the prison.[1] All the time he had been occupied with the greengrocer, and indeed ever since he had left Jabber, his thoughts had centred around his imprisoned cousin. Whilst on his way he stopped in the market to buy a few cakes for Saïd, and on reaching his destination obtained admittance to see him by giving a few coppers to the prison-porter. On seeing his unfortunate cousin he gravely shook his head and exclaimed: "Poor Saïd! How the vermin have devoured you! In what a sorry condition are your clothes!"

Saïd replied that there was little to wonder at in that; there were more than twenty in his cell, and every one tried to sleep as best he could on the bare ground. Penniless, he received the least food possible. After having eagerly devoured the few cakes Ibrahim had brought with him, they retired to a corner of the court and, squatting there, Saïd told him his story.

[1] *Cf.* Jeremiah xxxii. 2.

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Jaffa Gate

" As you know, I was a servant of the Secretary and Prior of the Convent of the Redeemer in Jerusalem, and many big sums of money passed through his hands. The Secretary was in the habit of carelessly putting the money-box under his bed, before carrying it to the bank. One day the Prior fell ill and, after a few days' unconsciousness, died, without anybody knowing of the treasure in his room. Here was a good opportunity for me. As they carried the dead body into the chapel, I appropriated the money-box, containing no less than 30,000 Napoleons, and that very night buried the money in Beth-Safafa ; and whilst they were still officiating about the dead body I was back again in the convent without anyone having noticed my absence. But after a few days it transpired that the money-box had disappeared. I was arrested and charged with theft. There is no proof, however, and as long as I feign to be poor they cannot prove my guilt even in the future. Now, cousin," said the guileful Saïd, " I'll tell you where the money is. Go and take it away and hide it until we see better days. Then we can divide it. But in the meantime take a few hundred pounds and get me out of prison. Buy clothes and food for me ; bribe the officials, so that I may be better treated until my innocence is proved. You will find the box buried a foot deep in the earth on the small hill on the eastern side of the solitary olive-tree which

is in a straight line west of the Badariyeh. Swear to me by the Badariyeh, my cousin, that you will dig out the box and help me."

Ibrahim promptly swore by the Badariyeh and by God that he would take the treasure without delay—" provided it is still there," he added, with a crafty and sceptical look. And having taken a farewell cup of coffee, which the jailer provided, Ibrahim departed.

III

That same evening Ibrahim et-Taiesh went out to Beth-Safafa and passed the night at his cousin's. He discovered that nobody but himself and Saïd knew anything about the treasure, so he wisely kept his tongue still on that point. The information he gave the imprisoned man's friends and relatives concerned the horrible state of the prison, the thieves and murderers who were Saïd's companions—all sorts of disreputable people, mostly Fellahîn of the Jerusalem district, whose company would only corrupt the poor fellow. Ibrahim went on to say that he had come, therefore, to collect some money from them to help to better his miserable condition. That evening a few hundred Beshliks[1] were collected and these Ibrahim promised to take home, to try to find some more in Urtas to add to them, and then to set to work for the prisoner's release.

[1] A Beshlik is about 5d.

Early next morning, when it was yet dark, Ibrahim left Beth-Safafa and found the tree beneath which the treasure was buried. Unearthing the money-box without much difficulty, he hid its contents in his pockets and baskets and, abandoning the box, quietly returned to Urtas.

Weeks and months passed and still poor Saïd was waiting in vain for the promised help. Ibrahim never went to pay him as much as a visit, but sent Jabber to tell him that he had not been able to carry out "the commission," and therefore he could do nothing for him, except send bread and oil from time to time, thanks to a collection which had been made for him. Finally, declaring that he was tired of bribing the officials to no effect, he advised Saïd to await his turn to be released, and, like the chief of the butlers in Pharaoh's days, did his best "to forget him."[1]

To keep Saïd in prison the authorities of the convent had from time to time to disburse sums of money. This prompted them, at last, to plead "not guilty" for their old servant; and thus Saïd's first trials came to an end.

Saïd was no sooner out of prison than, thinking that Ibrahim had not succeeded in locating the treasure, he proceeded to the spot where he had buried it. But, much to his disappointment, he found it was gone. Shortly afterwards, whilst

[1] Genesis xl. 23.

on his way to Urtas, he discovered the empty box behind a bush. Was Ibrahim, he thought, the culprit? That was a question he would not be long in solving.

Continuing on his way, he struck the main road to Bethlehem, near Rachel's tomb. A number of Bedawîn, men and women, were assembled there for a funeral service, for the Bedawîn of the desert of Judah all bury their dead near Rachel's sanctuary, as their forefathers the Israelites of old did around their sanctuaries.[1] Being a good Moslem, he joined the assembly and told them how, just out of prison, he was on his way to his cousin Ibrahim, at Urtas. Then he left them, and before evening arrived in the village. Saïd fully expected to find his cousin a wealthy man, but, to his astonishment and delight, instead of finding luxury and abundance, he found the whole family, consisting of Ibrahim, his wife, and nine children, all in one room just home from hard work in the fields, and about to sit down to an almost poor supper of lentils and bread. He was given a hearty welcome and kept there for several days, during which he went to work with the others. "No," thought Saïd, at the end of his sojourn, "there is not the slightest sign of wealth here. I am sorry to have suspected my cousin of villainy." And forthwith he decided to go back to Jerusalem and find work in his old convent!

[1] Genesis xlix. 31.

IV

During many centuries bloody feuds had been carried on in the village of Urtas between Ibrahim's and Salem's people.[1] About the time of Saïd's release from prison the head of Ibrahim's adverse party was not very prosperous financially. But, being in favour with the officials in Jerusalem, he was elected Mayor of the village. The two enemies closely watched each other, and Ibrahim knew that if he showed the least imprudence his ill-gotten wealth would soon be discovered and be a cause for new trouble. For the time being, poverty, he decided, was the best policy.

Years went by and the arrogance of Salem grew apace. Vexations of all kinds were heaped upon Salem's enemies. Ibrahim and his wife were bound together—an unspeakable insult in Islam—and were taken to gaol to Hebron on the most futile motive. After a time they were released by order of the officials. Ibrahim's people were charged with double and treble taxes ; his fourteen and fifteen-year-old sons were denounced as twenty and of an age for conscription, and money had to be paid in Jerusalem to convince the authorities that they were still under age. At last the vexations became too hard, a plot was formed and Salem was found dead.[2] Whereupon Ibrahim and some of the leaders of his party were

[1] See *Murder and Marriage in Urtas*, pp. 122, 123.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

imprisoned, and for over two years had to feed on "the bread of affliction and the water of affliction."[1] When Salem's party had exhausted its funds by bribing the officials to keep its enemies in prison, it became Ibrahim's turn to show the power of his hand. He and his people were released, and the moment that he stepped out of prison he knew that his buried money, now that Salem was dead, could be used advantageously.

Not very long afterwards he, in turn, was elected Mayor of Urtas. By slow degrees he got back the family lands, gardens and vineyards which—to his dishonour[2]—had been mortgaged. After a life of poverty and many hardships he again came into the possession of the properties inherited from his forefathers—the result, as everyone concluded, of a life of assiduous labour, and an evident blessing from Allah, the bestower of all good things.

[1] I. Kings xxii. 27.

[2] A Fellah is only considered to be really wealthy when he possesses land, and, like Naboth of old (see I. Kings xxi. 1, 3 and 4), he will not readily part with the inheritance of his fathers. Losing his land is as much a dishonour as possessing a dishonoured wife.

VIII

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

I

THE frogs of Jericho had reached the noisiest part of their nocturnal concert. Croak had begun to answer croak fully a couple of hours before, and now the whole countryside echoed with the harsh rasping notes from a hundred thousand distended cheek-pouches. The howling of jackals in the distance alone broke the monotonous song. Yet the small mud-hut town, enclosed by Dôm-tree hedges and inhabited by a few hundred poor Bedawîn agriculturists, tranquilly slept on, and the *habitués* of the modern buildings which serve as hotels on the outskirts turned not once in their sleep. Only Philip Ralston, a new-comer to the country, found a difficulty in slumbering.

> ". . . . . ranæque palustres
> Avertunt somnos,"

he said to himself, as the incessant croaking brought the words of Horace to his mind, and, what with the frogs, the heat and the fierce buzzing of baffled mosquitoes outside his tightly-drawn curtains, he came to the conclusion that, tired out though he was with his six hours' ride from Jerusalem, he was destined to pass a sleepless night.

It was Philip Ralston's first visit to the East, and his mind was full of those delightful early impressions which are produced by the unfamiliar scenery of a new country, full of light and colour, and the strange picturesqueness of a new people. Fresh from Oxford, where he had pursued his studies with infinite credit, he had come out to Palestine, at the invitation of his uncle Theodore Ralston, a prosperous English trader and old resident of Jerusalem, with the object of perfecting his knowledge of Arabic and exploring the land to which his thoughts had so often turned. He had an ardent desire to know the country as his uncle Theodore knew it: to traverse the length and breadth of the high-lands of Palestine, formed by the running down of two mountain chains from Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon,—to wander on the lowlands of the Jordan valley, or El Ghor, between those two ranges, and on the Plains of Sharon, along the shore of the Mediterranean,—to see the Jordan rise at the foot of snow-capped Mount Hermon and, perhaps, to follow its course to the south end of the Dead Sea, nearly four thousand feet below Jerusalem and more than a thousand below the level of the Mediterranean. Ah! thought the weary Philip Ralston, what pleasures were in store for him! He had had a foretaste of them that day when, whilst riding with his uncle to Jericho, they had tarried on the Mount of Olives to view the Mountains of Moab;

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Plain of Jericho and Dead Sea, from Olivet

an immense blue wall—beautiful to behold—rising in the Transjordanic region.

But how hot it was in El Ghor! He could understand, now, that 110° in the shade had been registered there on May 8th, 1847, and why someone had said that Jericho was "the hottest place next to hell!"

Was uncle Theodore sleeping through it all? he wondered. But the point was left undebated, for just then the incessant croak, croak, croak of the frogs performed its work and Philip Ralston, turning over on his side, at last found sleep.

II

Uncle and nephew were in the saddle at dawn, riding towards the Jordan. They had not been on their journey across the broad valley for more than an hour before there occurred one of those little wayside incidents which so delighted the heart of Philip Ralston. At a turning of the white, dusty road they saw coming towards them, on a pure-bred Arab steed, a fine-looking Bedawi chief. He was riding slowly, as the Bedawîn always do, except when in danger, and was armed and accoutred in accordance with his station. A carabine was hanging from his saddle-knob; he was girded by a Damascene sword, inlaid with silver; and on his shoulder he was carrying his heavy twelve-foot long spear, with its ornamental crown of black ostrich feathers—about the size

of a man's head—around the shaft, just below the blade. The breast and belly of his fine mare were entirely covered with long tassels in red, green, white and yellow, to ward off the flies, and as it proudly stepped along these pendent ornaments danced and shimmered in the morning sun like gems suspended on silken cords.

"Ah! an old friend of mine!" exclaimed Theodore Ralston, on seeing the Bedawi. "Now, Philip, my boy, you will take your first lesson in Eastern ceremonial."

And he pushed forward on his horse to offer the customary greeting: "Salaam aleik—Peace be to you!"

"Aleik es-salaam!—And to you peace also!" responded the Bedawi, a stately man with black moustachios and a beard resembling that of Napoleon III, but without its artifice.

"Sleem Ali-el-Thiab, this is my nephew, Philip Ralston, who has come from afar to be one of us," continued the uncle, in the purest Arabic. "We are on our way to feast our eyes on the sacred waters of the Jordan."

With these words, the English trader, as an additional token of friendship, held forth his tobacco bag, which every real Bedawi accepts gratefully. Sleem filled his long pipe and returned the pouch, with a wish that "it might always be full." Theodore Ralston received it back and said, "by your voice." These compliments

preceded the lighting of the pipe, when others were exchanged.

"May you never know its evil," said the trader, as he handed a lighted match.

"Nor you its heat," responded the Bedawi, as, with evident satisfaction, he applied it to the bowl and began to inhale the fragrant smoke.

III

When Sleem Ali-el-Thiab, after stating his business in Jericho and wishing them, in the name of Allah, a safe journey, had gone on his way, Theodore Ralston explained when and where he had made this dignified man's acquaintance. It was a curious story, embodying a tragic adventure in the life of the Bedawi chief, and full of those little known ethnological and scientific facts which can only be gathered during long years of intimate contact with a country and its people. Philip felt that he would not have missed it for the world.

"It was at the beginning of April, 1874, early in the morning, that I first saw Sleem Ali-el-Thiab," began the trader. "He was riding slowly along this very road, but in the opposite direction to which he was going to-day, and he was dressed and armed in exactly the way you have seen him. I became his friend, on trotting up to him with a 'Salaam aleik,' after going through identically the same ceremonial you have just witnessed. A remarkable fact—this unchangeableness of things

in the East ; and the longer you live in Palestine the more you will notice it. Men grow old, as Sleem and I, alas ! show only too clearly, but habits and customs and modes of thought remain the same. That is why you so often hear me speak of the Immovable East.

" Well, when the ice was broken by my offering him the tobacco pouch and we rode on together, I learnt that he was a son of Ali-el-Thiab of the Aduan tribe. Consequently his full name is Sleem Ali-el-Thiab-el-Aduan. The Aduans are a warlike people of the Transjordanic region who winter on the Plain of Sittim and pass most of the summer and autumn on the highlands of Moab. The eastern portion of the plain, with Nimrin as a centre, consists of fine arable land, interspersed, here and there, by miles of forests of the Lote-tree, or *Rhamnus nabeca*, which is also known among the Arabs as the Dôm-tree or Sidr, and which is noteworthy for its thorn-apples, the only fruit of the Bedawi and much appreciated, when dried by the natives, for their sweet flavour. These Dôm-forests, as Sleem told me, are almost impenetrable to man. Hyænas, jackals, wolves, and foxes abound, whilst birds of every kind, from vultures to titmice, make themselves at home in the thickets. Like the frogs of Jericho by night, so in these dense forests do two kinds of turtle-doves, in wailing tones, call out all day long : one for its lost plumage—' Ya-joukh-ti !

Ya-joukh-ti!'—and the other, a sacred bird, thanking its creator—'Ya kareem! Ya kareem! —Oh! merciful! Oh! merciful!' Big snakes of all kinds steal along through the undergrowth hunting for mice and birds. There is the immense Esculap of the Colubridæ family of Ophidians and the bluish-black *Zamenis carbonarius*, which often exceeds two yards and rises to half its length when about to strike; and this *Carbonarius*, otherwise called 'Hanash,' is certainly, with the Esculap, the 'Na'hash' of the Bible,—the brazen serpent of Moses.

"Such is the home of Sleem Ali-el-Thiab-el-Aduan.

"As he told me these things, we rode along the cornfields, the ears often rising high above our heads and giant marygolds lining the fields. Sleem also spoke about the forthcoming harvest and the part they would have to give to the 'vile Fellah.' For a self-respecting Bedawi never tills the ground, but lets his lands to the Fellah of the Jerusalem district, who does the work and furnishes the seed, giving a quarter of the gross receipts in return to the landlord.

"After the arable lands and forests came a sandy desert, where reptiles and mice abound, and which stretches, as you will later see, as far as the marly hills preceding Jordan. Here Sleem called my attention to the dangerous nature of the surroundings—to these

slimy hills, where not only boars hide in the rushes but where men might easily lie in wait for stray travellers. His mind seemed singularly full of suspicion, and I could tell from his quick glances to right and left that he was on his guard against some possible unseen enemy. In another half-hour we reached the forest of poplars, willows and licorice-trees, and it was then that an incident occurred which has a direct bearing on my story. Sleem suddenly pulled in his horse and warned me, with a sharp cry, to do the same. With his eyes directed on the road in front of him and a stern look on his face, he and his tightly-reined-in mare stood like a statue.

"'Tarsha!' he exclaimed.

"And there, indeed, in front of us, I saw a Daboia viper crossing the road. Once it stopped and blew up its head in the Cobra di Capello fashion, but soon it proceeded on its way and disappeared in the shrubs. I was for going after it, but Sleem told me not to interfere, as only the Dervishes, or Moslem monks belonging to the holy order of the Sheikh Ehmad el-Erfa'i, who lived in the days of the glory of the Khaleefs of Mesopotamia, had authority, as viper-charmers, to meddle with snakes.

"'Heed not this Tarsha, the Deaf,' said the Bedawi, solemnly. 'Shale illah! ya rjahl Allah!—Respect to God, oh! men of God! Does not the viper-charmer himself bid everybody

leave snakes alone? This Deaf One, friend, heareth not!'

"You know what the Psalmist says, Philip? 'The wicked are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not harken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.' The Immovable East again, my boy.

"And perhaps it was just as well I followed Sleem's advice, for the *Daboia Xanthina*, which, like many vipers, coils and lifts its head ready to strike, and then darts in the direction of its victim, is a particularly dangerous creature. A mere scratch from its fangs is sufficient to cause certain death. It is generally very little over a yard in length, but is as thick as the Esculap. A nasty customer is the Tarsha, or, as it is less poetically called, the Za'ara—the short-tailed.

"Our meeting the Daboia seemed to cast a cloud over Sleem Ali-el-Thiab's mind. He remained silent until we had crossed the Jordan. There was no bridge over the river in those days, and as my new friend was unable to swim, I had to cross the stream four times: twice for him and his mare and twice for my one horse and my clothes. In this way we lost quite an hour and a half.

"It was the sight of some caves at the foot of the mountains of Moab, and when we had been on the road again two hours or so, which caused Sleem to open his mouth once more.

"'God curse him!' he exclaimed, with a bitterness which made me give a quick glance at his still solemn, thoughtful face.

"I asked him to whom he referred, whereupon he told me the story of the adventure which the Daboia and the caves had brought to his mind.

"The Rascheidy Bedawîn of the western shores of the Dead Sea had come, he related, on a cattle-lifting expedition to the eastern shores and were overtaken by the Aduans. In their retreat, an Aduany Bedawi was killed by Muhammad el-Rachidi of the Rascheidy, and, as Moslem law recognises, Muhammad was a blood-debtor to Sleem and all the Thiab family. Both Jewish and Moslem lawgivers are of the same opinion on this point. We read in Exodus[1]: 'He that smiteth a man so that he die shall be surely put to death,' and a little further on[2]: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.' The Koran[3] says: 'Believers! Retaliation is set up for murder. A freeman shall be put to death for a freeman, a slave for a slave, a woman for a woman, and so forth.'

"Now, years had passed since this encounter between the two tribes, and, though a Moslem never forgives, Muhammad, who had business to attend to away from home, had almost forgotten that Aduans might be roaming about. Still,

[1] xxi. 12. [2] Verses 24 and 25. [3] Sura ii. 175.

in the instinctive manner of a Rascheidy Bedawi, he cautiously crossed the Jerusalem to Jericho road and hid in a cave above the declivity of the Wady Kelt,—the Brook Cherith of the Bible. There, in order to avoid encountering an enemy whilst on his way home and on a prospective visit up El Ghor to the Beni Sakhr (who roam about Bashan and Galilee), he went to sleep, intending to come out at nightfall and continue his journey. Just before dusk he peeped out of his hiding place. But at that very moment, to his terror, an Aduany was passing and caught sight of him. It was Sleem, the son of Ali-el-Thiab.

"'Ya mal'un il waldain!—Cursed of both parents!' cried Sleem, riding up with his hand on his sword. 'Have you fallen at last into the hands of men?'

"Terror-stricken, Muhammad el-Rachidi begged for his life, crying: 'Ana fi dakh-lak—I am under your protection!'

"Now, it is an unwritten law among these people that a dignified Bedawi ought never to beg, even for his life. Moreover, Sleem, the son of a great chieftain, with three hundred horsemen, whose steeds and arms, at least, he could call his own, could not, by reason of his superior station, refuse a humble petition for mercy. So, as he looked down, with blood-shot eyes, on the kneeling Muhammad, his blood boiled at the thought that he had lost an occasion for vengeance. How sweet

it would have been to have carried out the law of the Koran : ' A freeman shall be put to death for a freeman ! '

" The well-known words had no sooner occurred to him when a strange thing happened. His quick eye caught sight of a huge Daboia viper as it coiled back into a hole in the rock above Muhammad's head ! A thought flashed through his brain.

" ' Muhammad el-Rachidi,' said Sleem, slowly and with great presence of mind, 'rise and await your destiny.'

" ' No,' replied the trembling Bedawi, ' not until you have sworn that you will not harm me.'

" ' Get up, accursed ! ' cried Sleem, severely. ' I swear by Allah and the life of Allah !—Wallahi Billahi !—that I, the son of Thiab, will not seek your life, neither by this firearm '—touching his carabine—' nor by this steel '—touching his sword—' but will leave you to die by God's will and when he will. And now, Muhammad, swear to me that, in return, you will never again attempt anything against any of my family, great or small ; and as we have no prayer-niche or other sacred place near by, put your hand into that hole, representing a Mu'hrab (a prayer-stand) '—pointing to the Daboia's retreat—' and swear.'

" Muhammad el-Rachidi rose and readily put forth his hand, but no sooner had it entered the

hole than the deadly stroke was given and he fell, with pallid face, to the ground.

"'Kteeby wa inkatbat!—the sentence was written! The sentence was written!' cried Muhammad, whose features were already beginning to twitch convulsively, 'I was destined to die here and to-day!'

"'Naseebak! God willed it! It is your lot,' cried Sleem, fiercely, as he coolly looked on at the agony of his enemy.

"A quarter of an hour later the Bedawi turned rein, leaving the dying Rascheidy to the jackals and the hyænas, and rode at full speed to his tribe, eager to announce the happy yet fatal news. And the women ululated and joy went through the camp, for the dead Aduany was revenged.

"Such was the story which Sleem Ali-el-Thiab related to me when, invited to pay my first visit to his people, I was riding with him towards their encampment," concluded Theodore Ralston. "As we reached the 'black tents of Kedar,' of which the Bible tells us, night was coming on and barking dogs came forth to meet us. At the tent doors fires had been lit for supper and women were busy baking. Half-naked children ran about in all directions. Horses of the finest breed, all ready saddled, were tethered at a short distance. Cows and camels were chewing in the central parts of the camp. And, later, men gathered before

the guest-tent, sipping their coffee and smoking their pipes, to talk over the events of the day and discuss the question of a Ghazû to be undertaken as soon as the harvest was over and the wheat had been stored away in the wheat-wells."

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Bedawin Tent, Valley of Achor

IX

LAIL

"Bous el kalb 'alla thimmo, ta takhut 'hakak minno."

"Kiss the dog on the mouth, till you obtain what you want of him."—An Arab Proverb.

I

The sons of Adam disdain dogs, but in many places they raise us up and utilise us. Thus, in the camp where I lived, there were shepherd dogs, with thick fur, and watch-dogs, with a smooth coat all over, and the tall, thin greyhounds which are used for hunting the gazelles on the broad plains of Philistia, near my first home.

I was born in camp, south of Beersheba, and belonged to a family of the Azazmeh Arabs. On account of my jet black fur they called me Lail, —Night. We travelled up and down the desert of Edom. Sometimes my masters camped near the borders of Gaza. And once, when our people were hard pursued by the Jahaline Arabs, with whom we were at war, we passed near a village. When young and on the move, I was carried on the back of a camel with the children, but later I followed—mile after mile—on foot, with the other dogs of our community.

