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There may be—doubtless there are—Churchmen who can view such a prospect without emotion and without alarm. But it is not easy to share their feeling. Whether we consider the loss to the State or the loss to the Church, the blow to the organizations of the Church or the harm (though perhaps only temporary) to its spiritual life, it seems difficult to contemplate such an issue to the present controversy without shame, as well as misgiving.

How grave, then, must be the responsibility of those whose defection from the path of sober loyalty to Holy Scripture and the law of their Church threatens us with this catastrophe!

G. A. B. ANSON.

ART. VI.—EASTER SERVICES IN JERUSALEM.

SO many people are doubtless arranging just now to spend Easter at Jerusalem that the following notes of my own experiences may possibly be of service in some quarters.

Greek Passion Week is the time of the year when Jerusalem is thronged with “orthodox”—mostly Russian—pilgrims, who come by thousands to worship at the Tomb of our Lord, and be present at the “Miracle of the Holy Fire.” It is affirmed that on the Easter Eve of each year a flame descends from heaven into the Holy Sepulchre, kindling all the lamps and tapers there. This fire is then given out by the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs to the crowd of pilgrims through two holes in the walls of the Sepulchre. The origin of this extraordinary superstition may be traced to a singular legend, told by Eusebius, of the transubstantiation of water into oil for the use of the lamps on Easter Eve in Jerusalem. But legends have a way of growing, and in the nineteenth century it began to be believed that an angel came and lighted the lamps which hung over the Sepulchre.

Originally all the Churches represented at Jerusalem partook in the ceremony of the Holy Fire; but the Roman Catholics, after their expulsion from the church by the Greeks, denounced it as an imposture, and have never since resumed their old complicity in the affair.

The Holy Fire, like all the other services at Jerusalem during the Greek Easter, is interesting enough to attract even yet people of every nationality to see it. Having myself “assisted” at these various ceremonies under circumstances exceptionally favourable for detailed observation, I will now endeavour to give a circumstantial account of what I saw in the order in which the events occurred.

The first day of the week being Palm Sunday, a very pretty service was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Everybody present carried a palm-leaf in one hand and a lighted taper in the other. After a short Mass up at the altar of the Greek chapel facing the Tomb, a procession was formed, consisting of acolytes, the choir, and the priests and Bishops. Then came the Patriarch, and immediately behind him both the Russian and Greek Consuls and suite in full uniform, but on account of the limited space the consular cavasses prevented the rank and file of worshippers from joining the procession. The solemn array walked three times round the Holy Sepulchre, and then drew up in front of the entrance to the Tomb, where another short service was gone through, the Patriarch sitting meanwhile on his throne opposite the Holy Sepulchre.

The church was closely packed with people of every nationality, and lines of Turkish soldiers were present to keep order. There being over 7,000 Russian pilgrims alone in Jerusalem, and most of them attending all the services, it is easy to imagine the picturesque effect of this dense mass of people carrying lighted tapers and waving palm-fronds in their hands.

When the service was over, the Consular parties attended a reception held by the Patriarch, at which, according to the Oriental custom, there were handed round jam and water, liqueurs, and small cups of Turkish coffee. After this a few drops of rose-water sprinkled over each guest intimated that the reception was at an end.

The next important service, called the "Washing of the Feet," was held on Thursday. This is meant to commemorate the Last Supper of our Lord. As it takes place out of doors, in the courtyard of the church, the time fixed for it was 7 a.m. The hour is early out of consideration for the pilgrims, many of whom had been standing ready since the previous evening, so great is their anxiety to secure a good place. At 6.30 a.m. we wended our way through a perfect maze of narrow lanes, belonging to the Greek hospice of Gethsemane, our cavasses having the greatest trouble to open a passage for us through a compact crowd of beggars of every description. The lepers and the blind were the most unpleasantly conspicuous amongst them. After seemingly interminable wanderings over various roofs and up and down several flights of extremely greasy, slippery stairs, we at last reached our destination, and found that some wooden benches had been placed for us on one of the terraces of the hospice. As this immediately overlooked the courtyard of the church, we were able to enjoy a splendid view of the whole proceedings.

