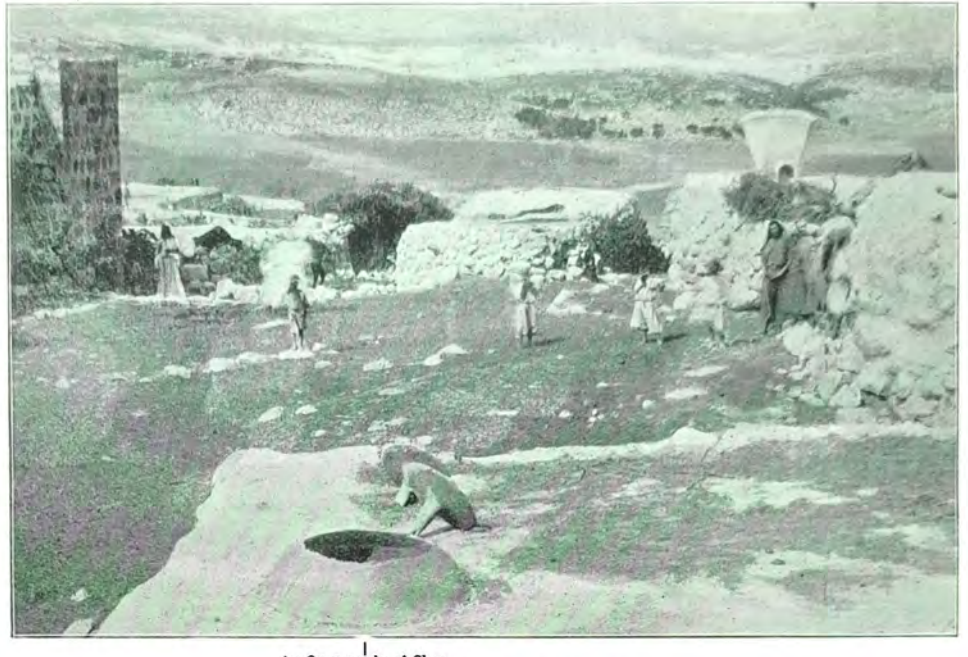
VILLAGE LIFE IN PALESTINE.

The Guest Chamber.

Corn Bin flaking in the Sun.



An Oven made of Clay.

IN THE CENTRE OF A VILLAGE.

VILLAGE LIFE
IN
PALESTINE.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIGION, HOME LIFE, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEASANTS OF THE HOLY LAND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE BIBLE.

BY THE
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WITH 26 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

I DO not intend to give in the following pages an exhaustive account of the people of Palestine, but such as could be included in a small handy volume for use among Sunday School and Bible Class Teachers, and others interested in the peasant population of the Holy Land. Nor have I inserted all Scriptural references that could be brought to bear on their life and work. Doubtless others will suggest themselves to the mind of the thoughtful reader, and I hope in this way give additional interest to the perusal of this little work. It is the result of study and observation during a residence of six years in the country, combined with a knowledge of the language of the people enabling me to dwell amongst them and take a sympathetic interest in their pursuits.

While lecturing on Palestine and its people for the last three years I have been repeatedly asked to publish my Lectures in an extended form. Should this effort meet with encouragement, it may be followed by an account of the Bedawin who live beyond the Jordan.

The Illustrations are from my own negatives. A few of them appeared in a little work, "*Bible Scenes from the Holy Land*," which I produced in Jerusalem, the first English illustrated book published in that city, now out of print.

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22, Marriott Road,
Tollington Park, London, N.
September, 1897.

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Village Life in Palestine.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY.

THE Peasants or Fellaheen of the villages of Palestine are so intimately connected with the Holy Land of the Bible that it would be impossible to adequately describe their condition, manners and customs, and religion, without some special reference to the land in which they live. Not only are they the aboriginal inhabitants, the descendants of the people who lived in the country when Joshua brought the Hebrews into Canaan, but the soil is the same, so wonderfully rich and fertile that after centuries of cultivation it is still capable of yielding an abundant harvest without the aids to agriculture used in other parts of the world. It does not near the highways always appear to advantage, yet the description of the "Promised Land" as found in the Bible is still strictly appropriate.

> "*A good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;*
> *A land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of oil, olive and honey.*"—Deut. viii., 7, 8.

AN OLIVE GROVE—BY THE KEDRON.

"*It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us.*"—Deut. i., 25.

The present condition of the Holy Land is not generally thought to agree with the description found in the Old Testament. But this opinion, although prevalent, is formed by a hasty survey of only a part of the country near the roads. The general appearance is certainly unfavourable, for it is sparsely populated, and only a comparatively small portion is under cultivation, and that part seems so stony that an English farmer would turn up his nose in disgust at the sight. An opinion is thus readily formed that some change has taken place in the country, and there the matter is allowed to rest. A closer inspection, a more careful examination, has proved, however, that the desolate condition of the country has been over-estimated, and that the springs and streams mentioned in the Bible are still flowing with water.

Beyond Jordan there is a land of greater excellence, of richer soil well watered. The uplands of Moab, the breezy slopes of the wooded hills of Gilead, and the cornlands of Bashan fulfil to the letter the promises of the God of Israel to His people.

But it is the western side of the Jordan where the peasants live that concerns us now more than the land over its waters, for here it seems in parts there is a difference. And how is it that it exists on one side of the river more than the other? A historical survey of the people that have lived in the country since Joshua came to Canaan will supply the answer. But

before entering into the life of the nation it might be as well to glance at the physical features of this remarkable little country that has been the theatre of the most wonderful events of all ages.

In no country similar in extent is there such a diversity of climate, for in the space that could be traversed by an English express train in less than three hours, there is a semi-tropical region, and one of perpetual snow; where rice, indigo, cotton, sugar, wheat, barley, and all kinds of fruits, from bananas, dates, oranges, lemons to pears may be grown. If this land was under proper cultivation and full of people, probably a greater variety of productions might be grown, and in greater quantity, than in any other country of the same size in the world.

Palestine is a mountainous country but it does not contain any number of independent mountain chains dividing one region from another. From the Lebanon on the north, to beyond Hebron on the south, there is one continuous range running down the centre of the country, varying in height from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. The mountains slope more gradually towards the maritime plain on the west than to the Jordan Valley on the east. Their sides are furrowed with deep ravines and torrent beds down which in winter rush innumerable little streams. Many of the passes are steep and dangerous, especially towards the Jordan Valley, where the slope is very abrupt and the ravines deeper and wider. In the south the mountains are rugged and barren, but

towards the north the soil is better cultivated and the hills are greener; while across the Jordan the hills are covered with vegetation, except on the sides that look towards the river.

The surface of the country has four plainly-marked natural features running from north to south:—

1. The maritime plain along the coast.
2. A central range of mountains which occupy the greater portion of the country and is intersected by small plains, deep ravines, and narrow gorges.
3. The Valley of the Jordan, the most remarkable feature in the country as it is everywhere below the level of the ocean.
4. The Tableland beyond Jordan which stretches away into the desert, and contains several mountain chains rising above the plateau. These are intersected by streams, one of which is not only the largest tributary of the Jordan, but carries a greater volume of water to the confluence of the two rivers than is brought by the Jordan from the Sea of Galilee.

The appearance of these natural divisions has changed only in one important particular that may be easily recognised. Where flourishing towns and villages once stood surrounded by gardens and fields yielding the fruits of the earth, heaps of stones and broken terrace walls tell of wasted energy and the decay of the population. Beyond the Jordan whole cities stand

with gaunt bare walls tenanted now by the birds of the air alone. Well-paved streets, broad and spacious, houses even of three stories, preserved so well that one might think the people had left but yesterday, are all the prey of desolation.

In the Holy Land proper on this side of the river, the devastation of war has laid low many a town on the hills and in the plain. Oppression following in its wake crumbled the remaining walls and crushed the hope of the people for ever. Whole villages have been depopulated, and the fields around left to the weeds and thistles. Only where the inhabitants find that the labour of their hands is moderately safe from the grasp of the tax gatherer do they cheerfully till the soil; and the amount of security can be gauged by the care that is spent on the vineyard or the field.

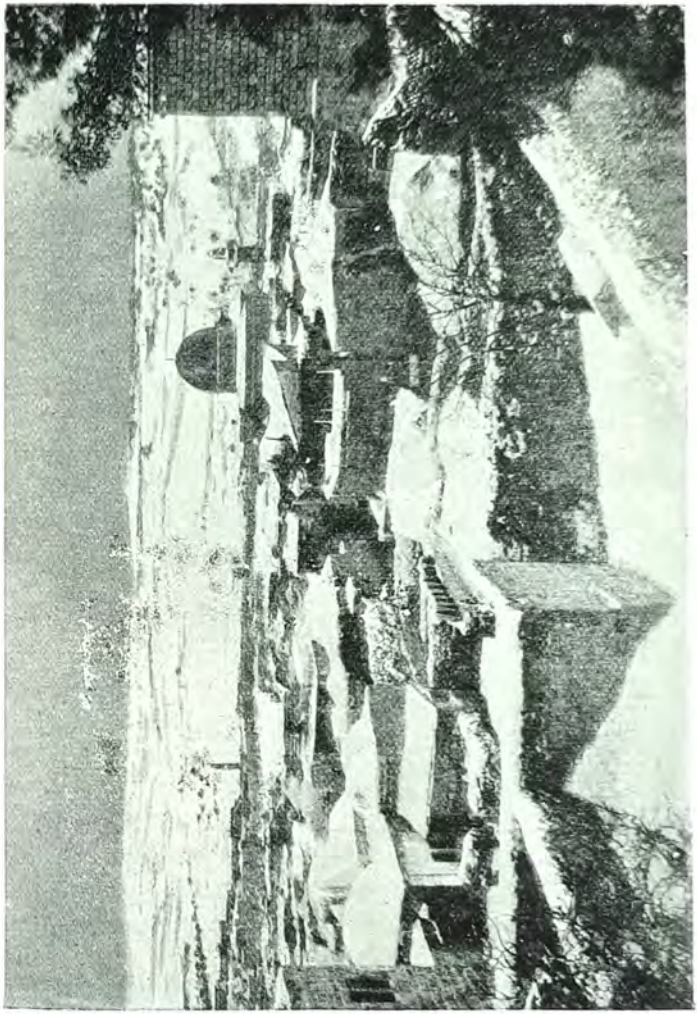
The sparsity of trees has often been given as the reason why the land is bare and brown, but we are never led to suppose that Canaan was a land of trees and forests, yet there is no doubt that much vegetation has entirely disappeared. This naturally follows where the government of the country has placed little restriction on the removal of brushwood and timber. The people have been so long accustomed to cut down trees whenever they liked, that in spite of a rigorous law now in force for their preservation, beams of wood still find their way into the market. The roots that form the fuel show that there must have been at one time more trees than there are now. In Gilead, away from the roads, there is an abundant growth of forest.

A VINEYARD, NEAR HEBRON.

The woods in some places are too dense for the passage of a horse and rider, and since the advent of the Circassians who occupy at least one well-wooded valley, Wady Seir, there are saw mills, and inch boards are now brought from over the Jordan to Jerusalem, and sold to carpenters in the city.

All the trees mentioned in the Bible exist in Palestine to-day. The olive and fig-tree may be met with everywhere. The oak, terebinth, sycamore, acacia, and fir, are still seen, but not in the same quantity. The wooded growth has decreased, but all the natural products mentioned in the Bible are found in modern Palestine. Indeed, the fruits of the earth are grown in plenty. There is not a day in the year when fresh fruit may not be purchased in Jerusalem. Oranges from Jaffa are found in the towns in winter, until apricots appear in the spring. These are followed by peaches, plums, nectarines, prickly pears, figs, melons, bananas, and grapes, in rotation; and before the latter have disappeared the dates and oranges are ripe. We may not suppose that all these fruits were always grown, but they show the fruitful land. Palestine is a splendid country for the vine, large quantities of grapes being sold in the season at ½d. per lb. Wine is now produced in an increasing quantity and exported.

The disappearance of trees is sometimes said to be the reason why there is a long dry summer and little rain, but the climate seems to be exactly the same as it is described by the writers of the Old and New Testament.



A WINTER SCENE—JERUSALEM.

The expressions found there are applicable now. Perhaps the one feature that is noticed least of all is the snow in winter. It is said in 2 Sam. xxiii., 20, "*Benaiah . . . . slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow*," and we find "*snow*," "*wintry storm and tempest*" mentioned more than once in the Psalms. Towards the end of the wet season in the spring of 1893, more than thirty pilgrims died on the roadside between Jerusalem and Nablous from exhaustion caused by the inclemency of the weather. The seasons have in no way changed, "*the early and latter rain*," James v., 7, falls not in two distinct seasons, but at the beginning and end of winter.

The Jordan overflows its banks according to its usual custom, and has silted up on both sides two other banks away from the bed of the stream, that now confine its waters "*all the time of harvest*" (Joshua iii., 15)—the barley harvest, the earliest of all.

That rich provision of nature, the "dew," cools the warm earth and ripens the fruit in the long dry summer. And here again we may see the care of the Almighty Father, which is the same now as in former times, in spite of the curse on the people—Hosea xiv., 5, "*I will be as the dew unto Israel.*"

The rainfall in Judea has an average for the last ten years of twenty-eight inches. And though towards the end of the summer there is a scarcity of water, it is not due to a scant supply, but to the sad condition of the receptacles for preserving the needful rain. The wells in many places are filled with stones,

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

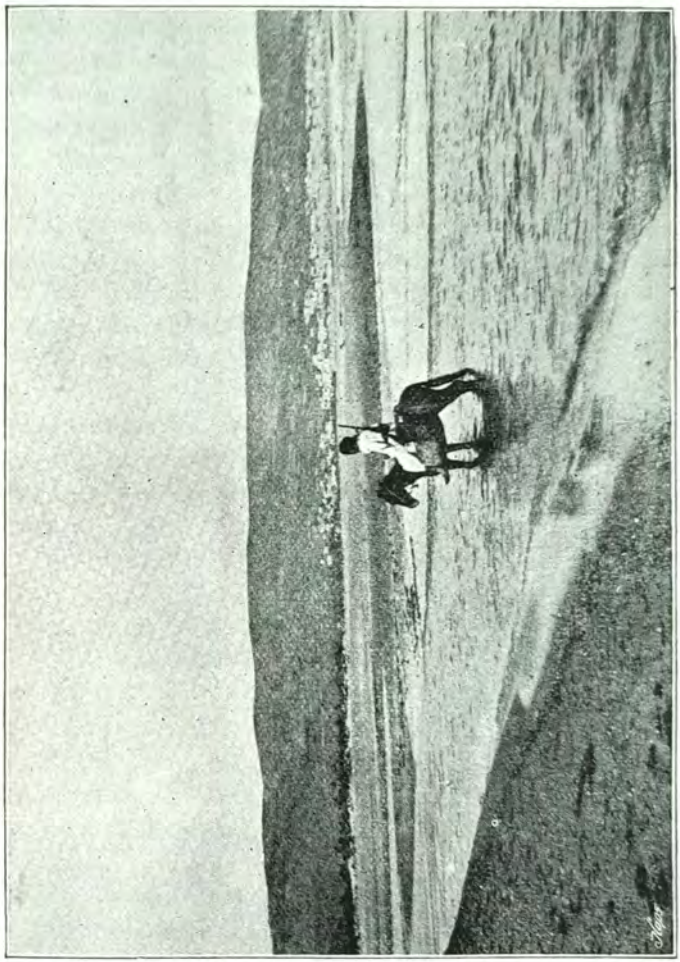
and the pools are useless either through broken walls or heaps of rubbish. In the time of Christ these were filled with water, for we read of the Pool of Bethesda where the "*angel went down at a certain season and troubled the water*" (St. John v., 4), and the Pool of Siloam where Jesus sent the blind man, whom he had healed, to wash (St. John ix., 7). The aqueducts made by Solomon to convey water from the pools, which he constructed to supply the people in the city of Jerusalem, still exist, but with broken walls that clearly show how little they are used.

The irrigatory system of the plain along the coast has been demolished. Drains and all sanitary arrangements fail to carry out the measures once promoted to secure health for the people. Those near the sea are choked, and swamps of a pestilential nature have been formed around them.

The summer is hot and long, but not more so than we might expect. The "*hot sun*" and "*scorching heat*" often referred to in the Bible must have been felt by the son of the Shunemite, when he said, "*my head, my head*," in the harvest field (2 Kings iv., 19).

There were times when "*there had been no rain in the land*" (1 Kings xvii., 7)—"*that the brook dried up*." I know the brook here mentioned well—the brook Cherith —and its fountain head. Only a very long season of drought indeed would cause this to happen, as the spring is very strong, and wells up into a wide basin, then runs down a narrow gorge that in places almost seems to shut out the light. At this time the country was nearly destitute of water, as we read 1 Kings xviii., 5, "*And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.*" Nothing like this has happened in the memory of any man living in Palestine at the present day.

One very curious feature is mentioned soon after this, when the drought was coming to an end through the prayer of Elijah. "*And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of*



A RIVER OF PALESTINE—THE KISHON.

rain." (1 Kings xviii., 41.) When the summer is over, and rain is expected, there first appears a strong wind, it whistles o'er the hills and through the valleys, round the houses in the villages, and along the roads. The people then know that a downpour may be expected, and the more noise there is the greater the shower.

A copious supply of rain falls on the plain along the coast and in the Jordan valley, but snow is seen only on the hills. There the climate is more bracing, and the inhabitants are healthier than those who live on lower ground; and this must always have been the case, for it is very evident that few large towns ever stood in the plain away from the sea. They were and are still either on the coast or among the hills. The men in the mountains were more hardy and better able to defend their homes, besides it was a much more difficult task to assail the towns on the hills than to sweep the plain with an army.

These very important natural divisions guide us considerably in tracing the routes of invading forces, and with the climate show us the more likely places of permanent residence.

Many a time when the people in the plain have been carried away and their homes destroyed, those in the mountains have been left unmolested. A maritime population collected in the coast towns differing from the aboriginal dwellers in the mountains, and these influenced to a very great extent the people who lived in the adjoining villages but in no way affected the hillmen.

There had never been much difficulty in raiding the lowlands, while the highlands of Palestine with their brave and hardy mountaineers have ever presented a formidable front against the invader.

And further, the south of the country, which to-day is brown and bare, and therefore less cultivated than the more fertile region in the north, is the home of the most independent and turbulent peasants, whose lives are fashioned according to the influences of the physical features of the land. It was the scene of the exploits of the warrior King David, and most of the references to shepherd life in the Old and New Testament are applied to this district. A history of the people could well be written from the geography, and the scriptural narrative of the work of the ancient people of the land would fully accord with its physical features.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGION OF THE FELLAHEEN OF PALESTINE.