Though each dog belonged to a separate tent and each received his food from his own master,

we exercised our calling in common. All night, or whenever we heard strange sounds, we barked. We were more indifferent to the wailing of jackals ; —we pitied the poor fellows, and they never (except at certain periods, when even jackals and bitches meet) came near us. But we pricked up the stumps of our cropped ears when the hideous laughter of the hyæna was heard, and together we chased in the direction of the enemy. In the daytime we were generally at rest, within the shadow of the tents, but only until some foreigner passed. We could easily distinguish Fellahîn or other strangers, who generally came on foot or on mules. Then we would bark our loudest. But should any Bedawi or camels of our own tribe approach by day or by night not a dog would move his tongue. Of course, there were exceptions to the rule. A Bedawi might come in or try to enter from the west, where the tent ropes indicate there is no entrance, and that we could never allow.

Full of experience, and covered with wounds and scars, were my elders. Our first leader was Sabe'— the Lion, who really deserved his name. He had lost an eye in a fight with a huge hyæna, which, creeping up to the camp, would have carried off a goat or a sheep but for Sabé"s vigilance. Sabé' attacked the hyæna, but before the other dogs arrived to assist him, the beast, with his mighty teeth, had seized our leader's head and pierced an eye. Feeling the dogs upon him, our enemy fled

for his life and told his fellows that they had "better eat clay than risk a battle with the dogs of the Arab."[1] The news spread, and thus did Sabé' come to be dreaded by all the wild beasts of the neighbourhood.

Baida, the old white bitch, too, was marked across her back with scars which she had received in a fight with two wolves. But for Ibrak, the black and white dog, who became the leader of our band when Sabe' (as I will tell you presently) was killed, she would have been almost skinned. A brave and trustworthy chief was Ibrak. His master often used to say: "I could not be sure of retaining my tent and my flocks without him. *His* place is marked." Yet Ibrak had a broken limb, the result of an attack on our camp,—this time by man. There were few of us, indeed—and least of all Hawa, the Wind, who could almost fly—who could not say that he or she had licked an honourable wound.

Looking back to those days, I think that I can say that we were generally well treated by our masters. Was it because they needed us? For they say, you know: "Kiss the dog on the mouth, till you obtain what you want of him." Yes; I think that the Bedawîn are really fond of dogs. Was not Sabe' as much loved by his owner as he was feared by the wild beasts? . . . Poor Sabe'! What a splendid leader he was!—

[1] A well-known Arab proverb.

what keen senses he possessed!—how easily he could detect the slightest smell or sound!

II

Late one evening, when the camp-fires had died out, an unaccustomed sound was heard in the darkness. As quick as lightning, Sabe' rushed in the direction of the noise, closely followed by Hawa, Ibrak, Beda, and the remainder of our band. We found a man lying on the ground;—he had stumbled over a peg and a tent-cord. What could have been his business there, late at night and coming from the west, whence no honest Bedawi comes?[1] We all compassed him and attacked him fiercely,[2] and Sabe' who had bitten him in the calf of the leg, would surely have torn him to pieces had not the intruder shot him in the head.

The report of the pistol alarmed the camp and in an instant everyone was afoot. Suffering from several bites, and hindered by us from escaping, the unknown one was soon captured. He was beaten and put in chains until morning, when he was found to belong to a neighbouring friendly tribe. What could have been his object in coming from the west and in the darkness of the night? Had he come to see a friend? . . . However, a commission of three men from each

[1] The openings of the tents in an Arab camp always face the East.

[2] *Cf.* Psalms xxii. 16.

camp was appointed to judge him for killing a dog. And as Sabe', according to his owner, was a most valuable animal, the culprit was condemned to pay for him,—the price being a heap of flour as high as would reach the tip of Sabe"s tail when he was held vertically with his nose to the ground.

Afterwards, when I left the camp and lived in a town, I found that dogs were killed without anybody interfering. But it was different with the Bedawîn, who treated us really most respectfully, compared with the disdainful treatment I received among townsmen. True, the dogs in towns are often very mean. But that is because they are ill-used. They have a saying, there, that "a dog begat a puppy, who turned out more unclean than his father." Now, I beg to ask, how can a dog be clean who feeds on carcasses and rubbish, and who lies down to sleep in unswept streets ?

Ah ! yes, things were very different in my old camp. I used even to play with the children and receive food from their hands. I was young then, for the older dogs never play with the children. Though we had nearly always enough to eat, the arrival of visitors was ever welcomed among us, for that meant a feast for all. The guests received their food in a central tent and fed us on the bones and scraps. Ours was a social life ; we rarely quarrelled over food. . . . My thoughts go back to a certain day on which a calf was torn to pieces

by wolves not far from the encampment. When our masters came to the rescue the animal was dead, so they abandoned it to us, because they said it was unclean.[1] But we found it anything but that and all agreed that man's tastes were strange.

III

After Sabe"s death Ibrak became our leader, and about the same time Beda had four young ones, which she protected against wind and cold behind a tent. One day, a boy from the inside touched her soft fur and said: "It is really very fine and warm." Whereupon I heard his father reprove him and say: "Zei souf el klaab, na'em wa nijiss,—Though the dog's wool is soft, it is unclean." Feeling very sorry for Beda, I approached her to show my sympathy, but she flew at me so fiercely that I ran away as fast as I could, yelping all the time. How very queer both men and dogs are! Our masters speak of us as unclean, yet we love them dearly; whilst we are ready, at times, to persecute every weaker dog, though its intentions may be of the best.

When Beda's puppies were three weeks old the owner of the last tent came and asked for a Jarru (a puppy) and took away a brown one. On seeing this Jarru's pendent ears, I imagined it must be of another race and felt so glad. I

[1] *Cf.* Exodus xxii. 31: "And ye shall be holy men unto me; neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs."

thought of the fun of pulling them when at play. But the cruel man took the poor browny to his tent and, cutting his ears in halves, forced him to eat the bits, under the pretext that this would make him more fierce. The Jarru howled and howled for hours, whereupon the children laughed and called him Kattoosh,—the Earless. He was given this name at first for fun, but he ever afterwards retained it.

Kattoosh remained a prisoner in a hen-coop for eight days. On rolling away the stone at the entrance, to shove in the potsherd containing his meal of bread soaked in water, the children daily told each other that he was to remain there until his wounds were healed. But he was not wholly free when released from his box. They attached him for another week to a tent-peg, so that he might know (as they said) his home and his masters. Then he was freed from his cord,—never, during the whole of his life, to be attached again.

It was a free life in the camp of the Bedawîn,—a life full of new experiences and adventures with Kattoosh. I taught him to catch lizards and bark and bite at serpents. But we never ate any, as jackals and cats do. We dogs preferred to eat dry bread, the lentils or pastry which our masters wasted, and, once in a while, to gnaw a bone. We knew, moreover, how to find the carcasses of animals lying at a distance, long before the smell

reached us, by the sight of the vultures and ravens soaring above them.

That first winter of my life,—how well I remember it! Continual rains brought much trouble to our camp. We could never find a dry place. As we had not yet left the mountains, the flocks suffered terribly from scarcity of food. One afternoon, during a thunderstorm, several weak goats were lost. We hunted for them the next morning and at last found their dead bodies near some rocks, under the lee of which they had sought shelter. Again there was a big feast, in company with the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.[1] We barked all night to drive away the jackals and the hyænas, but at last we could eat no more, so we returned to the camp and slept until dawn. Only two carcasses were left, and these were gnawed and torn, when we later inspected the remains. Hyænas had carried away the others. And very soon the ravens and the eagles finished the rest.[2]

On account of the severe winter and the stench from the carcasses, our masters loaded the camels with the tents and furniture, and set off towards the warmer lowlands. Whilst on the way we overtook another party of Arabs, whose destination was the same as ours. The two bands, who were on friendly terms, greeted each other with fair words. But I never heard of dogs of different camps doing the same. No sooner did we see the

[1] *Cf.* II. Samuel xxi. 10. [2] *Cf.* Proverbs xxx. 17.

rival pack than we attacked it fiercely. Never before was there such a barking and a howling, such a growling and a tearing at each other as then. Friend and foe were soon inextricably entangled, each snapping and jumping at his neighbour's throat, until, at last, the men interfered with sticks and clubs.[1] In the midst of this terrible melée I received a blow on the head which stunned me and left me stretched on the ground as though dead.

"Poor Lail!" I heard some of my people say. "What a pity! Who was it struck him?"

As they were discussing the matter, an elderly man intervened and said:—

"Why trouble your heads about him? You know the proverb: 'A dog became a carcass.' Lose no more time! Had it been Sabe' the One-eyed, or Ibrak the Lame, or Hawa the Swift, or even Beda the Flayed, we might have sought out the evil-doer. But it is only Lail! He had a big voice, a good appetite, and he hid during the night. Allah yekhfi,—May God hide him!"

And they left me lying in the middle of the rough roadway. I could hear their footsteps and voices fading away in the distance but could not move a hair.

IV

The day was far gone when I heard strange voices approaching,—voices surely not those of

[1] *Cf.* I. Samuel xvii. 43.

Bedawîn. The new-comers rode on mules and had luggage sacks. There were no camels, no women, no children, and not a single dog. Their conversation had nothing to do with either flocks or camps or war expeditions. They spoke in a strange dialect of buildings and towns, of the sale of butter and he-goats, of money and of the buying of bread. Ah! how hungry I was and how the mention of food made me long for some!

"Halloo!" cried the first man on catching sight of me. "Here's a dog. How came he here?"

And uttering a strange call—"Kss! Kss!"—he cast a morsel of bread in my direction. I rose and timidly crept towards it, for I feared their strange faces. There was nought else to strike terror in my heart,—neither sticks, nor stones, nor weapons; they carried hardly a stick with which to beat their mules.

I followed them when the bread was eaten, for what more does a dog require than bread and human company? Though they were almost always harsh to me when I approached too near, yet, from time to time, they threw me food.

By evening we came to a stone-built village. The houses were further apart than our tents, which form a protection one to the other. There, every house had a protecting wall around it and a door leading into a courtyard. And every house possessed a dog, which, barking and rushing

inside the wall, threatened to reach us. Evidently these animals were of the watch-dog class, like our own ; only they did not live together, as with us. This struck me as strange. For I had always imagined that, just as men gathered together, so did dogs flock together by night, when they lived in the same group of houses or tents. There were few of these village dogs, too, which had scars. Were they never attacked by beast or by man ?

My new masters tethered the mules in an enclosure away from the houses, and there I stood on guard all night. That is a dog's work, and it is well, in an unknown place, to be loud-voiced and angry. But long before dawn, and whilst the stars were still twinkling, the mules were packed and off we went, over hills and valleys, through olive-groves and vineyards. Noon found us near water, where the mules drank and fed and rested ; at sunset we reached a big gate and a place surrounded by high walls.

There were no courtyards to the houses in this city,[1] and as we passed along the streets I wondered where the dogs could be. Soon, every man in our party went in a different direction, so that I was at a loss to know whom to follow. I could not forget that I was nobody's dog . . . My choice fell on the man who had first given me bread. Dismounting from his mule, he knocked at a door, which he entered with his animal. I

[1] Jerusalem.

prepared to follow. But to my disappointment he turned round and kicked me, exclaiming :—

" Out ! unclean dog ! Barra ! Yen 'al !—Out, cursed animal ! "

And he banged the door behind him, murmuring : " Akhs ! Coward ! "

There I was, alone in a great city, where people possess everything more plentifully than in a camp yet have no room for a dog. But a faithful dog will not abandon his master's house because curses are heaped upon him. It is true that they say : " He who is in need of a dog calls him Hadj Ehmad." However, as in the fields, where I was wanted, I continued my duty. All through the night and at everyone who passed I barked my loudest. Many were the stones which came my way.

My reward came with the dawn, when the people in the houses threw their refuse into the streets. Soon I learnt that I must pick up my living in this way or die ; so for several days I sought among the rubbish heaps for food. One morning, three or four men came along, dragging a dead ass out of the town. Several dogs were following, so I joined them. Seeing us, one of the men said :—

" Verily proverbs are ever true ! Do not we say : ' Mote il 'Hameer faraj lal klaab—The death of donkeys is providential for dogs ? ' Look, they are following us already."

They dragged the dead ass beyond the city

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A Street in Jerusalem

gates and there, over the dunghill, cast it down.[1] For a moment we stood overlooking the deep declivity, and behold, at the bottom, were ravens and dogs searching for morsels among the bones of older skeletons. Down we scampered and began to feast on the new carcass. Of course, there was plenty for all, making it needless to quarrel.

With my head all besmeared with blood (no wonder the sons of Adam call us unclean!) I passed back through the city gates and, greeted with sticks and stones, ran for my life. At the end of a long thoroughfare with a sharp turning I came to a place where many busy people were in front of food shops and dogs were on every side. One big fellow, covered with scars, was lying down in front of a shop where a man was cooking pastry and putting it on plates. It was the smell of the Samn (melted butter) which attracted my attention. The well-known odour made me lift my nose and sniff the scented air. The man with the pastry threw a piece which had fallen on the ground in my direction. I pounced upon it, whereupon the big dog growled and made a rush to deprive me of the tasty morsel. Flight was impossible,—I was in a corner; the only thing to do was to back, imploringly, against the wall. But at that moment the pastryman cried:—

"A'raj! What are you about?"

[1] *Cf.* Jeremiah xxii. 19: "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

A'raj, the Lame One, obeyed and limped back to receive his legitimate share.

At last I had found a man who really loved a dog.

V

Every day found me outside the shop of the good-hearted pastrycook. There I had ample opportunity for completing my city education. Many were the things which came under my observation. I noticed, for instance, that the cook's customers were only men,—that no women were about the streets, as in the camp. One or two I had caught sight of in the houses, but they seldom went out and very rarely to the shops. Another impressive fact was that A'raj had pointed ears,—a proof that cropping was not generally practised in the city. But though many dogs had whole ears, there was not one without scars. A little later I learnt how these came. One forenoon, when I was sleeping, a band of boys came towards me with sticks and stones, and as I never suspected mischief, they covered my body with blows and wounds. Ever after, on the appearance of boys, I got up and ran in the opposite direction.

A'raj, who was always lying in the neighbourhood of his master's shop, was the chief of his quarter. Every dog within a hundred yards acknowledged him as leader and every bitch almost crawled

when he stood up. When a strange dog, on its way from the dunghill, passed through the pastrycook's street, A'raj would give the signal and we would attack him until he was out of our region. I discovered from this that each dog had his own quarter and kept to it as much as possible.

Not far away was the street where the butchers' dogs congregated. One of them I knew and thus, under his protection (for I was never very strong and nobody ever feared that *I* should become a leader) I visited his home and discovered his mode of life. The doorposts and the shelves of the shops were all bloody and greasy ; skinned he-goats and rams hung outside on hooks ; and the dogs licked the blood as it dropped to the ground, or caught the pieces of bone as they flew from the butchers' wooden blocks. Small indeed was *our* portion, for these greedy dogs, that could never be satisfied, would not let us approach.[1]

There was no growing very fat on the little food I found here and there. The bare living I found was nothing in comparison with my free field and camp life. And so, when I slept, I dreamed of tents and Kattoosh, of running with Sabe' and Beda, and with Ibrak and Hawa. Sometimes I would jump up as though jackals were approaching or distant sounds had broken upon the quietness of the camp. How I longed then for the old home!

[1] *Cf.* Isaiah lvi. 11.

Very often herds of he-goats and rams passed through our streets, driven by men who had knives in their girdles. Were they shepherds? —thought I. Sometimes they returned, carrying dead skinned animals on their shoulders. I puzzled over the reason for this strange occurrence. One day I determined to follow, and found that, instead of driving the animals to the fields, they gathered them into a dirty space, strewn with bones and horns, soaked with blood, and swarming with flies. Then I began to understand. I saw the animals bound by their feet, thrown on the ground and slaughtered, just as they used to do in camp. Only there they killed them one at a time; here, in the city, they slaughtered them by scores.

Many dogs were congregated at this slaughtering place. But what strange beasts they were! Not one of them barked at me. I thought that they must be dumb[1] and remembered that I had once heard someone say, when a dog would not move: "He is like the dogs of the slaughtering place, wishing for hunger and rest."

Like them, that day, I ate till I could neither move nor bark. But all the time I felt disgusted at the myriads of flies and worms, the smell of blood, the vultures, and above all at my lazy dumb companions with their rough wild fur. Once more I yearned for the old life: my playmates the children, the desert, the pure open air,

[1] *Cf.* Isaiah lvi. 10.

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Shepherd and Sheep, near Jerusalem

and the clear moonlit nights when we used to bay at the great light, thinking that someone was approaching with a lantern. And I began to ponder over the problem of how to leave the city behind me.

VI

Once more I followed the rams to the slaughtering place and once more I passed a day with the dumb dogs, licking blood.[1] But not many animals were killed that day; those that were spared were driven out of the city to the fields. I seized my opportunity and followed the man who was behind them,—a man with bare legs and certainly not of the city. He had looked at me, as I thought, compassionately, and had thrown me bread. Once he had actually called out, "Ta'o-ta'o! Kss-kss!"

What else could I do but run up to him and follow at his heels, almost hidden by the dust raised by the flock of rams?

Oh! the joy at having once more found some one to care for me!

The rams were put up in a village and throughout the night I ran about the court, barking. In the daytime I followed to the pastures. From time to time the shepherd fed me, for I soon became indispensable. I searched the rocks which the flocks passed for hiding jackals or men who might be lying in wait to steal the goats

[1] *Cf.* I. Kings xxii. 38.

or lambs. I brought them together when they strayed too far from their master. I guarded them against the danger of the night. The people of the house, who called me Ghareeb, because, to them, I was a Stranger, said that I was worth a man,—and even more than some men.

Life in my new home was infinitely more pleasant than that in the city. Yet I saw little of the other dogs about the village, each being attached to his own house. Sometimes, however, I met my next door neighbour on the refuse-heaps near the ovens and played with him.[1] Yes, once more I wrestled and romped in the open. But more than this,—we received gifts of lumps of bread, or dough which had fallen into the ashes, and, when the men were absent, were even admitted to the houses by the women and fed by their hands. On rainy days we entered the warm oven building, which is always a part of the house, and went to sleep in the warm ashes until dawn. When the noise of the mills ceased and the women came to bake the bread we crawled out, because we did not care to be driven forth, and on hearing the footsteps of men or boys we scampered away for our lives. The men often kneel down to pray on the roof or elsewhere, and on these occasions are particularly angry with us. I have heard them say that we must not on any account be

[1] The Arabs say, when speaking of this or that one's conduct: "He is as funny as a dog playing on a dunghill."

allowed to approach them; and even when, perchance, we have taken a bath, they shun us the more, saying that the water dripping from our coats soils their praying ground and that for "forty yards about a dog it is unclean." Little wonder that we are fonder of women than of men!

These sons of Adam are indeed curious folk. They are fond of cats, who steal their food and are never chased as we are. They permit them to lie on the skirts of women and children, and, worse still, they regard them as holy. Cats catch rats and mice and serpents and lizards, which we disdain,—and yet they call them holy! But we are unclean and filthy beasts. They even believe that a cat will be avenged, saying: "For killing a cat there is no pardon." They tell stories about Soandso, who became blind for having killed a cat,—about another whose leg was broken for having ill-treated a cat. Never, never do they speak of the evil which follows on the ill-treatment of a dog. And though they know and repeat: "The cat has got into the habit of eating chickens," all they do when it is at fault is to shout: "Out! cat . . . Barra! Biss!" . . . Ah! yes, cats have indeed a good time compared to us. They sleep indoors on the mats and on the bedding; they sit by the warm fire; they eat with their masters and mistresses; they are caressed by them and their fur is declared to be as soft as silk.

Have you ever noticed, too, among the Arabs that when anyone has shown courage he is compared to the noble lion,—an animal which they know only by name? Yet they maintain that "a lion remains a lion, though he be brought up with dogs, but a dog remains a dog, though he be warmed on a golden stove." Certainly we are dogs and can never be anything else.

Another injustice: when a man is not quite fair in his dealings, the dog is taken as a comparison. "A dog's tail," they say, "can never be straight, though you put it under a hundred presses." What has our curved tail to do with men's vices? I believe that if our tails were as straight and as stiff as a ruler they would still find fault with it.

One day people of another race and speech[1] passed through our village. They had dogs with collars on,—another unknown thing with us. And when we village dogs ran to chase them, they hid behind their masters, who even touched and caressed them. I wonder how they liked this? When men or women stretch out their hands to us it is generally with no good intention, and we jump aside as quickly as possible. Only the greyhounds in my old camp were touched and fed by the hand of man. They were given just the right quantity of food, to hinder them from feeding

[1] Europeans.

on carrion; and their feet were anointed with oil before starting on a hunting expedition, so that their paws, when pursuing the swift-footed gazelles, would not stick in the mud.

However, notwithstanding all my complaints, I have been better off in the village than in the city, and though I have had less to eat than in my first home, I have spent many happy years here. Sometimes the people eat nothing all day, but there is generally plenty for all by night time. Of course, dogs are now chosen as a proof that there is no virtue for fasting in Ramadan, as shown by the saying: "If hungering led to Paradise, the dogs would enter first." However that may be, the other day I found a bone, and as a neighbour's dog came to snatch it away, I jumped at his throat and growled in Arabic: "Hathi 'adem ti-i-i-i-i!"[1]

Menacingly, he demanded: "Bakam sharate ha-a-a-a-a!"[2]

Whereupon, showing my teeth, I barked: "Balf! Balf!"[3]

Then he ran off, leaving me in peace.

VII

I am old now. I can hardly see; I can hardly hear. Like many of my fellow dogs, my barking

[1] "This is my bo-o-o-o-ne!"
[2] "What did you pay fo-o-o-o-r it?"
[3] "A thousand! A thousand!"

has lost its force. Soon I shall die and be thrown over the rocks to decay. Nobody feeds on dead dogs; neither vultures, nor ravens, nor jackals, nor those of my own kind. Worms alone nourish themselves on our meat and skin. That is the reason, perhaps, why we are often spoken of as "a dead dog, good for nothing."[1]

[1] I. Samuel xxiv. 14. II. Samuel ix. 8; xvi. 9.

X

CREATURES IN COUNCIL

I

When Allah created the animals, He gathered them all into one place, and an angel of the Azizis, seated next to his throne, was commanded to assign particular regions to them, with meat specially adapted to their requirements. This arrangement suited all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air very well indeed, with the single exception of the serpent, who put in a claim to Adam that he had a right to feed on human flesh and blood. Adam replied that he must have a year in which to reflect, and promised that at the end of this time he would give his answer at a great congress to which all animals should be invited.

Whether this interview took place before or after Adam's expulsion from Paradise is unknown, so far back does it date in the history of the world. But very probably it must be placed after the Fall, when Adam's wisdom was on the decline. Otherwise, would he have been so foolish as to commission the mosquito to test the blood of all living creatures and report thereon? Naturally, that wicked insect found that human blood was

best. However, Adam had a friend in the swallow. Whilst the mosquito was on its way to the congress, the faithful bird, which, through its annual visits to the Kaaba, knew man's religious feelings and sympathised with him, discreetly followed and, ere the insect reached its destination, pounced down upon it and nipped off so large a part of its tongue that its voice became a sharp and vicious buzz. As the mosquito was unable to express itself in a comprehensive manner, the swallow offered its services as interpreter, and declared that the report was "Frogs." And that is the reason why, to this day, serpents feed on those amphibians.

