

the space of eight weeks I walked upwards of a thousand miles, at least one-third of that distance being over ground previously unexplored; and I have proved, I think, that any future traveller who will rough it a little, and has a slight knowledge of Arabic and Arab manners and customs, may easily follow my steps, and that there is a most interesting district within easy reach which still needs careful exploration, and which will, I hope, before long receive the attention of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

## THE FELLAHHEEN OF PALESTINE.

NOTES ON THE CHIEF TRAITS IN THEIR CHARACTER, THEIR  
FAULTS, AND THEIR VIRTUES.

By MRS. FINN.

THE Bedaween have a saying—

“El Medeny maidat ed-duniah,

El Fellâhh khamâr ed-dunieh,

El Bedawy Sultân ed-dunieh ”

“The townsman is the table of the world (provider),

The peasant is the donkey of the world (menial),

The Bedawy is the Sultan of the world (ruler).”

But the Fellahheen give a different version, and retort, saying:—

“What is the townsman? The Sultan of the world.

“What is the Fellahh? The donkey of the world.

“What is the Bedawy? The dog of the world, for he snatches from everybody; but nobody dares to snatch from him.”

“What have we to do with thee, thou father of cabbages!” was the contemptuous speech made by a Bedawy to the Fellahh sheikh of a village near Bethlehem. And yet the Bedawy had in all probability never tasted a cabbage in his life, or even so much as had one in his hand

One day an acquaintance came to us with the following tale:—

“Fâtimeh tells me that there has been a robbery in her village, and that they called in a Bedawy to find out the thief.

“He heated an iron and branded the tongue of every man, woman, and child, telling them that the tongue of the thief would swell, and that he would then make him pay the value of the theft.

“All their tongues swelled, and he made them pay the money among them!”

But the woman did not perceive the joke of the thing, though she told it of her people.

The Bedaween often outwit the Fellaheen, whom they utterly despise. A story is told on this point how that once a Bedawy and a Fellahh arrived at the same village as guests and repaired to the Sahha. Supper was put before them, and the Bedawy observed that it was only enough for one. He accordingly engaged the Fellahh in talk, asking, “What presents do you give to the bride at a Fellahh wedding?”

“What presents? why we give a silk robe, and a cotton robe, and silver ornaments; and then we give so much in money to the father, and so much to the brothers, and so much to the uncles and aunts.”

By the time that he had got to the uncles and aunts he perceived that the Bedawy had eaten up three-quarters of the supper, so he in his turn asked the Bedawy what they give the bride at a Bedawy wedding.

The Bedawy replied, bluntly, “A tōb (robe), a veil, a necklace, and a headdress,” and continued eating till all was finished, leaving the Fellahh still very hungry, and done out of his supper.

But the Fellahheen also retort upon the Bedaween. They tell how a Bedawy coming to a village one evening in the summer, entered the guest-chamber, and how among other things for supper they set before him the fruit then in season—namely, prickly pears, which he had never seen before. But in mockery of his ignorance of civilised usages and of the ordinary productions of nature in cultivated districts, they did not shell the prickly pears, but left them in the husk, all covered as they are with innumerable sharp thorns.

The Bedawy, suspecting nothing, took up and ate the fruit as he was accustomed to eat cucumbers, which he had seen before, after which his hosts asked how he liked them. “God be praised for them! they are very refreshing,” said the Bedawy, “only the hair upon them is rather sharp, it is rougher than the hairs on cucumbers, and it sticks to my tongue and smarts!”

The Fellahh lads who tend the flocks are often brutishly ignorant. They are out all day, from early dawn, with their charge, and come home late only to eat and go to sleep. They have no one, excepting, perhaps, another shepherd like themselves, to talk to day after day and month after month. They take a little bread in their scrip, and with that and milk from their goats or sheep they are sufficiently fed. When milk is plentiful they will sometimes make cheese or curds and whey for themselves, milking one of the flock into the leather *jurābeh*, or scrip (often made of a kid skin), or into the leather bucket which they carry for drawing water for the sheep. The acrid sap of the fig-tree (white and milky) is added to curdle the milk. They also know what roots and leaves are good to be eaten among the plants that grow wild among the mountains, and in early summer they get partridge eggs among the standing corn, or young doves and pigeons in the old empty rock cisterns.