The occupation of a country by a conquering race has seldom produced results as meagre as the sway of the Moslem in the heritage of the Jew. Palestine to-day, in spite of the thraldom of the Mohammedan despot, exhibits features so nearly akin to the country of the Prophets, the land of the Kings of Israel, and the earthly home of Jesus, that manners and customs so vividly portrayed in the Bible are plainly visible to the most casual observer. A mere passing acquaintance, however, will not disclose the superstitions of the peasant population, but rather convey the erroneous impression that they are good Moslems with an elementary knowledge of a faith cherished by a fervent desire to live in accordance with its practices. This profession of Mohammedanism is but the upper storey, if one might use the term, of a building whose foundation is raised on the aboriginal mind of the earliest inhabitant.

The idolatrous nations that dwelt in the land when the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness to take possession, were destined by God for destruc-

tion, but His commands were soon forgotten (Judges i, 21; ii., 3). Instead of exterminating the people of the land and working the soil themselves according to the code of laws for agriculture provided by God they gave these rules to the peasants, making them "*hewers of wood and drawers of water*"—their farm labourers. The contact and association thus formed for their observance eventually led the Jews into the sin of idolatry which culminated in their expulsion. The long ascendency of the Israelites, however, had left on the aboriginal inhabitants an impression so indelibly marked that it is their most noticeable feature at the present day. Their manner of life was always the same, so rooted were they to the soil; and so satisfactory were the conditions of labour to new rulers that no real change has ever taken place in the cultivation of the land.

When the Arabs came in 637 A.D. they settled in towns and not in the country districts, and left untouched the civilisation already existing, simply adding a new faith, the faith of Islam, which they believed was something better than the effete religion of the dying Byzantine Kingdom so powerless to stem the torrent of their wild rush from the desert.

Unlike the children of Israel who also came over the Jordan and with whose invasion there is much that is identical, they provided no rules for the cultivation of the land. The only land the conquerors had ever known was the sand of the desert. Conquest meant to them the power of sharing in the labour of others, in the wealth they had not created but for which they

had fought and won at the point of the sword. They were glad to leave things as they found them, to allow the peasants so intimately connected with the soil to continue to till it, as former conquerers had done, providing for the same share of the produce, which is still collected in exactly the same way. They retained all those who were able to minister to their wants, the workers in the towns as well as the farmers in the country.

But this reward was not the only object of their invasion. As soldiers imbued with a mission they considered the proclamation of their creed as necessary as the gathering of the spoils of war; and with the same impetuous zeal that had distinguished their march into the country they compelled all who were not in strict communion with the Jewish and Christian sects of the towns to adopt the Faith of the new Prophet.

To force in an abrupt manner a new religious system on a people long used to one well suited to their manner of life, modified only by the growth of years, without the requisite teaching necessary for the formation of a substantial belief in the new doctrine, was similar to the application of a coat of varnish to an article made of wood. Had the same tolerance been allowed that former conquerors observed, it would soon have entirely disappeared.

But all have been constrained up to the present day to openly confess the Mohammedan Faith, yet they are as far, with few exceptions, from a knowledge of the tenets of that creed as the day on which their

forefathers meekly received the command to adopt the new religion.

If the restrictions, that are not supposed in diplomatic circles to exist, were withdrawn, and missionary enterprise allowed full scope, there would soon be a remarkable change in the ideas and position of the Fellaheen of the Holy Land. Though the Gospel is permitted to be preached, and missionaries are allowed to teach the people, yet the disabilities under which they labour are little understood by their own countrymen in England, and unfortunately an explanation and exposure in a publication likely to appear before the Turkish Censor would do more harm than good, as all matter referring to the administration of any Turkish province, particularly Palestine, is subject to the scrutiny of unfriendly eyes, unfriendly to English workers and writers.

It would be manifestly unsafe for a Moslem to openly acknowledge Christ as his Master, so there are few converts to be found who have been received into the Church of Christ. Many have been awakened by the spread of the Truth, to them indeed a strange revelation; and by a method as alien in its nature to all former movements as the religion of love is to the barbaric teaching of the sword and spear. But the time has not yet arrived for their open confession, and until that day comes we shall have to wait with prayerful patience. No temporal protection could be given, and the faith of an old world peasant is not sufficiently strong to believe in a spiritual care that

comes from God in many and various ways for the relief of His people.

The present worship is Moslem in name only. The long Mohammedan dominion has, however, lent to the practices of the peasants quite enough ritual to hide their own beliefs under acts with names that outwardly preserve an appearance of the Faith of Islam.

Every Ottoman subject that turns to the Kiblah at Mecca is firmly convinced that he is a Moslem, and in every act of devotion, every superstitious belief, pilgrimage, fast, and festival he only carries out the injunctions of the Prophet. In reality he knows nothing of that religion unless he has been educated in the schools of the cities, privileges never granted to Fellaheen. Indeed peasants living far from cities in remote country districts do not even know how to say their prayers. They keep no sabbath, there comes for them no day of rest. Day after day, week after week, their work continues, with little or no interruption but that which may be directly connected with their lives of toil.

They are practically heathens, believing in charms both manifold and curious, holy tombs, sacred groves, strange places set apart for devotional purposes, and spirits with good or evil intent. It is through these and the rites and ceremonies connected therewith that we see a remnant of the idolatry of the aboriginal inhabitants, the relics of the false worship that led the children of Israel astray.

Almost every hill in central and southern Judea has resting on its summit a tomb house, or Wely, a small building with a white dome, often shaded by a green tree. Sometimes there is a solitary tree, or a tree with a walled enclosure. These isolated trees on mountain tops are looked upon as sacred, and rags and threads hang from their branches as votive offerings to the saint who is connected with the spot. (The tomb of a holy man is treated in the same way.) This is a makâm, or "sacred place," the origin of which is now concealed by its having been placed under the protection of some Mohammedan saint, whose name has even been adopted as the signification of the district. This intimate connection of names and places is found in the Canaanite and Phœnician mythology, which was remarkable for the number of its local divinities, and this explains why Moses was not content with the mere destruction of pagan altars, but insisted on the total abolition of their names. Deut. xii., 3, "*And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break down their pillars, and burn their groves with fire: and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.*" We all know how this command was disregarded, and the consequent intermarriage, false worship, and fall of the Israelites.

Another point of religious resemblance is the worship of female divinities which was common amongst the Canaanites and is still practised, many modern kubbehs (domes) being consecrated to women. In certain cases there is a duality, the Wely or Neby (prophet) being

venerated in conjunction with a woman who passes generally for his sister or daughter. This relationship, originally conjugal, which has been changed by Moslems into one of consanguinity, offers an equivalent to the sexual symmetry brought to light by the researches of Conder and De Vogüë.

Sacred groves may still be found on the mountain sides, and here the peasants feel they are on holy ground, that some unseen power is in possession; that a spirit guards and protects the spot and everything placed among the trees within the enclosure. Ploughs and other agricultural implements are often left by their owners in the grove for greater security than their own homes afford. And so great is their dread of the spirit guardian that if a stolen plough is put there by the thief, the real owner dare not remove it for fear of incurring the displeasure of the unseen protector of the holy place.

The names of most of the Prophets of the Old Testament are familiar to the peasants, and they hold them in great veneration, fearing their punishment more than the direct interference of God, although they think they can only act according to God's will. They further believe that the Prophets are patrons of certain districts where they have particular abodes.

Neby Daud, *i.e.*, the Prophet David, meaning the place of the prophet, for here is the Wely, the so-called tomb of King David, is a Moslem shrine annually visited by a large number of people. No doubt, in more ancient times it was one of the high places

A "HOLY PLACE"—NEBY DAUD.

of the Jebusites and the seat of their pagan worship. Its position as a central hill of commanding appearance was a sufficient recommendation in itself, but below it, separated by a narrow gorge, was one of lower elevation, overlooking the spring of living water known now as the Virgin's Fountain, on which the citadel of the people stood. Is it merely a strange coincidence, then, that its captor's name should, after the lapse of so many centuries, be retained as the appellation of the spot where they practised their sacred rites, and where similar ceremonies are now conducted round the place supposed by some to contain his bones?

Through the many eventful years since that time, can be traced the solemn mysteries that associated themselves with these particular places. In 1 Sam. i., 2,

we read of Hannah, a Hebrew peasant woman, journeying to God's Holy Place at Shiloh, and there praying that her barrenness may cease, and making a vow to the Lord.

The feelings of peasant women have in no way changed. A similar desire is prevalent, and who can wonder when the only love a women ever knows is that which she gives to others, to her children first and sometimes to their father. She dreads the derisive laugh, the finger of scorn pointed to the "childless one," and longs to fondle an infant of her own.

Hannah's hope has been kindled in many a breast in modern times; her story might often be repeated. Every woman thinks that King David will intercede on behalf of all who wish for children. They pray to God through him and believe that if they make a vow and keep it he can obtain for them anything they wish.

One summer afternoon before the sun had spent its power on the brown earth and sunk behind the western hills, I saw a woman toiling along the stony road leading from the north into the Holy City. She dragged behind her a lamb, resenting by its struggles rough treatment so unusual, thus increasing the labour of the peasant. Overcome by the heat she called at a house by the way, asked for a drink of water and permission to rest. Full of gratitude for the kindness shown to her, she, without the least hesitation, commenced to speak of her journey, its object, and destination. I had by this time approached the same

dwelling, having some acquaintance with the inmates, little thinking that I should hear the recital of a story so full of interest and resembling so closely that of the mother of Samuel. She said she was on her way to Neby Daud to offer up the lamb in fulfilment of a vow she had made to God. Her husband had taken another wife who bore him children, while she, his first wife, being barren was taunted with her affliction. At last she resolved to visit Neby Daud and pray for a son. She did so, and further vowed that if her prayer was answered, she would offer up a lamb as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The offering of a sacrifice is the highest act of worship known to a peasant; the one great sign of reverence and devotion; the propitiation whereby he is able to gain access to the ear of God through the saint who is the guardian of the place on which the sacrifice is offered.

But certain use is made of a sacrifice that cannot be considered a religious function, yet to the mind of the present there is little difference in meaning.

When the lamb is slain by the Sheikh or guardian of the "holy place," and its flesh distributed amongst the poor, as in the case of the woman above mentioned, a special act of thanksgiving is performed. If a feast is made and the poor called to eat after the relations and friends, on the occasion of the birth of a son, or the return of a relation from a journey, the act of thanksgiving is of a more general character. (See Story of a Prodigal Son, S. Luke xv., 23-34.)

Sometimes a lamb is taken by one man to show respect or devotion to another. This custom, called "Kawad," a word derived from the *leading* of the sacrifice, is not looked upon as a religious ceremony though it usually ends in a feast and may be the fulfilment of a vow or pledge. It is often used as an opportunity for making peace between neighbours and friends whose relations have been strained by strife and bloodshed; and often other motives of personal interest are attached, for those who *lead* the sacrifice expect to receive a reward, which according to custom must be a garment.

Not only are there "high places" (three hundred are known) and "sacrifices" still in use, but almost every village has its "holy man." He may be a reputed descendant of Mohammed the Prophet with a green turban surmounting his dirty face, or the village "natural."

According to local ideas a fool, madman, or idiot, is a person whose mind is in heaven, and therefore not responsible for what he may do on earth. He is in fact, a "holy man," and often a Dervish. A real Dervish is expected to renounce all earthly possessions, it is only when he has done so that he is entitled to beg and receive gifts. His relations will take good care that there is no sham about his lack of property as they seldom fail to appreciate an acquisition to the family so valuable. But he may not be always amenable to their kindly care and insidious attention. It is a profitable business as well as one of position and

eminence, particularly appropriate to the great unwashed, and quite as well suited to those who have a natural disinclination to work. Besides it is not every man that is a fool who will acknowledge that he is a fool. When therefore one is found to confess so freely he is deserving of reward.

A dignity so great as that of a "holy man" requires support. The sanctity of the individual increases in the ratio of his idiotic procedure. Ragged and ridiculous clothing is the essential garb of holiness so patent, and this must be accompanied by the manners of a fool.

The village idiot has not generally enough sense to turn his modicum of brain into an agency for making money, hence the advent of impostors. The praise and adulation of ignorant men, the liberty of action allowed by all, men and women alike, soon convince them that they are different from others, until there is little doubt that some of them really believe they are holy, and quite unlike their brethren.

To attract further attention they cut themselves with knives and other weapons. The writer has an instrument called a "sheesh," half a yard long, resembling a steel skewer, that he purchased from a Dervish after he had drawn it through his cheeks all dripping with blood. The degree of respect depends on the position they have attained in the art of self torture.

Here then we have the modern representatives of the "Prophets of Baal," as well as the "*high places*" *and* "*groves*." (See 1 Kings xviii., 28.)

To honour a "holy place" is a proceeding clearly

allied to the manner of worship of the priests of Baal. Not one but many Dervishes are necessary, and "holy men" alone are supposed to know how to conduct the ceremony. It must be on a Thursday night, the beginning of the Moslem sabbath and most holy part of the week. A crowd of villagers follow them to the "makâm" and help to light the lamps and kindle the fires to the beating of drums. A circle is then cleared to give the "holy men" space enough to excite the spirit of the departed saint. From a distance the glare of lights, so sharply outlined against the dark blue of the Eastern sky, act as an invitation to the further supporters of the local "priests." The spectators continue to increase until representatives of all the surrounding villages are able to avail themselves of the opportunity of shewing their appreciation of the merits of the "saint" whose unseen presence regards with favour the desire of the people to do him honour.

Then the leader of the Dervishes with a melancholy voice begins by saying "Allah da'im Allah"—"God is everlasting," followed by a second, a third, and finally with moving bodies and whirling arms all join in the cry which increases in intensity as the excitement moves the "holy men" until they are no longer able to repeat all the words. A change is then made to "Allah hei" —"God is living." The frenzy of the Dervishes increases until they are unable to more than utter the word "hei" in short sharp gasps, and then in frantic rage they begin to cast from the place all who are supposed to be unclean—any one that is not apparently

awed by their passion or an intruding stranger who appears to be actuated by no better motive than curiosity.

There is no abatement of their fury, till at last nature asserts herself and one by one they fall exhausted on the ground, wet with perspiration and overcome with the violence of their emotion. As soon, however, as they are able to rise and continue, they do so for hours, far into the night.

At the close a collection is made—a proceeding not altogether unfamiliar to an Englishman, and certainly not unique—and the crowd disperses.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEASANTS OR FELLAHEEN.

The people of Palestine fall very naturally into three distinct classes. They will admit of a more detailed analysis, but as one of these divisions is represented by the peasants, it is altogether unnecessary in the scope of this little work to more than mention the others.

1. Medanyeh—Townspeople.
2. Fellaheen —Peasants, or country people.
3. Bedawin —Nomads, who dwell in tents.

A very slight acquaintance with the people of Palestine will enable even the casual observer to distinguish between the inhabitants of a town and the occupants of the surrounding neighbourhood. Costumes alone will serve as a guide when there seems to be no other means of identification. There is not, however, that difference in the dress or appearance of some of the Bedawin that visit Jerusalem to direct the traveller in making a reliable distinction between the farmer who works on the land and the horseman who rides to the foray, as peasants who live near the country of these people adopt a similar head-dress as

well as cloak, and many tent-dwellers on the west of the Jordan have degenerated, according to the notions of their more aristocratic brethren beyond the river, for they now till the soil.

But many marks of difference will soon be apparent after a more intimate knowledge has been obtained of the men themselves. The same difficulty never arises with regard to the women, as their dress is of an entirely different character.

This difference of costume is one that might not be so readily understood in England, where dress is meaningless, and it is impossible to distinguish one man from another by his outward appearance.

How did the woman of Samaria know that Christ was a Jew? By his dress.

And so at the present day, every man is known by his clothing, not only his race or creed, but the position he occupies, and the part of the country from whence he comes. (2 Kings ix., 11, "*Ye know the man.*") The infinite variety of costumes that may be found in a street in Jerusalem is therefore full of information as to the people that wear them. Those who wear "soft raiments" are the wealthy, the aristocrats (St. Luke vii., 25); the toilers dress in coarse mantles similar to that worn by John the Baptist. There is never a change of fashion in Palestine, and this no doubt is very comforting to the husbands of the land who have wives and daughters. And, strange though it may appear, the coats (mantles, *i.e.*, Abyah) woven in Galilee at the present day are

often without a seam, and differ considerably from the same garment of southern manufacture, and we know our Saviour, who had a coat without a seam, ("*Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout,*" St. John xix., 23), came from the north. The costumes of the people can teach many lessons, for they resemble minutely the dress of the inhabitants of the country in the time of Christ, and the Prophets and Kings before He came to dwell on earth. All are alike in being loose and roomy. Even if most of them were not home-made, the wearer would not have to go to a tailor to be measured. The Abyahs, outer garments, are all the same size for men, and a purchaser looks at the quality and price, not at the size. One man's dress will therefore fit his neighbour equally well, and that is why articles of clothing were and are so easily adapted for presents. (See Gen. xlv., 22; Judges xiv., 12-20; 2 Kings v., 20-27.) Then all are fastened with a girdle, and the loins are girded at the same time. No hooks and eyes, or buttons are required, the girdle is all sufficient. (St. John xxi., 18.)

The less work a man has to do, the more material will be used for his costume (St. Mark xii., 38, "*Scribes, which love to go in long clothing*"); it will also be of a superior kind. The Bedawin living beyond Jordan do no manual labour; their garments are so long and full that it would be difficult for them to do any even if they were anxious to begin. At the first glance few would think that their arms could be used for fighting, as the sleeves of their under garment run to a point

often more than a yard long. When preparing for a battle the two ends are tied into a knot, and thrown over the head out of the way. The right arm is then bare and free, and in this action we have a practical illustration of the passage in Isaiah lii., 10, "*The Lord hath made bare His holy arm*," meaning that He is about to take action on behalf of His people. "*The strong arm of the Lord*" is another text referring to the same custom. The long ends of the sleeves are the only pockets used by the wearers of long clothing of that description. Any article of value is placed near the end, and secured by a knot; many more knots could be made before all the material was tied up. Peasant women of the villages have also sleeves of this kind for use as a substitute for pockets, or bags, where they fasten their small purchases in the cities and towns. In working the ends are tied and thrown over the head, so that their arms are free to labour.