Such was the principal question decided at the first animals' congress in Palestine. It was a long time before a second one was held—not, indeed, until just before the Deluge, when Noah was confronted with the problem of the preservation of species. Century after century passed without there being any necessity for a fresh re-union. But at last the day came when the third congress had to be called, this time by the creatures themselves, for they wished to discuss the wrongs which had arisen through man's ignorance of animal welfare, besides certain other private questions. The organisers unanimously agreed that for once man must be excluded from their councils.

Abu Sliman, the fox, who had gathered more

documents together than anyone else, and who knew the country better than even man himself, thought that the best place for the meeting would be the shrubby marches of El 'Huleh, in the extreme north of Palestine, where all the delegates would be able to find good shelter and plenty of appropriate food. Adam's sons seldom ventured into the thicket for any length of time, and when they did they always retired at night time. All that the delegates would have to be careful of doing was to keep quiet during the day; then their presence would not even be suspected. El 'Huleh, therefore, was chosen, and Tell-el-Kadi, the seat of the Judge, and the place where Dan had lived of old was selected as the exact spot for the important gathering.

Abu Sliman, in the course of his speech to his collaborators, went on to say that there was no need to waste time over discussing the question of a chairman. Abu Tasba', the lion, had long been acknowledged to be King of the Beasts, and though he did not live in Palestine he could no doubt be found without much difficulty on the frontiers of Arabia. Let their swiftest messenger, Abu Tansar, the white-headed vulture, be sent to offer him the presidency of the Council.

So the King of the Birds[1] flew away in a straight line across the desert to the jungle of the Euphrates. Cautiously soaring in big circles above the banks

[1] As acknowledged by Solomon (Palestine Folk-lore).

of the river, he searched and searched until at last he found the lair of Abu Tasba'. Swooping to earth, he delivered the invitation. Abu Tasba' did not take long to decide ; so great a recognition of his strength could not meet with a cold refusal; he accepted with a roar of delight and announced his intention of starting for El 'Huleh immediately. Only, Abu Tansar must lend him his aid as an aerial scout, and enable him to avoid camps and inhabited places, if he were to reach his destination quickly and safely.

Meanwhile, Snoonoo, the swift, sped from village to village and from mountain to mountain, inviting delegates from all the domestic animals to the congress, during the sittings of which it was thoroughly understood no one should be molested. Food in abundance was held forth as an inducement to all to come. The marshes of El 'Huleh—an ideal oasis—were not only full of juicy plants for the vegetarians, there were large herds for the carnivorous animals, fish for the king-fishers and divers, myriads of insects for the birds, and a multitude of minor animals for the reptiles.

II

It was a clear moonlight evening when the congress met—the most favourable time that could have been chosen, as some of the delegates would have been quite at a loss on a dark night, and daylight would have been equally troublesome

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Dan—Source of the Jordan

to others. The Ghawarneh Bedawîn having retired for the night with their cattle, the members —previously advised by the soft-footed mouse, the silently flitting bat and other envoys, to make as little noise as possible—quietly dropped in one by one.

Leaning against the bole of a gigantic oak, the King of Trees, sat Abu Tasba', the King of Beasts, with Abu Tansar, the King of Birds, and all his court perched in the majestic branches—an arrangement said to be due to Abu Sliman. Abu Dib, the brown bear of Lebanon, rolled in with an apology. He explained that, being a citizen of Djebel-esh-Sheikh, the cold region assigned to him by the Azizis, he came as an outsider, but he would retire as soon as possible, as he could not easily support the heat of El Ghor. Abu Tanmar the slender leopard, glided in so noiselessly that no one would have noticed him had it not been for his spots. Abu Madba', the lean, striped hyæna, came heavily into view, gave a hungry malicious look at the domestic animals and, feigning friendship, went to lie down near a fine ass. Abu Ser'han, the solitary wolf, slinked in at dusk, looking quite innocent and feeling contented with all the world, for he had just fed on a lamb outside the truce boundaries. Abu Sheeby, the yellow cheetah, silently followed in his footsteps. Pricking up his hairy ears, Abu Fahed, the round-headed lynx, silently took his place, amidst a

murmur of admiration and sundry remarks regarding his resemblance to a cat, near the grandees of the quadrupeds. Next came Abu-l-E'hseine, the jackal, with a very indifferent call, for he was replete through feeding on the carcass of a buffalo. In his rear walked the lesser friends: wild cats, martens, ichneumons and porcupines with clattering quills, closely followed by hedgehogs, moles, rats and, last of all, Abu Ghirreh, the circular badger, resembling, as it crawled forward on its low legs, a moving cushion. Abu Sliman, the acting secretary, introduced the domestic animals. There were strong camels of the 'Hauran and the mountains of Ephraim, lean ones, too, from the south of the Dead Sea; a slender-footed Hajeen (dromedary), which carried the mail through the sandy wastes of Palestine; the fiery horses of the Bedawîn, and a heavy Kedeesh, an animal for rough work at the mill or on the road; mules and donkeys; cows, oxen and buffaloes; sheep and goats. After these had taken their places there came gazelles and hares from the plains, conies and ibexes from the cliffs of Moab, and wild boars from the marshes. Great fruit-eating bats and other smaller insect-feeders flitted about in the moonlight. Most of the feathered friends had, as I have already said, gathered hours before around Abu Tansar, as with few exceptions, they were day birds. Thus, perched on the strong branches next to the great vulture, were eagles, buzzards,

harriers, hawks, kites, falcons and owls. Croaking ravens and crows sat on smaller branches, and so forth, until, on the topmost boughs of the oak tree, little robins and titmice fluttered and chirped. Other trees, too, were occupied by delegates. On a stately palm was entwined a fine specimen, with blood-red neck and brownish body, of the Esculap, the representative of numerous harmless serpents ; whilst near by was a huge Daboia viper, representing six venomous species. Nor must I omit to mention the Sheikh of the Haradîn and the Sheikh of the Chameleons, accompanied by a green lizard and a house gecko, who were perched on the walls of an adjoining ruin. Absentees among the 550 specimens of the animal kingdom of Palestine were very few indeed. The only really important delegate who could not come—and he sent a warran to present his excuses —was the crocodile, who said he did not dare, for numerous reasons, to leave the swamps of the Zerka in Sharon.

At last the voice of Abu Tasba' was heard, whereupon all chattering, chirping and fluttering ceased.

"Are all the domestic animals here?" he roared. "For their presence at this particular congress is of great importance. I dare say that some of the poor slaves of mankind have been unable to leave their stables and enclosures. However, I am glad to see that we are honoured

by the presence of Abu Te'hsen, the horse, Abu Baghel, the mule, Abu Ehmar, the donkey, Abu Thor, the ox, and Abu Jameel, the camel. We are pleased, too, to welcome Abu Klabe, the dog, and Bisabis, the cat—late though they be!"

Abu Klabe and Bisabis issued into the moonlight just at that very moment. They had been quarrelling on their way as to which of the two was the most useful animal to man.

"Come now, let us get to business," continued Abu Tasba'. "Abu Sliman, will you read the first item on the programme?"

"Dispute between Abu Madba', the hyæna, and Baghel, the old mule," read Abu Sliman in his most important manner. "In a certain big field, full of long grass and very useful for hiding in and searching for food, Baghel was appropriating everything to his own use. Now, the field belongs to everyone. So a delegation, composed of Abu Tanmar, Abu Ser'han, Abu Fahed, Abu-l-Ehseine and your humble servant, was sent to find out by whose permission Baghel ate most of the grass and spoilt the appearance of the remainder. Baghel insolently replied that he acted perfectly within his rights, and that, when and where we liked, he could show us the firman he had received from his superior."

"Very good!" exclaimed Abu Tasba'. "We must settle this matter without delay. What have you got to say in your defence, Abu Baghel?"

"Exactly what I told the delegation," replied the old mule, confidently. "It is quite true that I possess a written firman given me by the Dispenser of all Good Things, the Owner of the Universe, and written in very fine and subtle letters. If it is correct, as Abu Madba' states, that he is a scholar and can read, let him come near to me, and, in the presence of the assembly, prove his ability. I will say no more, save that Abu Madba' is an old sorcerer who, being unable to eat grass himself, is full of jealousy and wishes to see me condemned to death."

"A very straightforward reply," said the Chairman. "Very well, show him the firman and let us get to more serious business."

"As I have no pockets in which to keep the document," explained Abu Baghel, as the hyæna approached, "I have hidden it under one of my hind hoofs."

And with these words he lifted up one of his hoofs.

"I cannot see anything," said Abu Madba'.

"Didn't I tell you," replied the old mule, "that the firman is written in very fine characters? How can you expect to see it at that distance, and in such a poor light too? Draw near and then you'll be convinced."

The hyæna came nearer.

"Whew!" exclaimed Baghel, aiming well and kicking with all his might when he considered his

adversary was close enough. "If that doesn't convince you nothing will!"

The blow alighted on Abu Madba"s nose, and sent him rolling, senseless, a dozen yards away.

Whereupon there arose such a yelling and a shrieking, such a bellowing and a croaking, such a grunting and a snorting, such a neighing and a braying, such a hissing and a whizzing as had never been heard before at one spot. It seemed as though the very trees and bushes had joined in the laughter at the most striking proof of the accuracy of a firman ever given.

Abu Sliman was the only one who kept his head. Conscious of the importance of his position as chief organiser of the congress, and its secretary, he did his best to call the delegates to order. But it was some minutes before he could make himself heard.

"Yawlat, yawlat!—Children, children!" he at last succeeded in saying. "I beg of you to be prudent. Man may be about and spoil all our plans. . . . I think we may unanimously decide that Abu Baghel has fully made out his case. So we will pass to the next question. I have a very important document, signed by a well-known delegate, to read to you and would beg you to give me your most earnest attention."

But it was some time before the hilarity wholly subsided and there was complete silence. At last he began to read, as follows:—

"Sons of Adam sneer at us, chase us and call us names. Sometimes they are right but very, very often they are wrong in their appreciations. Besides, they are often guilty of ill-treating our friends, the domestic animals, who so rarely revolt against them. Who has not heard the story of 'Lail,'—an excellent instance of the ungrateful manner in which the sons of Adam treat their most faithful friend the dog? But others could tell equally striking stories of cruelty and neglect. Now, as citizens of Palestine—citizens before man was created here—we are ready to protest. But let everyone do it for himself. My purpose at present is to point out how very much men are dependent upon us. They require not only our services but very often our names, to designate their abodes, properties, hills, springs and so forth. Here are a few instances in which sites have been named after us. There are

three for leopards, as Nimrin, etc.;
three for hyænas, as Wad-ed Dab'a, etc.;
three for camels, as Beit-ej-Jmal, etc.;
three for boars, as Wad-el-Khanzeer, etc.;
four for sparrows, as Ain-el-'Asafeer, etc.;
three for bees, as Khirbet Na'hleh, etc.;
two for horses, as Nekeb-el-Khale, etc.;
two for ibexes, as Ain-Jiddy and Wad-el-Bedoon;
two for vultures, as 'Ebr-en-Nisr, etc.;
two for serpents, as Ain-el-Hayeh, etc.;

two for flies, as Dair-Dubban, etc.;
one for the buffalo, as Birket-ej-Jamoos;
one for the crocodile, as Nahr-et-Tamsa'h;
two for dogs, as Nahr-el-Kalb, etc.;
one for the gazelle, as 'Ain Ghazaleh;
one for the wolf, as Khalet-eth-Theeb;
one for the jackal, as Jurn-el-Wawy;
one for the fox, as Tell-el-Ehseiny;
one for the badger, as Abu-l-Ghrair;
one for the donkey, as Beni Ehmar;
one for the coney, as Khirbet el-Wabar;
one for the partridge, as 'Ain-esh-Shananeer; and
one for the fleas, as Nahr Barghut.

There is also Khirbet-el-Assad, the Lion's Ruin. But there is a difference between this and the names I have cited. These names all point to ancient sites which once existed in the vicinity of their modern representatives, whereas the name of the lion is generally used as a mere badge. Humans employed the lion's name as an emblem of strength; and his image—graven images being forbidden—is the only one they will permit. Thus, we have lions' images at the Gate of El Kuds, on the bridge near Lydda, on old temples in the Hauran, and elsewhere, just as in the days of Solomon, who had them sculptured on his throne."[1]

Abu Tasba' here interrupted the speaker with

[1] II. Chronicles ix. 18-19.

the remark that this was all heraldry. But it was a fact that there was no definite locality known for lions.

Whereupon Abu Sliman, continuing the delegate's dissertation, read some old passages concerning old and young lions.[1]

"Looks very much like the Euphrates region," remarked Abu Tasba'.

"Then a certain judge named Samson," continued Abu Sliman, "killed a lion in Philistia with his staff and took honey from its body."[2]

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Chairman. "Who ever heard of a lion being killed with a staff, or of bees building in a carcass? That writer never studied nature."

"Once upon a time, too, an Ash Allheem,[3] who came from Bethel, was killed by a lion and left by the roadside with his ass; and both beasts stood by the carcass contemplating it for hours."[4]

"This is sheer lunacy," growled Abu Tasba'. "The writer who recorded that incident had never seen a lion in his life, otherwise he would have known that when we kill a warm-blooded being we carry it away and eat it."

"There is a story of a prophet who was cast by a king into a den of lions."[5]

"Ah! I can vouch for that," said the lion.

[1] Job iv. 10; xxviii. 8. [2] Judges xiv. 8.
[3] Dervish. [4] I. Kings xiii. 24. [5] Daniel vi. 16.

"It happened in my own country. Kings always capture lions."

"Then there was a young shepherd, David, in the wilderness of Judæa, who smote a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of their mouths."[1]

Here both Abu Tasba' and Abu Dib roared and growled so terribly that Abu Sliman, thinking his last moment had come, slipped away into the bushes.

"How can I help what has been written?" he cried piteously. "I am but your most humble servant."

But it took some time for the anger of the lion and the bear to subside. Both were on their feet together, loudly protesting against the statements of holy Scripture. Presuming that they had been able to live in the arid desert in question, they would each, they said, have taken a lamb and gone in opposite directions; and the shepherd boy would have had his work cut out to track them.

The clash of their two voices became so great at last that Abu Tasba', in a towering passion, roared to the bear:

"Order! Order! Abu Dib! Wait until it is your turn to speak. . . . Let me say that this fairy tale is not worth discussing. But I should like to observe that lions, as a rule, do not care a scrap for man's opinions and beliefs. Nor do

[1] I. Samuel xvii. 24.

they choose between believers and unbelievers when they are hungry—it is all one to them whether their prey believe in the gods of the land or not."[1]

"Permit me to remark," said Abu Dib, timidly, when the Chairman had sat down, "that perhaps the scribe did not know the difference between the Dib and the Thîb. Our friend the wolf was probably meant. Judæa and lambs are certainly better known to him than they are to us. . . . As to the tearing to pieces of forty-two children by two Im-Debbab (she-bears) because they made fun of the bald head of an old Dervish,[2] I again protest. Maybe a ravenous wolf would kill children, but never a bear. We occasionally carry off a kid or a calf, but never can we take two. Moreover, I agree with our powerful and respected brother Abu Tasba' that we do not put forth our strength especially for man's sake. May I ask the author of this learned communication whether humans have recorded the names of the Dib in their writings?"

"No," replied Abu Sliman, who had ventured back to his place. "Neither in their old, nor in their new lists, do we find them."

On hearing which Abu Dib, with a final growl of indignation, sat down.

Many of the other delegates heard with satisfaction that *their* names were known in the Bible.

[1] II. Kings xvii. 25. [2] II. Kings ii. 23-24.

There was Beth Nimreh[1] standing for leopards; Zeboim,[2] as ancient as history, for the hyæna, who was still busily rubbing his poor bruised nose; Zeeb,[3] changed into the modern Thib, for Abu Serhan's ancestors; Engedi,[4] where the ibex still tumbles over the rocks; besides many others.

As Abu Sliman had by now come to the end of the document he had been asked to read to the congress, Abu-l-E'hseine, in his turn, stepped forth and said that but for himself and the suffering Abu Madba' the sons of Adam would assuredly die of pestilence. Were they not instrumental in clearing áway the dead animals which humans carelessly threw around their habitations? Instead of being thankful for this valuable work—and at the word thankful Abu Sliman sneered, and murmured cynically, "Adam's sons do not even show thankfulness to each other"—they called them false names, such as Wawy and Abu-l-Fataiess, the Howler and Father of Carcasses.

"Suppose we strike for a few weeks," concluded the jackal, amidst almost universal murmurs of approval, "and see how *they* would get along alone."

And with these words, as the light of the moon was failing, the first sitting of the congress came to an end.

[1] Numbers xxxii. 36.
[2] Genesis x. 19.
[3] Judges vii. 25.
[4] Joshua xv. 62.

III

On the following evening it was the domestic animals' turn to have their say.

"Abu Jameel," said the lion, addressing the camel, "have you any complaint to make against Inns ?"[1]

"No," said the camel. "It is true that they put heavy loads upon my back, but I can easily carry them. They are rather solicitous of my welfare than otherwise. They feed me on prepared Kersanné,[2] and, in Rabee, anoint my skin with oil and sulphur to cure the Jarrab,[3] which I have contracted from another. Occasionally they strike me, or pull my jaws with the Karrasat,[4] but I take my revenge in the spring, when the Hadr[5] makes me lively. Let any man come too near me and I dart at him so swiftly that he is frightened out of his wits. But we are soon good friends again."

Nor had Abu Ihsane, the bay horse, any complaints to make against his Bedawîn masters. He rather liked the Ghazû, and even should he fall in battle it was a more dignified death than the one awaiting his cousin the Kedeesh, who, after having turned Byarat[6] in the gardens, or carried loads which often wounded him, was abandoned to find a living for himself—a very difficult matter for one who was not accustomed

[1] Humans. [2] Vetches. [3] Itch.
[4] Camel bridle. [5] Bad temper. [6] Water wheels.

to do so from youth, as wild animals are. His fate is to pine away and die and be devoured by dogs, jackals and hyænas.

A general murmur against Inns followed this communication. But Abu Ihsane continued :—

" I am of the Abeyan race, my silky mane keeps insects away, my well-furnished tail helps to brush flies from my body, full of the purest blood, flowing in protruding veins." (At the mention of blood all the carnivorous members of the congress lifted their noses and sniffed the air.) " I hail from Nejd and Man says that I am of divine origin. The Angel Gabriel first rode 'Heisoon, the divine courser. El Khadr gallops above the firmament and produces thunder and lightning. My white ancestors were dedicated to the sun,[1] and though the first Hebrew invaders maimed horses,[2] King Solomon introduced a great number,[3] and was so much astonished at their excellency that he forgot his prayers the day he saw them.[4] The Prophet Mohammed chose the original Khamsy[5] who accompanied him on his expeditions. Therefore these five, Abeyan, Saklawy, Julfa, Khalawy, and Marghub, are acknowledged to be the only true breeds ; and whoever possesses the one or the other considers himself beyond all riches. On them the Arab nation went from Mecca to Seville ; through

[1] II. Kings xxiii. 11. [2] Joshua xi. 6. [3] I. Kings iv. 26.
[4] Sura xxxviii. 30. [5] The Five.

their agency empires have changed hands and Islam has covered one-third of the world. We are well kept, as sacred as the sun horses, and no true Arab will allow us to go into foreign lands. The Prophet knew the danger of horses getting into the hands of foreigners, who might become conquerors like himself. Our home and temple is all Arabistan. Has anyone been honoured so much by Inns as our race has been ? Has not the Prophet, in his enthusiasm, cried: 'The wealth of this world is suspended from the tuft of hair which hangs on the forehead of your horses until Judgment Day ? ' And does not the Bedawîn lover sing:—

" 'Rukb el afrass
Talook el amrâss
U takerkib el akhrâss
Yegla' id-dood min er-Râss.' [1]

Though stallions are presented to foreign princes, the mares are kept at home. Let our race remain pure and only in Arabia."

Mules and donkeys were quite content with their lot, and even cows and the patient oxen had nothing to say. After a day's ploughing with the oldest and most primitive instrument, they often had rest on rainy days and were fed all the same. And with most Fellahîn, when thrashing, the old

[1] " Riding horses,
Slackening bridles,
The tinkling of ear-rings
Drive away care."

law was observed—not to muzzle them while treading the sheaves.[1]

The faithful dog said Lail had told everything.[2] But he, personally, had nothing to grumble at.

At this moment a little mouse, whilst intently listening, rolled over in front of Bisabis. "Allah!" exclaimed the cat. "Be careful or you will be hurt!" "Thanks," replied the mouse. "Bass aslam minak!—If only you do me no harm!" And with these words it climbed into a hole out of reach.

"Birds!" shouted Abu Tansar, who had now become Chairman, to replace the tired lion, and who best understood bird language in the Palestine vernacular. "Has anybody anything to say? Storks, swallows, pelicans, hoopoes, turtles are all in favour of Beni Adam, as they are considered almost sacred by them, so let them be quiet."

The griffin vulture was the first to show his hoary head and said:—

"King Solomon in all his wisdom spoke to birds and blessed our ancestor by laying hands on his head, which ever afterwards remained white. Therefore we cannot speak ill of the human race, though they hunt us for the sake of our bones to make Neïyés. Fortunately, they seldom come within our reach, so we have seldom need to deplore a victim."

[1] Deuteronomy xxi. 4.

[2] See *Lail*, pp. 153–174.

Abu Ghrab, the raven, declared they were persecuted. Inns called them Baine,[1] so whenever they saw Adam's sons they flew away long before they could reach them even with a gun.

The red-faced partridge, which Inns call Maka'hal, though they never use Kohl, complained that they were treacherously snared at watering-places, or with the Bairak on the mountains.[2] "Not satisfied with having subjugated the fowls, these greedy sons of Adam seek the small satisfaction of capturing us for a dinner."

In the name of the Rakta and the Raksha, the Rabda and the 'Hamra, the Barjeel and the Za'ara (the Daboia), the shining blue-black 'Hanash—the Nahash of the Bible and the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness—declared that man had written all kinds of absurdities regarding them.

"We are falsely accused of being the cause of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. We are said to have had legs and are condemned to walk without them. Every man does his best to kill us, saying, 'Il 'Heiyeh wul 'Aseiyeh!—For the serpent take the stick!' Because one-seventh of all the serpents in Palestine are venomous, we are all condemned to death. Naturally we fly for our lives whenever man is in the vicinity. We ought to be bred rather than persecuted, for we feed on

[1] Unlucky. [2] I. Samuel xxvi. 20.

mice, who destroy the crops, and on rats who break into their barns. However, we do our duty and yearn not for their gratefulness."

* * * *

When the animals left El 'Huleh to return to their respective regions they meditated on what had been revealed at their great congress. Abu Sliman whispered into Abu-l-E'hseine's ear that, though many had protested, he thought there would be no change in the relations between man and the beasts. Adam's sons would continue to be kind or brutal as the case might be. "We shall have to take our chance," he declared, "and find a living as best we can in this Immovable East."

XI

THE LADY OF HER BRETHREN

As I sat at the door of a little coffee-house in the main street of Lydda, sipping my Moka and drawing at the sweet-scented tombak through a bubbling narghile, Sit-Ikhwitha, with that haughty bearing which I knew so well, came along upon her horse. It was years since I had seen the "Lady of her Brethren," but I recognised her at once and saw that she still retained her old authority. The clatter of her horse's hoofs on the loose stones and the musical tinkling of the gold coins on her Burka,[1] or half-veil, was the signal for the hushing of conversation among the groups of squatting coffee-drinkers. Deferential looks met her imperious gaze. Salutations denoting profound respect (some would have called it fear) greeted her to right and left, making her slow and stately ride through the town, which was built by the tribe of Benjamin, a veritable triumphal march.