A Fellahh lad on being asked how old he was, replied, “You know the red cow? Her grandmother gave birth to her mother three days before I was born.” And this was all the account he could give of himself.

We saw another lad who, on being asked his name, said he did not know. “Don’t know your name! Why, what do men call when they want you to come? what do they say?”

“They say Hō! hō!” was all the answer we could get from the boy.

And yet in some things that boy was sharp enough. These shepherd lads are no mean adepts in the arts of wrestling, running,

slinging stones, and throwing at a mark. They will often hit even small birds on the wing with stones. They can make reed pipes, and play them skilfully. Some make similar pipes, larger and prettily ornamented, out of the large pinion bones of the common vulture (rookhameh) and other birds. When they grow tall enough to sling a gun at their backs, they often carry one, and become very fair shots. They also know every bit of ground, every hill, valley, rock, plain, or spring within their own district. Above all, these shepherd lads are skilful in the simple rough surgery needed by the sheep or goats which may get hurt during the pasturing over the rough ground upon the mountains. It is not uncommon for an animal to get jammed among the rocks, or to fall, and thus break a leg. The shepherds are proverbially excellent bone-setters, making splints out of any chance bit of wood, and binding the limb up with perhaps a rag torn off their own garments.

The townspeople amuse themselves by laughing at the stupidity of the Fellahheen. They say that if a Fellahh be asked, "Which is thy left ear?" he will raise his right arm over his head, and feeling downwards lay hold of his left ear and say, "Here!" not having the wit to put up his left hand to it.

One day a Fellahh had bought a pair of new shoes in Jerusalem, and was returning home towards Beit Jâla. On coming to a rough bit of road he took his shoes off to save them, but presently knocked his foot against a stone and hurt it, on which he exclaimed, "What a good thing it is that my shoe was not on my foot; it might have had a hole knocked in it with that blow!" The Bethlehemites look down on the people of Beit Jâla (their opposite neighbours) as being far less sharp than themselves. The Fellahheen generally treat themselves to smart new red shoes for some great festival, on the eve of which one may see them going along the high road from Jerusalem to their own village dangling the new shoes by a string from one hand. We have sometimes seen a large pair for the father and a little pair for each of his children thus carried.

Another town story at their expense is the following:—A Fellahh was one day pruning his vine, and managed to cut his hand. He got angry with the pruning-hook, and threw it away up over his head. Looking up after it to see where it would fall, it came down into his eye and struck it out. "Thou wretched thing! is it not enough that thou hast cut my hand, but thou must pick my eye out also?" and so saying, he trod upon it in a rage and cut his foot. On this he flung it away in terror as far as he could, and took refuge behind the broad trunk of a fig-tree. On seeing his wife coming, he cried out to her to "Beware of the pruning-hook, lest it come and wound thee also!"

The men of Dair-es-Sinneh, above Siloam, are proverbial for their stupidity, and the other Fellahheen tell stories about them such as the following:—One of these men was going out of the Gate of the Tribes (St. Stephen's Gate) on his way towards Siloam, with five asses, which

he was driving before him. After passing out of the gate he mounted one of his asses, and so rode down the hill. At Sitti Mariam, in the bottom, he stopped and counted the asses before him. There were but four. He turned back to Jerusalem to look for the fifth (which he was riding). At the gate he dismounted, drove in his asses to the open space within, and counted them. They were all right, five in number. Rejoicing, he turned back again to go home, and mounted again outside the gate. Arrived at Sitti Mariam, in the valley, he again counted his beasts; but lo! as before, there were but four. Again he went back to Jerusalem, dismounted at the gate, drove in his donkeys, counted them at the same place. They were five! This happened several times. At last he said, "By the life of my son! it is better for me to walk and have five donkeys than to ride having only four!" And with that he walked home, driving his five asses before him.