All men that reside away from the towns, both Bedawin and Fellaheen, have only two garments, of the same shape, differing only in colour and size: A large white shirt, the "*inner garment*," and the mantle or coat, very much like a huge sack, slit down the front, with a hole at each side for the arms—"*the outer garment.*" But a chief, being a man of dignity and importance, will have an additional coat of colours, similar to those worn by townsmen (the Kombaz), made of some soft material; he might even buy one for a favourite son if he wished to exhibit his love in a practical way, *e.g.*, "Joseph's coat," which was a

sign of his father's love that gave offence to his brethren because he was preferred before them.

The women have, like the men, two body garments, very much like them in shape, but of another colour. A woman's dress (in the south country) is always blue; the man's shirt white; her mantle striped red and black; her husband's brown and white. The man will wear a turban or kerchief; his wife a veil, not as a covering for the face but the hair. Here again peasant women are unlike those who reside in towns; the latter hide the face with a thin gauze veil, whereas a peasant, like her Bedawy sister, has one of substantial size, two yards long and one yard wide, of strong coarse "towelling." Should anyone have been unable to understand how Ruth could carry six measures of barley in her veil, the difficulty would be reasonable enough if the small veil worn by an English lady was thought of, but when we think of the veils in Palestine all doubt is at once removed. Ruth iii., 15, "*Bring the vail thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley.*"

The Fellaheen are the only representatives of the aboriginal inhabitants in Western Palestine, and it is chiefly in their manners and customs that we must expect to find the Bible mirrored in the people. Their very existence is in itself a sufficient confirmation of Holy Writ; and though we may consider that God has wonderfully preserved the country and its inhabitants to be witnesses for the truth of His word to the present generation, yet we are to exercise our own

knowledge and judgment as in everything else; and the more carefully the Bible is studied in the land in which it was written, where manners and customs are the same, and where descriptions of dress and modes of life are applicable to the people now, the more clearly do we recognise the grandeur of the story of God's great scheme of redemption, worked out to the end, to the great sacrifice offered once for all.

In a detailed account of the modern peasant and his home, there will be many phases of life that have grown into his ideas that cannot be found in the Bible, but at the same time amongst the chaff we shall be able to discover the grains that will lead us into Biblical life and thought.

The Fellaheen, as they may now be seen away from the track of the tourist and pilgrim, out of the sight and sound of Europeans, where they have not developed the sense of inquiry into the ways of the outer world, offer a field for investigation that is almost unbroken, save by a few whose researches have been confined to a comparatively small circle of earnest workers in this department of exploration.

The Fellah says:—

The Townsman is the Sultan of the world.
The Peasant is the donkey of the world.
The Bedawy is the dog of the world, because he steals for his living.

The Bedawy has another version:—

The Townsman is the table of the world, the provider.

The Peasant is the donkey of the world, the drudge.

The Bedawy is the Sultan of the world, the ruler.

When the Fellah himself is satisfied with his lowly position we may take it for granted that he has never known a better. Indeed he seems to be well contented with his lot. Though not always cast in a pleasant place, it is the one to which he was born, and as he is not ambitious, he thinks there is nothing in the world so pleasant as the sunny slopes of the vine-clad hills that surround his home.

The great city, El Kuds esh Shereef (The Holy and the Noble), Jerusalem, to which he occasionally carries the produce of his garden and field, he believes has no equal on earth. No man can love it more than he, although he knows not why. It is connected by a feeling of veneration that he fails to understand, with the mystery that surrounds the God that rules the world.* It has within its walls the great praying place of all people, from ages so far remote he thinks that they stretch back to thousands of years before the creation of Adam, where he says even angels worshipped God. He is afraid to venture alone in the sanctuary; he is too clumsy even to walk over the hallowed stones that lead to the shrine, the sacred rock under the great dome; the awful sanctity of the place appals him, but

* The Dome of the Rock—Kubbet es Sakhrah in El Haram Esh Shereef (the old Temple Area). See "Jerusalem Illustated," by the same Author, p. 69.

once a year in a crowd, with faltering steps, he gazes with wondering awe at the mass of rock, then quickly withdraws to the streets of the city.

But apart from the feeling of reverence, the Holy City has always seemed great and beautiful to him, with its cool bazaars teeming with the delights of Esh Sham (Damascus) and the cities of the East. As a boy, when he followed the donkeys to the market, he remembers how he gazed in astonishment at the wonderful things that hung in the shops or lay on the benches so close to his itching fingers. Oh! how he would have liked to help himself, but for fear of the man behind them with a Kurbaj (whip). He drank in the scene with open mouth, and in the crowd was lost. How his heart went thump, thump, when he first felt the shock of being alone in the great city and mingled in the dense throng of people, none of whom he knew! Hither and thither he ran, scarce considering a moment whether the way he turned led to the city gate or not. The buzz of voices in the narrow crowded streets seemed to turn his beating heart into a lump of lead. He began to cry, and when the city boys saw him in distress they laughed and jeered, which increased his misery; then one struck him and that made his fright more awful, and in his terror he ran through the tangled mass of men and animals, scattering the articles lying in the streets for sale, until at length the streets seemed wider and brighter and a stream of people flowing in one direction led the way to the gate. The tears that in their course had made

such furrows in the outside polish of his dirty face dried up, and his eyes wreathed in smiles beheld the donkeys of his village patiently waiting to start for home. They pleased him then more than all the visions of splendour in the shops of the market-place. Next morning as he lazily rolled in the dust of the hillocks near his father's door, he thought of the fearful time on the previous day when all hope of seeing that door again had fled. Kicking up his heels in the ecstasy of his joy he believed that after all there was no place better than the little mound on which he could stretch his legs in safety.

Year after year he grew like a young tree firmly rooted in his native soil, and beyond a fleeting look at the great city with its white domes and the minarets that pointed to the sky he saw nothing, cared for nothing more than to live in the place where his forefathers had lived and died and were buried.

Few can conceive the extent of the affection a Fellah bears for his home and country, the country around his dwelling, for he has no national pride. There is no part of this great love lavished on a Fatherland. He belongs to a clan, governed by a Sheikh, which forms no part of a united nation.

The members of these clans have a common language. They possess a common religion, their manners and customs are all the same, but of national unity there is none. They do not even know what it means, nor can they understand the feeling of patriotism that links people together, into a brotherhood that co-operates

for the well-being of the mother country. Every district lives in and for itself alone, waging its own petty wars, managing its own affairs, settling its own disputes with but occasional recourse to the centre of government of the power that rules the land as a whole. The people of the various districts differ considerably in character and speech, resembling each other only so far as to indicate their descent from one common stock; appearing only as the fragments of a nation broken up at some remote period. Sometimes they combine for mutual protection or personal benefit. Seldom do they ever show any desire to extend the limits of their territory. Each village has been in the possession of its land from time immemorial, and no necessity for stepping over its boundaries ever seems to arise without the aggression being forcibly resisted at the expense of blood. Every man clings most tenaciously to his freehold, and the village to its common land.

The population is stationary. Whatever hope the people have of increasing their worldly wealth they only exhibit it by working as labourers in the adjoining towns, and not by absorbing the land of their neighbours.

The one great sorrow of a Fellah's life is the conscription. This is the channel whereby he learns something of the outside world, though much against his will. Townspeople have a very poor idea of the intelligence of the peasant. They think it is no higher than that of the beast on which he often rides, and tell the following story as an illustration:—

"One day a Fellah left a gate of the city with five donkeys. He counted them as they went out before him, then jumped on the back of the last and drove the rest in front of him down to the valley below. When they were beginning to ascend the opposite hill the thought suddenly occurred to him that there were only four. He looked round on all sides but no other could he see, so he drove them all back to look for the one he thought had been left behind. On reaching the gate he dismounted, then counted them over again, one by one, when lo! there were five. Happy in the possession of all his beasts he mounted the hindmost and rode off. When he approached the place where he first discovered his loss, he was reminded to count once more, with a like result. 'By the life of my head,' said he, 'I must return for that which is left!' Back again at the city gate, he saw his five animals in a line, then was heard to mutter 'Well, if I have four animals when I ride and five when I walk, by the life of my beard, I will go on foot.'"

A friend of mine met a shepherd out on the hills one day, and wishing to purchase six cups of milk for some boys, offered four small coins, and then five. "No," said the shepherd, "I will sell you at the rate of two cups for one coin," and he thought he was making a better bargain. As a rule they are fairly sharp with numbers up to ten or even a hundred, but beyond that figure any other expression of number means many.

I.—A VILLAGE.—THE HOME OF THE PEASANT.

In all matters relating to his home and land the peasant is very shrewd. The position of a village will show that the inhabitants are well versed in the knowledge that points to the best site for their dwellings.

THE KEDRON VALLEY—VILLAGE OF SILOAM ON THE RIGHT.

They are built on the top or side of a hill, and seem at the first glance in the sunlight of a bright summer day to be a part of its rocky side. When the rain has washed the white dust from their walls they are much more distinct, or when surrounded by trees and gardens. Security from the attack of foes and the storms of winter seem to have prompted their choice of a site for the village. The position on or near the

summit of a hill commands a view of the surrounding country and renders it in ordinary warfare well nigh impregnable. To add to this desirable situation the houses are built like little forts, and close together.

When storm clouds burst and the rain rushes in torrents over the rocks on the hillsides, and innumerable little streams tumble precipitately down the mountains, the village homes are free from damp walls or standing pools, as the water seeks the lower land. To prevent the house from following the course of the rain it is firmly built on the rock with strong thick walls—the precaution of a wise man. St. Matt. vii., 24, "*I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*"

In the plain below the hills where there is no stone, the houses are often made of clay and mud, and raised on the sand. If they do not disappear altogether before the rainy season is over, they become so saturated with the wet that when the sun comes out the roof will dry and crack. The house is then very much like the illustration used by our Saviour when He spoke of family dissensions: "*If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*" (St. Mark iii., 25.) The fissure in the roof and the consequent collapse of the walls would readily convey His meaning to the minds of His hearers.

There is no beauty in the picture of a village. The houses are all alike. If there is any difference it is

quite unintentional on the part of the builder, who is not always certain when he has made a straight line; and he has an undisguised contempt for a right angle. Yet he manages somehow to make all the houses appear, at a distance, of the same shape. A closer inspection will reveal the prentice hand.

Where the people are wealthy, comparatively speaking, and abundance of good building material lies close at hand, there is an attempt at something better. The houses of the well-to-do are more imposing. A large yard with a high wall forms part of the homestead; and if the Sheikh (chief) is a man of importance in the district his house may possibly consist of two stories. In large villages, really towns, as Bethlehem for instance, the richer people make their position known by a dwelling of a superior kind—and the homes of Christian peasants are also better. Yet all are erected on the same plan and in the same strong and durable style. Amongst the poor windows are deemed unnecessary, besides they form a loophole for the shot of an enemy. Formerly when feuds and faction fights were much more frequent, no hole was ever left in the wall of a house. They are not so common now and windows may be safely inserted, crossed with iron bars. A lattice may even be added like those found in towns. (See Judges v., 28, "*The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice.*")

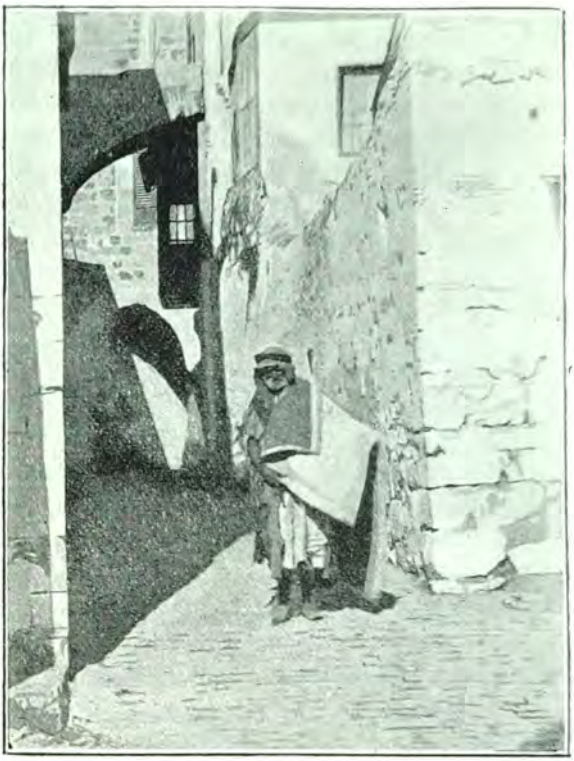
2.—A HOUSE AND HOME.

A common house consists of four thick walls composed of roughly cut stone built with mortar or clay. The roof is made of trunks and branches of trees, over which a layer of earth is added more than a foot deep and well stamped down. On this grass often springs up in little green shoots, but it never lasts long, for when the sun is high its rays burn up the tender green blades and they wither away. "*Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up.*" (Psalm cxxix., 6.)

The interior is divided into two parts, one of which is raised about a yard above the other. The upper portion is reserved for the family alone, while the lower part is occupied by poultry and even the sheep and goats.

The implements of husbandry are hung round the room on nails. A few mats or perhaps a home-made carpet are sometimes spread on the raised portion of the dwelling to encourage sleep. If the owner is inclined to be luxurious he purchases town made beds —lehaffs—quilts stuffed with cotton wool. These are the beds of the East, and after use they are rolled up and placed in some receptacle where they may be carefully preserved, or laid in a corner and covered with a mat. St. John v., 8, "*Take up thy bed and walk,*" was a command that could be easily and readily obeyed.

Some very primitive looking articles, chests made of



AN EASTERN BED (*St. John*, v. 8).

dried clay baked in the sun, are found on the edge of the sleeping platform; they are corn bins (see one baking in the sun in the picture on frontispiece), and form with a very limited number of pots and jars the furniture of a peasant's cottage. A few sacks woven

of the same material as the mantles, a wicker basket and a handmill will complete the list. The pottery utensils, lamps, jars and pots, that come from the hands of the native manufacturer, are very much like the pottery of the Amorites and Phœnicians that has been dug out of the earth. The common lamp of burnt clay is made from one cake with its sides turned up and nipped in near the spout or nozzle. In this oil is placed, and a burning wick that floats on the top is the only light used.

Strange though it seems, the lamp in a Fellah's house of to-day is like that of the Amorite ages ago, of exactly the same shape, differing only in size, yet we have in this fact a great and significant confirmation of the descent of these people from the aboriginal inhabitants. Lamps of all sizes, shapes and patterns have been manufactured of the same material through all the intervening years. But wherever there is a difference it can be traced to a foreign origin.

The Jewish lamps changed little until Greek and Roman influence altered the models. As long as other nations provided utensils for the people of the land cheap enough for them, they were satisfied. But when they are compelled to rely on their own efforts, for they have neither the means nor the inclination to purchase imported lamps of glass or china, they adopt the very old way of working, and the same tools. Isaiah lxiv., 8, "*We are the clay, and Thou our potter, and we are all the work of Thy hand.*"

They are in no way gifted with a creative or artistic

ANCIENT POTTERY.

faculty, unless it lies dormant, being tillers of the soil or "*hewers of wood and drawers of water*" (Joshua ix., 27), with ancient ideas, and therefore unable to construct anything beyond the most simple form, and for lamps and domestic utensils, of the most plastic material, clay.

These very elementary features present to us an intelligence that does not far exceed that of the rudest savage. Clay is of such a nature that the art of working it might be easily discovered, and the baking of it in an oven is but one step in the development and improvement of the crudest mind, and represents only the first effort in the art of manufacture. Thus we

see what very primitive minds are now in the possession of the peasants compared with the maturity of the rest of mankind in civilised countries. It is the same in everything else connected with the Fellaheen of Palestine. They are old world people and belong to a period very remote from this.

Earthenware lamps now found in great quantities in the Holy Land, and still used by the peasants, were, and are carried by virgins that go to meet the bridegroom. (See St. Matt. xxv., 1. "*Ten virgins which took their lamps.*") "Τας λαμπαδας," here are generally understood to be torches by Greek scholars, but this in no way affects the point in question. Even now at a city wedding torches are used, but in a village lamps. Some lamps hold a very small amount of oil, and in olden times little jars were used for carrying any additional supply that might be needed. The foolish virgins had made no provision for a time of waiting, and their lamps * were going out.

If the Fellah may be said to have a luxury it is by way of a light. For a man to have no light burning after nightfall is a sign of extreme poverty, and peasants in referring to a poor man will say "he sleeps in darkness." The "light" is often mentioned in the Bible as of great importance, and with a similar idea to that now held by the Fellaheen. They consider it synonymous with the light of life. Around many early Christian lamps (fifth century) in very elementary

* The Author has lamps and jars in his possession that verify his statement and illustrate the parable.

Greek are found the same words, "light of life." When a man in cursing another, says, "May your lamp be put out," he means the life of the family altogether. In Proverbs xiii., 9, we find exactly the same expression with the same meaning, "*the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.*"

The house door is always open so that all may see as the light of day streams in that the deeds of the family are above suspicion. If a door was shut the people on the outside would think that something was being done within of which they were ashamed, they are fully alive to the fact that "*men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.*" (St. John iii., 19.)

During the day the house is never closed for another reason, that the hospitality of which every man is proud may be apparent to all who pass by.

There is no privacy in a village; everybody walks everywhere, and enters not only into any house, but joins in the conversation and seeks a share in the business carried on by other people, until the darkness gathers and there is no more light to shut out; then every peasant seeks his own home and the house is made secure for the night. Soon after six o'clock in winter and eight o'clock in summer the day is done, and work and play cease until the morrow.

Twice a day the Fellah eats, and as many more times as the opportunity offers. He is unlike an Englishman not only in his manner of taking food, but in his capacity for providing a space for as much as is set before him. When there is nothing left the meal

is finished. To the peasant there is a certain amount of forethought in this method, as a provision is made for the time when he may have to content himself with less than a good meal a day, perhaps nothing at all. *Daily* bread is all he thinks about, and as much of it as possible.