But, though I knew Sit-Ikhwitha and her history well, the "Lady of her Brethren" passed me by unnoticed. Years of absence from the

[1] Possibly the veil which was given to Sarah on the borders of Egypt because, as a northerner, she had none. Abimelech said unto Sarah: "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved." —Genesis xx. 16.

little Christian and Moslem town had turned me into a stranger, unworthy even of a passing glance. Apart from looking a little older than when I had last seen her, Sit-Ikhwitha alone had remained unchanged.

"The Lady of her Brethren" was a very dark-complexioned Egyptian, with thick lips, strong jaws and a set of teeth (in spite of her fairly advanced age) as white as the snows of Hermon. Though certainly not what you would call a pretty woman, she was far from being an ugly one. Hers was the beauty of perfect health and superb physical strength rather than that of form and expression. She was over five feet and a half in height, and she sat astride her Arab thoroughbred like a man, and with all a man's assurance. Indeed at a distance, you might easily have mistaken her for one, had it not been for her characteristic Egyptian dress. The lower part of her face was hidden by her Burka, lined with heavy gold coins in order to hold the veil down. Her shirt (the only piece of clothing she wore at home, besides the black silken head-veil which she threw over her head and shoulders) was dark blue, and over this she had a black and white silk girdle, a brown and white striped silk caftan, or long robe open in front from the top to the bottom, and, finally on the top of these various articles of clothing, a black mantle, which, when astride the broad saddle of her horse, she threw over her

knees. Broad silver bracelets ornamented her arms, which were bare, as the broad sleeves of her cloak only covered them when they were hanging down ; and a pair of yellow sheep-skin boots completed her out-door costume.

Yes, the "Lady of her Brethren" was undoubtedly unchanged, both in dress and in manner. I could still see her, as of old, speaking in a loud voice and gesticulating, so that the coins on her Burka, striking each other, kept up a continual tinkle. And though, as a rule, she observed the Moslem custom of keeping her face covered, I could still imagine her, in the fire of conversation among men, throwing back her veil and, with a commanding expression on her energetic face and a blow with her fist on her knee, exclaiming : "Wallah ! Awarikum ya kohm el hâmleen ! —By God ! I will show you, band of cowards ! "

The story of this remarkable woman is intimately connected with the Egyptian conquest of Palestine, and in relating it we must go back to the days of Mehemet Ali. This distinguished man, an Albanian by birth, was an officer in the Turkish army at the time that it was opposing Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign. Three years after the French were expelled from Egypt he made his mark and was placed at the head of an army corps. Following with interest the progress of Napoleon I, he may be said to have modelled his career on

that of the great Corsican. He rose to the rank of Pasha of Cairo, and, as all who read history know, rid the Pashas of the domination of the Mamalukes.[1] Having become sole master of Egypt, Mehemet Ali's ambition grew and, supported by several old Bonapartist officers, he marched his army against his legitimate sovereign, the Sultan of Turkey. The Egyptians, under the command of his adopted son Ibrahim Pasha, crossed the Syrian frontier in 1831. The frightened Fellahîn, led by their great Sheikhs Muhammad el-Misleh, Ethman el-Laham, Mustapha Abu-Ghosh and others, resisted. But what could their undisciplined bands do against a well-trained modern army? When Ibrahim Pasha, whose name in Palestine has remained synonymous to "hero," "great man," and so forth, had conquered the country and taken the fortress of Acca (St. Jean d'Acre), which had even successfully resisted Bonaparte, he established conscription, and in order to escape military service thousands of young Fellahîn courageously mutilated themselves, some by pulling out the right eye, or poisoning it, to prevent them aiming, others by coldly cutting off the right thumb, to make it impossible for them to pull the cock of a gun. But Ibrahim was

[1] On May 1st, 1811, Mehemet Ali invited this formidable cavalry force to come in full dress to the Citadel of Cairo, and, on their arrival, ordered his Albanian soldiers, whom he had hid behind the walls, to massacre them to a man. With the exception of Amin Bey, who is said to have succeeded in escaping on his horse, they were all shot down by the musketry.

not the man to be frustrated. "These boys are true heroes," he said. "They are more courageous than my own Egyptians. I shall enroll them in my service." And so he created "one-eyed squadrons" and "thumbless battalions."

As in the case of every invading army, bands of merchants, hawkers and others followed in the rear of Ibrahim Pasha's troops. And thus to-day we find entire villages of Egyptians all along the plains of the Philistines, from the river of Egypt to Jaffa,—descendants of those of 1831, and who continue unmixed. A Fellah of Palestine will never consent to give his pure-bred Palestine daughter to an Egyptian. "Ehna Fellahîn u hummé Masriean!—We are Fellahîn and they are Egyptians!" he will say, with a sneer, on receiving such a proposal. The differences between the two races are too great to make inter-marriages possible. The Egyptians have semi-Ethiopian features,—thicker, slightly flattened noses, and are of a much darker colour. The Fellaha has a white head-veil, but the face is bare and her blue shirt is of a lighter colour than the dark-blue one of the Egyptian. The Egyptian wears the Burka, hanging down from the forehead, covering the nose, mouth, and upper part of the cheeks, chin and neck, but leaving the eyes and forehead free.

Now, in the service of Ibrahim Pasha were several young soldiers of one family, and with

them their parents and an only daughter. The girl, Nasra, had been brought up among boys, possessed many boyish characteristics, and, as her name indicated, was destined to be "victorious." Remarkably self-willed, she commanded her brothers every bit as much as her parents did, and consequently came to be known by those of her race as Sit-Ikhwitha,—the "Lady of her Brethren."

As the Egyptian soldiers camped and decamped on the long way through the desert from Egypt to Palestine and all along the hostile country, Nasra's masculine and authoritative character became still more pronounced. She used to accompany the horsemen when they went to water their horses and to execute commissions for which she was liberally rewarded. Always awake whenever a Bedawi attack was expected, she did not hesitate even to seize a spare rifle and rush towards the enemy. More than once had she largely contributed towards the saving of lives and on at least two occasions she had been instrumental in rescuing the treasure of war, which was kept in a wooden safe in the midst of the camp. In recognition of these services, Nasra had received the compliments of the commanding officer and thus had become known to all. The officers especially had cast glances in the direction of the courageous, well-developed, dark-eyed girl of fifteen. One of them, bolder than the rest,

ventured, one day, on flirting with her. But he never tried again.

"How dare you!" cried Nasra. "Ya ebn el Kalb! Oh! son of a dog! . . . Shall I denounce you?"

The officer, fearing for his life, since such mistakes are often punished by death, implored for pardon.

"I meant not any dishonesty," he cried. "Imshi doughri! Walk straight, and no one will insult you."

The incident leaked out and henceforth Nasra could move about the camp without being molested, either by deed or by word or even by a look. This was one of her earliest victories, and it led her not only to a position of greater authority but, later, to wealth.

Nasra, the "Victorious," the "Lady of her Brethren," was ambitious. She had dreams of becoming rich and a commander of men. Many a time, during the quiet hours of the night, whilst everyone in the camp, save the sentinels, was deep in slumber, had she let her thoughts revolve around the future. Young in years, she was old in experience and cupidity. One night, shortly after the last occasion on which her vigilance had resulted in the saving of the war-chest, temptation stole upon her. How considerable, she thought, must be the treasure of war and how powerful would be the person who possessed such wealth as that!

Ah! if only *she* could say that it was hers! . . . But, in a sense, was it not hers?—since it had more than once been rescued from the hands of the enemy through her foresight and bravery? Then a plan struck her.

She chose the time for the carrying out of her daring project well. The army had moved out of the dangerous Bedawi zone and was encamped just off Sar'ah, the Zorah of the Bible,[1] near the mountains of Judah. Officers and soldiers felt that they had no longer much to fear from the enemy; they could afford, now, to relax their attention a little. The camp fires had died out and the moon had set behind the blue waters of the Mediterranean. A slight east wind was blowing and in the stillness of the night the fields of Dura murmured incessantly. It was a peculiar sound, caused by the striking together of the heavy ears of the Syrian millet, resembling Indian corn, and the rubbing together of the plants' broad leaves, and it bore a certain likeness to that of men stealthily approaching the camp. Nasra, who had made all her preparations, aroused the camp and declared that she had distinctly heard, in a certain direction, the sound of the enemy's footsteps. Officers and men went in pursuit of the phantom Bedawîn, but after a time the fields of Dura were declared to be the cause of the false alarm, and, laughing over their empty fears,

[1] Joshua xix. 41.

they returned to the camp. Soon everyone, save Nasra and her brothers, who were acting as sentinels that night around the treasure of war, and whom she had easily persuaded to become her accomplices, was once more deep in slumber. Slipping out of her tent into the darkness, the "Lady of her Brethren" drew near to the coveted treasure and had the safe quietly carried into a tomb cave on the slopes of a neighbouring hill.[1] Then, when she and her accomplices had returned to the camp and had again taken their places, she gave the alarm for the second time. Slightly striking one of her brothers, who fell, as though stunned, to the ground, she cried out, like Delilah did in the case of Samson:[2] "El-kohm—'aleina! Jai ya naas jai!—The enemy are upon us! Come here, oh people!" The soldiers rushed out of their tents towards the safe, but the treasure was gone and the sentinel apparently lifeless. With Nasra at their head, they rushed into the darkness in the direction of Wady-Ali, whence she declared she had seen the enemy carrying off the war-chest. Others went in the

[1] These tomb-caves date from the days of the Israelites and are hewn out in the slopes of the hills. The natives of the district avoid them, or rather did so in the days to which this narrative applies. Of recent years they have all been visited by searchers after antiquities, and tombs which had been unviolated for thousands of years have now been opened in search of spoil. Sit-Ikhwitha well knew that such a tomb as she had chosen would be avoided by the superstitious soldiers of Ibrahim Pasha's army.

[2] "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson,"—Judges xvi. 9, 12, 14 and 20.

direction of Yalo (Ajalon). But by daybreak the futile pursuit was abandoned.

Thus did the "Lady of her Brethren," who continued for several months longer in the rear of the Egyptian army, lay the foundations of her fortune. She finally settled down in Lydda, the principal town of the plain, and there, with her parents, went in for commerce. This gave her an opportunity of rising to the position to which she aspired. Out of the hidden safe in the Israelitic tomb, known to her and her brothers only, she obtained money, with which she bought, first a small house, and then a field. Wisely, she abstained from suddenly becoming rich. But as the years went by her wealth and power gradually increased, and when I first came to know her she was the owner of houses and lands all over Lydda and district.

When the brothers of Sit-Ikhwitha had concluded their military service in the Egyptian army and Ibrahim Pasha, in 1841, had withdrawn his troops from Palestine, they also remained in Lydda and, under her sway, became influential people. She married an Egyptian and had children. But the very names of her husband, offspring and relatives were unknown to the general public. They were always spoken of as the "husband of Sit-Ikhwitha," the "son of Sit-Ikhwitha," the "brother of Sit-Ikhwitha"—she alone counted

in Lydda and district. As with Deborah and the children of Israel, ideas contrary to her were never uttered.[1] Even the Governor of Lydda, on meeting her riding on her thoroughbred, as on the day when I saw her passing through the main street of the town, had to greet her reverently and often to obey her if, imperiously, she claimed this or that favour.

[1] Judges v. 7.

XII

TAX-GATHERING IN NIMRIN

NÂBLUS, in Samaria,—the Roman Neapolis and, in part at least, the ancient Shechem,—is too well known to need more than a brief reference to its well-built houses, its fine situation and its fair circle of gardens. Lying between the twin mountains Ebal and Gerizim (on which the few remaining Samaritan Jews—some 150 in all and the smallest religious sect in the world—possess an old temple), the town is exceptionally well watered and the seat of a Pashalic. In the early eighties of the last century the Pasha's authority extended to the left shore of the Jordan valley, where the turbulent Bedawîn tribes congregated, and even as far as the Dead Sea. But his jurisdiction was merely nominal and he found it not at all easy to levy taxes. In those days the tax-gatherers generally set forth to claim their due with the Pasha himself and a strong escort of soldiers.

Now, at the time of my story, Khurshud Pasha had in vain asked for the taxes of the Aduan, the wildest tribe in Nimrin. So he decided to go himself and gather what he could. Advised of his visit, Sheikh Ali el-Thiab, accompanied by two hundred Bedawîn horsemen, royally came to the Forth of Jordan to meet the government official. Seeing this formidable body and realising that his hundred soldiers were at its mercy, Khurshud

Pasha immediately became extremely polite,—and his politeness tended to increase rather than decrease when Sheikh Ali ordered his warriors to gallop up and down in front of the visitor and fire salutes in his honour. The Bedawîn fired their guns so near that the sparks almost flew into the Pasha's face and so long did they continue that at last the official begged Ali to order them to cease. But the Sheikh, as he called out to his personal attendants "to receive and dismount the horseman—'Howlu il Khayal!"—assured his guest that they were so honoured by his visit that really they could not cease firing for joy. So, amidst the continuous discharge of firearms, Khurshud Pasha entered Ali's big black hair tent, all lined with silk from the market of Damascus, and sat down on the silken cushions which had been spread for him on the home-made many-coloured carpet of long sheep's wool. He tried to speak but could not make himself heard because of the din. Coffee was prepared and ceremoniously handed to the honoured visitor, and all the time the firing continued, both in and outside the tent. At last, boiling over with indignation, but without showing it too much, the Pasha hurriedly drank his coffee and started off again, accompanied by Ali's noisy followers until, just before nightfall, he had safely reached the Jordan. The fierce Bedawîn then wished him "God's protection—Fi 'Haffad Allah!"—and

galloped off into the gathering darkness, still discharging their carabines, pistols and flint-lock rifles and howling with joy.

For some time after this episode the Aduan could do without visiting the towns. But they require more than wheat and meat, which is plentiful in their camps especially after the harvest. By two or three minor Ghazu, they had obtained a few camels and tents, but that was about all. They badly needed to renew their clothes and boots at the only market accessible to them,—that at Nâblus. So Ali el-Thiab and his warriors were very glad when Khurshud Pasha invited them to return his visit and bring a few taxes with them. The Bedawi chief promptly seized the opportunity and started for Nâblus with two hundred and fifty horsemen, most of them fully equipped. But the Shaalé (black mantles) of many of them were much the worse for wear; their flowing head-cloths (Kafiyé) would hardly have been decent but for the very nice home-made 'Agaal, or head-cords, which, tressed by their own women of camel's hair, held the Kafiyé in place; their white shirts were in the poorest condition; whilst their shoes and boots—in which every Bedawi Khayal (horseman) takes a pride—were in nearly every case quite worn out. Their weapons, however, were in proper order;—trust the Aduan for that! Muskets, pistols, swords and lances glittered in the morning sun as they approached the Jordan.

What matter if their clothes were shabby so long as their arms were bright and ready to their hand? They would soon, they told themselves, be in the bazaar at Nâblus, where silk, sheeting, red and yellow boots, and everything for the renewal of a dilapidated wardrobe could be had by paying for it. It is true that at that moment they were without money with which to buy all the fine Damascus wares they would see. But were there no money-lenders, willing to advance money at fifty or a hundred per cent.?—A Bedawi will put his hand to any bond when he is in need of ready cash; for he is a firm believer that when the harvest comes "God will provide,—Bifridge Allah!"—Filled with this spirit, and thinking of the precious things they would buy, a group of Ali's men began to sing an Aduan war song, beginning:—

"Ya Muhur, la alweek leyaat
Yohm il Khail il 'arak
Wayohm naquel el-mazareek
In maalat il-ma'aref."[1]

The last verse had no sooner been sung than another group, still more enthusiastic and full of confidence in its might, continued:—

"Bi alfain wulla thalathé
Min khaf il'Arab yelamlam
Fi Shoor wulla Khabathé."[2]

[1] "My foal, I'll twist you round and round,
When all horses are engaged in battle;
On the day when lances are borne
And manes are wildly flying."

[2] "Two or three thousand are grouped;
The Arabs have gathered.
Is it for war, or trickery?"

On hearing of their approaching arrival, Khurshud Pasha made stables ready for the horses of the Shiukh (chiefs); those of the others were camped in the olive yards around the walls of the town. By no means at his ease, owing to the number of his guests and their warlike appearance, he made a point of receiving Ali el-Thiab with great cordiality, and of treating his men right royally. Sheep and lambs were butchered without end. Nor was Ali behindhand as regards courtesy, —he had brought presents with him for the Pasha: a beautiful young horse of the famous K'hailet pedigree and a fine camel. The Aduan were well contented with the reception accorded them and soon the streets of Nâblus were animated with purchasers and the noise of their trailing arms and huge blood-red ironed boots, with blue tassels dangling from the tops, as they tramped over the uneven pavement. Coffee-houses became filled with moka-sipping Bedawîn; Jews and business-men were everywhere astir, writing bills for the money to be advanced to the eager-eyed sons of the desert, who, on seeing the gold coin brought out of the safes, would have agreed to any percentage.

When the money had been received and the deeds had been stored away, the Harat-el-'Atareen, the Apothecaries' or Perfumers' Street, and the Harat-el-Khawajaat, the Drapers' Street, were especially crowded with customers. Large

quantities of perfumery were bought for themselves and their wives at home. The narrow streets rang with the voices of the shopkeepers, calling to the passers-by that everything was better and cheaper than at their neighbours' rival establishments. In the Harat-el-Halawy, or Sweetmeat Street, a crowd of Bedawîn waited to be served whilst the shopkeepers with enormous knives cut big slices of Halawy, a sweetmeat made of sesame meal, sesame oil and honey. Long had these sugar-loving children of the East been deprived of such luxuries.

In brief, during their three days' sojourn in Nâblus, there was hardly a man who did not spend from £5 to £6 on his own body and nearly as much for his family at home. The two who spent the least were Sheikh Ali el-Thiab and his cousin Gublan,—he who had a great scar on his face, the result of a spear wound received in battle; Ali and Gublan were saved the trouble of either loosening their purse-strings or signing bonds by the liberal-handed Pasha, who heaped upon them fine silken gowns, new mantles, head-dresses of silk, red boots and that choice perfumery of Arabia which has been celebrated ever since the days of the Ishmaelites[1] and the children of Israel.[2]

At the close of the third day and whilst the bazaar was still thronged with purchasers, a

[1] Genesis xxxvii. 25. [2] Exodus xxxv. 28.

Bedawi could be heard going round the streets "singing the retreat" :—

"Quees gabel taghees
Walla linafsak il gaise
B'aad el farak,"[1]

enigmatic words to all but the Bedawîn. For unexpectedly, early the next morning, after a hasty farewell and a promise to come again soon, the Aduan were in the saddle and on the way back to their wild country. Passing over the Plain of Salem, where Abraham and Melchizedek met,[2] these children of the East unconsciously copied their forerunners by feeding their horses on, and consuming themselves, whatever they could find on their way.[3] They descended the Wad-Faria till they came to El Ghor, over which they easily passed; then, in groups of thirty to forty, they broke into song, as though returning from a victorious expedition. Some were singing:—

"Barudna daraj-daraj
Wal-khail mafateeh el Faraj
Barudna Shara 'il dareeb
Walli yaseebo ma yateeb."[4]

[1] "Give full measure before you start;
Don't be stingy
At the hour of separation."

[2] Genesis xiv. 18. [3] Cf. Judges vi. 3-4.

[4] "Our fire-arms we carry with us afar;
Our horses are the keys to plenty;
Our powder is law to the victim.
Whoever is hit never rises."

Others were chanting such love songs as this:—

"Ma zainatin gharbi-l Fareek
Ya 'Halali soud 'eyounha
La fout rum'hi wa-l Farass.
Ma zini hum ya 'tuba."[1]

How glad the Fellahîn were when the excited horde had passed over their lands, leaving at least the live-stock untouched!

Thus, in triumph, did the Aduan return from Nâblus to their far-away camp, where the women, in expectation of the fine garments that they knew were being brought for them, were waiting to receive them with songs and ululations.

The only person who did not feel satisfied was Khurshud Pasha. It was not the loss of his taxes that troubled him so much as the feeling that Ali el-Thiab had been playing with him. His pride was sorely wounded. So he set to work to plan his revenge. But, as becomes a serious son of Islam, he determined to be in no hurry. Indeed, friendship was re-established between the two chiefs, and Khurshud Pasha even went so far as to let the taxes go, until, at last, Âli el-Thiab was wholly re-assured. It was then, some two years later, that Khurshud Pasha once more invited Ali to honour him with a second visit. At the same time he quietly distributed a regiment of Turkish cavalry in the surrounding villages.

[1] "There is none like her (for beauty) west of our tribe.
What a delight those black eyes!
If I were to offer my spear and my mare,
I'm afraid they'd not give her (in return)."

When the Aduan came once more to taste the joys of Nâblus they were three hundred strong. "The more the merrier," said Khurshud Pasha to himself, smiling in his beard. And as he gave a brotherly welcome to Ali el-Thiab, he explained that Nâblus was too narrow to accommodate so many guests. Besides, their beautiful horses could be stabled under much better conditions if their owners were quartered in the neighbouring villages. Ali at once consented to this arrangement, which was so evidently made with an idea of contributing to their comfort. But no sooner were the Bedawîn installed around the town, with their arms deposited behind their horses, than, at a given signal, the Pasha's soldiers issued from their hiding-places and captured them to a man. Khurshud then threw down the mask and told the haughty Ali el-Thiab of the fate which awaited him.

"I shall have you and your fellow Shiukh (chiefs) taken to Acca to gaol," he said, "and with a similar fantazia to that with which you greeted me on a certain memorable occasion. Your followers shall go in fetters to Damascus accompanied by your horses, with which I will later decide what is to be done."

Ali el-Thiab, already a man of about fifty-five and accustomed since boyhood to a free open-air life, took very badly to prison. He lived, however, for two years more, when the redeeming Finjan

'Kahwy, the coffee-cup, mysteriously put an end to his existence.

Meanwhile, Khurshud Pasha had inflicted upon Ali's followers the cruellest of all punishments. Their pure-bred Arab steeds—animals of the K'hailane, 'Aheyane, K'hailet-el-'Ajouss and other celebrated pedigrees—were sold in the market at Damascus for such vile prices as £10 to £20, and afterwards, in the presence of their fettered owners, put to the plough. There is no greater disgrace than this to a Bedawi, who will refuse to part with his horse under many hundreds of pounds. What indeed is a Bedawi without his horse or his mare, which in time of war can appear and disappear "swifter than eagles?"[1]

[1] Jeremiah iv. 13.

XIII

THE WOOING OF SABHA

I

Abd er-Rahman el-Helal, who lived in the village of Abu-Dîs, on the borders of the desert, but quite near Bethany, was one of the wealthiest men of his community and as such could afford the luxury of having two wives. Not that he cared very much for more than one. A special reason had prompted him to take a second spouse, Farha, a strong Bethlehem Moslem. His first wife, Kadriyé, a near relative from the village of Bethany, had borne him no living children. And are not children, together with riches, the best of earthly goods,—especially children who can say "Praise to Allah!" and perpetuate His glory? But Farha's married life, unfortunately, was short: she died after five years, leaving Abd er-Rahman almost in the same position as before their union, for she left him only two daughters, Sabha and Alia. He loved them dearly, but all the same longed for a son and heir.