Another Fellahh of Dair-es-Sinneh is said to have climbed up a beanstalk, and got up to the moon. After walking about and seeing all that was to be seen there, he wished to come down; but his beanstalk was broken, and he could not reach it. So he pulled a bit of cord out of his pocket, and let himself down by that. But it was not long enough to reach the beanstalk, so he took out his knife and began cutting a piece from the top to join it on at the bottom, in order to lengthen it!

Stupid as the Fellahheen seem, however, and stupid as they often undoubtedly are, it is rather from want of cultivation than from lack of natural intelligence. We found them very capable of instruction, especially when young; and they are amenable to discipline, provided that strict justice governs the treatment they receive.

Some of them are clever in culture of the fig-tree, olive, and the vine, as also in managing field-crops and vegetables. They can be made excellent labourers and builders. They are idle in their own villages, chiefly from want of sufficient motive for exertion; but if the opportunity of earning wages is put in their way, they work steadily and well, provided that the amount of pay is made to depend upon their industry. A fine for idleness is the most sure preventive, and it rarely needs to be repeated.

The apparent stupidity of the Fellahheen may be explained by one of their own stories, to the effect that it is "All of no use talking to people of things which they have no sense to understand:"—

"Said the ass to the camel one day, 'How is it that with thy long legs and head so high up, thou never stumblest over stones, while I, with my little legs and eyes near the ground, am always stumbling?'

"'That,' replied the camel, 'is because I am always looking forward. I look out ahead for what's coming.'

"'Oh, dear!' replied the ass, 'that is quite beyond my comprehension.'"

The Fellahheen are sharp enough in all matters that come within their own range of observation, and they are very shrewd in what concerns their own interests—so far as they understand them. They have

an excellent retentive memory. It is scarcely too much to say that they never forget anything, and they are quick of apprehension in matters upon which their faculties have been exercised, even while utterly stupid in others. They have the character of being avaricious, and certainly they are fond of money. We often observed that wherever Fellahheen were congregated, the counting of money or calculating of gains might be heard. Indeed, it was almost certain that if we happened to overtake two of them upon the road, or sitting by the wayside, their talk would be of money. They spend very little of their gains, and hoard up the rest in some secret place, which is not often revealed by them before they die. Their money is usually buried in some out-of-the-way place in the ground, or in some old ruin. There can be no doubt that, when Palestine comes to be fully cultivated, many of these stores of hidden cash will be discovered. Sometimes a Fellahh will lend out at interest a part of his savings, exacting from 50 to 100 per cent. interest. A Fellahh will not part with his money if he can help it, and will endure imprisonment and stripes in order to escape payment of Government taxes. We saw many instances of this; and a story is told of one of the Ibn Simhhân people, who was brought into Jerusalem to pay his arrears of taxes long due to the Turkish Government. He declared that he had no money; but this was unlikely, the family of Simhhân being well-to-do. Imprisonment produced no effect upon him, and the governor ordered him to be bastinadoed. He was laid down, and the cobaj was applied to his feet. One hundred strokes were borne, and he would not yield; two hundred, three, four, five, and six hundred were in vain; and it was not until he had suffered seven hundred strokes that he gave way, and, loosening the girdle he was wearing, took out of it the sum of 2,000 piastres (about £20), and paid it to the governor. He had borne all the pain of so fearful a beating in the hope of being able to carry his money back home again.

The Fellahheen have naturally far more gravity and dignity than the Syrians of the towns. They have also less of the conceit and vanity for which the townspeople, especially those on the sea-coast and in the north, are remarkable. Indeed, it is not difficult to detect a radical difference on these points between the town Syrians and the Fellahheen.

The town Syrians, moreover, have a certain *legèreté* and fickleness, with vivacity, which are not common to the Fellahheen, or even to the dwellers in the southern towns, where the Fellahh and the Arab elements predominate rather than the Syrian or the Greek. In manner, in address, in turn of expression and thought, in idiom, in the very mode of putting on the garments, these differences are apparent.