GRINDING AT THE MILL

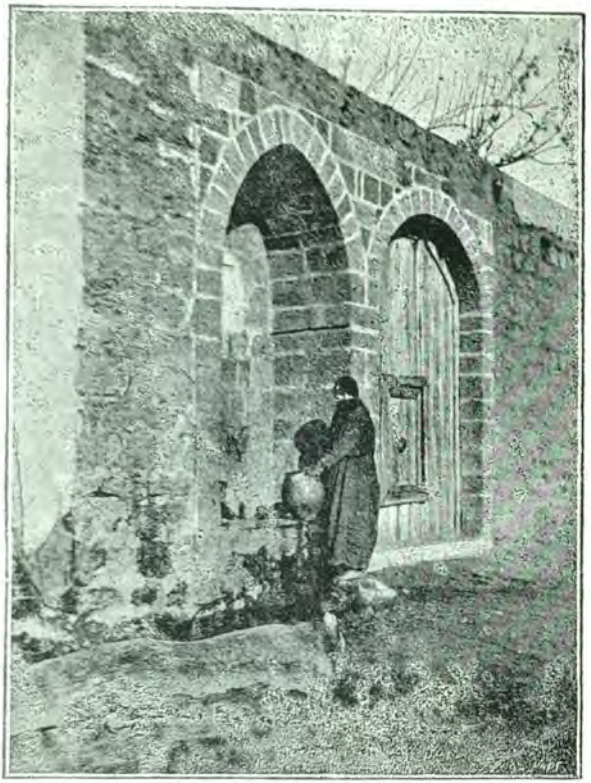
Woman's first duty every morning is to take a supply of grain from the corn bin and call a neighbour or friend and grind it at the mill. St. Matt. xxiv., 41, "*Two women shall be grinding at the mill.*" Two women

are always required for this work on account of the weight of the upper stone, one woman would be useless. The corn is put into a hole at the top and gradually falls between the stones as the topmost revolves on the one underneath, and is crushed into coarse flour. The sound of grinding corn is a sign of life and prosperity, "*And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low*" (Eccl. xii., 4), would mean desolation and sorrow.

Very little time is occupied in baking, as there is not very much kneading to be done, the dough being spread in a thin layer, which when placed on hot ashes is soon ready for eating. When leavened bread is made a small quantity of sour dough is used, this is "the leaven that leaveneth the whole" (1 Cor. v., 6), and a piece of dough is always kept on one side for this purpose, though rarely used, as unleavened bread is generally eaten. 1 Sam. xxviii., 24, "*And did bake unleavened bread.*" (See also Exodus xii., 39.)

The oven is not in the house, it has a building of its own, the joint property of several families whose duty it is to keep it always hot, and being an article of baked clay (see one with two lids baking in the sun in foreground of picture on frontispiece), it retains the heat for a considerable length of time when covered with ashes. Leviticus xxvi., 26, "*Ten women shall bake your bread in one oven.*" The fuel is the rough grass, leaves, green twigs, and dung that the children collect round the village, which is put into the oven itself. (See Mal. iv., 1.; St. Matt. vi., 30.) While the mother

bakes, the daughters are sent to the well for water and the breakfast is then ready.



THE PITCHER AT THE FOUNTAIN.

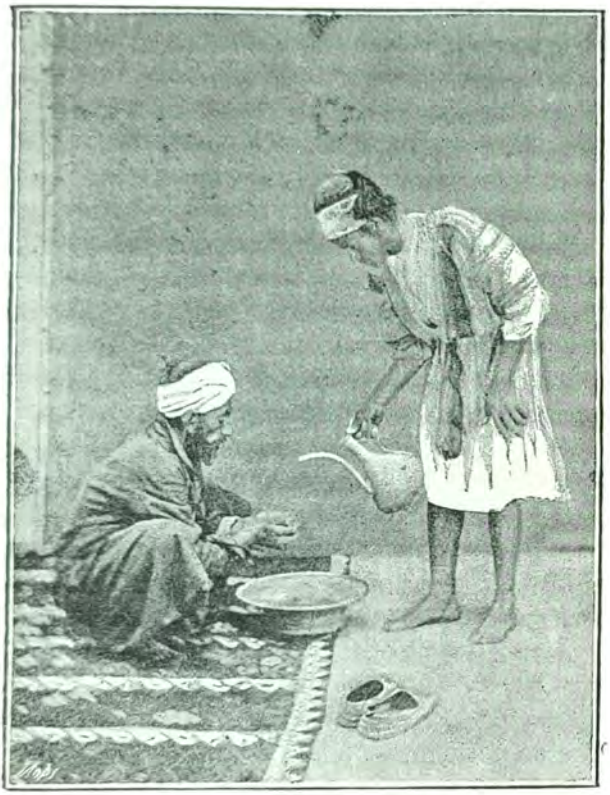
Where there are rules in a household, which is seldom, the morning meal is provided by the wife in

the early part of the day, but if the attention of the male portion of the family is required outside, a few pieces of bread are carried and eaten on the way to work. Towards evening the principal and perhaps only real meal is prepared, and consists of bread with a relish, either made of vegetables, tomatoes or onions, or in the shape of home-made cheese, or olives. Meat is seldom eaten unless an animal is killed to prevent its dying a natural death. Fruit is consumed at all times where plentiful, and cucumbers take the place of apples to the boys of Palestine. A father has been known to purchase half-a-dozen as a bribe to induce his son to go to school.

The food when prepared is carried on a tray to the men, which is often the only substitute for a table, who sit round it without knives or forks, dipping their fingers in the various dishes with pieces of bread in which is taken up to the mouth the liquid part of the food. A woman may eat at the same time as her husband if there is no visitor, but certainly not in the presence of a stranger.

In well conducted houses no one takes his place at the trencher without first washing his hands; a boy or servant will pour water on them, unless the host wishing to honour a guest takes that humble duty himself; even the feet will be washed if the visitor is of some importance. In St. Luke vii., 44, (*"I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet"*)—we find Christ mildly rebuking Simon, the Pharisee, for his lack of service compared with the reverential

act of the woman "*which was a sinner.*" Evidently the Saviour had been treated with marked indifference,



THE WASHING OF HANDS.

unbecoming a host who prided himself on being used to the amenities of social life. We see in St. Mark

vii., 4, "*Except they wash they eat not,*" how common was the custom of washing before meals. The same outward cleansing is carried to an extreme at the present day. If a Moslem peasant has washed his hands for prayer, he will not touch the hand of any women, not even his mother, lest he be defiled and his prayer of no avail.

I once watched a soldier of the garrison in Jerusalem greet a female relation from the country after he had cleansed his hands for his mid-day devotions. He carried a cloak so that he could place it between his own hand and that of the woman.

The Peasants before partaking of their meal will say "Bismillah," "In the name of God," and conclude with thanks.

If there are cushions in the house they are brought for the honoured guest so that he may recline more comfortably, and every mark of respect is shown to him. The servant meekly stands behind ready to give him water, and every motion is eagerly watched. But this would be noticed more plainly in the house of a Sheikh. There the servant never leaves his master's presence whether during a meal or any other time except to do his bidding. His eyes are fixed on his features, watching to see if he can anticipate his wishes; and so thoroughly does he learn to know him that one scarcely ever hears a command. Every look is recognised and its meaning interpreted. Psalm xxxii., 8, "*I will guide thee with Mine eye.*" Psalm cxxiii., 2, "*Behold as the eyes of the servants look unto*

the hand of their masters . . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us."

During the progress of the meal we might almost imagine our Lord and His disciples sitting at meat, and the dipping of the sop, for this is a common practice and one that cannot well be understood by those only acquainted with western habits. What would anyone think at an English table if someone put his hand in a dish and offered a morsel to his neighbour? He would be looked upon as unmannerly and vulgar. There is nothing vulgar about it in the east. And there the way of taking food is comfortable and affectionate; and certainly eating with clean fingers is quite as sensible as any other method, and much less risky than the manner of using a knife peculiar to some people.

When the meal is over there is again a washing; the servant girded with a towel ministers to each one. St. John xiii., 4, 5, "*He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet.*" What a lowly and graceful act was that of the Saviour! What humility! The example can only well be understood by a reference to the life of the people in the Holy Land, yet the precept is the same all over the world, but little heeded.

In summer the cooking operations are carried on out of doors in the open air, but in cold weather the inside of the house is preferred. There is no fireplace worthy of the name. A little open clay-baked box,

or a curious article like a thick jar with holes at the sides and shallow, that can be carried about quite easily, is the only stove they use. Dried dung is the fuel, and when it is lit in the house where there is no aperture for the escape of the smoke except the door, it is neither pleasant for the eyes nor the nose. There is one advantage, however, in having no chimney, the owner is saved the expense of colouring the walls. In a few years time the surface is a rich dark brown which grows deeper with age until it is quite black. Sticks are sometimes burnt but not by a poor Fellah. His wife takes them to town and sells them. A rich Sheikh can afford to burn wood or charcoal; St. John xviii., 18, "*a fire of coals;*" and a visit to his house alone would furnish a different impression of the people.

There is one building in the village set apart for the stranger—the guest house—Medâfe. Should anyone on entering a village inquire for the "guest house" or "guest chamber"—(Medâfe), he will be taken immediately to this building where he may safely lodge for the night and be provided with a supper. In some villages there is more than one, but only when there are rival factions and rival Sheikhs. One Medâfe in a village is a sign of a peaceful community under one head. If the village is large and important, the headman or Sheikh will be rich and very likely have a special chamber for his guests, besides the common yet hospitable Medâfe. In small towns, like Bethlehem, all rich men have these guest chambers, and it was no doubt to one of these in Jerusalem that

Christ sent His two disciples. St. Mark xiv., 14, "*Say to the goodman of the house, the Master saith, where is the guest chamber?*"

Where there is a large population and numerous guest chambers there is seldom one common Medâfe; a large "Khan" or inn will be found instead, where a small charge is made for the accommodation of the traveller who will often sleep beside his beast. Though this is not necessary, there is sometimes a danger of someone mistaking the animal for his own and taking it away in the dark before the real owner is aware of its removal.

A portion of the inn, the "lewan," is raised about a foot above the surrounding enclosure and covered in. On this platform the weary may seek their repose after a day's journey, providing always their own bed-clothing, space alone being found by the innkeeper. When every available spot is occupied, and this often happens in the pilgrim season, a place for sleeping must be sought for elsewhere. Should the inn happen to be on the side of a hill there may be caves hollowed out of the limestone rock that offer extra accommodation, and one of these will be warmer and more comfortable than the open ground within the four walls of a khan. When Joseph and Mary arrived at the inn or khan in Bethlehem, nearly 2,000 years ago, they were glad to find shelter in one of these caves, where the Son of Man came into the world, because there was "*no room for them in the inn*" (St. Luke ii., 7), that is on the "lewan," and a hole in the precincts of the inn was

better than the bare and open ground beneath the sky in the wet season.

3.—BIRTH.

The birth of a child is an important event in a village if the little stranger is a boy. Away from his dwelling the father anxiously waits for news of the infant, for no man is allowed to remain in the house. As soon as the sex is known, if the child is a son, off runs a friend crying as he approaches the parent, "Bschara," "Bschara," *i.e.*, "good tidings," "good news," and the happy father hurries home to name the child. (St. Luke ii., 10, "*Behold, I bring you good tidings.*" These tidings, happily, were not reserved for one man alone, but "*to all people.*")

The babe is immediately rubbed all over with salt, then wrapped in swaddling clothes, so tight that it cannot move. St. Luke ii., 12, "*Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.*" The shepherds would know by this that the infant was new born, and that it was at the "khan," in a compartment for animals.

After seven days the child is unfastened, washed with fresh oil, rubbed again with salt, then bound up once more in the clothes. This continues until 40 days have elapsed, when it is clothed anew in the ordinary garments of the Fellaheen.

The father makes a feast for his friends, who are expected to bring presents to the child. Every man according to his means deposits money for the benefit

of the boy, and, in true eastern fashion, the father, who is also the collector, appropriates the sum total for his own use. The custom of bringing gifts is an old one; we find it mentioned in St. Matt. ii., 11, the wise men who came to see Jesus "*presented unto Him gifts.*" There is still another custom in vogue at the present day that we read of in the Gospel of St. Luke ii., 23, 24, the offering of a sacrifice. But this is generally included in the feast, and differs in kind. A lamb is brought by the relations and its flesh given to the poor.

A very different reception is accorded to a girl, her advent is announced, it is true, but in other words. No glad tidings are conveyed to the father. Instead, the words are: "Blessed be the bride," that is a girl that will some day be a bride; thus the messenger breaks the news, so disappointing, gently, by referring to the time when she will be worth something. The father values his new daughter so lightly that he usually accompanies his reply, "God bless thee," with the offer of the girl—a compliment so far as giving the man ample time to earn the dowry. If he accepts, he says, "I accept." If, on the other hand, he wants her no more than her parent, he declines by merely replying, "God bless thee, Abou.—"

If the girl is accepted, a sacrifice is brought to ratify the betrothal, and the waiting for the wedding begins.

Very little notice is usually taken of the entry into the family of a female member, as she brings no

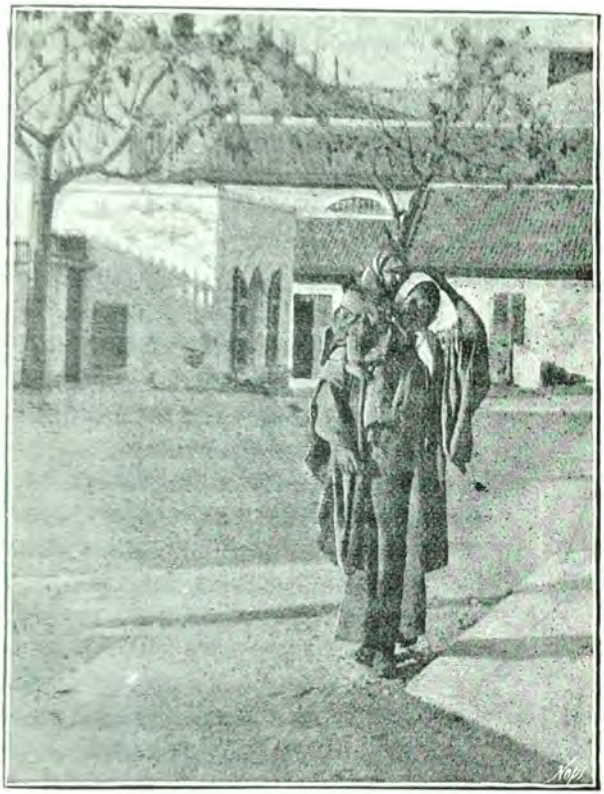
honour with her. In fact, she is of no account until she approaches a marriageable age, and then she represents so much capital, and it is possible for her father to receive credit from the trader who supplies him with sugar, rice, and coffee, on that account. A man having three daughters can reckon himself worth from £60 to £120, according to their age and appearance. But in spite of this value they are not counted in the number of his children. If he is asked the number of his children and he has three sons and three daughters, he answers, "three," reckoning only the sons, as daughters don't count, they are not children to him.

On the birth of his first-born son he assumes a position of considerable importance, and a new name. He is no longer known by the appellation that has hitherto distinguished him, but by that of his son. In future he will be "Abou Abdallah" (if the latter is the name of the boy), *i.e.*, "the father of Abdallah."

Children are carried at the breast much longer than in England—boys especially, up to three or four years of age, sharing even with the next born. The mother believes they will be stronger, and so feeds her son in this way until he can talk and walk. Isaiah xi., 8, "*The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp.*" Psalm viii., 2, "*out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.*"

As the mother's time is fully occupied with the work of her house and its surroundings, the little mite is laid in a corner; or slung in a piece of carpet on her back when she carries her basket of eggs to market;

and swung in a little hammock on the branch of a tree when her labour is in the field. When it is able to



CARRYING CHILD ON THE SHOULDER.

use its legs, its energetic mother places them astride her shoulder and it is soon able to keep its elevated

position without danger. Isaiah xlix., 22, "*And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.*"

A Moslem boy is not circumcised until he is several years old; the age varies from five to twelve.

The son of a Christian is treated in a very different manner—he is baptised. The Fellaheen who belong to the Greek Church, the Church of the country, are in many ways superior to the poor peasants in the Mohammedan villages, yet they are in most things like them. Up to a certain point they are similar, and if their Christianity is but an outward polish it has raised them to a higher position, and there is still hope for better things.

A peasant mother is very fond of her children, and though she may have little time to caress them she willingly deprives herself of many necessaries in order that she may promote their welfare. Native women make good nurses for European children where care and kindness only are required; indulgence too frequently spoils their charge, never cruelty or neglect.

Very little comfort seems to surround the upbringing of a young peasant though there is no lack of maternal affection. The mother will fondle her babe and call him by all kinds of endearing names, "My life!" "My soul!" "My lord!" "Light of my eye," &c.

Early in life the little brown piece of humanity becomes acquainted with one of the scourges of the East—the flies. As he lies helpless they attach themselves to the most exposed parts of his little face, settling comfortably round his mouth and eyes. At

first he screams, then perhaps his mother throws her veil over his face, and the pests depart, leaving him nearly suffocated for want of air. But she cannot long protect him, so he yells until he becomes accustomed to the clusters of flies that sit on his face. After a while little notice is taken of them, and many children may be seen playing amongst the dust of the village without the slightest intention of brushing the insects off.

A peasant is not brought up to the use of soap and water, the salting at his birth is supposed to keep him fresh and clean for the rest of his life, and no boy in a village ever looks as if he had been washed. It is the want of cleanliness that breeds so many diseases, particularly of the eyes, and why so many become blind when quite young.

Children's ailments receive but scant attention, nature is the healer except when the illness is prolonged, and a bad attack of fever compels the sufferer to remain indoors. A remedy is then necessary, and the patient is bled by scraping the skin with a razor. If no improvement is visible, branding with a hot iron is the next resource. For inflammation of the gums while teething a red hot needle is applied to the lower part of the tongue. Wounds are covered with a paste, composed of finely-powdered red earth mixed with water.

When these common remedies fail nothing more can be done, branding with a hot iron and the letting of blood are the only means known to the peasants for

the alleviation of suffering, and the ultimate cure of a sick person. They consider in any case that the patient is in the hands of God, much more so when no act of their own can save him, and philosophically resign themselves, hoping, of course, that the hand of God will rest but lightly in affliction, and eventually restore the patient to his wonted health and strength.

After a child has cut its first teeth it is permitted to crawl about the house, armed with a piece of bread, which is very likely the only toy it will ever see. Perhaps, when it is a little older, and able to run after the donkeys into the town or city, a miniature instrument of music, possibly a drum, will be given to it on a feast day.

Girls never have any dolls, they do not even know how to play. From childhood they seem like little women, and as their clothes are identically the same as those of their mothers, differing only in size, the resemblance leaves nothing but stature wanting. The burdens of life fall quickly to their lot; as soon as they are able to run they are taught to carry the water jar and bring it full from the well. Before they are as old as an English school girl they know how to knead the dough, bake and cook, and are acquainted with all the cares of a peasant's house; by the time they are twelve they are married.