Sabha and Alia had a sorry childhood. They may be said to have grown up like orphans. Their stepmother almost hated them for taking away a part of the affection of their father. Luckily for them, Kadriyé soon had a son, who, since he

was born in the Spring when the father was absent on a pilgrimage to Naby-Moosa (the tomb of Moses) in the direction of the Dead Sea, received the name of Moosa. Great was Abd er-Rahman's joy, and fervently did he offer up thanks to the Prophet Moses for answering his prayer for a living son. Two years later, Kadriyé presented him with a second boy, whom they called Ehsein. Finally came a daughter Hasna. Sabha and Alia were as glad as if the children were their full brothers and sisters, and very useful they made themselves in the house, rocking the babies and carrying them about when Kadriyé was busy elsewhere. Yet their stepmother, who continued to regard them as intruders, did not always treat them with kindness. The oldest of clothes were good enough for them, whilst their ornaments were limited to a few coloured beads on their head-dresses and some paltry silver coins dangling from their coral necklaces. Often, as the boys and little Hasna grew older, did the girls feel their loneliness,—the injustice of the treatment meted out to them, and often did they cry for their mother, until, at last, the Bethlehem relatives claimed them. It was then that Abd er-Rahman allowed Alia to go and stay with her grandmother and sent Sabha into the fields to look after the goats and sheep.

Sabha quickly developed into an exceedingly pretty lass. Her mother having been a Bethlehemite, her skin was much whiter than that of the

Abu-Dîs girls. In other ways, too,—the result, perhaps, of her healthy, open-air life—she was more attractive than they, so that when about fourteen she had already more than one admirer. But none could tell her openly of his admiration, or declare his love, as this is contrary to custom among Eastern lovers. Besides, she was away all day long with the animals, and on coming home in the evening, or before she left in the morning, her stepmother always had plenty of work in store for her. She had to milk the goats; sometimes, early in the morning, to sweep the courts and fetch water from the well, some distance away from the village; whilst during the day, when following the herds, there was the wool to spin. In short, she was busy all the time, but never had a para to call her own. How she wished she could earn something and buy her own clothes, or at least some silk to embroider her head-veil,—how she longed for rings for her fingers and coins with which to adorn her head! Ah! she often thought, if only she could go to Jerusalem with the other girls to carry milk and eggs to the market. She would soon have some money then. Besides, it was no longer decent to let a big girl out day after day roaming about the mountains. But her stepmother Kadriyé did not yet want her son Moosa to go among the rocks and be in danger from serpents and wild animals, though the father hinted more than once that the children had better

change their work. Let the boy now become the shepherd and the girl sell the produce at the market.

II

Among Sabha's admirers was one Hassan Saleh, a fine young fellow, who had met her sometimes as he led out his donkeys and cows to the fields and fancied her as his wife. But as his father was not on good terms with the El-Helal family and would not have been able to pay the dowry, he had been content to let his fancy remain a youth's dream.

One December evening, when driving home his herds in the falling snow, and whilst everybody was hurrying to the village, he saw an old man on a white mare coming towards him and at once recognised Saïd el-Ma'ati, with his one-stringed fiddle protruding from his saddle-bag. This old wandering bard was well known all over southern Palestine ; everyone was delighted to see and hear him. After Hassan had bidden him "Peace," and the usual compliments had been exchanged, Saïd told him that he was going that evening to Abd er-Rahman's house. There would be a goodly company of villagers. Could he, too, not come and listen ? . . . Hassan hesitated to accept the invitation. Would he be welcome under Abd er-Rahman's roof ? Did not his father belong to the adverse party ? . . . Saïd el-Ma'ati patiently listened to his scruples and smiled in his usual

dry, knowing manner. Then he proceeded to set all objections on one side. What had youth, he asked in turn, to do with feuds? When *he* was young he had had no thoughts for anything save song and music and love, and, old though he was, he still remained faithful to the Muse and his fiddle . . . Hassan passed on his way undecided. But on reaching home the thought of Sabha's eyes turned the balance. After supper he slipped out of the house, hurried through the snow to Abd er-Rahman's, and quietly sat down among the guests, just as the bard was preparing his fiddle by warming the sheep's tail skin which covered the body of the instrument and was passing some resin over his bow.

Saïd el-Ma'ati had not only amused men, women, and children of more than one generation by repeating his interminable stories of 'Antar, of the Zeinati and Abu Zeid,—stories of war and the chase,—he had kindled flames in more than one breast as he sang of lovers dying for dark-eyed Bedawiyé, sighing and wailing as though he himself was the lover, and imitating joyous or sorrowful faces as the tale ran on. Many a happy evening had people spent with him, sitting silently in the low-roofed rooms and patiently bearing the smoke which rose from the wood fire at which from time to time the bard warmed his one-stringed fiddle. Everybody loved Saïd, his fiddle and his mare,—three companions who had grown old

together, and, moreover, were fast showing signs of their years. As a matter of fact, both Saïd and his mare Rabâby looked rather underfed, or perhaps it was that they never put on flesh through much roaming about. The mare had the same elongated face as her master ; her scanty beard was modelled on Saïd's ; her dry cheeks resembled his ; and, as her large and intelligent eyes followed her master's movements, there was a sarcastic twitch about her lips which gave one the impression that she knew he had some good story in store to tell. Some thought that she sometimes moved her fore-feet in imitation of a bow and fiddle. However that may be, there is no doubt about this, that as they went slowly up hill and down dale together they sought to read each other's wishes. When the hill was too steep, Saïd would dismount and tell her the stories which he was to repeat at their next stopping-place. It made the way seem less long to her and at the same time he rehearsed his rôle. " Are you thirsty, Rabâby ? " he would ask her when they approached water, and gently he would lead her to the wayside spring. Most of the time the bridle was hanging from the knob, as he feared he might hurt her old mouth by too hard a pull. Rabâby, his fiddle, Rabâby, his mare, and himself were three inseparable friends. His mare had carried him during a great part of his life and his Rabâby had been the means of him gaining a livelihood by fiddling, so

when, sometimes, he paused in his song and set the fiddle aside, to hear the approbation of his hearers, he would wittily remark, "Rabâby is hungry and wants food." The listeners never knew whether he meant the real Rabâby which wanted warming, whether it was time that Rabâby the mare had her feed of barley, to be ready for next day's ride, or whether Saïd himself required a strengthening cup of coffee. However, everyone received his or her share. Wood was piled on the hearth to warm the fiddle, Rabâby the mare received a good portion of barley, and coffee was prepared with the necessary ceremonial and handed to the bard and the company before he continued his poem, which, if particularly interesting, was rewarded by an extra Majidi from some generous hearer. And as the silver coin rolled towards Saïd he would skilfully introduce the name of the donor into his song and compliment him on his generosity,—an impromptu which invariably brought fresh gifts.

Snow had continued to fall as thickly as ever, and intense cold reigned over the whole district. The listeners at Abd er-Rahman's wrapped themselves more closely in their striped Abbas and the chattering women-folk, in spite of the heat of the room, snuggled together. Hassan waited for every new impression produced by Saïd's song to look in the direction of Sabha and try to read her thoughts. In the general movement his

assiduity in seeking her eyes passed unobserved by all save the girl herself—and perhaps another. Sabha noted with pleasure that at least one person present was sympathetic towards her. Did Saïd also detect his secret ? Or was it merely a coincidence that when he once more took up his fiddle and began to entertain the company with a new composition he sang of love and its trials ?

Saïd's touching story, which he opened with a wailing "Ah ! Ah !" and a few particularly plaintive notes on his Rabâby, was that of the son of a Sheikh who became enamoured with the daughter of a rival chief. The young man was much struck by the exquisite beauty of the Bedawiyé. Her dances were such that the passer-by had to stand still through sheer admiration. Her black curls pushed forth below her veil like thyme bushes. The long veil which enframed her full-moon face was all embroidered by her own dexterous fingers with red and green silk, and all around the brim dangled silk tassels of her own making. Her walk was like that of a young foal, and her long neck resembled a young camel's ; her bright black eyes were often likened to those of the gazelle. The perfect brows of her eyes were painted with kohl. Her looks were more burning than fire sparks, and looked like arrows ready to dart from the black bows above them and fly at their victim. Her well-proportioned body, thin as a lance, was ornamented with a pair of

pomegranates from Damascus, and when she lifted her hands to shade her eyes and look whence her love was coming, tears like rivers would flow from the dull eyes of the enamoured passer-by, and the golden henna on her nails would dazzle many,—to say nothing of her voice, which, though flowing as sweet as honey, was like an arrow shot at the young Sheikh's heart.

"Ah! Ah!" moaned the Sheikh, "I am dying of love, and never will she be mine. Why is bloody feud between our families? Why is that tent curtain between her and me? Why can she not see me riding my foal and showing my agility? She would have pity on me, and my tears, which are drying up my eyes, would stop at a single look. I would then carry her off to a place of happiness. We would reach another camp and my body would again put on flesh. But as it is, I am worn to a skeleton with care. Her black eyes and the golden henna on her nails have drawn out the very blood of my veins. My body and my bones have become transparent, so that my very shadow seems nothing more than the thinnest veil. Ah me! Ah me! I shall surely die and another will love my gazelle!"

Ere continuing his story, Saïd paused awhile, as though to see what impression he had produced on his audience. Everybody was deeply moved. Many of the girls and young men had tears in their eyes, and the glances exchanged between Hassan and Sabha were full of meaning.

" Alas ! " the looks of the former seemed to say, " I have no horse with which to carry you away. Nor am I certain that you would be willing to follow me. An attempt to take you against your will might cost me my life. Perhaps it will be better if I wither away like the young Sheikh in Saïd's poem."

But the message in Sabha's eyes and the happy ending of the bard's narrative gave him courage.

It was long after midnight when the last notes on the one-stringed fiddle ceased. But nobody was really sleepy. The company would have listened until morning had not next day's duties been in memory and Saïd had complained of hoarseness. So when Abd er-Rahman had honoured the bard with a golden lira the guests dispersed and retired to rest.

III

Hassan was too full of emotion through passing a whole evening near his lady love to sleep a wink. How much Sabha slept she never said. One thing, however, I can state with certainty : long after the snow had melted and Spring had painted the fields and hills with green and many colours, the echo of Saïd el-Ma'ati's song was still in the young people's hearts. As they went about their work, day after day,—Sabha with her herds and Hassan in the fields,—they dreamed of wild rides and a future home in a new and far-away land.

Early one morning, as Hassan drove his donkeys and cows to their work, he met Sabha at the well. If it is not in Fellah manners to be gallant, love's gallantry is the same all the world over, so he hastened to seize the opportunity to help her to set the heavy jar of water on her head, and, for the first time in his life, to speak to her. But words came with difficulty. He could only think of asking her how it was that she was alone. She replied simply, that with her father's wife there was no pity. She was forbidden to linger at the well and wait for the other maidens, for when the heaviest housework was done she had to take the herds to the mountains. "Eesht ya kheyi,—May you live, my brother!" she hastily murmured as thanks. And each hurried away, lest anybody should see them and suspect an assignation.

The interview had been of the shortest, but all the same Hassan was in a seventh heaven of delight. In lifting the jar he had touched her body. He had smelled the odour of the Khedar perfume, which she had taken from her step-mother. His lips had almost come into contact with her thick curls as they pushed forth under her veil,—curls like those of the girl in Saïd's poem. Indeed, he fancied she was the very image of the fair lady whose charms he had heard sung to an accompaniment on the Rabâby that winter evening. Strange, he mused, that her name was Sabha (the Dawn), and that it was a white morning when

he first met her! Her face, now that he came to think about it, was indeed like the Dawn. And forthwith he named his white-faced cow Sabha, in order to have an excuse for calling out the name of his beloved. How he yearned for her! His thoughts were full of her when ploughing, sowing, reaping, or thrashing. Sabha was ever uppermost. The black water-fowl with its white face was Sabha; every white flower, every white thing in Nature reminded him of her and made his heart so overflow with poetic thoughts that he improvised a little love song beginning :—

"Shuft is—Sabha fi tareek
Ghamat 'hassra fi Kalbi
Sabha sadrat jal fareek
Tamat il 'hassra ja nâri."[1]

Every morning Hassan went early to the well, but never again could he meet Sabha there. It was rumoured (neither could learn how it was that the news got abroad) that they had met; so Sabha was no more sent to fetch water at an early hour. Moreover, to cut short all talking, Abd er-Rahman decided that she should no longer go with the herds. Henceforth she was to carry the milk and produce to the Jerusalem market in company with other women and girls, and so be always guarded.

It was not long before Hassan discovered that

[1] "I have seen Sabha in the way.
My heart received a severe knock.
Sabha has gone and since that day
I suffer from the terrible shock."

he could only meet her in the city, amidst the noise of the streets and when the other women were busy. You may be sure that he soon found a pretext for going to Jerusalem. People flocked there every Friday: some on a visit to the Haram (the Mosque of Omar), others bent on selling their animals. He knew that the doors of the city were closed during prayer hours, from ten o'clock until noon, that nobody could either come in or go out, and he calculated that there was every possibility of his meeting Sabha, either when she was buying articles for a coming wedding of which the whole village of Abu-Dîs had been talking for days, or when she was waiting for the gates to be opened. His plan was successful. He did meet her; but had merely time to exchange glances, to assure himself that she still had sympathy for him, and, ere he disappeared in the crowd, to whisper the first two lines of his composition. It was evident that he must seek for a better opportunity of telling her all that he had in his heart.

IV

The moon was growing larger and the day for the wedding was rapidly approaching. It was a beautiful night in May, with a clear starlit sky. Stretched at full length on the roof of his father's house, Hassan dreamed of his beloved. For several evenings he had heard singing and ululations, as the girls of Abu-Dîs gathered on the

house-tops to practise the songs and dances they were preparing for the coming ceremony; and now, once more, he thought he could hear the music of song and dance.

He dreamed that he was looking on at a grand rehearsal, and that Sabha was the most agile dancer and the sweetest singer among all the performers. Her silvery voice covered all the others, and her solos, when she improvised before the other girls, sounded like a concert of cymbals and drums. Ah! if only he could get a little nearer and once more tell her of his love. Listening intently, he seemed to hear her words and the others repeat them :—

"Nahun ibneiat mithle ilward la fatah!
Kulmin shamna walamna rabahn alley fatah!
Ya makhid is samra ya aima ya imkassah
Khotlak wahady min il baid titsabah wa titmassah." [1]

Then came a chorus of ululation. "Lull-u-lull-lull-u-lull-lull-u . . ." it struck upon his ear, and so loud, at last, that he woke with a start.

He could hardly believe that it was all a dream. Everything, and especially the words of Sabha's song, had been so distinct. Surely it was an omen? And he found himself repeating the lines one by one, in order to try to discover their meaning. Was it not evident that the "dark

[1] "Dark roses are fit for the lame and the blind;
Who gathers white roses is never behind.
Unceasing the blessings are sent from above,
And mornings and evenings are filled with their love."

roses" were the dusky-skinned girls of Abu-Dîs, who fell to the lot of the generality of lovers, "the lame and the blind," and that the choice "white roses" included Sabha, who was merely waiting to be gathered by some enterprising lover? If only he had the courage to gather her,—and with her consent he determined to do so,—then the blessings from Allah would be unending, and the rest of their days would be "filled with their love." Yes, he must be bold if he would possess his beautiful white rose, otherwise his youth would irrevocably slip by and he would languish like the young Hmedan of Saïd's poem.

Hassan's duties called him on the following day to 'Ain Feshkhah, to gather rushes (dîs) near that Dead Sea spring with which to make the mats for which Abu-Dîs (the Father of Rushes) had gained a reputation. It was late in the evening when he returned home with his animals, and as he approached the village, eating some bread and the Dôm-apples which he had gathered from an oasis, the sound of singing told him that the customary night's entertainment had begun. Putting his cows and donkeys in a place of safety, he cautiously approached on the house-tops, reached the one where the singers and dancers had assembled, and lay down in the deep shadow of a wall to enjoy the marriage revel and "drink" the songs of "his dawn."

The girls had lit a bonfire and were dancing

wildly around it and a central figure,—no other than Sabha herself, whose flushed face seemed to her lover to be more glorious than ever as the light from the ruddy flames fell upon it. She was waving a coloured Mandeel (kerchief) high above her head; so that her broad sleeves slipped down and revealed her alabaster-like arms, each adorned above the elbow with half a dozen glass bracelets of the best Hebron make. She bowed to her companions: now to the right, now to the left; she jumped here and there; she seized a naked sword to strike an imaginary enemy, and, with commanding gestures, threw it from one hand to the other; whilst her feet incessantly moved to the music of her song and the circle of girls bowed and danced and sang before her. Comely though many of the others were, Hassan had eyes and ears for no one save the leading singer. He could hear the swish of her silken tassels as they tossed wildly to and fro; he could perceive her bare feet as they glided over the smooth roof. They seemed like caresses to him.

Sabha now addressed a new song to the coming bride:—

"Abiad min ith-thalj beda ghabaïlki,
Aswad min il fahmi soda hawajebki
Kul Areesin in tallabki allal baab natirki
Yetla imhassar alla keflat hawasirki."[1]

[1] "Your breasts are as white as the hills when it snows;
Blacker than coals are your perfect black brows.
The candidates, lurking about your door, sigh.
Return and regret; no one dares to come nigh."

The ululations which followed were not calculated to quieten him. He resolved to act at the very next opportunity, even if he should die in doing so. Why not die fighting for his beloved rather than languish away in inaction ?

In her wild dances Sabha's girdle had become loosened and her head-veil had slipped. She stopped a moment, giving the leadership to Helwy, the next best dancer. As there were several men standing by, Sabha retired to the shade of the wall where her lover was lying to rearrange her clothing, and, as decency requires, everybody looked the other way, towards the dancers. Hassan, who feigned to be asleep, was so near to her that he could almost have touched her.

"Ya Kheiti,—My sister," he whispered. "I am with you morning and night."

Recognising him immediately, she put her finger to her mouth and replied :—

"Huss ya Kheiji,—Hush my brother. As soon as the wedding is over, we can meet again in Jerusalem. I will buy perfume for my mother at Hadj Abdallah's shop in the Sûk el-Attarîn, next to the Sûk el-Lahamîn ;[1] and there we will speak together."

In a moment she had fastened the red silk girdle, fixed the veil with a great pin to her thick raven hair, and hurried back to the dancers, where she took up her post again.

[1] The Butchers' Street.

Hassan's heart was ready to burst with joy. She had returned the love compliment. For the second time she had called him by the sweet name of brother, and she had appointed a meeting-place in the great city where they could surely see each other and, in all security, make their future plans.

V

Sabha's growing beauty did not influence her stepmother in her favour, especially as her own daughter Hasna was small and very dark-skinned, —so brown indeed that she received the nickname of Abdy (negress). When Sabha came home from the Jerusalem market, Kadriyé's animosity used to take the form of a searching examination of her accounts, in order not to leave the girl any chance of making a few coppers, as pocket-money, out of her transactions. But Sabha was as good a business woman as she was a dancer or singer. Even an austere Oriental prefers to see a well-mannered tradeswoman, and will willingly pay a few extra paras if a smiling face looks at him from behind a stall or basket of provisions and a sweet persuasive voice invites him to buy. Consequently Sabha always sold her milk or labban, her hens or eggs much better than the plainer featured and less elegant mannered Fellahât. That she also contrived to make a little legitimate profit for herself, in spite of her stepmother, you may be sure. Sometimes a friend, knowing her

reputation for being able to sell anything, would give her goods to sell, and on these she was allowed a small commission. Thus was she able to indulge in those little luxuries to which every Eastern girl aspires: small coloured beads and rows of quarter Majidis pierced with holes and sewn on her head-dress.

The few days which separated them from their appointed rendezvous seemed like months to Hassan, and the marriage rejoicings were wailings in his ears. He could not bear to think of Sabha displaying her beauty and skill to anyone save himself. Yet, he often asked himself, what right had he to lay claim to so superb a creature,—he who was so powerless to carry her away? His only steed was a she-ass, fit for nothing save the carrying of mats to the Jerusalem market. In their flight—if ever she consented to that—the slow-moving beast would be nothing more than a nuisance.

At last the happy day dawned. Driving his ass over the Mount of Olives, Hassan saw the rising sun tinting the Holy City with beautiful roseate colours. With the gilt cupola of the Mosque of the Holy Rock reflecting the bright rays of the sun, the Temple plateau void of people, and the multitudinous minarets pointing to heaven, El Kuds was to him the holiest of sanctuaries. His love was going to be sealed in that immortal city. "He! He!" he exclaimed, as he urged

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Siloam Fellahat going to Jerusalem

on his ass ; and he wished she had wings to carry her over Kedron. But the beast of burden responded neither to word nor stick ; slowly she crept over the Jewish cemetery, down the slopes of the mountain, barely passing the groups of peasants whom they overtook on their way. Among these were numbers of Siloam women, who marched along below Absalom's pillar with baskets on their heads, containing heaped up cauliflowers, parsley and chard beet leaves from their watered gardens. The more women he saw flowing to the market the better he was pleased, for he knew that the denser the crowd the more certainty there was of his meeting with Sabha being unobserved. On entering Bab Sitti Mariam (St. Mary's or St. Stephen's Gate) the Fellahât, pouring in on all sides, increased at every step. Moreover, on that particular day, Jerusalem was full of visitors and pilgrims of every nationality.

Hastening as rapidly as possible to the Bazaar where mats are sold, Hassan set down his load. Hardly had he done so than some foreign visitors came and bought his four mats at a Majidi each, and at the same time ordered ten more, as they were furnishing several sets of rooms in the Greek Convent. Promising to be at the same place a fortnight hence, he hastened away to the Friday fair near the Prophet David's Gate (Zion's Gate) and found the market crowded with cattle, donkeys, goats and sheep. Six Majidis were

offered for his ass, but he refused them, and, after half an hour's waiting, seeing that nobody came his way with a better offer, he drove his animal to a Khan, where he paid fifteen paras for it to be fed and looked after during his absence. Then, with a rapidly beating heart, he hurried as fast as the crowd would permit him to the corner of the Sûk el Lahamîn and the Sûk el Attarin.

Sabha was already busy there, choosing her perfumes, a little pepper and cinnamon and some anise seed for dishes of curdled milk. Nobody of their village was about. Nevertheless, Hassan acted with Oriental circumspection. He feigned to buy powder and shot, telling the 'Attar[1] of his game expedition to the oasis of the Dead Sea. There were no formal salutations between the lovers when they left the shop and walked up the street, which was so narrow that not more than two persons could walk abreast without almost pushing into the articles hanging around the shop doors. As soon as they were side by side Hassan lost no time in making his brief declaration.

"Soon," he said, "I shall be leaving Abu-Dîs to go and live beyond Jordan with the tribe of the Aduan. I can no longer stay in the village without you."

Sabha blushed and, in her confusion, replied: "Take me with you."

[1] Apothecary and perfume dealer.

Hardly, however, had the words passed her lips than she retracted.

"Ye! my brother, how do you think I could leave my father and brothers, my work and my far-away sister?"

But the word which has passed the lips is master of the speaker's thoughts. Hassan insisted that he was ready to take her whenever she chose to follow him. He had merely time to add that in a fortnight he was to bring a fresh supply of mats to the market, that she should bring all her spare things with her, and that he knew a sure way of attaining their object. Some Abu-Dîs people were coming down the street and left him but a moment to slip into a by-way without being seen.