In the centre of the courtyard, surrounded by a triple line of Turkish soldiers, a raised platform had been erected, at one end of which stood the Patriarch's throne. On each side of this were six seats for the Archimandrites, who had to act the parts of the disciples. The courtyard was crowded with people of many races, whilst every roof, balcony, and window of the surrounding buildings was alive with clusters of onlookers. Against the wall of the Greek Convent of Abraham a wooden balcony had been temporarily propped up, and decorated by an olive-tree stuck into it. Standing upon the balcony was a priest, who continuously read in a loud voice the chapters of Holy Scripture bearing on the ceremony enacted.

Having kept us waiting for about an hour, the patriarchal procession at last emerged from the church. In front came the acolytes, carrying crucifixes and incense; after them the choir and priests; then the twelve Archimandrites, who represented the disciples, all in gorgeous red satin robes elaborately worked in gold thread. Behind them appeared the Patriarch in a magnificent red and gold brocade robe, with his beautiful mitre of wrought gold and precious stones on his head. After a short prayer, the Patriarch sent two Archimandrites (representing the disciples Peter and John) to inquire whether "the Supper was ready." Having approached the platform, they returned with an affirmative answer, after hearing which the Patriarch and all the Archimandrites solemnly mounted upon the platform, and sat down to listen to the singing of the Greek choir (which was really more like howling than singing).

When the priest on the balcony read out the words, "He . . . took a towel and girded Himself" (John xiii. 4), two priests came and disrobed the Patriarch, fastening a towel round his waist and throwing another over his shoulder. They then held a handsome silver enamelled bowl of rose-water, and the Patriarch, representing our Saviour, went the round, washing the right foot of each disciple (beginning with Judas and finishing with Peter). The latter at first had to decline the honour, but finally gave in, when the Patriarch admonished him in the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). After drying each foot with his towel, the Patriarch kissed it, and the Archimandrite kissed the Patriarch's hand in return. The whole of that scene as it is written in the New Testament was thus gone through, even to the sending away of Judas on his dreadful errand.

To the educated and sensitive mind it is a repulsive ceremony, being apparently the most sacrilegious of all; but on the Russian peasants, who are like children, and have to

be treated as such, it is said to have a moving effect. Certainly it appears to impress them in a way we cannot understand. They are wonderfully devout people, and by their faces one can see that they are in imagination gazing upon a sacred scene, instead of what seems to us a hideous mockery. One cannot really help admiring their faith and simplicity.

Apart from the ceremony itself, the scene presents a picture of kaleidoscopic variety, with the brightly-coloured attires of the Bethlehem and Ramala women, the many-hued garments of the Arabs, the Turkish uniforms, the sombre dresses of the Russian peasants, and here and there a sprinkling of European fashions. At any time a crowd is most interesting to watch, but an Oriental crowd is simply fascinating.

After the washing of the feet, a great many people went to see the so-called "Auction of the Holy Fire," which is held on the same day in a Coptic church close by. The highest bidder (usually some rich Copt from Egypt) acquires the right of being the first to light his taper on Saturday from the "holy" flame immediately it is handed out of the tomb by the Armenian Bishop. This privilege (which may cost occasionally as much as £120) is always eagerly sought for, as well as a minor one attached to it and included in the same price—that of being led in triumph by a procession of priests all round the sanctuary, and profusely censed the while.

Another picturesque scene which may be witnessed the same day is the return of the Mussulman pilgrimage from Nebi Musa (the tomb of Moses). This pilgrimage was first instituted by the renowned Sultan Salah-ed-Din (Saladdin), who feared that the numerous Christians who assembled in Jerusalem during Easter might succeed in reconquering the Holy City. Accordingly he devised this pilgrimage as a means of collecting a sufficient number of Moslems to counteract any such designs of the Christians. The insignificant fact of Moses never having crossed the Jordan did not deter the Sultan from carrying out his idea, and a tomb of Moses was accordingly discovered. This has been lately proved to be merely the tomb of a Greek hermit named Moses, who flourished and died in a Greek convent founded by St. Euthymius in the fourth century; nevertheless devout Moslems still believe it to be the resting-place of the Jewish prophet, and the annual pilgrimage to it never fails to attract a good many fanatics. The caravan starts from Jerusalem on the Friday preceding Palm Sunday and returns to the city the day of the "washing of feet." It is escorted by a band of music, flag-bearers, the mufti on horseback, howling and dancing dervishes and numerous Arabs, who perform native war-

dances with shields and sabres in their hands—the whole procession presenting a striking spectacle.