The life of a woman is full of sadness; from its dawn, when all that is bright and gay should surround it, to the setting of the sun of its existence, few gleams of sunshine flit across the day of a woman's

life. She is one of the goods and chattels bought and paid for like the rest. Her life knows no love but that which she gives to others, to the children she bears, and perhaps sometimes to their father. No Sabbath illumines the week for her, one day is much like another; day after day, month after month, the time of which she takes no account, passes from one year into the next, it records the births of her children and the deaths of her relations; and perhaps the worst of all, the advent of another wife to her husband. Her sprightly step is less firm; the skin of her face begins to wrinkle, and the little red fades into the brown. The arms, that were once so round and strong, can no longer do their duty, and she wanders aimlessly through the village almost unnoticed, except by those who carelessly glance at her shrunken figure, and wonder how soon the "old one" will be going away. If her sons have been left in the village, and not carried off by the war, her one joy remains. All her life she has denied herself for them, to make them strong and manly; they have given her nothing in return, but she is not disappointed. That she is the mother of so many boys is a blessing that creeps into her heart, and gives it a peaceful throb ere it ceases to beat for ever.

The position of a woman in a Moslem village is melancholy in the extreme. Here in the land where the Saviour lived she is but a beast of burden, or one of the articles in her husband's house. She is a "thing," not a member of a gentler sex. I remember

once a man coming to see me in a village, thinking I was a doctor, for some medicine for his wife's eyes. He had brought her with him, but left her outside the house where I was sitting, saying, in an apologetical tone, "the thing is without awaiting your pleasure." He would not offend the sensitive ears of a man by even calling her a woman. And wherever the name of Christ is scorned and dishonoured she is no better. But where Christianity has taken root and spread a woman's place is side by side with the man. If for no other reason, the women of England owe a debt of gratitude that ought to stir their hearts to do something for their poor heathen and helpless sisters, and more especially in this land of Christ's birth.

He came to set them free, to raise them to a higher and nobler place in man's estimation, and in trying to spread His kingdom they are helping their own sex.

The women of Palestine recognised His love and care when on earth—a woman was the first to love and cherish Him—a woman washed His feet with her tears—women beheld Him lifted towards heaven on the cross of shame—women followed to see where He was laid—and women were the first to seek Him after the resurrection.

All women are not able to witness for Him in His own land, but they can help to send others there instead.

A few beams of the light of Gospel love and mercy are being shed amongst the women of the Holy Land by the efforts of the Missionary Societies, and if this

little book can help to increase the interest of others in the Christian work of their agents there, it will not have been written in vain.

Boys have soon to make themselves useful, and when very young watch that the sheep and goats do not stray into the vineyards and the gardens. Now and then they go to the Khateeb, the Moslem priest or teacher, to learn the opening chapters of the Koran, and how to pray. Village children know no games, life is too serious. Before being considered capable of taking care of themselves, they receive other instruction than that given by the village Khateeb. The first lesson that a boy learns, after he can say "father" and "mother," is how to swear. Cursing is a fine art, and requires constant practice and a natural aptitude in the use of language to become proficient. It is therefore necessary to commence early, and a beginning is made with the wish that the devil may be in his father. After lisping the "Abook," as it is termed, the little rascal is patted on the head, and the elders who are present predict his future worth.

The next stage in his education is to tell a lie. When this is accomplished the first rung in the ladder of fame is reached, for "lying is the salt of man." The most prominent trait in the character of a peasant is the zeal he shows in prevarication. He never answers a question with a direct reply, but will evade the most trivial request for information. If a man is asked on the road from whence he comes, the answer will be "from behind," "min warra." Ask him

what he wants when he is loafing round your premises, and he will say "Salaamtak," "your peace." One can almost forgive him at times he is so pleasant and polite.

The habit of swearing, like lying, he thinks, is one to be cultivated, and care is taken to produce the most ridiculous forms of speech. It is no uncommon occurrence for a man to beat his son and curse the boy's father, his donkey's grandmother, and the religion of the camel or the devil. These are mere forms of expression and quite meaningless. But when he invokes the aid of "Allah" to cut short the life of his friend matters assume a more serious aspect, and words and phrases follow of too evil a nature to be placed on record. As a rule the Fellah means nothing beyond a desire to emphasise the statements he makes, or to show off his little pleasantries before an admiring crowd. I once heard a woman, in a quarrel, tell a man he was a "piece of a dog." This was a gross insult, and much worse than saying he was the whole of it, but then she wished to hurt his feelings.

"By the life of my beard," "By the life of God," "By my head," are every-day expressions. Among some of the Fellaheen a man is regarded with favour if he rounds off his sentences with "Ai Wallah," "Yes by God." It is, therefore, easy to understand why there should be a third commandment, and why Christ so often spoke against the use of irreverent language. St. Matt. v., 34, "*Swear not at all;* v. 36, "*Neither shalt thou swear by thy head.*"

Women use the same language as the men, and rarely occupy a secondary place in cursing. The conversation in the house, the road, or the field, is often lewd, and no restraint is ever placed on the tongue even in the presence of children, so that boys and girls begin with the knowledge that comes with the maturity of mind as well as body in England. Yet in many ways, though the language is plain, it is stripped of its coarseness by the absence of thought and intention of anything immoral.

4.—MARRIAGE.

All marry young, and amongst the Moslem peasants I have never heard of an old maid. Every girl knows that sooner or later she will be a bride, and, as a rule, prepares, little by little, a "garment of needlework," a dress on which she works beautiful silk embroidery. There is no fixed time, as marriage depends on means not age. Poor men cannot afford to marry young, though there is a possibility of overcoming the difficulty. If a youth has a sister he can exchange her for another man's sister, and both weddings are concluded on the same day with one feast. In the absence of any such probability arrangements are made in the usual way.

The most important part of the marriage proposal is the sum offered as dowry, practically speaking among the poor this is the price paid for the girl, her purchase-money, which her father secures for himself and at last believes that a daughter is of some use and value. Richer people regard it as a provision for

clothing and ornaments for the bride. But in all cases it is necessary to negotiate for a fixed sum, and in this the bridegroom seldom takes a part, except amongst the poor. If we recall the marriage of Isaac, we find that Abraham's steward undertook the delicate task, and we may, to a certain extent, assume that young men at that time were not supposed to be competent to choose a bride for themselves. They are not always capable now, even in England, if we consider some of the misfortunes that often follow this important step in life. And where we read in the Bible of sons seeking their wives without the aid of their parents, the result has usually been disastrous. Esau married without consulting his father, and this error in a great measure cost him the position that he might have expected to occupy. The old ideas prevail in the land to this day, and the parents take upon themselves the burden of providing a mate for the son, and generally the means wherewith he is able to meet the obligations of the change in his life.

The dowry varies according to the beauty, age, and rank of the girl; if she is young and pretty the price is high and only a rich man can expect to possess her. When the bloom on her cheek begins to fade the initial cost of the marriage lessens until it is possible for even a poor man to raise the sum required. A certain amount of sympathy might be expressed for the man without means, but his time for recompense will surely come; after a while he may, by the aid of a hard-working wife, have saved enough to pay for

another, a young and pretty one, for all Moslems are allowed to have four.

The dowry is not always paid in cash, its equivalent in camels, oxen or donkeys, will be accepted. On one occasion a notorious character in search of a wife agreed to give a yoke of oxen and four donkeys to a man for his daughter. They were duly delivered on the morning of the marriage feast, and the festival proceeded with great rejoicing. As the father-in-law lived by raiding other people's cattle, he was very much chagrined to find on the morning of the day following that he had been paid with his own animals. The action of the son-in-law was admired by all his new relations except the one he had outwitted, and he was regarded as a desirable acquisition to the family and a remarkably clever fellow. Among the Bedawin who dwell in tents, it is the reverse that often happens, and the son-in-law has cause to be annoyed. The bride is covered with her large blue veil, it is thrown from her back over her head so that her features are invisible, and as her dress is in no way unlike the costume of the other women, it is impossible to know that she is the right one until the following morning. After the procession she sits in the woman's apartment of the tent in the dark, no light being allowed, she is not permitted to speak, such a proceeding being looked upon as immodest; she must sit in discreet silence while the praises of the bridegroom are being sung to her. Her father knows, like every other parent, that the older the daughter the less

the dowry, and he is sufficiently alive to his own interests to part with the cheaper first, especially if the higher sum is already secured. This happened in the case of Jacob, whose father and mother were absent and unable to look after his interests. Of his manner of paying the dowry we find many illustrations at the present day. If a young man has no hope of possessing a stipulated sum at one time, he pays by instalments or serves for lower wages for a given period. The writer had a man-servant who gave a medgedieh a month (3s. 4d.), until he had completed the sum total of 96 medgediehs or £16. Though a man may elect to provide the dowry in this way he does so at considerable risk, for there is no hire system, he cannot take the girl after the first payment, and should the father die before the last instalment has been delivered the brother who takes over the right of ownership in his sister may refuse to ratify the agreement made with his father and demand payment over again, and the poor love-sick swain has no remedy.

I was once called upon to arbitrate between two men who could not agree about the last instalment. A young man had agreed to pay 30 Turkish pounds as dowry, and in order to complete the amount handed over five French gold pieces as a final settlement, saying they were worth more than the Turkish but he was pleased to let the father have the difference because he loved the girl. This proceeding was so unusual that the prospective father-in-law demurred,

and in order to satisfy himself that the payment was correct appealed to me. I was compelled to say, in the interests of justice and equity, that there was a difference of 10s. on the wrong side, a French pound being worth 16s. and a Turkish, 18s.

Love is not supposed to exist until after marriage, though there have been stories told of "love matches," but there is always such an air of romance about them that one is inclined to think they are fables. Marriage is far too serious for love to enter into the contract. It would be useless for a lover to declare his passion if he could not purchase the object of his affection. Sinful love is punished with death, it is, therefore, a dangerous expedient to tamper with the property of another man by carrying off his daughter. Some time ago a girl eloped with a young Greek Christian; they sought what appeared to them a safe and secure refuge, in the camp of a Bedawin tribe, where they thought no relative would follow, but the brother of the maiden became aware of their destination and started in pursuit. The gallant lover having conveniently disappeared on business for a time, his bride received her brother alone, and after a time, yielded to his entreaties to return to the parental roof from whence the marriage was to take place with the consent of her relations.

The return journey commenced after messages had been sent to the recalcitrant lover, but as soon as a lonely and secluded part of the road was reached the brother turned and shot his sister, then skinned her

face and hung it on the branch of a tree as a warning to all who desired to enter wedlock in a roundabout way.

There is no fear of the wife being returned to her father when once she is in her husband's care as he cannot afford to part very readily with what has perhaps caused him years to procure. Divorce is easy enough. Should a man wish to avail himself of this means of disposing of his wife, the words "Bi talak bi thalāti," "I divorce you thrice," said in the presence of witnesses being sufficient to annul any contract. The facility of divorce and its practice was severely condemned by Christ in very distinct and measured terms. It is rarely resorted to now.

A story is related of a young man in Jerusalem who possessed a very pretty wife and a bad temper. In a moment of passion he lost them both. Returning home one day in an irritable frame of mind, ready to quarrel with everybody and everything, he was met by his wife with a look that showed her want of appreciation of his ill humour; whereupon he used words and expressions that his favourite warmly resented, and before he really knew what he had said the fatal words escaped his lips—"Bi talak bi thalāti." At once the injured one removed to her father's house. According to the law a man cannot remarry his divorced wife until she has married someone else and been divorced from him.

His wife's instant departure cooled his passion. He gazed at her retreating figure in bewildered astonish-

ment; then, having collected his scattered senses, realised with dismay the consequences of his wanton behaviour, and turned his steps in the direction of his mother's house to seek advice.

The only way out of the difficulty was to engage the services of a reliable friend. He accordingly sought one and related to him his tale of woe. After consultation the friend agreed to serve him, and it was decided that overtures should be made for an immediate marriage, to be followed with a speedy divorce to enable the disunited pair to marry again.

Everything went happily until the second marriage was over. There was then a noticeable delay in the remaining part of the friend's service. The first husband called to see him and urged him to send away the wife according to agreement so that he could take her to his heart again, but he refused, saying "Oh! no! I like her too well myself."

When all preliminaries are settled and the nuptial day fixed, the people in the neighbourhood are very busy. The most noticeable feature is the change of costume. All who are bidden to the feast consider it necessary to array themselves in their best clothing; the wedding garment is brought, a bright coloured kombaz worn over the white shirt. See St. Matt. xxii., 11. No invited guest would ever present himself at the feast without his wedding garment. Where many are asked, as on the occasion of the marriage of the son of a sheikh or chief, it is possible for a man who has not received an invitation to enjoy the

repast provided, if he is suitably attired. The governor and his assistants arrange the details of the feast and look after the comfort of the guests, and they are responsible for the admission and entertainment of all who appear at the wedding. The bride is seated on a camel or a horse, covered with a veil and decked out for the occasion. Rev. xxi., 2, "*As a bride adorned for her husband.*" Isa. lxi., 10, "*As a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*" Jer. ii., 32, "*Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?*" Ps. xlv., 14, "*She shall be brought unto the King in a raiment of needlework.*" If she has not to be fetched from a neighbouring village, a semblance of this proceeding takes place near her own residence, she must be brought to the bridegroom's house accompanied by a numerous train. As the sun sets the cavalcade winds slowly round the hill on which the houses stand, guns are fired, drums beaten, and as much noise as it is possible to create with voice, instrument and arms is supposed to be a part of the marriage. The crowd around the bride conducts her to the bridegroom's abode, there to await his coming. Psalm xlv., 14, 15, "*The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace.*" The women, all except those who superintend the cooking, remain with her.

The men assemble on the threshing floor, as it is generally the only large open space to be found, where the food is brought on trays and placed before them. When the meal is over another very important part

of the ceremony follows. The governor and his helpers walk round the circle of guests to collect the presents —always money, which they deposit on a carpet before the bridegroom who reclines on a raised couch in a conspicuous part of the assembly. Every man gives as much as he can afford, and in order to stimulate the spirit of emulation, as each presents his gift, twice or thrice the actual sum is shouted with the name of the giver, and every good blessing is promised for him and his family. If the presents are as numerous as the guests and they are many—at one marriage I remember the number of guests was so great that 162 sheep were killed and eaten—the bridegroom tarries until the last coin has been collected. Then, with the same noise that followed the bride, the procession to the house begins, and the women waiting with their lamps can hear that the bridegroom comes. A plentiful supply of oil will have been necessary if the feast has been imposing, as the time of his approach can only be known when the shouts begin.

Guests may have come late or left early, the women and girls that are waiting cannot ascertain, they therefore know not the hour when the bridegroom shall appear. (See St. Matt. xxv., 1-13.)

5.—DEATH.

The peasants never try to control their emotions, and as at a marriage they give full vent to their feelings in joyous exclamations, shouts and yells almost deafening to the ear, so when the hand of death is

laid on one of the inhabitants of a village, wailing cries of deepest woe make known the sorrow of the bereaved ones to all who dwell in the neighhourhood.

The women rend their clothes, tear their hair, and exhibit all the outward signs of mourning with which we are familiar in the Bible. Joel ii., 12-13, "*Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning; And rend your hearts and not your garments.*"

The Khateeb washes the body of the dead, and covers it with a linen cloth. As the climate is so very warm it is impossible to wait any length of time before interment.

Professional mourners, "*that weep with those that weep,*" are hired to follow the remains to the grave. St. Luke viii., 52, "*And all wept and bewailed her.*" Very little time is wasted, a hole is hastily dug in the cemetery, the resting plâce of the village fathers near by, the body is placed on a bier, and carried by the men, while the mourners follow with shrieks and cries of distress. Words of praise are uttered of the dead in feeling tones as the body is laid by the side of the tomb, then the Khateeb calls on the spirit of the departed to answer as he would in the presence of God, and say that he has been a devout Moslem. In his stead a relative will reply that he believed in one God, and Mohammed as the Apostle of God. The body is then laid in the grave and covered with earth. Women weep at the tomb all day long, mingling with the tears that flow words of praise of

the one that is gone. (See David's lament for Saul, 2 Sam. i., 17-27.) Day after day the graveside is visited until a headstone has been placed there, then women only go on feast days, always believing that the spirit will understand all that is said by the stone that marks the grave.

The stones in the village cemetery are whitewashed, and though women seek the places of the dead in the daytime, no man will ever be found near after dark. He is afraid that the angel, who is ever on the watch to snatch good Moslems to the realms of night, may appear and frighten him into unconsciousness, and then secure his body.

Night is the time for all dread spirits to carry on their nefarious work, and only the most hardened and sceptical Mohammedan will venture out alone, and certainly not near any tomb; hence the precaution of whitewashing. This is not done in the cities, but it must have been the custom in the time of Christ, to warn Jews of the proximity of tombs, and thus prevent defilement. "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*" (St. Matt. xxiii., 27.)

The tombs are not the same now, graves are dug instead, as in England, but there are hundreds and thousands of rock-cut sepulchres to be seen all through the country.

In no place on either side of the Jordan have I seen so many rock-hewn tombs as in the neighbour-

hood of Umm Keis (ancient Gadara), where Christ met the man "*which had devils a long time, and wave no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.*" (St. Luke viii., 27). And there at this day some of the old sepulchres have been cleansed, and used as houses by peasants who have left their own villages and joined the new settlement, but the feeling of dread has departed with the ancient custom of disposing of the dead. No peasant would believe that corpses had been there if the bones were not visible as witnesses.

The old time tombs were chambers beautifully cut out of the rock, and closed with a rolling stone; when this is removed, by breaking it in pieces with a charge of gunpowder, a very good house is at the convenience of anyone who is sufficiently ignorant of its former use to occupy it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAND.

There are two kinds of land attached to a village.

1. The Freehold.
2. The Communal land belonging to a village, for cultivation only.

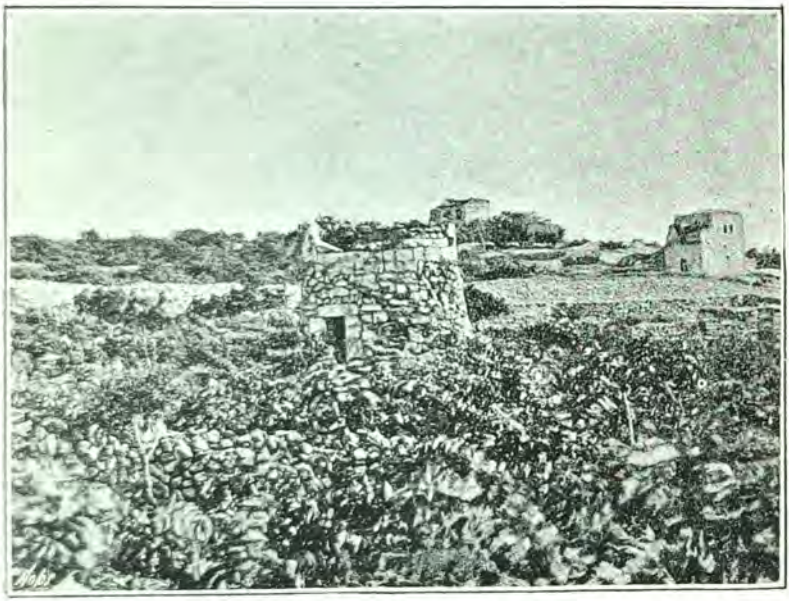
The first usually, not always, consists of gardens, vineyards, and olive yards, immediately surrounding the village. Naboth owned a vineyard, had it belonged to the second class King Ahab could have taken it for his own use without any trouble. The gardens are generally found quite close to a village, or where there is a supply of running water that can be turned by various channels into them, and in order to keep them in a constantly productive state regular care and attention are needed. They are divided into little plots, twelve feet square, or even less, surrounded by trenches of earth, through which openings may easily be made to let in the water, and as easily closed again when a sufficient supply has run over the garden patch. This system of irrigation is the only one that can be carried on in Palestine, where no rain falls for more than six months in the year.