VI

Hassan and his father worked busily at the mats for the next fortnight and Sabha went daily to market. Sometimes she returned home at noon but often, of necessity, she was later. Owing to the gates of Jerusalem being closed whilst the people were at prayer, she frequently missed her chance of selling her produce to advantage. Her stepmother's suspicious questions and looks when she explained how it was that she had come home late greviously offended her, so that her thoughts often recurred to Hassan's projected departure. Could she bear to let him go without her?

On the eve of the Friday market, when passing

Hassan's home, she saw the mats rolled up in front of the door and wished that she could meet him, in order to beg him to stay in Abu-Dîs. Just at that moment he came round the corner. As he passed her he seized the opportunity to whisper: "I shall be ready to start to-morrow. We will meet at the same shop."

Late that same evening Kadriyé made ready the produce for next morning's market. Sabha's basket contained butter, sour milk and eggs, packed amongst olives, so that they would not break against the milk-jars. Her exacting stepmother estimated the possible price of every article and ordered her to buy, in the Sûk el Khawajat, a piece of blue stuff for her sister Hasna. Should the money not be enough, she was to pay the remainder from her own earnings, "as her poor sister was very badly off for clothes, etc., and never had any chance of earning anything," though, as a matter of fact, little Hasna was always neatly clothed and had far more silver ornaments than her elder stepsister.

Friday came and with it the usual crowds. Rows of yelling and bargaining women filled the lower quarters of Jerusalem. Women of Siloam, the Mount of Olives, Bethany and Abu-Dîs chattered and quarrelled as they bought and sold. Sabha, selling everything very quickly, explained to her last customer that she was in a hurry to get home. Her stepmother wanted her to work

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Fellahat of Battir going to Market

and she would have to hasten before the gates closed for prayer. As she had to buy the material for her sister, she went up the town instead of going towards Sitti Mariam.

Hassan, too, was busy selling his mats to the customers in the Greek Convent. He then drove his ass to the fair, where, before he had been there more than a quarter of an hour, she was sold for seven Majidis to a man of Bethel, north of Jerusalem. He chose his customer with care, for anyone from the east might have asked silly questions : why he sold his ass, and so forth. He was very glad of the chance of getting rid of the animal at such a fair price.

With the ten Majidis for the mats and seven for his ass, Hassan was a rich man and could start in life for himself. His powder-horn was full ; his small leather bag contained bullets and shot ; his Shibriyeh was fixed in his girdle. He had left his gun outside the gate, near Gethsemane, with an old olive-guardian, as the soldiers at the gate would not allow any armed Fellah to enter the city.

Finding Sabha at the appointed meeting-place, Hassan explained that he was indeed turning his back on Abu-Dîs that very day. Was she coming with him ? . . . Sabha again hesitated. Should she leave home and throw in her lot with another ? Had she really any right to complain ? Harsh though her stepmother often was, she did not

exactly illtreat her . . . On the other hand, her stepsister was rapidly growing up and could easily fill her vacant place. Yes, Hasna was getting a big strong girl and would soon be able to go to market. Besides, she was the preferred one . . . At the thought of freedom, Sabha's heart began to beat riotously. Then, suddenly, she gave her consent.

"Which way shall we leave, brother?" she asked.

Hassan indicated a quiet street out of the Bab el 'Amud (Damascus Gate) and instructed her to turn to the right and walk slowly, with her empty basket on her head, towards the north, where he would join her by the southern side. Then they parted.

Half an hour later, Hassan and Sabha met at Karm esh Sheikh. Both looked very embarrassed, for now they belonged to each other. And yet they were strangers. They had never been alone together as at that moment. For a few hundred yards they walked without speaking a word. At last Hassan broke the silence.

"My sister," he said, "anybody meeting us will guess our situation at once if we continue this embarrassment. People will see by our clothing, our manners, and our speech that we are not of their parts. Villagers know each other so well and talk so much that our flight will be reported at once. We must leave the main road and go

towards the Jordan. But we shall have to walk quickly to reach the huts of the Ghawarny [1] before nightfall."

Stumbling over the stony way, which Hassan, fortunately, knew very well, the lovers made their plan of campaign. They agreed to say that they were married, but had quarrelled with their parents on account of a stepmother; and to everyone inquiring whence they came they were to give the name of a different place.

By the time they reached El Ghor both the wanderers were very tired. Sabha had left her basket with the empty milk-pots, etc., in a grove. The nearer they approached the Jordan valley the warmer it grew. Her red mantle was the only superfluous article she decided to carry with her.

Received with hospitality by the negro-arabs above Jericho, each slept in a separate tent: Sabha with the women and Hassan with the men. The older Bedawiyat, after hearing their tale, wisely shook their heads and spoke about a Khatify,[2] though Sabha had sworn that they were newly married and were going to see the land which "her husband" had rented from the Aduan in the autumn. The younger women and girls fully believed her and did not see why it should be otherwise. But the men agreed with the elders. They had noticed the lovers' tell-tale glances.

[1] Jordan Valley Arabs. [2] Elopement.

Some remarked that the young man was nicely shaven and looked very much like a sinner. Moreover, appearances were against them. The woman carried practically nothing ; the man was without agricultural implements,—he had not even a sickle. However, that was their business. " May Allah level their road," wished the sceptical ones. Everyone had a right to a chance to live. And so the Ghawarny feigned to believe the story which had been told them and decided to indicate the best way on the following day. Should pursuers come, they (the Ghawarny), having given this man and woman food and lodging, having eaten " bread and salt " with them, would be obliged by the laws of hospitality to deny that they had ever seen them.

VII

Early next morning, Hassan and Sabha were on their way towards the Jordan. Their conversation centred around the impression produced at Abu-Dîs by their flight. Abd er-Rahman and Kadriyé would probably ask the women late in the evening if they had seen her, and on being told that they had not set eyes on her since morning, a messenger would be sent to Bethlehem, to her grandmother's, to inquire if she were there. Unless they waited a day or two to see whether she came back. As to Hassan's father, he would probably conclude that, as the boy was fond of

hunting, he had gone to the desert with some Sawahry[1] with whom he had been on expeditions before. There was no need to be anxious about the ass, which he had perhaps left in safety in the Khan. In short, Hassan and Sabha concluded that they were safe for a day or two more, until they were far out of reach.

The lovers were not very far out in their predictions. When the people of Abu-Dîs found that the two young people had eloped, every woman knew more about the past—the mysterious meetings near the well, in the town, and on the road—than was possible. Kadriyé was deeply grieved at the loss of the money from the last sale and at having to find someone to replace Sabha's cheap labour. But she had observed the girl's sullen demeanour and expected the worst. Abd er-Rahman was really very much affected. He did not realise until then how much he loved his eldest child. He bitterly regretted his want of affection and secretly blamed Kadriyé for having treated the fair grown-up daughter too harshly.

Meanwhile Hassan and Sabha travelled on beyond the Aduan (their alleged destination) until they came to the Beni-Sakhr, up on the plateau of Moab. On asking this tribe to admit them as Matnûb[2] they were received with joy, and a tent (the cost of which was covered by contributions) was given to them. Furniture,

[1] Bedawîn. [2] Naturalised subjects.

an old carpet and the most necessary articles for their household were also provided in a similar way. Hassan took down his turban and made it a flying head-dress (Kafiyé). Sabha was transformed gradually. Her short Fellaha skirts were lengthened inch by inch, and with her spare money she bought a black mantle, the indispensable garment of every Bedawiyé. Her red one, in memory of the old days, she retained only for indoor use. Hassan soon proved himself to be a first-rate hunter; consequently he received from his comrades a fully equipped horse and, later, joined them on their war expeditions.

Sabha brought up many children among the Beni-Sakhr and never told anyone of the story of her beloved Hassan's devotion until many years had passed and the people of Abu-Dîs had long regarded them as dead,—the victims of Saïd el-Ma'ati and his Rabâby.

XIV

SONG AND DANCE IN THE EAST

I

Songs and dances, as well as music and poetry, or proverbs and stories, may be called the intellectual treasures of the inhabitants of Palestine—treasures inherited from ancestors reaching back to the dawn of history. Superficial observers have sometimes remarked that their songs are mere repetitions, their music monotonous wailings, and their instruments primitive, indicative of a nation in the lowest stage of civilisation. But many writers forget that the primary cause of this state of affairs is to be found in the absolute belief of the Arab in the divine revelation of every human gift, marking men superior to the brute. Thus, to him the *calem* (pen) is of divine origin.[1] Why then change it? he asks. A typewriter is ungodly,—an occidental invention. Books other than the Koran are wicked; singing at prayers and dancing at a time of devotion have been inspired from above, and no true believer is allowed to admit new methods. Moslems are faithful and punctual to the law and tradition received from ancestors, and though we neither admit nor submit to such inexorable obstacles to progress, we cannot refrain from admiring their constancy. What have occidentals done regarding

[1] Sura lxviii.

"forbidden graven images"? Not only are they everywhere in our streets and on our public monuments—but even churches are filled with them. The Moslem bows down to fate, or orders given in the sacred books, the Torah as well as the Koran, and cannot follow innovations. God ordered Noah to build an ark and gave the dimensions.[1] Now, not only Moslems but even Christian oriental sailors believe that it is contrary to divine laws to build ships over 300 cubits long. Musical instruments, songs, dances, were invented by Jubal,[2] and it is transgression of the law to admit other ways. As the law of Moses is admitted by every true Israelite, every true Moslem must strictly observe the Koran, which is both a civil and a religious code.

In Islam we find a greater respect for the letter of the law of Moses than amongst the alleged dispersed tribes of Israel. The song of Moses is a glorification of the supreme power of Jehovah.[3] The Blessings of Jacob and Moses prophesy[4] war and wealth. Miriam and the women, singing in antiphony, proclaim the triumph of Israel—after the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea.[5] Let us take an example. The modern Arab Kaseedy is a song of expedition glorifying the crushing of enemies, and the establishment of the victorious tribe; the Exodus of the Beni-Helal

[1] Genesis vi. 14-16. [2] Genesis v. 21. [3] Deuteronomy xxxii.
[4] Genesis xlix. and Deuteronomy xxxiii.
[5] Exodus xv. 20-21.

from Nejd, passing by the Holy Land and fighting its way, till the final establishment in Tunis, resembles the Exodus of Beni-Israel by Sinai to the Holy City. A passage from this Kaseedy runs as follows :—

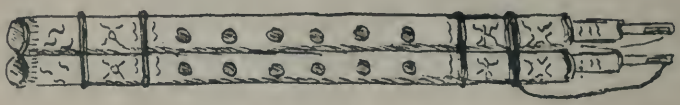
" Benadi il imnadi fi Dawaweer Abu-'Ali,
Sultan Hassan Yom el Khamees yesheel,
Wa inkan endhum hurmuttin ajnabie
Yenadiha la ahelha min gher jameel
Wa inkan endho bint amo haleelto
Daneelha 'oj il rkab itsheel
Wa taran bint it 'am tusbur 'alla-j-jafa
Wa amma-l gharibey bidha didleel
Walli endo muharatin ma tittaba'ak
Yehot 'aleiha sarj ma yen adal ma yameel." [1]

Musical instruments, especially the Neïyé and the Duff, are characteristic and unchangeable instruments used from time immemorial.

The Neïyé, also called Zoomara, is a double-reeded wind instrument, generally used by shepherd boys but often also by camel-drivers ; and I have often noticed how the animals in Palestine are charmed by its limited scale of notes, repeated hour after hour. My special attention has always been called to this primitive instrument, which I do not hesitate to call Abu-Zemoor, the father of

[1] " The Herald goes round the camp of Abu-Ali, and shouts
Sultan Hassan decamps on Thursday.
If you have foreign wives
Send them back to their people.
If your wives be your cousins,
Prepare the crooked necked (camel) for them,
For a cousin supports trials with patience,
And the foreigner wants persuading.
Whoever has an unbroken filly,
Saddle and equip it well."

musical instruments, and for some obvious reasons. With its very few notes, dull to occidental ears, it can raise passionate flames in the heart of the Fellaha girl, just as the wailing tones of the one-stringed Rabâby can kindle the passion of a young man, and lead to an elopement,[1] with as



(Generally the Neïyé or Zoomara is made of reeds, but sometimes it is formed with the wing-bones of the Nisr. The mouth-pieces are movable and attached with strings, and like all the other strings which hold the two reeds together, they are strengthened with pitch. The mouth-pieces are called Banat—the daughters.)

much ardour as can the most enchanting occidental flute, or the skilled and dexterous violinist of the West playing on a Stradivarius. And if the Western bursts into tears when he hears "Home Sweet Home," the Oriental melts at the thought of "My Mountain home, my whitewashed dome." And has not this same Zoomara, which has enchanted the under-developed Palestine Fellah for ever so many generations, also been a comfort to millions of Christians who still hear "the sweet singer of Israel" but are not aware that his Psalms were composed to the accompaniment of the Neïyé?

When David brought the ark to Jerusalem he delivered the first psalm to thank Jehovah,

[1] See *The Wooing of Sabha*, pp. 218-246.

"Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him."[1] The Hebrew wording is *Sheeroo-loo zamroo-loo*—that is sing a "She'er" to him, blow a Zoomara to him. Now, a fellah blows the Neïyé and the identical word "Zamroo" is used. Again, in Psalm lxxxi. we find the words, "Sing aloud unto the God our strength, howl unto the God of Jacob. Take a Zamra (the English version says psalm) and bring hither a timbrel (duff) the fine harp with the psaltery." In Hebrew "Psalm" is "Mazmoor," indentical to the modern Arabic, meaning "played on the Neïyé or the Zoomara." We also read, "Let him praise his name in the dance, let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and the harp,"[2]—in Hebrew, "Yehlaloo bima'hool biduff wabi Kanoot yezmaroo-loo."

Palestine proverbs are always based on incidents, and a proverb has almost always a small story attached to its origin. The origin of the proverb, "Adob ibneiak zamarr—Now, your son shall blow" (that is on the neïyé) is as follows: "A man told his neighbour who was going to town to bring a zoomara for his son. 'Very well,' replied the other. So he went on his journey, but forgot all about the commission. The next time he was about to set out, he was again asked to bring the instrument. 'All right,' he said. But he again neglected to do as his neighbour had asked him. The third time he left home, the man handed him

[1] I. Chronicles xvi. 9. [2] Psalm cxlix. 3.

thirty paras for the much desired reedlets. 'Adob ibneiak zamarr—now, your son shall blow,' said the witty neighbour, as he received the money. And, sure enough, in the evening the much coveted object was in the hands of the delighted boy." Oriental sagacity has placed the moral education of the nation in their proverbs.

Though the days of Arab splendour are gone, when generous and erudite Khalifs of the Omniad and Abbasid dynasties, in the marble palaces of Damascus and Bagdad, royally bestowed wealth on poets for a single verse,—though Arab literature declined during the dark ages, when the conqueror of the north threatened to crush the nation out of existence, yet, thanks to the vivacity of the language and the constant efforts of the intellectual centres of Damascus and the world-famed El-Azhar at Cairo, Arabic has incontestibly proved that it is firmly rooted. The language has survived political disaster and, thanks to this energy, we are able to read the mentality of the people of former ages, vividly preserved in immutable manners, songs and melodies.

The Palestine mother sings to her baby in the cradle as Samuel's mother did; a woman sings when grinding her corn as the Israelite of Isaiah's days; with Jephthah's daughter or with Miriam, the very *duff* is used to praise great feats. Under the vine and fig tree they sing as in the days of the judges. Men and women are separated in

joy and in sorrow, as of old. From generation to generation the father faithfully transmits his wisdom to the son and the mother teaches her daughter, the way she learned from her mother. Age is so respected that it is a transgression to dare to change a single word, a single colour.

These are some observations concerning a family group in a well-known Judæan village:—

Miriam and Abdallah were cousins, and had been brought up in the same house. They had grown up side by side—and their manners were the same. How could it have been otherwise? For not only were their fathers brethren, their mothers also were sisters. Each family lived in a room, which every one pompously called "his house." But does not the tent-living Bedawy call his tent or hut by the same name? "Beit" House—means as much as hearth in the English language. These two houses were nothing more than two rooms, the doors of which opened into a court-yard, itself surrounded by a wall on which were stuck sharp thorn-hedges,[1] to protect the herds and keep out thieves or wild animals by night.

As the cousins were of the same age and the mothers lived on good terms, Miriam and Abdallah were almost always together. The herds, the land, the gardens, the poultry, belonged to their parents in common, consequently, whether at

[1] *Cf.* Micah vii. 4.

work or at rest, there was hardly a moment they did not spend in each other's company. When the two mothers rose long before dawn, to grind the daily flour on the handmill, they worked together,[1] and sang the songs they had learned from their mother and which, to judge by the wording, may be traced as far back as history. One of these songs, sung in long-drawn tones, ran as follows :—

"In my father's house there are riches.
Black negroes go quietly about to work.
The days of my youth when visitors met
As the fruits of last year have vanished."

Half slumbering the children retained the wording —and when at play they repeated the song, which in their turn they handed on to their offspring.

In the cradle they heard the mother's lullaby :—

"Helwy mattat, mattat. La Walla salamet ha.
Bukra tokol Khurfeshy, illi btutkur fi jozetha."[2]

Or else, as a variation, the other mother would sing :—

"Nami ya 'eni, nome il hinna ;
La tashufi adna danna.
Ya'h mik Illah, dumti fi sa'tik.
Jufi bima'dik Illah es-sama."[3]

Miriam and Abdallah had also heard children's songs from the neighbours, and being very keen to learn songs of all kinds could at once repeat them. One such song was as follows :—

[1] Matthew xxiv. 41.

[2] "Helwy is dead ! No ! God save her !
She has perhaps eaten an artichoke
Which has stuck in her throat."

[3] "Sleep, darling, sleep in peace ;
May you never have sorrow.
God will protect and give happiness.
God in heaven grant your prayer."

" Ya Kammar, ya hadi ya munawer alla-l hanady,
Awlad Khamsy, sitty, belabu ta'ht id dikky." [1]

Betimes they astonished their companions by singing unknown doggerel rhymes which they had picked up somewhere :—

" Saranda'h ya saranda'h
Tool ik-tareek mana amda'h
Bamda'h sitti Safiyé
Im 'ekoos il imdaliyé
Dalatni 'alla bab el-beer
A'tatni shambar hareer
Kalatli bifarhat amin
Darabt il-Kooz bitufa'ha
Til'oo Khawati rama'ha
'Hamleen is-sawany
Khataftli Siniyé
Hamra wamakliyé
Ajat Khalti is-sarraka
Sarkat min waraï
Wuk'at min Kafaï
Fi Tamar wa hinna
Tamoot il 'ajooz
Watedal il kinna." [2]

[1] " Oh moon ! calm guardian who giveth light to man,
We are five or six children playing under a belt."

[2] " Saranda and Saranda,
I meditate all the way.
I think about granny Sophy,
Limping on her crutches.
She showed me the way to the well ;
Gave me a silken shawl.
She told me with joy :
Strike the cymbal with an apple.
My sisters came in a hurry,
Carrying great dishes.
I snatched one of them,
Bearing roast and fried food.
My thievish aunt came that way
And stole one behind me.
She fell behind me
Amongst dates and henna.
When the old one dies
The daughter-in-law will remain (at home)."

As Miriam and Abdallah grew up their ambition was not to invent new songs but to retain the old ones. After a long summer without rain, processions went round the village, the women and children imploring for pity :—

"Ya Rabbi itbill ish-shartoota
Kabbel in 'hamel Kabbel in-roo'h
Kabbel in-'hamel 'a Musser
Fi Musser ma navra'sh.

Ya Rabbi itbill ish-shaly
Wa ma'hna te'htak Khaiyaly
Ya Rabbi ma hoo battar
Yalla Karamy lal mattar." [1]

Another year, when all the orchards were full of the most luscious fruit, many families of Jerusalem and Bethlehem came out to camp for a few weeks and "live on fruit,"—an evident imitation of the feast of booths [2] and the living under vine and fig-tree. [3] Miriam and Abdallah, always ready to learn, made friends with the town children and from them learned many songs which were new to them. In the towns, where Jews and Christians are more common, the children said they rarely made friends with those of another creed and

[1] "Oh, Lord ! wet our veils
Before we load and start ;
Before we start for Egypt.
What awaits us there ?

"Oh Lord ! wet our mantles.
We only act by your order—
Oh Lord ! It is not through pride.
We honour, O God, your rain ! "

[2] Leviticus xxiii. 42 and Nehemiah viii. 14.
[3] I. Kings iv. 25.

often sang one against the other. The Moslems would sing :—

"Ya Nasara, ya Yahood !
'Eet-kum 'eet il kurood
'Eet na 'eet in-Nabi
Fatme jabbat sabi
Samato 'Abd en-Nabi
Khabatto bil-Khabayé
Ta'mato zalabiyé, etc." [1]

The Christian children of Bethlehem or Jerusalem, to rally the Jews, turned against the Yahood with the words :—

"Ya Yahood ! Ya Yahood !
'Eet kum 'eet-il kurood
'Eet na 'eet il Masee'h
Wal Masee'h fadana.
Bidammo eshtarana
Ma dean illa dean il Masee'h
Wa fath in-noor wa 'esadna
Wa hatha Kabr Seiedna
Seiedna 'Eesa-l-Masee'h
Ehna ilyome fara 'ha
Wal Yahood 'hazana," etc. [2]

[1] "Oh, Nazarenes ! oh, Jews !
Your feasts are goblin feasts.
Ours are for the Prophet.
Fatmy (his daughter) had a son,
Whom she called Abd-en-Nabi.
She hid him in the wheat-trough
And gave him oil-cakes there."

[2] "Oh, Jews ! oh, Jews !
Your feasts are goblin feasts.
Ours are for Messiah,—
The Messiah who redeemed us.
With his blood, he bought us.
Messiah's religion is the only true one.
Light shone from his grave. [3]
The grave is Our Lord's
Our Lord Jesus the Messiah.
We rejoice on this day (whilst)
Poor Jews are sorry."

[3] A reference to the Holy Fire of the Greeks, which is alleged to come down from heaven into the Holy Sepulchre on Maunday Saturday.

These children also taught Miriam and Abdallah round games in which all joined and sang in a circle. Antiphonally the two groups sang the words :—

" 1st. Ya Fatmy, y a 'onha
Fain ij jamal ?
2nd. Fil ma'ssara.
1st. Shu biyokul ?
2nd. Habbet durra.
1st. Shu beyeshrub ?
2nd. Nuktek nada.
1st. 'Ami, 'Ami ba'd amak !
Bitjawezneesh bintak ?
2nd. Bajawzek iyaha
Bitebool wa zemoor
Min Halab la Stambool." [1]

The town families also brought musical instruments with them, such as the Kanoon, a stringed instrument resembling the stringed Kanoot, or harp of David.[2] But this was only played in the evenings by the men. Another of their instruments was the Kamanjy, a small fiddle which differs from the Fellah Rabâby. The body of the former is made of a coco-nut covered with sheep-skin and has several chords, whilst the latter has

[1] " 1st. Oh, Fatmy ! homage to you !
Where is the camel ?
2nd. The camel presses oil.
1st. What does he eat ?
2nd. A grain of durra.
1st. What does he drink ?
2nd. A drop of dew.
1st. Uncle, uncle, dear uncle,
Let me have your daughter.
2nd. I will give her to you
Accompanied by drums and neïyés
From Aleppo to Stambul."