The character of the Fellahh is, in short, much nearer to that of the Arab than to that of the Syro-Greek. They are excitable, and appear quarrelsome to those who do not know them. They mingle so much gesticulation with their speech that a stranger often supposes a deadly fight to be imminent, if not actually going on, when he sees a group of eager Fellahheen vociferating at each other, cursing, it may be, and

swinging their arms about as if to knock each other down. (They never use their fists, and do not know how to do so; a blow with the open palm is all they ever do in striking with the hand, and this they call *keff*, the exact equivalent of our "cuff.") The accidental falling off of a turban in the midst of the uproar gives strength to the idea that all this means mischief, and that the short swords in their belts and the long guns at their backs will soon be brought into action. When, behold! a word has been spoken by one of the disputants, calm is suddenly restored, gravity and self-possession take the place of furious excitement, and in a few moments more the party separate, after exchanging the salutations of peace.

The word that was spoken with this purpose and intent may simply have been the customary salutation, "May God give thee a good morning" (or "evening" if spoken after noon), gravely uttered while stroking the beard, with a steadfast look at the person whose excitement is at its height. This greeting has, of course, been given before at the first meeting, and it has been reciprocated as usual by the person now addressed. Nevertheless, it now acts as a charm. He stops his furious gesticulation, and responds, "May He give thee a hundred good mornings." The wish interposed may have been, "May God lengthen thy life!" The effect is the same; a pause for reflection is secured while the appropriate compliment is returned. Or if real anger has been displayed, one will exclaim, "*Ya, Ibrahim* (or whatever the name may be), *edhkor Rubbak*" ("Oh, Ibrahim, remember (bethink thee of) thy Lord!") The rebuke is meekly taken, and the response given, "*Yehhyu dhikerbro wa 'yedoom*" ("May the remembrance of Him live and remain"). Or it may be that the reprover will say "*Allel*." The other will then reply, "*La ila illa Allah*," &c., the formula of faith, "There is no God but God," &c. Sometimes a man finding himself getting angry, and inclined to use offensive epithets, will check himself, and repeat the "Oh, Ali (or whatever the name may be), may Allah give thee a good morning!"

"*Sally-an-Neby*," ("Pray in the name of the Prophet" Mohammed), is another of the phrases by which angry men are calmed; and the reply is given with the wish, *Alai es-Salaam wa es-Salla*." "Upon him be peace. and through him is prayer" [made].

There is little or nothing among this people of what we call *fun*. They understand jokes, or rather humour, of a certain kind; but they cannot bear to be laughed at. Irony and sarcasm they can comprehend, and they themselves use both. "*Mashallah! huwa akil!*" ("Wonderful!")—(literally, "What hath God wrought!") "He is a sensible fellow!" is an exclamation one may hear if a workman blunders in his task, and a mocking laugh will accompany the speech, adding pungency to the rebuke. Even the women, who are in some respects less intelligent, because less versed in the ways of the world, can appreciate humour, and be influenced by it.

The Siloam women commonly supply Jerusalem with milk, and are

very fond of mixing as much water with it as they can without detection. The woman who brought us our milk had, however, gone too far, and the milk was so thin and blue that our patience failed.

"Oh, mother of Ahhmet!" said I to her one morning, "I want to speak with thee."

"Be pleased to speak, O lady."

"Milk is good, and water is good. Allah made both of them, but we don't like them mixed; henceforth bring us thy milk in one jar and thy spring water in another, that we may drink them separately." The woman listened, considered a moment, broke into a smile, and said "*Taib*" ("Good, oh lady"). From that day forward we had milk pure and good from her. When the children or their elders in a strange place impertuned us for Backsheesh, we could generally turn the laugh upon them, in which they would join, by holding out our hand and saying, "No; it is you who ought to give us backsheesh for our trouble in coming here."