A VILLAGE SHOWING GARDENS—BETHANY.

It is evident that it is by no means a modern invention. Isaiah refers to a sad condition in "*a garden that hath no water*" (i., 30), and when we read in Jeremiah xxxi., 12, "*And their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all,*" and Isa. lviii., 11, we must think of one that when well looked after will produce four crops a year, a sign of happiness and plenty in a dry and thirsty land. These may be seen below the village of Siloam in the Kedron valley, once the gardens of the Kings of Israel and Judah, now the

vegetable gardens that furnish cauliflowers and cabbages for the market in Jerusalem.

Cucumbers, tomatoes, and many other kinds of vegetables are grown, and when they are ready for market, the owner hires a man to watch them. He sits under a little lodge composed of three sticks or poles—tripod—covered with an old mat, a temporary structure, to be used only for a short time and then left, to be tossed and torn by the tempest after the produce has been collected, a picture of desolation



A WATCH TOWER, IN A VINEYARD.

and distress. Isa. i., 8, "*left . . . as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.*"

In the vineyard, being of permanent growth instead of a season's produce, a more substantial building is erected for a watchman—a tower; this is only occupied for a time, when the grapes have been gathered it still stands, but tenantless. St. Matt., xxi, 33, "*There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard . . . and built a tower.*"

Watch towers can be seen near Bethlehem where there are many vineyards, and there the watchman sits, not merely to prevent thieves from stealing the grapes—he has with him a gun and a sling which he uses to frighten the foxes. Cant. ii., 15, "*The little foxes that spoil the vines.*"

I.—THE "LOT."

The Communal land is allotted annually to the villagers. One man may therefore have a different piece of land every year, and a variable number participate in the division. When the time for the "lot" arrives, all those who wish to take part assemble either in the Medâfe or on the threshing floor, where the Khateeb awaits them with a bag and some pebbles. On these stones he will have written the names of the various fields or portions, the lots. Fields have similar names to those in use in the time of Christ, there is the "field of blood," "field of the fight," "field of the rock," &c.

When all the pebbles have been placed in the bag,

a little boy is called to take them out, one too young to understand what it all means; as he withdraws each stone he hands it to one of the men until all are supplied. Immediately on receipt of one of the pebbles the man says "El hatha jarraly,"—"This is my lot." He does not know where it is situated, he cannot read, but he proceeds, "May God maintain my lot." A similar expression may be found in Psalm xvi., 5, "*Thou maintainest my lot.*" When all the pebbles are distributed the Khateeb reads the names and then each one knows the portion of land that will be his for the ensuing year. He will know if his "lines (or lot) have fallen in pleasant places." (Psalm xvi., 6.) If he has fields in a fertile valley he can truly say it, and rejoice accordingly.

The division must then be made so that each one may know the extent of his land. The old landmarks will be there to serve as a guide, but in order that there may be no dispute, as some changes may be necessary on account of more or less participators in the land, the boundary is again marked by a double furrow, one twice as wide as the others, and to be doubly sure, at each end a small heap of stones is placed called the "stones of the boundary," so that the landmark may be plainly visible even if the furrow is obliterated by the rain. It is just as much a sin to-day as it was in the early days of the Hebrew occupation to remove a landmark. Deut. xxvii., 17, "*Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark.*"

2.—PLOUGHING.

The plough cannot be used on the rocky hillsides, the stones are often too big and unwieldy, but an industrious peasant will not neglect this portion of his lot: he takes his pickaxe or mattock and prepares

PLOUGHING.

the soil for the seed. Isa. vii., 25, "*And on the hills that shall be digged with the mattock.*"

Steam ploughs have not yet been introduced into Palestine, nor even a plough that requires two hands. In England one might possibly imagine that the plural

ought to have been used in the following text, "*No man having put his hand to the plough.*" (St. Luke ix., 62.) The sight of a plough used in the Holy Land would remove any such impression, and so it is with many other references to the little details of life. They are quite contrary to the usages of the people in England, yet they are nevertheless correct. There is nothing that shows so clearly and distinctly the truth of the Bible as the implements of husbandry used by the peasants, and their mode of work. They are exactly the same as those mentioned in the Bible, and have never changed, but remain in the state of primitive simplicity they occupied in the time of the Judges when the Canaanites dwelt in the land. This is also an illustration that sheds abundant light on the historical origin of the peasants.

With one hand the man grasps the plough and in the other he carries an ox goad. It usually has two iron points, one broader than the other to scrape the earth from the ploughshare. In the hands of a strong man this would be a formidable weapon, equal to a spear,—"*Shamgar, the son of Anath, slew of the Philistines, six hundred men with an ox goad.*" (Judges iii., 31.) The sharp end is turned towards the oxen to assist them in their movements; how foolish, therefore, for a young ox to chafe and become unruly, or kick against this point! Acts ix., 5, "*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*" We read in 1 Sam. xiii., 21, "*They had a file . . . to sharpen the goads.*"

The plough is drawn by a pair of oxen, and no man

unless he is very poor would yoke an ox and an ass together (Deut. xxii., 10), as two animals unequally yoked together are a source of trouble (2 Cor. vi., 14) and annoyance. At the end of the plough there is a long piece of wood running across it, the yoke; this sometimes is heavy and ill-shaped, and causes the animals much pain and suffering. How remarkable is the contrast! Christ says:—St. Matt. xi., 29-30, "*Take My yoke upon you . . . For My yoke is easy.*"

3.—SOWING.

After the ploughing comes the seed time. In the outlying districts farthest from the village, the crops are always in danger of being removed by roaming Bedawin, who steal away the corn before the peasant is aware of their approach, and often in spite of any watchfulness or care on his part. Even his seed is lost, and if he is very poor indeed we can understand how sadly he carries the precious corn from his house when he goes "*forth*" to sow, with wife and children watching his departure. He cannot tell whether he will ever see the fruit of his labour, and if the corn he throws into the furrows is all he has in the world and starvation is almost at his door he will have no cheerful heart, he may even "sow in tears," as the feelings of Eastern people are easily moved, and it is no uncommon sight to see a man in tears. His joy will be all the greater if when the harvest comes he finds it waiting for his sickle.

The best description of a sower is found in St.

THE SOWER.

Matt. xiii., 3-8, every word of which is applicable to the work of to-day.

4.—REAPING.

It is most remarkable when we come to the harvest to find how the ingathering of the corn in every particular is the same as in Biblical times.

Deut. xvi., 9, "*To put the sickle to the corn.*"

Leviticus xix., 9, "*And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.*"

xxiii., 10, "*When ye . . . shall reap the harvest*

thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest."

Ruth ii., 15, "*Let her glean even among the sheaves.*"

,, 17, "*So she gleaned in the field until even.*"

After the harvest has commenced a portion of the field is purposely left until the rest of the corn has been taken to the threshing floor. This is called by the peasants "laket" and "jaruā," and if the owner of the corn was asked why it remained until the harvest was nearly over, the reply would be "Meshan Allah"—"for God." It is "*the corner of the field*" which with the "*gleanings*" are left for the poor and the stranger: Leviticus xxiii., 22, "*Thou shalt leave them unto the poor and the stranger.*"

When the corn is standing it is an unwritten law of hospitality for everyone that passes through to help himself. The same rule applies to the vineyard, and no one would ever think of trespassing on the kindness offered by carrying any away. Deut. xxiii., 25, "*When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle into thy neighbour's standing corn.*"

The plucking of the corn and eating by the disciples St. Matt. xii., 1, 2, was not looked upon as a theft by the Pharisees. the "*not lawful*" referred to the act being performed on the Sabbath Day, an interpretation of the fourth commandment of a purely Pharisaical nature.

THE KHATEEB (village priest, teacher, interpreter of the law, scribe, &c.) is a person appointed by the

community to attend to the rites of circumcision and burial. He is not always able to read fluently, though of late years there has been a visible improvement in the intellectual capabilities of these individuals, and they now in large villages teach the children; they are sometimes able to lead the people in their prayers, a duty that is more often neglected.

The Government has recently exerted some influence on the village sheikhs and elders, after noticing the efforts of Christians in their desire for the spread of education, in the hope of preventing a further development of missionary enterprise. The wages of the Khateeb are provided by the peasants and paid in kind after the harvest.

Where the sheikh is too poor to take all the responsibility of entertaining strangers in the "Guest Chamber," another portion of the produce of the field is given up for his assistance.

Widows and fatherless children are usually the gleaners (Ruth ii., 5), and in a particularly distressful case where a woman is but recently bereaved and has to make a provision for a young family or widowed mother, she is allowed to glean even among the sheaves.

All the simple laws of kindness and hospitality found in the law of God are minutely and carefully observed by these poor peasants without knowing any other reason than custom. No man can say why he does these things, he merely answers when asked, "Min Zāman," "It is from long," meaning it has always been so.

After all this help for others it is sad to see the worry and trouble that accompanies the Fellah in his endeavour to preserve a portion of the harvest for himself. All the corn of the village must be placed on the common threshing floor and there await the coming of the tax gatherer, to assess the tax and take away his share. A peasant knows how much he has to pay for his oliveyard, about sixpence per tree, but he is quite unable to form any idea of the amount of corn that will remain for him until the tax collector has left with the tithe. One-tenth of the crop is due to the Government for Communal land, but the tax is publicly sold to the highest bidder, a speculator who expects to profit by the transaction, and after paying a stipulated sum proceeds to recoup himself for the outlay from the peasants. Before the harvest begins, he rides round the district and whether the year has been favourable or not, he expresses his astonishment at the wonderful harvest, then tries to compound with the peasant for a fixed amount of corn. If unsuccessful, he is at least able to form some estimate of the yield, and thus place a check on his subordinate who will afterwards fetch the tax. He would never think, if he is a man of position, of undertaking the task himself owing to its unpleasant nature, and he knows that only men of unscrupulous character can be obtained for the distasteful work, so he adopts this method of procedure for his own protection. In the time of Christ the collection of taxes was carried out in exactly the same manner: they were sold to the highest bidders,

"publicani," *i.e.*, "farmers of taxes," from whence the word publican is derived, and this name was regarded as synonymous with "plunderer." St. Matthew, who was himself a publican, gives us some idea of the estimation in which they were held (St. Matt. v., 47; ix., 11; xi., 19), they were looked upon with scorn and hatred.

These men to-day are called "Ashar," the word for tenth, a term of opprobrium on account of the extortionate practices of these officials, that is used to designate any grasping and merciless man.

There is still another payment to be made by the peasant if his village is of any size and importance. A useful public servant, the "Natoor," or watchman, expects his allowance for being on the look-out for the strangers who wish to take what is never offered, bands of marauding robbers, and for those who expect hospitality. He must also take care that the cattle from another village do not graze on the herbage belonging to his own community. Trespassers must be impounded, and only returned to the owner on payment of a fine, which goes into the purse of the watchman as a reward for his vigilance.

This office is of great historical interest; we find it mentioned in 2 Samuel xviii., 24: "*The watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked.*" 2 Kings ix., 17: "*And there stood a watchman . . . . and he spied.*" Psalm cxxvii., 1: "*Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*"

THE THRESHING FLOOR.

The Man with a Fan.

7.—THRESHING.

The threshing of the corn is carried out on the same plan as the one intended for use amongst the Hebrews. "*Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*" (Deut. xxv., 4,) is still a law respected by all the farmers. Oxen are driven round and round a circular heap of corn, free to bend their necks and eat. The word *halo* is derived from the Greek word for threshing floor, ἄλωνα (halōna), as all the threshing floors of the ancients were round.

When the straw is well broken into small pieces it is removed, and the grain and the chaff together thrown on a heap. The peasant then takes his "fan," a fork with wooden prongs, the winnowing fan, and purges his floor by tossing up the wheat or barley; and as the threshing floor is always at the top or side of a hill, in a prominent part of the village, fully exposed to the wind, the grains fall into a heap while the chaff is blown away. St. Matt. iii., 12 : "*Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.*"

When the wheat is brought into the market from the threshing floor, it is mixed with little stones and dirt; these have to be removed before the corn is ground into flour. It will fetch a higher price if sifted before being offered for sale. Many industrious women not only do this with their own, in order to secure a better return for their husbands, but seek the same work in town after other purchases are complete. In this case the money is their own to use as they please.

SIFTING CORN.

The corn is placed in a sieve which is shaken up and down until the little stones fall through the meshes with the dirt and small imperfect grains. This process of purifying the wheat for use is typical of the dealings of the Lord with His ancient people the Jews. See Amos ix., 9: "*I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*"

8.—THE GOOD MEASURE.

The peasant farmer can seldom afford to keep his

corn to realise a good price, he is too poor to wait, and must of necessity sell immediately. The corn merchant reaps the benefit. The reputation of the middleman is almost entirely dependent on that of the professional measurer employed by him. Householders of means purchase a supply of corn for the year; when it is brought to their dwelling the measurer accompanies the vendor. This is a matter of little moment in England, but it is of the utmost importance in Palestine, where the measure is a variable quantity and may be much or little according to the ability of the expert who handles the corn. In order to ascertain the contents of each sack and satisfy the purchaser before the bargain is concluded, the professional measurer empties the grain into a heap on the floor, and seating himself beside it proceeds to fill his wooden measure, the "tabbeh," shaking it and turning it to press down the corn. When it is filled to the brim, he heaps up more and more until the grains run over the side, and then the "*good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over*," passes into the hands of the customer. (St. Luke vi., 38.) Unless the buyer is present to receive his corn he cannot be sure of the justice of the seller, and even when his eye is fixed on the measure the man who so deftly wields it may deceive him. The "*give into your bosom*" is a form of expression signifying pocket or bag. Peasants carry everything in their shirt above the girdle, their bosom; neither pockets nor bags have been adopted by the country people of Palestine.

CHAPTER V.

SHEPHERD LIFE.

As soon as boys, and in some cases girls, are old enough to make themselves useful, they begin to form an acquaintance with the sheep and the goats of the family. Gradually this intimacy develops, and by the time an English boy is busily engaged with his books the young peasants are entrusted with the care of both goats and sheep in the immediate neighbourhood of their home, but sufficiently far away to lead a lonely life. Years of discretion have not yet sobered the little fellows, so they pass their time with the animals with as much pleasure as can be derived from their association, though they invariably assume a manly air when this labour of life rests on their shoulders. They learn to look on their companions with a feeling of friendliness engendered by close intimacy that increases with the knowledge that they represent the principal wealth of their father. By and by a name is given to each, not one similar to their own, but suggested by some peculiarity of feature, "brown ear," "black ear," etc., etc. The voice of the young shepherd is soon recognised by the sheep, and when

he wishes to lead them to another pasture he calls and they follow; he never drives or hurries them, time is not a part of his knowledge; he knows the rising and the setting of the sun but nothing more, therefore the need to hasten never arises. When two or three shepherds meet with their flocks at the well, they sit and chat until all the sheep are mixed together as one flock. A separation has to be made, not by the aid of a dog, for a shepherd never has a dog with him. Each one moves in the direction he wishes to take, and shouts to his sheep, "Tahho, tahho," short and sharp, never thinking to look round until he is some distance away; one by one they hear his voice and follow slowly after him. A stranger looking on would see them moving, some after one shepherd, some after another, until all were together again in their own flocks. There is never a mistake though all use the same word, the voice of each shepherd is unmistakably his own, it has a distinct individuality about it, caused by constant use of the same tone. St. John x., 4: "*And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice.*"

As the time hangs heavy on his hands the shepherd boy will make a pipe, of reeds if there is a brook near, or the pinion bones of vultures if nothing else can be found, and in his own way becomes a musician, amusing himself, and perhaps the sheep.

A sling would be the first article in his possession. It is his "dog," his assistant. He does not use it

A SHEPHERD AND SHEEP.

to throw stones at the sheep, but just beyond them, when they are straying too far away, and thus with constant practice he is able to save his legs and lighten his labour. In the time of the Judges, see chap. xx., 16, slingers had reached a stage of perfection, "*everyone could sling stones at an hair breadth.*" Slings have been used in war by many nations, but they were the weapons of the common soldiers. David by his dress, staff, and

sling, appeared to Goliath as a very inferior antagonist, and certainly not one in a position or with arms equal to his own, hence the giant's disgust. "*Am I a dog?*" says he (1 Sam. xvii., 43) when he saw the lowly dress and weapons of the champion of the Israelites. No doubt the friends of the warrior laughed, though they might have known the power of the sling. The shepherd in the vigour of his early manhood knew how to use it to some purpose, as they soon found. He must have had a powerful arm, and God was with him. That arm and trust in God had proved his mainstay on two former occasions of imminent peril, when he slew the lion and the bear.

The staff mentioned in the encounter with the giant is another important part of the shepherd's outfit, now called the "Nabooty," a heavy club, often with a head studded with nails, made of the hardest wood, and of formidable shape. A hole is bored through the lighter end, the handle, so that it may be attached by a piece of string to the girdle, or when used as a weapon round the wrist. The sling is also fastened to the girdle, as the shepherd needs a rod—not in the form of a crook, this is never seen—the end may be forked or bent, but not in the style adopted by artists, and the one seen in the pastoral staff of a Bishop. This assists him in climbing the hills, his help and guide. When we read Psalm xxiii. we understand David's allusion to the rod and staff. "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.*"

The rod (assayeh) supports, the staff (nabooty) defends.