[2] I. Samuel xvi. 23.

only one string, is much bigger and square in shape. But neither the Kamanjy nor the Kanoot were for Miriam or Abdallah; their instruments were the Duff,[1] or tamboureen, the Durbukky, or the S'hoon (Cymbals), and with these they did their best to encourage the dancers.

When Autumn came and all the visitors had left, the two children continued their musical studies and by dint of practice soon became recognised as the most expert singers and dancers in their village. Whenever there was a wedding, a procession for rain, or a burial, they were among the guests.

As they grew older, they earned a few coppers by small sales at the Bethlehem market and thus were able to buy the necessary materials for making musical instruments. Miriam became the happy possessor of a Duff, and Abdallah not only purchased a Neïyé and a Yarghool—but also bought a cheap Soofara and a Shabbaby, single reeded blowing instruments. But he especially prided himself on a home-made Rabâby. His favourite song was a Kaseedy of the Zeer, an old Arabian tale which runs as follows:—

The factions of Kase and Yaman have been at war. Murra, in the north, is conquered by the Tobba Hassan of the Yemen. (The Tobbas of the Hemyarite dynasty reigned in the fourth century

[1] Exodus xv. 20.

A.D. Tobba Hassan was fifteenth prince, from 236 to 250 A.D.) The Tobba wants the beautiful girl Jaleely to wife. But Jaleely is betrothed to Klabe of the Kase faction. Yet they must submit and send Jaleely with forty camels. Every camel has a triple chest, with two compartments containing clothes and jewels, and, in the middle, a hidden knight to kill the Tobba when introduced into his castle. An old necromancer is called and sings:—

"Takool il 'ajooz illathi Shahtat.
Ma'an tazeel el 'anawi il sudoot
Ya Tooba 'Hassan in'em Wajood.
Wa erkab wa tared fok 'alla inhood.
Ya jibu-l Jalleely, lajlak khadeemy.
Bi Khadin a'hmar wa jooz 'eyoon sood.
Wa yasba 'ha ya Tooba', ya Khalbooz fatha
Wa fi yad is-seiegh kul yome yesna'oo.
Wa ya badenha, ya Tooba' ya shillet 'hareer
Wa fi yad im 'allem kul yome yet la 'oo
Wa ya 'unkha ya Tooba' ya 'unk el-ghazâl,
Wa ya thumha ya Tooba' ya Khaten thahoob
Fi yad es-seiegh-Kul-yome masn'oo."[1]

Tobba Hassan goes and receives the bride—but after much fighting is killed in battle, and

[1] "The old woman says, I witness
Thou mayst adorn the captive, the sealed.
Give in abundance, oh Tooba Hassan.
Ride and gallop on women's breasts.
Let them bring Jalleely, the captive,
With red cheeks and coal-black eyes.
Her fingers, oh Tobba, as silver appears
In the hand of the smith, daily renewed.
And her body, oh Tobba, a silken roll
In the hand of the weaver, daily refreshed.
Her neck, oh Tobba, just like a gazelle,
Her mouth, oh Tobba, a ringlet of gold,
Daily repaired by the goldsmith's hand."

Jaleely comes back to her tribe. Her beauty, however, causes much bloodshed. The faction continue to fight : Jassas, the Chief of the adverse party, against the Zeer, a son of the Jaleely. The Zeer is victorious and, as a final condition, condemns the descendants of Jassas to ride only on donkeys. Now, the Gipsies are those descendants and they still curse the Zeer :—

"Yen 'al Abu-l-Zeer
Illi rakabna hameer." [1]

Whereupon the Fellahîn, because they received cows with which to plough, answer :—

"Yen 'al Abu-l-Jassas
Illi hamalna massas." [2]

(It will be noticed by the student of these Kaseedies and popular songs that their authors are referred to by the bard as either He or Mohammed. It is not the poet but the subject which counts.)

II

Smallpox broke out in the village and the eight-year-old Can'aan, the child of a neighbour, became dangerously ill. His mother vowed that should he recover she would offer a sacrifice to El Khadr. [3] Her prayers being granted, she invited friends and neighbours to join in a procession to the Convent,

[1] "Cursed be the father of Zeer,
Who made us ride asses."

[2] "Cursed be the father of Jassas,
Who provided us with goads."

[3] *Cf.* I. Samuel i. 11.

which, though Christian and dedicated to St. George, is acknowledged by Moslems. Among the guests were Miriam and Abdallah. All along the way the latter entertained the party by playing on his Neïyé. Miriam, in her finest attire, led the girls and, like Jephthah's daughter, did not forget to bring her Duff. When the men were busy preparing the lamb and the rice, the girls gathered around Miriam, who was dancing her Me'hla,[1] swinging her body to and fro—and now and then knocking on her Duff and accompanying it with songs and hallelujahs until she was flushed. Her flying curls around her forehead impressed even the young men; whilst the girls, delighted to encourage her, clapped their hands at every third note. At last Miriam sat down quite exhausted, though none the less admired by her companions.

On the way back, whilst sitting down awhile near the "sealed fountain" at the Pools of Solomon, a long-haired Dervish passed. He paused a few moments and entertained the company with a song which related, in harmonious rhyme, the troubles of Joseph with his brethren. It opened as follows:—

"Wa ramoo la Beer Jibrîn
Mallaan Heiyeya multameen."[2]

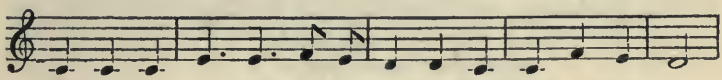
Abdallah's good memory and quick ear retained

[1] Judges xi. 34.

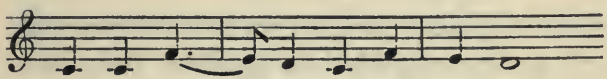
[2] "They threw him to Beer Jibrîn,
Full of different kinds of serpents."

the words and tune, and on returning home he set to work to sing the song to an accompaniment on his Rabâby.

Abdallah had heard of the seven Mo'alakat hung in the Kaaba at Mecca, and his ambition was to retain as much as possible of all such songs. He began, at first, with short verses; and thus his memory became very retentive. He quickly learnt how to sing the No'h or lamentation songs; and he was also considered to be very good at singing a certain Mawaal, or romance, supposed to be sung by his lady love and beginning thus :—



"Wa la man ya ghib il-Kamar, ma newlak il mufta'h."
"And when the moon has set I'll hand the key to you."



"Ah ya lail ah ya lail ah hay."
Dear, oh night, dear, oh night, oh dear!"

His town friends' Mawaal were sung differently. "Ya lail"—was drawn out three or four times the length of Abdallah's "lail." Risk, his town friend, used to put his right hand to his temple as though to hold his head for the effort which the long drawn-out "lail" required from his whole being.

The following summer brought much work in the field, at the lime-kiln, at the olive harvest, and on all these occasions songs to encourage the workers were very welcome. At the last

olive-gathering boys and girls worked and repeated a song opening with the words :—

"Ya Zeitoon eklib lemoon ;
Ya lemoon eklib zeitoon," etc. [1]

During the long winter evenings the young people played all kinds of games, but She'er were more welcome, as everybody could appreciate them. Rabee brought new marriages. Miriam, ever ready to use her sweet voice, was again the leading figure in the dances in the evenings after the day's work. As if bowing to the moon, she opened the seven nights' ceremonials by one of the oldest marriage songs, addressing the bridegroom thus:—

"Tull ib-Kamar wal Helali
Wal Nijme ish-sha'alé.
Walli bifoot ir-rafaïk
Yerkhass wallow kan ghali.
Lull-u-lull-u-lull-u-," etc. [2]

Then, turning towards the bride, in her own circle, she smiled as she slightly changed her voice and sang these verses :—

"Khaatmik ya maliha arinn bidaket in-nooba.
Inhoodki hal beed mithil thalj ma'hsooba
Sarat il kheel marsoojé wamarkooba
Bint il ajawid illa ibn is-saied matlooba—
Lull-u-lull-u-lull-u," etc. [3]

[1] "Olives turn into lemons ;
Lemons turn into olives ! "

[2] "The moon appeared, that crescent
And the flame-kindling star.
Whoever hurries to leave his friends
Loses his value though he be rich.
Lull-u-lull-u-lull-u," etc.

[3] "Your ring, oh fair one, rings as music.
Your breast is a white place all strewn with snow.
The horses are saddled and the riders have started.
The nobleman's daughter is asked for the Lord."

When Eed el-Kebir, the spring feast, with processions to the Sakhra (the Holy Rock in Jerusalem) and the succeeding feasts to Nabi Moosa came round—the young people expressed a wish to join the pilgrimage. The Standard, dedicated to Seidna 'Omar Ben Khattab, was brought forth, and with all the instruments, cymbals, and drums, the valid villagers set forth. Not only men and boys, but women and girls followed in the rear. As they approached the wall of the Holy City, and as Saiara (processions) after Saiara from all the villages, with their instruments and standards, poured into the town, a holy enthusiasm seized the crowds. The men, half-naked, drew swords and began to strike their bodies until blood gushed forth, and all the time they wildly called on their saints and prophets. What Bible reader could fail to compare these savage scenes to those which the Prophet Elijah contemplated when the desperate prophets of Baal[1] expected wonders of their deity? Soon the Saiaras filled the streets. Dervishes of all classes danced with all their energy before entering the sanctuary;[2] women, arm in arm and by threes and fours, followed singing at the top of their voices.

When, on the following day, the ceremonies were over in the temple-court, the Saiaras set off again with the Beyrack, the holy standard of

[1] I. Kings xviii. 28.
[2] *Cf.* II. Samuel vi. 14.

Moses, for the three days' feast in the wilderness of Judah.[1] Very trying to all were these feasts and very glad everybody was to return home and begin their daily work again.

At harvest time the families of both Miriam and Abdallah went down to the plain of Philistia. There was no healthy flowing water there as at their mountain home,—no wood,—no pure mountain air. The village had a well about twenty yards deep and as the women drew up the water they sang to the water genius :—

"Il mal yareed
Abdain waseed
Winghab el Abd
I'hdar ya seed
'End el tawreed."[2]

The water is generally very bad in the torrid plains of Palestine and many mountaineers suffer there from malaria and ague. On this particular expedition fevers were rampant. One of the victims was Abdallah's father. At the funeral, the women, especially the two sisters and Miriam, rent their clothes, smeared their faces with soot, and, with dishevelled hair, wildly danced about the grave, singing the following lines, as

[1] Exodus v. 1.

[2] "Property requires
A lord and slaves.
If slaves are gone,
Remain my lord
In charge of wealth."

By permission of *The American Colony Photographers, Jerusalem*

Neby Moosa Procession and Holy Standard

though trying to induce the departed one to return :—

"Ya Sheikh hana mishwariye
Fiha Shabab oo jahleen.
Yiridoo shorak ya imsamma
Ya Sheikh, heihum biendahulak
Khafeef il Kaddem bista 'jelloolak
Biridoo shorak ya imsamma.

"Laffa dioof 'alla-s-sa'ha
Itla 'ya Abu Isma'în shoof
Kharoof ma bikri dioof
Wadoo la ye'lam yidjib oakhra.
Sequel { Lihkill ghamam 'hafi oo 'arian
Li'hkill aghnam 'a mowrad el moye." [1]

A few months later another death took place,—that of Miriam's mother. The girl was so overcome with grief that she refused food. But when her father took another wife she regarded herself as a stranger in her own home, once so dear to her, and looked for comfort in her best

[1] "Oh Sheikh! there is a meeting
Of young and ignorant lads.
They want your counsel, blessed one.
Here they are!—calling you Sheikh.
Light-footed, they run after you
And seek your counsel, blessed one.

"Guests have come to the public place.
Come out Abu Ismaïn and look!
A single lamb is not enough for them.
Send for more—one or two.
Sequel { He got up barefooted and naked
And went to the watering-place
(to get the lambs)."

friend,—song. Many a time did she sing these lines :—

"Marrakt 'an beit il 'habiby
Lakate sakinto ghariby
Sallamet ma raddat 'alleiyi
Il Beit, beit immi 'erifto
Bish-sheed wal 'hasma kasarto
Sakanto oo ghishmit 'aleya
Lanno il 'habaieb fis-sa'idé waseleen.
Ma sheen 'a nakhel ij-jareed oo jeen
Ka'ad ill 'habeieb 'all i'rak
Yibkin 'all ayam il-afrak
Yit'hakin 'all ayam il-laka."[1]

Abdallah was now the head of his family. He worked in collaboration with a number of other young men of his own age, gathering brushwood and thistles for a lime-kiln which they had built. Whilst cutting the wood or carrying the big bundles of thorns, singing was the order of the day. Heaps of brushwood as high as houses were gathered, and when the fire was put to the entrance of the kiln, with a "Bism Illah!" the men by twos constantly shoved in the fuel, singing antiphonally

[1] "I passed by the house of my beloved (mother).
A stranger had taken her place.
I greeted her and she did not answer,
Though it was surely my mother's house.
I knew the lime and the clay which she plastered.
I lived there but now am a stranger.
If the beloved ones (her father and stepmother) are living in happiness;
If they joyfully walk on palms
Others sit in sorrow and weep,
And remember the day of separation.
But sometimes they laugh for the days of meeting (again).

the following lines, which, if not profoundly sensible, rhymed and served as an encouragement:—

1st Singer. "Hana juwa.
2nd ,, Il 'hooma.
1st ,, Wain waisilna.
2nd ,, Darb el 'henna.
1st ,, Darb esh-shoke.
2nd ,, 'Handakoke."[1]

When the lime was burned they carried it on their camels to building-places in Jerusalem. There they found the workers singing over their task. The gangs as they went up with stones or mortar responded to those coming down:—

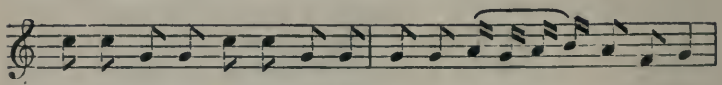
1st Gang. "Ya Muallem hilna—
2nd ,, Wulla bnuhrub kilna—
1st ,, Ya Muallem haat baksheesh
2nd ,, Wulla bukra ma bnijeesh."[2]

These Jerusalem workers also sang in unison a song which had come from Egypt and was known in every street. Abdallah picked it up and when he came back sang it to Miriam. But

[1] "In it goes
At the fiercest moment.
Where are we?
At the henna road.
The way of briars.
Trefoil plant."

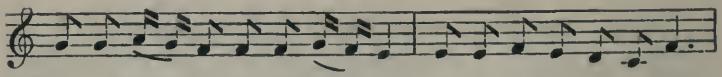
[2] "Master! give us freedom
Else we shall run away.
Master! give us baksheesh
Else we'll not come again."

she did not much care for these "novelties." The opening lines were as follows :—



"Baftu-Hindi, baftu Hindi Shash hareer ya banat tukhud uli shash il ghali."

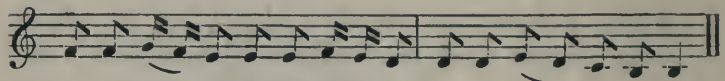
"Indian linen, Indian linen, Silken muslin. Hear ye, girls! Buy me the dearest muslin."



"Min suekat Hadrabat. Weft ahuli ya sabeya laglabat, laglabat."

"From the shops at Hadrabad. Open, maidens, let me enter. Weary, let me in to rest."

He sang many more verses—but she only liked the passage referring to conscription, for lately a cousin had been taken away to the army—and like every Fellaha, she cried for him as if already killed in war.



"'Akhadook it Turki minni
Nawa 'oo Kalbi 'alake."

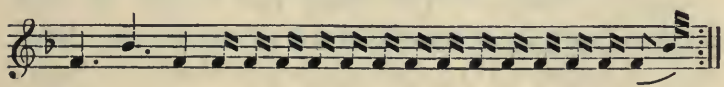
"And the Turks have dragged you from me,
Leaving sorrow in my aching heart."

III

Abdallah and Miriam became engaged. They were to be married in the autumn. Preparations for the wedding were already being made. Abdallah himself joined the dancers and singers; he had always been fond of the Sa'hjy, that all-in-a-row dance in which he was an expert, and which

reminds us of the Sahak in Sinai, "when the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."[1] In more ways than one has the Israelitish spirit continued to exist in the Fellahîn of Palestine. They still sprinkle blood on the door-posts in commemoration of some great past event, probably the recollection of the slaughter of the Egyptians.[2] Similarly, as in the bowing to the golden calf, modern dancers bow down, prompted by some long lost motive.

Abdallah was ever the leader in the Sa'hjy. Facing the dancers, he drew his sword, and gave directions. Singing, he made the human wall of dancers stand still or move to the right or the left. All the while they repeated what he sang—and clapped their hands. Suddenly with a very reverent bow, he made them bow, almost to the ground, like camels ready to kneel. "Kh! Kh! Kh!" he cried; then commanded them to rise again. Miriam and the girls with her were so delighted that for a while they stopped their own lively dance and whispered one to another. How grand the scene was. What a master Abdallah was! And seizing her Duff, Miriam began to sing as follows in honour of her beloved :—



"Ah! ih! ah! A hu ya hath a'l la'ham ya bene il 'ada kome hâm'
Ah! ih! ah! 'Aduatak daba'hu mara'h il khabar ish-Shâm!
Ah! ih! ah! Ya Malek, ya ibn il malek, yeblak bin-nesra wadarat il fallak."

[1] Exodus xxxii. 6. [2] Exodus xii. 17.

followed by the Zaghroot:—

"Lull-lull-ull-ull-ull-ull-ull-ull-ull-ull-ull-oo."

"Ah! ih! ah! Wa naru'h lidar il 'adoo wa nahidid ha.
Ah! ih! ah! Wa innakkel a'hjarha 'alla belaad il Karak.
Ah! ih! ah! Ha hathak malekna, low la kan halikna.
Ah! ih! ah! Low la Rheilak taaleen ran il 'ada akhadna."

The late Claude Reignier Conder kindly corrected my version of this song, and in the "Quarterly Statement" of the P. E. F. for July, 1894, translated it as follows:—

"O, there was the butcher, the fury of foes.
Your foes are slain, was the news to Damascus.
O King, King's son, victory is thine. (Ululation.)
And a return to fortune.
Let us go to the foeman's home and destroy it,
And carry its stones to Kerak.
He would have ruled us—not till we perish!
Before your horsemen came, the foe was our prey."

Marriages are very often celebrated in Palestine to terminate an expedition or to show joy on returning home. Therefore the songs on such solemn occasions have a note of victory in them. The women of Israel came out with Me'hloot and She'er playing on the Duff for Saul and David's victory over Goliath—and antiphonally repeated,

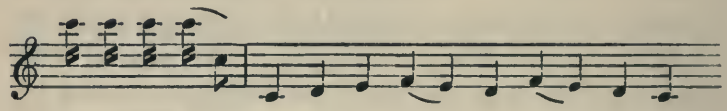
—first group: "Saul has slain his thousand"; second group: "David his ten thousand,"[1] because David was considered as the bridegroom of Michal, the King's daughter. It was a war song to celebrate the future marriage, as well as the victory.

This singing in two groups is often to be noticed, —for instance, with Moses when he "She'ers" for the escape from the Egyptians[2] or with the psalm of exhortation, when one party sings: first "O give thanks into Jehovah, for he is good"; and the second answers: "For his mercy endureth for ever," and thus twenty-five times,[3] or as in the case of the two companies which gave thanks in the house of God, Nehemiah and the half of the rulers with him.[4]

As can also be seen, the women's songs have retained the old measure. At times of joy or sorrow, triumph or loss, the melody differs little except that a more lively note is noticeable. When Miriam, walking one day to Jerusalem, saw mourning Ta'amré women weeping on the graves near Rachel's tomb, she joined the mourners, as she knew several of them, and noticed the low tone in which they sang compared with what she had heard at Mamilla in Jerusalem. There the women waved handkerchiefs above their

[1] I Samuel xviii. 6-7.
[2] Exodus xv.
[3] Psalms cxxxvi.
[4] Nehemiah xii. 40.

heads and in shrieking tones began their address to the departed as follows :—

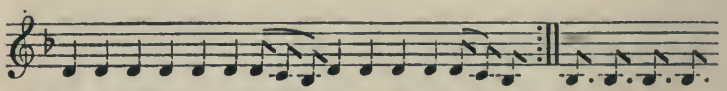


" Ya waradi-e

" La mano hilli nomo hoo
Kadadoo thiabho add'hadoo."

" When his sleep became prolonged
They rent clothes on his grave."

Here, on the contrary, the high pitched screams were omitted, and the wailing song seemed a more natural expression of deep grief. The mourning of the dark Badawiyat took this more dignified form :—



" Manaksh Khaber y a Kheiyi. Yohne shufna 'hbabna.
hm ! hm ! hm ! hm !
Tal'een biz-zaffy wul Kheil. Wush Shab 'alla babna."

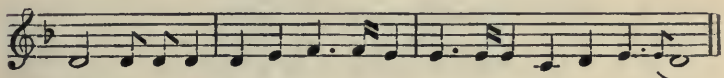
" Don't you remember, brother, When we saw our dear ones Going on the horseback procession. And the youngster at the door."

" Laminak tinshara, Bil mal ma ridna tana
Ya 'hesso ra'd, y 'erak la tahleel."

" If you could be bought—No money would be sufficient. His voice was like thunder, a rock for praising (God)."

Just as Miriam and Abdallah had learned songs and dances—No'h (mourning songs) and Mowaal (romances)—from their parents, friends and neighbours, so in turn did they teach their songs and dances, unchanged, to their children. And as I

listened one evening to Abdallah's tune as he chanted the old dervish's song of Joseph, I was struck by the fact that the construction of the song of this modern singer was the same as that of Miriam's song—not the young woman before me with her "Duff" but the older Miriam, the sister of Moses, when, following her brother's example, she sang of Israel's delivery :—



"Sheiroo li Jahweh Kigah gah. Soos wa rakbu rama meem."

"Sing ye to Jehovah, for his glorious deeds, Horse and rider have been thrown to the sea" (Exodus xv. 21).

It was exactly the same as :—

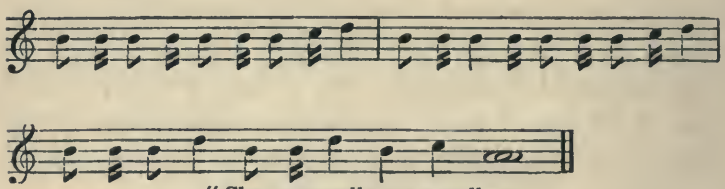
"Wa ramoo la Beer Jibrîn—Malan heiyeya multameem."

IV

As if transported through the ages of Palestine history, I could distinctly hear, when watching the wild gestures of Dervishes, the loud or faint echo, as the case might be, of the songs and dances of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. On hearing the Neïyé, I could imagine David composing a Mazmoor. At other times the sorrowful song for a lost friend reminded me of the fall of Saul and Jonathan on Gilboa, or the clear tinkling voices of the girls in the booths under the fig-trees of those old forgotten feasts which Nehemiah instituted and which were the occasion for "very great gladness." [1] How could it be otherwise

[1] Nehemiah viii. 17.

when I heard Miriam's clear notes issue from one of the booths :—



" Shay ya wellay, ya wellay,
ya bei."
" Shay ya wellay, ya wellay,
ya Khei."
" Shay ya wellay, ya wellay,
ya low low,"

and another girl, on the opposite mountain, respond —like a far-away echo ? This singing from mountain to mountain, often carried on for hours in the gay sunshine, was interrupted by the chirp of the cicadas or the continual croaking of the crows as they fluttered about the fig-trees in search of figs.[1] The very air itself seemed impregnated in this unchangeable East with archaic ideas and images. Ravens croaked as they had always done ; jackals repeated the same wailing sounds ; ruins told of ancient tragedies—events which happened thousands of years ago—and yet were spoken of as though they were incidents of the last war episode in the Balkans.