On Good Friday a midnight service is held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, at which the story of the Cross is represented, and five sermons read in different parts of the buildings in the French, Russian, Turkish, Arabic and Greek languages. Towards the end of the Holy Week the services get very long, and the midnight ones last generally from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., sometimes even to 4 a.m. As one has to stand all the time, attendance is very trying, and one is thankful when it is all over.

On Saturday at 1 p.m. we again went to the Holy Sepulchre to see the ceremony of the "Holy Fire." The church was even more densely packed than for any of the previous services: every balcony, even to the small recesses in the dome itself, was crowded with people who had thronged to be present at this most interesting, but also most barbaric, ceremony. Before the service began, all the orthodox Arabs in church chanted at the top of their voices a wild song, cursing the Jewish faith and extolling the merits of their own. The fierce gestures and grotesque contortions of the singers seemed a perfect outrage to the sanctuary; but as this shocking custom has existed from time immemorial, and the Arabs are greatly attached to it, every effort that has been made by the Government to abolish it has so far signally failed.

The service began once more by a procession (including upon this occasion also a representative of the Armenian Patriarch), which went three times round the Sepulchre. When the Patriarch, on the third round, reached the door of the tomb (which had been shut and sealed the day before in the presence of a Turkish official) he disrobed, and with the Armenian Bishop went inside, the door being firmly closed after them. A few seconds later they were handing out bundles of "miraculously" lighted tapers through two large circular holes on the sides of the tomb. Immediately the fire was seen to appear from these holes there was a tremendous rush towards the tapers. There is generally a fight to get the first light, for Arabs, Greeks, Russians, Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians are all anxious to be the first to light their tapers. The first taper that gets lighted is always sent to Bethlehem by a special messenger, who waits on a saddled horse outside the church.

We were upon a balcony between two parts of the church (the so-called Rotunda and the Greek Chapel of the Resurrection), and so had a good view of everything going on. The Greek chapel at our back was very dark and crowded with

Russian pilgrims, each holding a bundle of thirty-three slender tapers, meant to represent the thirty-three years of our Lord's life. The moment the fire issued from the Sepulchre all the bells in the church began to ring; the people—12,000 at the lowest computation—shouted, and altogether there was a tremendous noise. Those who got their bundles lit first rushed about among the others, spreading the fire, and immediately the whole place was a blaze of light. All the lamps of the church were also lit by the priests. It was wonderful how quickly it all spread. Those on the balconies let their tapers down by means of strings, and in such a manner got them ignited. We had been so busy watching the strange scene in front of us that we never thought of looking at the Greek chapel behind us. Suddenly we turned and beheld quite a transformation scene. The place that had been so dark before was now a perfect sea of flames. Those who have not witnessed it can have no idea of the effect produced by this compact mass of pilgrims, each holding a blazing bundle of tapers, which looked like torches. It was just the first view of it that was so beautiful, for afterwards the place got dark with smoke.

These simple peasants implicitly believe that God really enables the Patriarch, who has been praying and fasting all the week, to perform this wonderful miracle of making fire descend from heaven on to the Tomb of our Lord on this day of the year. They also believe that as it is "holy" fire it will not burn them, and so hold their hands in it and pass them over their faces and bodies, bathing in it as much as possible. It is a miserable fraud that is thus practised upon them; but the shock that the abolition of this ceremony would give to the devotion and faith of countless thousands is held to make it necessary as yet to continue a disgraceful and degrading imposture. The light is carried by the pilgrims to their homes, where they light with it all the small lamps in front of the eikons, or sacred images of the Saviour, or various saints, which are never absent from a Russian home. We, however, lacking their faith, were truly thankful to get outside after the ceremony, for the place was very close and smoky, and the day unusually hot.