Only one acquainted with the watchful kindness, the tender solicitude of the shepherd, could have sung this beautiful Psalm: "*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters.*" The loving care of the shepherd of Palestine is one of the most winning traits in the character of these simple people. The sheep are the only living things he sees, sometimes for days, they have been his companions, his friends, from boyhood, and he has learnt to love them. How gently he leads them from one place to another! The little toddling lambs that droop in the sunny heat he lifts into his arms, and I have often seen them in the expansive folds of his shirt—in his bosom. Isa. xl., 11: "*He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*"

Whenever affection requires an illustration, the shepherd and sheep are used, to signify care and kindness. At nightfall he brings them home to the fold, if the weather is chill—an enclosure with a high wall—and shuts the door. No one may enter in but their guardian who keeps the key. A thief will climb the wall when the shepherd sleeps, for that is the only time that a favourable opportunity presents itself, and with the aid of confederates lift over the wall as many as they can carry. (See St. John x., 1, 2.) A man has no difficulty in throwing one over his shoulder, in fact this is the only way to carry a full-grown sheep. (St. Luke xv., 5.)

A shepherd is not always able to return at night, he will then have companions, other shepherds, who will watch with him. He may not see his home for days and even weeks, but with others journey far and wide in search of the green pastures. Joseph's brethren were absent from home so long that their father was anxious to know if they were safe and well. (Gen. xxxvii., 13.) Here in this account of Joseph's visit we see the jealousy of his brothers towards him, not merely because their father loved him, there was a stronger reason; all Eastern fathers love their children as well as those who live in the West. He, a younger son, had been preferred before them. It is this preference in the East that causes so much strife to-day. The eldest son does not necessarily inherit, he may not in any way occupy the position held by his father, though by right of birth he has the prior claim and may justly expect to succeed, but the parent has equally the right to appoint his successor if he is a sheikh or chief, head of a family or clan, as Jacob was, and his heir may be a younger son. The prestige of the family or tribe must be preserved from decay, and the one who appears to be the most capable of supporting it is generally chosen. Even during the lifetime of the father he may be exalted. I know several tribes of Bedawin across the Jordan that furnish at the present time illustrations that apply to every one of these points; in one case the father abdicated on behalf of his son—Ali Diab, the Sheikh of the Adwan tribe, ruled his people in his father's stead while his

father was yet alive. And further still in the desert amongst the Anazeh, the chief of one branch is expected to name a younger son to succeed him, and trouble may arise. When Satm the chief of the Beni Sakr, died, the eldest son had been appointed and in consequence the tribe divided, deeming him unfit to rule, and while dissensions vexed the supporters of opposing factions they were defeated by their old enemy the Rawallah.

Jacob showed the bent of his inclinations by sending the elder sons with the sheep, and not the younger. It is the latter that generally act as shepherds; David for instance. The patriarch further expressed his favour by a coat of many colours. Amongst the Bedawin, tent dwellers, nomads, that move from place to place with their flocks and herds, like the patriarchs of old, two garments are worn, a white shirt and dark brown or black mantle. I have already referred to the shirt on p. 33. Beyond the hills of Moab thousands of Bedawin may be seen with only these two articles of clothing on their bodies; but a Sheikh sometimes wears another, one in common every-day use in the towns of Western Palestine — a kombaz, a bright and gaily coloured robe worn over the shirt. It confers very little distinction among the hills around Jerusalem, but beyond Jordan with the Bedawin it is very different, and for the Sheikh to give one to his son, and particularly the one already placed in a superior position, is a significant mark of favour and promotion that would subject the recipient to the envy and hatred of those who thought themselves by right of birth more deserving.

The position of a shepherd is a lowly one; it seldom gives him a chance of airing his notions before a crowd of admirers, or of cultivating the esteem of the various sections of his tribe. He rarely comes in contact with his own family, and is little known amongst his clan. Whatever prowess he may have in the field, nobody sees it as he is not expected to go to war or engage in a fight. His opportunities for fame are wasted. A younger son is not supposed to wish for a place of honour unless some accident proves his worth. The father will, if possible, look to his firstborn for support and assistance, and for counsel to the elders of the family. Words of wisdom proceed not from the mouths of the young.

The mother gives her son a scrip, a dried skin bag in which she places bread and dried fruit or olives, occasionally a skin bottle for water — the bottle of scripture, and off he goes with the sheep. If he is an only son, and there are daughters, they are sent instead; the proud position of an only son must not be jeopardised. Jethro's daughters (Exodus ii., 16), and those of Laban tended the sheep (Gen. xxix., 6). But girls do not take their flocks far from the village, being unable to protect the sheep in case of need. The "nabooty" (staff) would seem out of place in the hand of a woman, though she is strong enough to use it if necessity should arise. It is a weapon that more naturally belongs to a man, one of offence as well as for protection, and when Christ forbade His disciples to carry "staves" He wished even their appearance to

be peaceful, as befitting their vocation as preachers of the Gospel of peace. St. Matt. x., 9, 10, "*Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves.*" A preacher who went about doing good would require none of these. The guest chamber, Medâfe, is ever open to the stranger, where he is lodged and fed. A scrip is only required where there are no habitations, no villages or tents, away on the hills, and Christ sent His disciples amongst men, to the people. Two coats are only worn when on pleasure bent, at a festival or marriage feast, and not by labourers in the vineyard.

If the preacher appears with bare feet it is a sign of humility, and a sacred calling. The absence of any offensive weapon would commend his mission to all with whom he came in contact, and no one would molest any man known to be on an errand of mercy. "*Heal the sick, ... freely ye have received freely give.*" (St. Matt. x., 8.)

I.—INDUSTRIOUS PEASANTS.

The work in the gardens and fields does not occupy the whole of a man's time, and where there are several sons it is necessary for them to look elsewhere for employment. This is sought in many ways, and certain villages are noted for supplying special workers in the labour market; men used to occupations that are not often required in their own village, charcoal burners, masons' labourers, porters, water carriers, camel and donkey drivers. The latter, especially found in the

villages adjoining the high roads, are engaged in the carriage of goods and merchandise from one town to another. They travel in companies for mutual protection and comfort. At certain stages on the road and at the gate of the city tax gatherers sit "*at the receipt of custom*"

AT THE RECEIPT OF CUSTOM.

(St. Mark ii., 14) taking toll for the produce of the country or imported articles. Here, in the picture, men are paying road dues to a "publican," a Jew, on the road to Jerusalem just as they enter the hill country, from whom they receive a paper to be shown to another

"publican" at the city gate, who will, on seeing it, allow them to pass with their goods into the street.

If a man has neither a camel nor a donkey he will be very poor, and have to take a more lowly position as a labourer or porter in the city. He has no idea of time, and could not understand the reason why there should be regular hours of labour. Compulsory service even from day to day would be irksome. If a foreman builder has a number of men in his employ he requires a man as overseer to watch that the men do not loiter in his service. Sometimes, in addition, a peasant with a powerful voice and a recognised talent for native music will be engaged to sing. His efforts would not be appreciated in England, but they are eminently successful in encouraging the workers in an Eastern Land. His song has always a refrain that is readily taken up by all in such a way that the movements of the men keep time with their voices, and thus unconsciously they do far more work than they ever intended, and the toil is made easier by the spirited accompaniment of the song. When the music ceases the listless movements of the men are apparent. Every opportunity that can be derived from the careless inattention of the overseer is a suitable chance for a rest and a smoke. When a man is satisfied with the money he has earned he walks off, and often without notice. He may even demand his wages at any time and quit the place, should the work or master disagree with him. The foreman is then compelled to seek more labourers; he is sure to find them in the market place.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARKET PLACE.

The market place, Es Sook, is where the produce of the country is exposed for sale. There is no precise spot similar to the market of an English town; the open streets near the gates, or wherever business of any kind is transacted, is the market place of an Eastern city.

As there are no newspapers the market is the favourite place for conversation and gossip. Here the peasants meet their friends, and all classes may be seen in this part of the city.

I.—LABOURERS.

When labourers and extra hands are required for the vineyards they are hired in the market place at any hour of the day, where all servants are found. St. Matt. xx., 1-3, "*a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place.*"

LABOURERS IN THE MARKET PLACE.

2.—THE SCRIBE.

Even letters are written there, the scribes are known by their dress, not by a brass plate on an office door, and in the girdle of each there will be an inkhorn, not even a desk is required. As soon as one is approached he draws from it his reed pen, dips it in the inky sponge kept at one end, places the paper on his hand, and writes whatever is required, without even sitting—a "*ready writer*" indeed. (See Psalm xlv., 1.)

When the letter or petition is finished,—for it is on

account of the latter that the scribe is so often employed, as no suppliant can be heard on any matter before the Council; he must present his case in writing duly sealed and stamped, however trivial, — the sand or dust in the street is scattered over the paper, and then thrown on one side again. No blotting paper is ever used, and it will be readily seen that a handy substitute is near. There is no such thing as a signature, the peasant cannot write, and even if he could he would still seal the document with his ring. There are innumerable references in the Bible to this manner of using the seal. Pharaoh gave his ring to Joseph as a sign that he could act in his stead. (Gen. xli., 40-42.) Nearly every peasant wears a ring with his seal on it; if he does not possess one he dips his thumb in ink and presses it on the paper instead.

3.—THE RULERS.

The Effendis, who are the members of the native Council (Megliss), the rulers, will be seen walking about, ready to listen to the complaints of the injured and those in distress, which will enable them to better understand the case when it is presented in a more formal way on paper at the Seraglio. (See Acts xvi., 19, "*drew them into the market place to the rulers.*")

Itinerant musicians frequent this part of the city as it provides more scope for their efforts to amuse. Coffee shops, where peasants sit and smoke, are to be found there, and if the men are in a playful mood they listen to the strains of the performers on drums, stringed

instruments, and flutes with varying emotions. (St. Luke vii., 32.)

4.—THE WATER CARRIER.

* The cry of the sherbet seller and water vendor is heard, "Ya atshaneen, tahal ishrab moyeh, ya belash." "Oh ye thirsty ones, come and drink of the water for nothing, without money and without price." Any thirsty customer walking up to the generous sounding merchant without the necessary coin will find he has made a mistake. The offer of a drink in such figurative language is merely a pleasantry of the singer, and quite meaningless. Not so with Isaiah's promise of Christ, Isa. lv., 1, "*Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, etc.,*" given in the language of every-day life.

The weary and heavy laden can be seen—porters carrying huge boxes, for no vehicles are allowed to pass through the streets, therefore all merchandise has to be carried on the backs of porters. The sight of a porter with his heavy load very naturally suggests the sin laden object of the Saviour's pity. St. Matt. xi., 28, "*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

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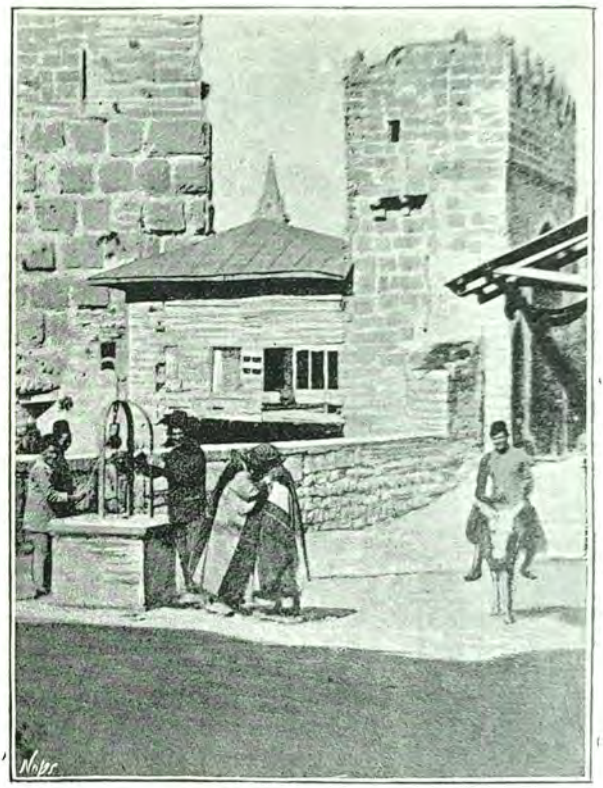
* "Street Cries," *see* p. 32 "Jerusalem Illustrated," by the same Author.

THE PORTER.

5.—THE SALUTATION.

If a master wishes his servant to hurry, not to stop by the way and to talk with his friends and relations from the country, he says, "*salute no man by the way.*"

(St. Luke x., 4.) Many have been astonished, and sceptics have sneered at this saying of Jesus, and



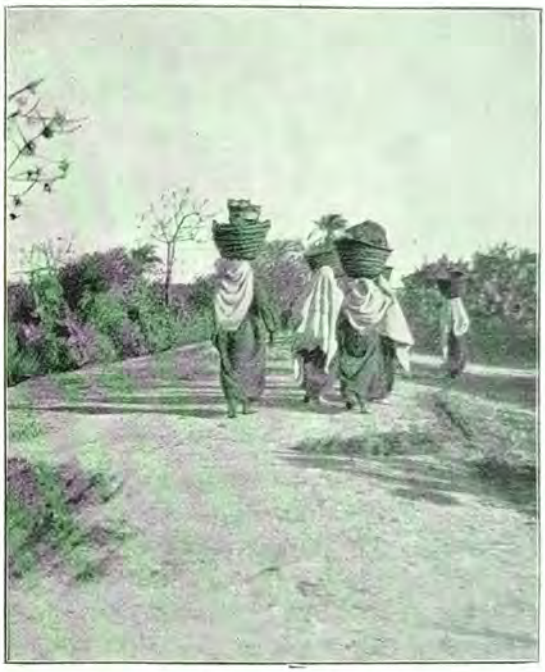
THE SALUTATION.

pointed to it as showing that He taught His people to be vulgar and impolite. They are not acquainted

with the customs of the country, and imagine that a salutation is merely a pleasant smile of recognition, an inclination of the head, or grasp of the hand. If a peasant could see an Englishman hurrying to catch his train in the morning and watch him move his head on one side as he passed his friend, and was told he had saluted him, he would laugh and make merry. No Fellah would be guilty of such an act of discourtesy, as it appears to him. When he walks through the street and spies a friend that he has not seen for some time, he rushes up to him and falls on his neck and kisses him,—witness the father of the "prodigal son," (St. Luke xv., 20,) he "*ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*" Then he shakes him by the hand; they sit down and question each other with complimentary speeches that will take quite half an hour; after embracing again, they depart. Time is of no importance so they never hurry. How necessary then to say to a man when sent on an errand, "*Salute no man by the way*" (St. Luke x., 4) if you wish him to do his work with despatch; and how much more so when on the "Master's" business, which will admit of no delay. It deprecates, too, the use of meaningless compliments that seek to convey a false impression. (See St. Mark xii., 38), "*Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing and love salutations in the market places.*"

Women from the villages are found sitting on the pavement selling eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit and fuel (roots of trees). No one ever sees their husbands

with them, not even when they return home. The wife must carry the load alone, she may not walk by her husband's side, but meekly follow behind him. He would never offer to carry her basket, though she



RETURNING FROM MARKET.

had a child astride her shoulder and another slung at her back. But if she had a donkey to help her with her load, he would ride the donkey and allow her to walk after him with the burden.

Fortunately she has a reward. At least she is allowed to keep whatever she earns by her labour. She may own a cow and sell the milk, breed poultry and dispose of the eggs. The proceeds are her own. Every coin she earns she guards with care and anxiety, never trusting one out of her sight. How could she after her toil and hardship to obtain them? Her savings bank is her necklace or her head-dress, where she deposits all her wealth, adding coin after coin until there is quite an array of silver.

What distress and terror would be in the mind of the poor woman who had only ten pieces when she lost one can only be understood by those acquainted with her condition. (St. Luke xv., 9.) Who can wonder the woman in the parable sought diligently until she found it and then called her neighbours together, saying "*Rejoice with me for I have found the piece which I had lost?*"

A man is equally fond of money. If a group of peasants were passed on the road, the mention of money would surely be heard, it is generally the subject of conversation, the one particular phase of peasant's thoughts, hopes and desires. Every piece of money on which he can lay his hands he hides with jealous care. Many a man has been known to suffer torture rather than reveal the hiding-place of his wealth when seized by thieves; he has submitted without flinching to severe punishment rather than pay a fine. Only when his son is about to be carried off to serve in the army will he despairingly and reluctantly with-

draw from his treasure heap the sum required to buy him off. He trusts no bank, but hides his money in some place of security, a hole in a field; and so well acquainted is he with this method of banking that if ever any digging or excavation work of any kind is being carried on, no amount of explanation will persuade him that the recovery of treasure is not the object of all the work and search. The "*treasure hid in a field*" (St. Matt. xiii., 44) is so very common in the Holy Land that systematic digging has to the peasant but one end in view.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

Allusion has already been made to various social usages of the peasants. Hospitality, the principal trait in their character, has been referred to with the Medâfe, the "guest chamber;" the kindly greeting in their salutations; the presents at birth and marriage, when feasts are made, and the "Kawad," the offering of a lamb at a birth or the return of friend or relation from a journey.

I.—SINGING AND DANCING.

Whenever there is a feast music and dancing form a part of the entertainment. The instruments now in use are like those we read about in the Bible, the singing and dancing are the same.

Singing improvised songs is an art that is appreciated, and any man capable of this performance is in great request, he is the "sweet singer," though his voice be harsh and unmelodious. There is never any harmony—all unison, and the words and style of the chants and songs are similar in form to the Psalms, though not of the same character.

The following songs from a paper in the Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement — "Peasant Folklore of Palestine," by Philip Baldensperger, are fair examples :—

For a Man :

"The Arab chief is sleeping
All covered with a blanket
And when his sleep has sweetened
They tore their clothes for him.
The Arab chief is sleeping
With his garments all loose
And when his sleep has sweetened
They tore their raiments for him."

For a Woman :

"She's coming from her father's house washed and tucked up
And fears to soil her feet from the cemetery's dust.
She's coming from her father's house washed and cleansed
And fears to soil her feet from the manure heap."

Dancing is a pastime that differs very much in form and character from the English custom. Men and women never dance together, and when we read of this practice in the Old Testament, we must remember that men danced alone and women also by themselves.

Gaiety of feeling, whether secular or religious, is shown by a movement of the feet, as well as hands and lips. Emotions in the East are strong and overpowering and no attempt is ever made to control them. The movements of the dancers are not confined by any artificial fashion; some are wild and fantastic, others slow and graceful, according to the feelings of the performer. The text, "*Let them praise His name in*

the dance." (Ps. cxlix., 3), would mean nothing in England as there is no dancing that could show praises. But the vigorous movements of Eastern dancers show their delight, and convey a meaning that is altogether absent in a regulation dance at a ball.

2.—RIDDLES.

On festive occasions, when music and dancing engage the attention of the young peasants, there is a further means of entertainment, more particularly at weddings. And here again are we reminded of Biblical times. See Judges xiv., 12, "*And Samson said, I will now put forth a riddle.*" Riddles are still "put forth" at the marriage feast. Here is a common one:—

Black as night, it is not night;
It cuts its wings, it is no bird;
Damaged the house, it is no mouse;
It ate the barley, and is no donkey.