With such thoughts as these I was riding home late one evening down the stony village path when it occurred to me that Miriam and Abdallah's songs were more or less imitations of

[1] *Cf.* Psalm cxlvii. 9.

the voices or sounds heard in Nature. The setting crescent shed its last pale rays on the innumerable rocks which studded the mountain slopes. Behind the boulders the graceful cream-flowered stalks of thousands of squills peeped out on the nocturnal landscape like silent pigmies. Suddenly, borne on the evening breeze, the sound of drums and cymbals struck my ear, now louder, now quieter as they were carried towards or away from me. Then I remembered that it was Thursday night, on which the Dervishes assembled and prophesied, calling on the name of the one God until the Spirit was upon them.[1] Abdallah had belonged to them for some time past but up to then only carried a big rosary about with him—to say his "Saba'h." He and his comrades were assembled for the Tahleel, which originated when the moon was worshipped, and which later was observed by the Israelites on the occasion of their new moon solemnities.[2] Those Dervishes in that village on the border of the Judæan desert, were dancing and singing with the same ardour and enthusiasm as their predecessors of olden times, they were exhorted to sing hallel-u-jah to the sound of the timbrel as in the day of the Psalmist. And through the stillness of the night the voices came up to me again and again, repeating "Hallel-u-jah!—Praise to Jehovah!"[3]

[1] I. Samuel xix. 20. [2] Isaiah i. 13. [3] Psalm cl.

XV

THEN AND NOW

I

In our peregrinations up and down the country with our bees, my brother and I had pitched our camp to the left of the main road leading from Jaffa to Gaza, in the low hilly country between two river-beds, which, further up in the mountains of Judah, were known as Wad-es-Sarar (the Valley of Sorek) and Wad-es-Sumt, but here, nearer the sea, had changed their names into Nahr Rubîn and Nahr Sukreir, near the mouths of which are the shrines of Naby Rubîn (the Prophet Reuben), and Naby Jûnis (the Prophet Jonas). Both these sanctuaries are visited once a year by flocks of pilgrims from all parts of Palestine—pilgrims who indulge in a few weeks' picnicking and spend the money they have carefully gathered all the year round in view of the feasts. When these feasts in the wilderness are over the places are deserted for eleven months, and only Warrans and serpents leave their unmistakable traces in the deep sand which for miles covers the country. After the rainy season, the rivers become flooded, and the consequent stagnant marshes afford good shelter for birds of all kinds—magnificent haunts for the sportsman

were it not for Sultan Wakham,[1] who reigns supreme, and innumerable mosquitoes, who help to inoculate his dangerous virus into the systems of the few daring visitors who, like ourselves, ventured there. Jackals, ichneumons, foxes and, now and then, a stray hyæna, are the only quadrupeds who live and find plenty of food in those inhospitable marshes. Our own special reason for going there was the rich flora in August and September, when our apiaries could best profit by the flowers. We usually avoided all such villages as Shuweikeh (Socoh), Tell-es-Safi (the Blanchegarde of the Crusaders), or the Jewish colonies of Ekron and Katra (Gederoth), and set up our hives on the banks of the Wadies, mostly lined with melliferous *Agnus Castus*.

Our apiaries were generally guarded by North Africans, who were admirably fitted for keeping would-be marauders at a distance. As in the days of David and Saul, people of all classes, eager to escape being called to judgment in the more orderly centres, flocked to this land of the Philistines to be in safety.[2] True, we did not frighten anybody by foolish ways, as Nabal did,[3] nor did we ask who they were, nor did we care to know the names of "the servants that broke away from their masters." By the intervention of our Moroccans, we chose Abigail's policy, and let these

[1] Malaria. [2] I. Samuel xxvii. 1-2.
[3] I. Samuel xxv.

suspicious characters have honey in return for "being not hurt by them."

Late one evening, when the plain was still burning with the heat of a torrid August day, and we were about to retire to rest, strange sounds as of men in peril fell on our ears. Swift as lightning, one of our guardians, 'Hadj Imhammad, seized his double-barrelled gun and rushed in the direction of the voices. Though a comparatively honest fellow, whenever he could join in a row with a chance of obtaining a share of the booty, he became as vigorous a ruffian as any of those who waylaid belated wayfarers in the long windings of the Wadies. His very rifle he had obtained in one of these expeditions, in which he "had not hurt the robbers." On 'Hajd Imhammad drawing near to the place whence the sounds came, he heard the complaints of a man lying wounded, perhaps dying, on the ground. It was not long before he found him and lifted him up. He was a stranger, an Arab townsman. On opening his eyes, the wounded man put his hand to his girdle, where he generally kept his pistol, and cried out: "Kohm wulla sa'heb?—Friend or foe?" Imhammad quickly quieted him, explaining that he was a friend, a true believer, who had come to rescue him. The injury he had received was a blow on the forehead from a Naboot, but he could stand up fairly well and so, leaning on Imhammad's arm, the two men hobbled into our camp. But

no sooner did the stranger recognise us to be "hated Franjis" than he stood stock still and seemed to be making up his mind to retreat. It took all 'Hadj Imhammad's eloquence to persuade him that we were really good people—"almost as good as Moslems"—and that we should look after him well until he went on to Jaffa or Jerusalem. Esdud (Ashdod) was too far south; Yebna was a good way off; and it was doubtful whether he could count on as warm hospitality in the Jewish colonies off the road as with "his masters." The man replied that he was now living in Jerusalem, but that he knew the whole country and was a native of Hebron, which he had left years ago. He always looked for a place where no Christians came into contact with him. True to his native town, he swore "by the life of the Prophet Abraham, the friend of God—Wu'heyat in-Nabi Ibrahim Khaleel Allah!" However, on hearing that we were the Urtas Franjis, his attitude suddenly changed. His face positively beamed with joy, and he at once consented to tell us who he was.

His name, he said, was Hassan Yaseen Abu-Razek, and he was the nephew of the well-known Sheikh Hamzy, the travellers' guide of Hebron. Strange to say, we were not unknown to each other. On one occasion, when on a tour to Hebron and in the ever-regretted vineyards of 'Ain Askala, he had found us boys with our

mother living in a hut under his uncle's big nut tree. And he distinctly remembered the good woman going round from hut to hut in the vineyards, tending the sick, giving quinine to this and that one, but especially dropping Kutra (*lapis infernalis*) into the eyes of the numerous ophthalmia suffering women and children, including himself. Never would he forget Im-Hanary (the mother of Henry), the Hakimy.[1] Henceforth we were almost brethren, for had we not lived several weeks under the same hut and starlit sky—had we not eaten "bread and salt" ("il 'esh walmal'h") together, in good old Sheikh Hamzy's vineyard?

II

When Hassan Yaseen had had a good night's rest and had partaken of our frugal breakfast—the usual cup of Moka, biscuits and honey—we rolled our cigarettes and spoke together about his narrow escape on the previous night and our wonderful meeting after so many years. He, too, had been a citizen of the world, as the story of his travels and adventures showed.

"By Nabi Ibrahim el Khaleel," he began, "Naseeb (Fate) has brought us together again. May we often meet thus. Though I thought that the perilous days of Fellah Sheikdom had gone for ever, and that the Turkish Government had put

[1] Doctoress.

order into the unsettled days of my youth, travel is evidently still Khattar.[1] I will retire from business after this last adventure. . . . When I was a boy my father owned one of the finest vineyards near 'Ain Askala,[2] where the renowned Hebron grapes grow. That luscious fruit always sold at a superior price, and often we could keep it until the Christians' Eed el Milady (Christmas), when it fetched as high a figure as three piastres a rottel.[3] How I loved the beautiful shade under the pomegranate and fig-trees of 'Ain Askala! But my star led me elsewhere. As a rule, we would not sell the grapes to Jews and Christians, as they generally transformed them into wine and spirits, and this despite the fact that the Jews living in Hebron often offered us high prices. Rather than do that we preferred to make Dibs,[4] and boil the fruit into Tabikh 'eneb[5] for our own use in winter and for sale in villages and towns. When the grapes had been pressed in the old cuttings in the rocks, which, with vineyards, are as old as humanity, we boys used to suck the sweet juice as it flowed down into the pitchers below.[6] I always thought that the rocks and vineyards which had belonged to my ancestors and were never out of repair could never change hands.

[1] Full of peril.
[2] The brook of Eshcol where Joshua found the fine grapes, Numbers xiii. 23.
[3] Five pence for six and a half pounds. [4] Treacle.
[5] Preserved grapes. [6] Deuteronomy xxxii. 13.

But we must bow down and accept what was written from Eternity! Little did I know that soon we should have to abandon home and heritage and, fleeing from the land of our fathers, never again handle the small Dibs-Kaakeer,[1] never again taste our good fruit and drink our own water near the tombs of our Lords and Ladies, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Sarah and Lea—on whom be peace!

"Usually we remained two to three months in the small house and huts of our vineyard, and when the harvest was over and all was ready in pots, my father and I would start off and sell our produce, either for cash or for wheat, barley, butter and the like, which in turn we sold in the Hebron market. Thus, when still young, did I learn the art of trading.

"One dark night, when the rainy season was almost at our door and much work yet remained to be done in the vineyard, where there was a fine crop of winter grapes, we were suddenly awakened by unaccustomed sounds, as of men stealthily coming in our direction. As quick as thought we reached for our swords, but no sooner had we done so than armed and thickly masked men stood above us and with vigorous blows stunned us. The fingers on their covered mouths and their swords held menacingly above our heads were arguments which needed no further explanation.

[1] Pots made in Hebron.

Dumb with terror, my father, mother and two sisters lay motionless, their eyes half open, their faces as pale as death. The wild eyes of the robbers, looking daggers at us, seemed to say: 'Stir if you dare!' Of course, it was useless to think of resisting, or attempting to call for help—that would have meant immediate death. So we let our assailants have their way. Soon, quite distinctly, we could hear the cutting of the grapes, the loading of animals, the whispering of many men, and, finally, the retreat of the whole band. But before they left us we were bound hand and foot with our own turbans and girdles. Bleeding from our wounds, we had to disentangle ourselves as best we could. It was not until daylight that we got free of our bonds and began to try to find out in which direction the robbers had gone. That would have been an easy task here, on the sandy plain; but along the stony roads of Djebel el Khaleel it was impossible to find a single trace of them. In vain we asked passers-by, but nobody had seen any suspicious-looking camel-drivers. So my father, though suffering from the wound on his head and exhausted through the night's adventure, set out with me in the direction of Jerusalem, the only likely market to which thieves would venture to take stolen goods. When we had walked for fully two hours, we stopped at 'Ain 'Arrub, the great spring intended from time immemorial to supply Jerusalem with

healthy water.[1] Sitting down at the small Kahwy,[2] we asked for coffee, and, whilst sipping the hot beverage, put questions. The Kahwadjy told us that he had seen many troops passing, bands of camels loaded with wood, Karami,[3] charcoal, vegetables and grapes—an endless procession of people and things on their way to the Jerusalem market. He had noticed five men with four camels and a donkey; they were armed and carried grapes in Shakadeef[4]—a curious way of transporting fruit—and, unlike the other passers-by, they were in a hurry. By the light of his dim lantern, he noticed that one of the men had a very dark and unkempt beard, and he thought that he recognised him to be from Dura, south of Hebron, where no grapes are grown. 'Allah yen 'al Abu-l-Khayen—God curse the father of the thief!' he added to himself, and then, in a louder tone: 'But I am no detective. You know the proverb: "Kuthur il 'haki Khibi-wa-giletahu hiby,—Much talk is a nuisance; little is respectful."'

"We had learnt enough. My father decided that it was best not to follow; to have done so would probably have led to a fight, in which we should surely have been killed. So we returned home. . . . Two days later, some people of

[1] A work which Herod the Great partly carried out and which has been awaiting completion by a modern engineering genius for twenty centuries.

[2] Roadside inn. [3] Stumps. [4] Wooden cages.

Dura, with camels and Shakadeef, passed Hebron. We exchanged looks and both parties understood. But what redress had we? To have taken the matter to the courts would have been mere waste of time and money. Where is the proof without Majidis? No; we knew of a better way than that of settling accounts.

"On a market day, about a fortnight later, some of our Ghareem,[1] as we now called the thieves, came to Hebron to sell he-goats and Samn. My father went to ask them their prices, fully determined to kick up a row. Butchers, tanners, grocers, Fellahîn and Fellahat, and a few soldiers composed the dense crowd about the pool of Hebron, where all public transactions take place. The skins of the he-goats killed there[2] were sold to the tanners, who have a reputation for making the best Throuf,[3] as well as the smaller Kirbies, in the whole country. Walking up to one of the Dura men whom he suspected of having been the leader of those who had deprived us of the pleasure of making Dibs that year, my father said he wanted a good big Tharf,[4] made of the skin of one of the he-goats of Dura, to put his Dibs in. And as he stated his requirements he looked wildly into our enemy's eyes.

"'In-sha-Allah,' replied the man ironically,

[1] Antagonists. [2] *Cf.* II. Samuel iv. 12.
[3] Large skin oil or water bottles.
[4] Singular of Throuf.

'I'll provide for your Dibs next year. I have good camels and . . .' But before he had time to utter another word my father's Shibriyé flashed from its scabbard. 'It is this Tharf I want—Ya tais—Oh! he-goat!' exclaimed my father, as the long blade entered the rogue's body up to the very hilt.

"In the confusion which followed, we escaped and at once left the town, taking with us a few of the most necessary articles of clothing. That evening we reached Beth-Jibrin, where my mother and sisters soon joined us with every portable household implement. But the people of Dura soon found out our retreat and we again moved to Gaza, where we had relatives. In our movements from place to place, we quickly came to know the country and people, and had no difficulty in finding opportunities for trade. After a time, however, we found that Gaza—a town we very much liked on account of its austere Moslem population, as yet free from foreigners—was not far enough away from our persecutors. So we set off once more, this time to Lydda, for we townsmen cannot easily live among the Fellahîn. It is all right to be with them for a night or two, but we do not care to keep company with them longer. They have none of our habits. They live mostly on vegetables and oil and dried fruit, whilst we townsmen like a good plate of Ma'hshy,[1] with now and then

[1] Rice and hashed meat, rolled in vine leaves.

yakhny[1] and even bread. Besides, we are born traders, and it is only in towns that we can do good business by buying and selling goods.

"When we were found out by the officials, continual bribery was the only way to get rid of them. By means of our Hebron relatives we sold our vineyard and our home, in order to pay, pay, pay—until we had nothing left. Then we were abandoned. But our Ghareem never detected us. In Lydda it was easier to pass unnoticed than in Gaza, where the darker Philisto-Egyptian population formed a striking contrast to people of our fair complexion. But Lydda contained too many Christians for our liking. Established long ago in the country, they were keen competitors in our trade. They not only carried shirting and silk, Abbas and shoes to the villagers on their donkeys, they even carried prickly pears and melons in the mountain villages round about. And so we again set off on our travels. Our next place of residence was the more Moslem town of Nâblus. There the population more resembled the Hebronites; they were stern believers, disdaining intercourse with the viler and poorer class of Christians; and, besides, the town was an industrial one. If Hebron could boast of its glass bracelets, its big he-goat skins, and its fine grapes; if Gaza was still the grainery of Palestine; if Lydda was reputed for its oil markets and mat industry, Nâblus could

[1] Meat and vegetables.

point with pride to its soap manufactories, one of the most important factors of the wealth of that prosperous inland town. Then we must not forget that the Zbeeb[1] and Samn of Es-Salt, beyond Jordan, in addition to the Hauran wheat, stored there for further importation, have enriched many a Nâblusite.

"But the unsettled state of Palestine, due to strife among the Fellahîn, hindered the country's free development and was the reason for our business being stopped for years. Once, when on a commercial journey to Jerusalem, we were robbed at 'Ain el 'Haramiyeh, half-way to that town, of all our goods. We appealed to a few powerful Shiukh of Selun (Shiloh), Sinjil[2] and Jibia (Gibeah), but found that it was better policy to 'grin and bear it,' since the baksheesh was equivalent to a second robbery. Consequently we took other measures in future, and never went on journeys except in fairly large companies.

"Now, the continual moving about and exile from our dear home had an ill-effect on my father's health, and thus, instead of being laid to rest in the Turby[3] near our Haram, he had to be buried far from his native country. How we longed to return there! The fertile valley of Nâblus with its enormous nut-trees, the fruit of all kinds, the olive-groves out in the plain, the droves of cattle and sheep, roaming over the stubble,

[1] Raisins. [2] From the Crusader St. Gilles. [3] Cemetery.

continually reminded us of the neighbourhood of Hebron. A beautiful country indeed, but despite its beauty and the twelve springs which supply the town with an abundance of water, we could not forget our own town and district. Instead of the Siknaj[1] of Hebron, who form a lively part of the population of that town, we had the quiet and exclusive sect of Samaritans, the smallest religious community in the world, who go mysteriously to their holy mountain on Gerizim and perform mysterious rites. In Hebron we possessed, besides the tombs of Abraham and Sarah (on whom be peace!), Abraham's oak, visited by thousands of Christians; but in Nâblus there is only Jacob's Well, a much less frequented shrine.

"In course of time a Jerusalem family came to pass a few summer months in the cool valley and lived next door to us. The womenfolk became friends and we were invited to visit them when in Jerusalem. Our friendship ended in marriage. A young man of the family and myself exchanged sisters. Thus we all went to live in Jerusalem, of which town I am now a citizen. And I trust, since it was not my father's privilege to lie near Sidna Ibrahim el Khaleel, it will be my lot to live and die near the Beit-el-Makdas, the second 'Haram which he built after the Kaaba at Mecca, and before he constructed the third one at Hebron, and be buried away from home. I came near,

[1] Polish Jews.

last night, to finding a grave in the sands of this district, but 'Ozraïn[1] spared me. Il 'hamdu l-illah!—Thanks be to God! I have attended regular Friday services whenever I was in town. I have fasted the thirty days of every Ramadan since a boy of twelve. I have never omitted my regular five prayers a day. And when down with the fever or with ophthalmia, years ago in Hebron, or when half stunned by robbers, I never missed on the very next occasion recalling the omitted prayer. I have always tried to live in unpolluted quarters, away from Nasara[2] and Franjis. I have never bought in their shops, though it is true they are very clean and neat, and contain better wares than those of my own people. But I believe in good old Islamitic ways; and though you have now offered hospitality in such a kind way, this was written in the book from Eternity. It had to come to pass; neither you nor I could help it.

"Many are the transformations that have taken place in Palestine since the wild days of my youth, when travellers could hardly venture to the next village for fear of robbers who infested the country. The days of Fellah Sheikhdom are over. The Turkish authorities first set up order in the towns; then in the provinces. Conscription has produced a great change. The Crimean War

[1] Or 'Ozraïl. The Arabs change the final *n* into *l*, or vice-versâ, indifferently.

[2] Native Christians.

gave rights to the Allies, the French and the English, and Christians poured in. Hebron, which until lately had never seen a Christian living in its precincts, has been lost to Islam. The fearful Jews have set up colonies here on this very plain, colonies such as Richon le Zion, Ekron and Katra, and so forth. The Prussians have splendid settlements about Jaffa, Jerusalem, Carmel, the Plains of Sharon and Esdraelon. Allah best knows why he allows foreign religions to come into this Holy Land, the land of Prophets and Welies."

And lifting up his turban towards the skies, Hassan Yaseen cried to his God:—

"Why have you rescued me from so many perils; from the vineyard attack in Hebron, from battles between Kase and Yaman factions, from the dangers and accidents of the road—why have you let me live to see Islam, at least in the towns, almost giving way before the Franjis and their ideas?"

At this point of Hassan's story, 'Hadj Imhammad came forward with a donkey which he had found feeding on the scanty Halfa leaves which grow in the sand. Our friend at once recognised the animal as the one he had been riding when the attack took place. His Bedawîn assailants, after having robbed him of a few golden liras and his Abba, had taken the donkey away, but, probably finding the beast rather cumbersome for horsemen to steal, had abandoned it. Hassan was

glad to recover his steed, which, since it belonged to a Mukari of Lydda, he would undoubtedly have had to pay for had it been lost. Now, he said, he would be able to return the animal to its owner, after he had reached Jerusalem. His future plans, he went on to say, were already made. Passing by Kariet-el-Eneb, he would visit the Sheikh el Enbowy, the representative Khalify of the Dsuki order, to whose Dervishes he had secretly belonged for many years, and would become a real Dervish with the outward and visible signs: the pointed woollen cap, the short spear, and the diplomas well in evidence. He would pass the remainder of his life in or about Beit el Makdas, serving Allah; and whenever the Muazzin called to prayers he would then and there pray. In short, he would lead a holy life, and read the Koran as much as he could, for, though he had read parts of the Book at the Kuttab at Hebron, he was not entitled to be called a full-fledged reader or Kari, a title which was only given to students who could read the 114 Suras.

III

On the following day we set out with the embryo Dervish to take him at least as far as Ramleh, where he could find friends of his own religion, So intent was he on getting to the end of his journey that he remained silent and thoughtful almost the whole of the way. The villages of Zernuga, El-Kabu and others inhabited by

By permission of *The American Colony Photographers, Jerusalem*

Tower of Ramleh

Egyptian colonists of Ibrahim Pasha's days held forth no attractions for him. Nor did he evince much interest when, riding through the fertile oases of Wad-Ihnain, where orange-gardens and sugar-canes grow, old ruined buildings showed that an older civilisation had passed that way before the town of Ramleh was built. Round every winding in the long sandy way leading to the fine olive-groves of Ramleh remains of the town were visible. There the Crusaders had fought hard to conquer the Holy Land; there Saladin had again reconquered the plains. Then the stately tower of Ramleh, a last relic of its greatness under the Moslem, appeared in the distance.

As we rode side by side through the prickly-pear hedged gardens—Moslem and Frank for once at peace—we reflected on the ups and downs in the history of this part of the country. Hassan, probably, dreamed of the restoration in Islam's name of all these decaying towns. We saw naught save decadence—the passing glory of the great Khalifs and Sultans, who won empires for Islam, and whose power was now to be renewed in the name of progress. But ultimately in whose favour? Engineers passed us, measuring and making plans for a future railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Hassan Yaseen was sick of all these renewals. When the carriage way to Jerusalem was built in 1868 and carriages rolled into Jerusalem, he thought that with them Christianity and

Occidental progress had made its real entrance to the Beit el Makdas. But, lo and behold, a new invention replaced the old. What had this iron road and its noisy locomotives in store for the holy soil? Oh! that Allah would never allow him to live to see all these transformations. The future, judging by the past, looked very black to Hassan Yaseen. Where, he asked himself, were the 'Abd-en-Nabis of the north, the Mustapha Abu-Ghoshes of the west, Mesleh el 'Azzy, Mohammed Dervish, the Salem Shakhturs, and the many mighty men of forty years ago who ruled the country and never submitted to the governors of Jerusalem? "Alas! the old times are going and the new ones in no way embellish Islam," he said, ere he disappeared in the narrow, paved streets of Ramleh, which he preferred to the carriage road where hotels and modern coffee-houses abounded, with Franks, Jews and native travellers awaiting the departure of one of the Palestine coaches, driven by Jewish drivers.

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