The last, but not by any means the least, interesting ceremony in Passion Week is the midnight or Easter service. This commences at ten o'clock on Saturday evening, and generally lasts till about 4 a.m. on Easter morning. The Russian and Greek Consuls and staff again attend in full uniform, and it is customary for the ladies of the party to be dressed in white, as a sign that the time of mourning will be soon over. A large party having assembled at the Russian

Consulate beforehand, we once more set out for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, preceded by all the cavasses and men carrying "mashallas," or large native torches, fixed to a long pole. As, of course, there is no means of lighting the streets in Jerusalem, our torch-bearers proved eminently useful, the more so that the streets of the Holy City are all paved with slippery cobbles, and run up and down hill at all imaginable angles.

The service began as usual in the Greek chapel, then a procession, similar to those already described, was formed, and walked three times round the Holy Sepulchre. Then the Patriarch sat down on his throne, placed at the entrance of the Rotunda, and on each side of him, opposite each other, sat the Bishops. A sort of funeral service was now read, the clergy being robed in black and silver, and the worshippers holding tapers in their hands, as if they actually assisted at a Requiem. Shortly before midnight the Patriarch rose from his seat and entered the Tomb to have, as it were, a last look at the body of our Lord. A hush falls over the congregation, and then the Patriarch suddenly comes out of the Tomb, and in a loud voice announces that "He is not here; He is risen." At these words the whole church is suddenly lit up, all the bells begin to peal, and great is the rejoicing. The Bishops and clergy (now divested of their mournful attire and clad in their richest glittering robes) go up in turn to the Patriarch, who embraces them thrice, greeting them with the words, "Christ is risen," to which they answer, "Yea, verily, He is risen." After them the Consuls and suite go through the same ceremony, and in every part of the church the same thing takes place—friends and even strangers greeting each other with joy and brotherly love. The last part of the service consists of the ordinary High Mass and the administration of the Holy Communion, and is very long and tedious.

When all was over, we returned to the Russian Consulate to partake of the Easter supper, or, rather, breakfast (the Russian word "razgovliatsia" means literally to "break the fast"). A large number of pilgrims followed us, all carrying lighted tapers and singing a sacred hymn of praise, as they only know how to. The walk through the now quiet streets of the town on a perfect moonlight night, together with that beautiful singing of the peasants, all made an impression on one that would be difficult to define, and still more to forget.

The custom of Easter supper is purely a Russian one, the Greeks having nothing similar to it. It is an excellent institution, quite apart from the historical interest attached to it. After rigorously fasting for seven long weeks like the Russian peasant, or after merely standing in church for

several hours as we had done, one felt that the body also needed refreshment. Therefore, to find a table spread with dainties of every description made one feel at peace with all mankind, friend and foe alike. The special Easter dishes on this occasion are the "pascha" and the "kulitchi," the former being a sort of sweet cheese, and the latter a kind of cake, tracing its origin, I believe, to a Phœnician custom. It requires a special training to partake of the pascha with impunity, notwithstanding that it always has to be blessed, with all the other dishes, by a priest before being eaten. A conspicuous feature of the table is also the Easter eggs, which are exchanged by everybody with the usual salutations. Big baskets of them are sent each year from the Russian Consulate, with loaves of bread, to the various monasteries, personal friends, and to the Turkish prisons, where they are most thankfully received by the wretched prisoners, who all live in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. The Easter table is kept laid all the following week, supplanting the regular meals of the household, and everyone is made welcome, be he friend or stranger.

N. HENDERSON.



ART. VII.—THE ISLINGTON CLERICAL MEETING:
A NOTE.

THE Islington Clerical Meeting of 1902 was in some of its aspects so interesting that it calls for more than passing mention. It was the first of a new series. We have, however little the fact may be noticed, left behind us the old Islington Meeting, with its private character and its sense of personal obligation to an individual. We have now to deal with a new Islington Meeting, an institution in charge of a Committee, a gathering over which the Vicar of Islington may or may not preside. If there are likely to be gains from the change, there are also likely to be losses; but, whilst the new method is still upon its trial, it is unnecessary to conjecture which will be the greater. It must, however, be noted that the first gathering under the new order was a very decided success.

But the distinguishing characteristic of the 1902 Meeting was not this mark of novelty; it was rather the manifest return to old paths. The outstanding feature of the papers and addresses was, without exception, the firm statement of what some people may possibly call old-fashioned Evangelical