Answer.—The Ant.

3.—FEASTS.

Two religious festivals are kept in a greater or less degree of observance by the Fellaheen. The Feast of Atonement (Eed el Kebeer), *i.e.*, the Great Feast, and the Feast of Ramadan (Eed Ramadan). The latter is the first day of the month next to the movable fast of Ramadan, the Moslem Lent, of which little notice is taken by the peasants; they prefer the feast preceding it.

Both feasts have the same general features; the assembly of relatives who may have been in a distant part of the country, the killing of a goat or sheep, and a good dinner.

The Khateeb, the village teacher, priest, scribe, interpreter of the law, composes a sermon and delivers it in public to as many of the peasants as feel religiously inclined. His functions on the Day of Atonement are evidently copied from Nehemiah viii., from whence the attitude of the Moslem at prayer is taken; verse 6, "*With lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.*" The directions in the tenth and twelfth verses are most carefully followed. "*Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.*"

This feast somewhat resembles the Feast of the Passover of the Jews and their Feast of Atonement; like most religious ceremonies it is a mixture of Judaism and the superstitious instincts of tradition modified by the ritual of Mohammedan law. The Festival itself is held in commemoration of Abraham's contemplated sacrifice of his son, not Isaac but Ishmael according to Moslem teaching, and is kept when the Hadj, the pilgrims, are bringing their sacrifices to Mount Ararat, six hours journey from Mecca.

When the lamb has been slain by the villager, the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled on the door-post, and an olive branch is fixed over the door as a sign of peace.

4.—THE EVIL EYE.

The most widely circulated superstition in which the inhabitants of Palestine universally believe is what they call the "evil eye," and its ability to injure everybody and everything. Mohammedans, Christians, and Jews, fear its baneful influence, and use all kinds of charms to break its spell. No one is exempt from the ill effects of this great and dread power. They think it causes sickness, sorrow and death; that it can throw down houses, break ploughs, kill animals and plants, wither young corn, and work all kinds of mischief. There is no limit to the extent of its sinister desires, and nothing comes amiss to its insatiable longing for all manner of iniquity.

Certain persons are notorious for being the means for its mysterious working; they may be conscious of the possession of this inherent malice, though it is not generally believed unless the person afflicted becomes well known for the injurious effects of his presence, and then the evident indications of dislike to his company compel the simple and superstitious peasant to admit that he has been the channel through which the calamity has passed.

The potency for evil is supposed to be attached to those who are unfortunate enough to have blue eyes, and their glance is sufficient to act on the object at which they gaze unknown to themselves. Some people are better mediums for transmitting the power than others, and the effect is more fatal than in ordinary

cases; these are carefully avoided. An old man who lived in a village near Jerusalem was so dreaded that all who saw him turned out of his way, for rumour said that when no object seemed near in the shape of man or animal, standing corn or a field of beans would be dried up by the flash of his eye.

The easiest cure for the stroke of the "evil eye" is to take a bit of clothing from the man or woman who has the bad quality and burn it below the person supposed to be struck, and the fumes will immediately take away the ill effect. Another method, for a Mohammedan, is to take a piece of tamarisk wood, for a Christian, a portion of a palm branch used on Palm Sunday, and for either or both a pinch of salt or alum, and place it in a pan on the fire. Then the person afflicted must walk round it seven times, and as soon as a crackling sound is heard the spell is broken.

To praise anything, particularly a child or a horse, will cause at once some misfortune, and even if sickness should follow sometime after it will be attributed to the words of favour. A beautiful child is rarely openly admired without the formula "May God encompass thee," a phrase that is supposed to exercise a protective influence over the little one. If perchance some European unacquainted with the superstitious ideas of the peasants should pat the offspring of a friend on the head in the presence of the native nurse, the woman on reaching home will take the child into a room, place it on the floor, then collect on a shovel

dust from the four corners, and throw it in the fire saying, "Fie on thee, evil eye." "Mashallah!" literally "What has God made!" is the most common expression of wonder and admiration at man or beast. No one would think of praising in precise terms the points of a horse, though blue beads hung from its neck or mane.

Blue is the colour most favoured to counteract the influence of the "evil eye," and no young child is ever seen without blue beads fastened to its clothing. Small glass hands of the same colour are also worn.

*Many poor Jews in Jerusalem have a large hand whitewashed over the door of their dwellings—the "Hand of Might"—to protect the inmates from misfortune and death.

Christians often wear a piece of the true cross (?) or a relic of some saint in a little tin box. Moslems believe that a wolf's tooth will keep away cholera, and the dental instrument of a shark is a wonderful charm.

5.—GHOSTS AND EVIL SPIRITS.

Mr. Philip Baldensperger, a native of Palestine, of European extraction, who has made the folklore of Palestine his special study, gives the following account of ghosts, ghouls, etc., in the Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement, July, 1893, p. 204.

"The 'Jân' live underground. They have a Sultan (who is dead, so that there is now a kind of interreg-

*See "Jerusalem Illustrated," p. 36.

num), and governors, courts, &c., just as on earth. But their courts are just, and their judges take no bribes, owing to the holiness of Palestine; they do not appear often. In Egypt they are seen very often. The principal difference between them and us is that they neither plough nor sow, they must take their victuals from human creatures. All food-places are guarded by them, but they can only take wheat from the threshing-floor, or bread from the oven, when men move it without saying the first sentence of the Koran. They are most active at sunset. Whistling attracts them. The oven and the fire are their favourite abode, therefore a person quenching the fire without saying the above-mentioned words is beaten by them, either lame or simply stunned.

"They live below the threshold of every house, and women may never sit there. During the month of Ramadan they are bridled and put behind a mount in Jebel el Kaf, but as soon as the morning prayer of the Wakfe is said, they get loose, and rush to the houses in search of food after their thirty days' fast, and salt is strewed before the houses to prevent them from rushing in. Salt is holy.

"King Solomon had power over the Jân, and with their assistance he built the walls of Jerusalem, Baalbee, etc. The king had been dead 40 years when the Jân discovered it. The Jân intermarry with human creatures. Such people are always solitary. In some cases the Jân never quit human company. For instance, a man in my service, about 25 years old, would never stay

out in the fields by night, because his Jânie regularly visits him, and he was very much afraid of her. He could never look at a woman and smile, for his Jânie was very jealous, and had several times thrown him on the ground. Another man in my service had beaten his wife; she fell on the fire hearth, and immediately the Jân took hold of her, and tried to entice her to follow him to Egypt, as there they could live openly together, whilst in the 'Holy Land' that is not proper. A Jân one day stood in the way of a man, and would not let him pass. He three times told the Jân to go out of his way, but the Jân only repeated mockingly the words after the man, who then lifted his stick and killed the Jân. A shoe was found into which the body of the Jân had turned, and all at once the Jân rushed at the murderer and dragged him underground to the court of the Jân to be judged. At the inquiry the Jân told the judge minutely what had happened, and the man was pronounced not guilty and released. As he was coming away he saw a washerwoman of the Jân, and poured out the water, for which he received a flogging, and was told never to pour out water without calling on the 'Merciful,' the same as when he quenches fire. When the man came again to earth he told everything, and these rules are strictly observed by the mass of the people. Many think the Jân to be Mohammedans, and believe they are under Mohammedan law."

There are many other spirits besides Jân according to the Fellaheen, and various charms are used to keep

them away. The "Mâred" is a tall spirit that appears where someone has been killed. To "lay the Mâred" dust is sprinkled by the man-slayer over the blood of his victim; but there is another reason for this proceeding, "Dam butlub dam," *i.e.*, "blood calls for blood," is a proverb that urges the necessity for it.

BLOOD FEUDS.

As far back in Bible history as the 4th chapter of Genesis, verse 10, "*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground*," do we find a text that bears on this Arabic proverb. And in Gen. ix., 5, "*at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of a man*," we recognise a resemblance to the "law of blood" now in force in Palestine. "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*," 6th verse, is an injunction that is strictly observed at the present day. The mark of blood is invariably hidden by covering it with dust; if it is on the person that part is washed seven times so that no trace of it may lead to identification.

It is a duty of paramount importance for the nearest relative of a murdered man to take instant vengeance; should the murderer escape for a time, unless retribution is made by a substantial payment, his fate is delayed only for a little while. The spirit of revenge is kept alive, and waits for the opportunity that will sooner or later appear. If the murder has been a brutal one it is the right and proper thing to take the life of the first member of the murderer's family that may be met. The feud then increases in intensity and many lives are lost before the cry for blood is appeased.

Just as God provided cities of refuge into which the man-slayer could flee for safety so there are certain laws for the protection of men whose hands have spilled the blood of their fellow-men. These laws for the preservation of man are as binding as the act of revenge itself, they may be broken but not with impunity, as another hand invariably seeks a life.

When a murderer enters a house or tent and partakes of any kind of food, whilst in that dwelling, under that roof, whether of earth or hair, he belongs to the family of the owner, who will protect him. I have myself sat at the same trencher as two men engaged in a blood feud who ate with apparent friendship in another man's tent, but as soon as they left one of them hastened to place a convenient distance between himself and the avenger. When a man partakes of food at the hand of another he is safe, but this safety does not bind those who eat of the same dish. The deed of Judas was made all the blacker by his eating the sop from his Master's hand, for just in the same way that the giver of food thereby offers sanctuary, the receiver is doubly expected to abstain from acts of treachery or violence.

A very feasible explanation has been offered for the exoneration of Jael who murdered Sisera, by asserting, without any warrant whatever, that the fugitive must have forced his way into the woman's apartment of the tent, and thereby placed the honour of Jael in jeopardy, in return for which she of necessity, to save her character, killed him. It was quite unnecessary for Sisera to desire any other shelter; that of any tent would be sufficient, and more especially the one,

the only one into which Jael could invite him, the guest tent. Here he would be safe from his pursuers even if they overtook him at the door, unless the chief had not sufficient power to protect him. Jael's deed after offering him refreshment is inexplicable, one of those unaccountable acts that in spite of the many laws for the preservation of life show the darkest side of the human character. Yet it forcibly exhibits the lawless character of the age in which she lived, and should not be judged from our own advanced stage of Christian civilisation. She may probably have had some reason that has not been handed down for our guidance, one that evidently gave her a favoured place in the estimation of the Israelites, who were deeply grateful to her for ridding them of so formidable a foe. (See Ps. cxxxvii., 9.) That she was extolled by Deborah in her song requires no other explanation than that she felt pleased, and rejoiced because of there being one enemy less, and naturally in the fervour of her praises included the woman who had worked so well for her people. We do not always find that everyone who has dealt wickedly has received just condemnation, quite the contrary, it is the most natural thing in the world to condone and excuse any wrong-doing that has been accomplished for our benefit. The wicked often prosper, and what appears to be a vicious deed may be regarded by another, from a different standpoint, as a necessary act of human sympathy or justice.

If a man hurrying to a safe retreat in consequence of a deed of violence is overtaken before his destination is reached, there is a refuge even for him beneath the

sky. The name and reputation of a chief extends far beyond his tent or the limits of his camp, and should a fugitive when about to be slain by an avenger call on his name, declare himself under his protection, the arm of vengeance will not light on him, if there are witnesses near to convey the message to the chief whose aid has been invoked. How much more then will the tent be a sanctuary! And this custom must have a remote origin for no doubt the prophet Joel refers to it when he says, "*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.*—Joel ii., 32. And David, in 2 Samuel xxii., 4: "*I will call on the Lord . . . . so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*" But there is a difference. When the name of an earthly chief is the refuge there must be a witness, or the cry is of no avail, man cannot hear afar off; but God is ever present, His ears are ever open to the cry of the distressed.

If the suppliant's call "Ana dakheel Sheikh, etc.—"I am the protege of Sheikh—"—is unheeded, and he falls a corpse at the feet of the avenger, it is the duty, that must not be disregarded, of those present to carry the tidings to the chief, and his reputation will compel him to keep his honour untarnished by immediately taking steps for the execution of the man who dared to touch his protege. "*It is God that avengeth me.*"—(2 Samuel xxii., 48), says David.

I remember once meeting a peasant on the hills of Gilead carrying at the end of a spear a white flag, saying, as he passed me on the road, "This is the honour of the great Sheikh of the Wulid Ali," and I

saluted it accordingly. Some little time before the man had cause to leave his village and flee to the Bedawin, having slain his neighbour. The brother of the murdered man followed, and overtook him in the district where the chief of the Wulid Ali, tribe of Bedawin, Mohammed es Smeir, is a great power. Before he could take vengeance, the murderer had sufficient presence of mind to call "Ana dakheel es Sheikh, Mohammed es Smeir," and was safe. The name of the Sheikh of the Wulid Ali was his protection, and he was free. It, therefore, remained for him to testify to the people in the district the power and might of the great Sheikh.

If the man had been killed a black flag would have been taken to the Sheikh as a sign that his honour and name had been despised and insulted.

Some time ago the turbulent peasants in the hill country south-east of Jerusalem, the Diasy and Sahwâry, quarrelled and fought. An appeal was made by mutual friends to a very important and influential citizen of the Holy City, and an armistice concluded for six months, to enable him to examine the points in dispute. Before the time had expired the Sahwâry attacked Abou Dîs, the home of the Diasy. The chief of the latter therefore carried a black flag on a spear to Jerusalem to show that the honour of its citizen, the arbitrator, had been set at nought. His decision included an indemnity of 33,333 piastres, the price of a life, when it was finally given, to pay for the broken faith of the Sahwâry. "*Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FUTURE OF THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

In the narrow compass of this little volume I have endeavoured to give a truthful account of the land and the people, and at the same time show how they are living witnesses to the truth of God's Word—though walking in the light they know it not.

Our position, the position of each English-speaking man and woman, the prestige of our country, the knowledge and wealth at our command, and our future hope, have all been given us by the light of the Gospel.

This Gospel that has elevated the people of Christian countries to the lofty position they now occupy first came from the Holy Land, even the Bible itself emanated from the same source, and we are, therefore, indebted for all that is good and holy through God to this land.

It surely must be obvious to all who have but an elementary knowledge of the history and geography of the world, that the progress that tends to the improvement of the poor and lowly is only attached to Christianity. The condition of the poor amongst

the nations that have been shrouded in heathen darkness has never been thought worthy of consideration. There has always been a perceptible difference in the treatment of the wealthy and the indigent in a community. But as soon as the religion of Christ has made itself felt, the power of the Gospel has lifted the weak ones of the earth into the freedom of the spirit, and on to the equality provided by a Christian state for all its individual members. What has already been done in other countries can be accomplished in Palestine.

The Local Government of the Province knows how to appreciate truth and honesty of purpose, though at times it has a manner peculiarly its own of showing it. Nevertheless, it has improved of late years in its method of administering the laws. The quiet, yet telling influence of missionary agents has affected this by consistent lives, and the constant practice of Christian principles. Their example will produce yet more beneficial results, and gradually grow on the methods and practices of the Turks until a still better state of things prevails.

If a merchant or shopkeeper in Jerusalem, who never sells without asking a price much higher than he expects to receive and loves a bargain, wishes his customer to understand that he has named a price that will not be altered, he says "Kelim Inglese," "the English word," meaning that his last statement is unchangeable and sure, and may be relied on.

There is every reason to be encouraged. And if there be any who read this little book that have no faith in missionary labours, let me say that British

prestige in Palestine is kept up by the British men and women who work amongst the people of the land, and if they wish the name of England to be respected in the country, let them support those who hold it up to honour before the people. Therefore, if for no higher reason, here is one that ought to appeal to every nominal Christian Englishman.

It is evident that two points are clearly before us regarding this country:—

1.—That all the land is not under cultivation, some of it is lying desolate on account of the sparsity of population.

2.—The people generally are in a deplorable state of ignorance and superstition.

During the last few years thousands of Jews have returned to their Fatherland, and colonies have been promoted in many parts of the country. Even the Sultan is taking an interest in the development of the land. Across the Jordan there are colonies of Circassians whose presence is due to the enterprise and hospitality of the ruler of the Turkish Empire.

Here, then, is the promise of a change in the aspect of the country. If the Gospel of Christ is not preached, what will be the result of this occupation? The same disasters and desolation that followed the Israelites when they first entered the country and forsook the commandments of God in the mingling with the aboriginal inhabitants and the worship of their "high places."

All who follow Christ are witnesses for Him. Let them consider His words, "Freely ye have received,

freely give." Christ, the giver of all that has ennobled man and woman, the Saviour that suffered for all mankind, both Jew and Gentile, said "*Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" (St. Luke xxiv., 47.)

When we consider the many changes that have taken place in recent years and the varied influences at work in this land, we ought to be thankful that several missionary societies have been at work there; societies that are deserving of the support of all Christians, and if we wish to see Palestine "the good land," and its people happy and free, let us heartily support the efforts made. Though much has been and is being done, it is nothing compared to what ought to be done. Let me draw the attention of the women of the English speaking world to the condition of their sister women in the land of Christ's birth; so degraded that they are like beasts of burden, not even permitted to hold the name of woman, a "thing," bought at a price, cast off with a word. What can men with mothers and sisters think of this! No wonder that a child is first taught to curse his father, and that lying is an accomplishment.

If we sincerely wish for a change in their condition we shall double the efforts already made for their amelioration; we shall strengthen the hands of the societies working there. Every little helps. The building up of a Christian people and a fruitful land cannot be done all at once, but there must be no delay. An ever increasing support is necessary to keep the forces in the field. Let no one say this or

that is my favourite society, but let him support the hospitals, schools, industrial homes, orphanages and churches that are proving a blessing to both Jew and Gentile.

The future men and women of Palestine are the children of to-day. By stinting the accommodation in the schools Christians are laying upon themselves a tremendous responsibility. When the Latin Church wants another school, one is built, the money is found. Why cannot the English Church do it?

Englishmen have no idea of the immense sums of money sent from other European countries to aid the work of the Greek and Latin churches in Palestine, of the energetic labours of the priests, particularly amongst the young, and of the deep interest of the governments of their respective countries in the numerous buildings that are being erected and the further development of their work.

In conclusion, then, let me repeat that only by raising the peasants and the incoming Jews to a higher level, the platform of true Christian equality, can we hope to see the land of the Bible, the land on which the Saviour shed His blood, flowing with milk and honey. The soil is ready, the most fruitful soil in the world; and the seed, what of it? It is being sown, but there are still uncultivated portions waiting for the labourers.

May God in His pitiful mercy send more into the field, and put into the hearts of those who have never yet taken their share in helping to send the Gospel seed to begin at once.