The Fellahheen do not easily or commonly laugh, except in scorn. In this they resemble the Arabs. They are keenly alive to ridicule. To tell an old man that he has behaved as a child, to say that "his intelligence is small compared with the whiteness of his beard," is in effect to have administered a most stinging rebuke; a similar reproof to a young man, "child" (for they still, as of old, call grown-up young men "child" in familiar and endearing, as well as in contemptuous, phrase), would be to say to him, "*Yn waled istahhy*" "Oh, child, be shamefaced!" ("Be modest;" "Don't presume;" or "Be ashamed," the phrase means all three).

The Fellahheen have been supposed by some to be devoid of humour. It is true that in some districts they are more stolid and stupid than in others; yet there is no part of the country in which witty proverbs, sententious sayings, and humorous parables are not understood and welcomed; a happy hit, a clever retort, a bit of retribution cleverly devised, will sometimes do more than force could in mastering a troublesome Fellahh. We found their sense of humour to be keen. There is true perception of wit in the retort, when two men, of whom one was thoroughly inferior, were compared with each other: "Truly they both have large eyes; but yet there is a difference between a hawk and an owl." And in the remark on the use of adversity, "Nothing will get oil out of an olive but crushing it;" and even in the words used to admit ignorance, when replying to the question; "How old is that tree?" "Praise be to Him who (alone) knoweth." Their epithets or descriptions of men are often very witty. "That priest of yours, a span and a half high," was the description of a European cleric, very short in stature, and more nimble than dignified in his gait. Abou Nadarât, "the father of spectacles, whose eyes nobody sees," was the description of another European whose dark spectacles were generally believed to be worn to hide his countenance and expression of face rather than because his eyes were weak.

"Hah! hah!" cried some children in Safet one day, as they ran after

a European whose chin was shaven, while he wore a full moustache and whiskers. "Hah! hah! there goes the Frank who cuts a hole out of the middle of his beard!"

Proverbs are in use all day long; they think in proverbs, and speak in them, and invent fresh ones, pithy and to the purpose, without the slightest effort.

The Fellahheen are often very clever at understanding hidden allusions and enigmatical sayings.

A man once came to his friend Ibn Hhanna and asked his mediation with the father of a girl whom he wished to marry. But the friend, not being particularly desirous of furthering the matter, and knowing moreover that the would-be bridegroom was unusually thick-headed, gave him the following message to the girl's father, Ahhmed Moosa: "Ibn Hhanna salaams thee and says to thee, 'Look at a she-goat; but let her milk alone.'"

The man went, gave the message, and returned, saying, "Ahhmed Moosa salutes thee, and says, *Ala rāsy*" ("Upon my head be it"—i.e., "I will obey").

"Very well," said his friend, "then go home and wait till he sends for thee," which he did, but was *not* sent for, the girl's father having understood the message to mean, "Look at this man; but do not negotiate with him or accept his gifts." The Fellahheen are crafty and ingenious in stratagem, quick also in detecting or guessing the devices of others; but this, of course, only in matters to which they are accustomed. They are excessively cautious and even suspicious in their dealings with strangers, and rarely, if ever, give a direct answer to a question.

"Art thou going home, Ibrahim?"

"Why? does my lord require anything?"

"No, but art thou going home?"

"I will take a message to the sheikh of my village; he is in the bazaar to-day."

"I have no message for the sheikh of thy village, oh Ibrahim; but I do want to know if thou art going home."

"Wherever my lord pleases to send me, there will I go," and so on, *ad infinitum*; but no direct answer. A question is almost invariably met by another question. A Fellahh, if met on the high road and asked, "Whence comest thou?" will answer, "From behind," and thus avoid giving information; and to the further query, "Where goest thou?" answers, "Ala Bab Allah" ("To the gate of God" [whither God pleases]), or "According as God may open the way".) This habit of evasion is inborn, and is practised by the veriest infants, who can but lisp out the question, "*Lais?*" (for "*Laiish?*" "Why?").

Insolence in time of prosperity, and where government is weak, is a common fault of the Fellahheen.

The Fellahh servant of one of our friends being about to be married, bade his master to the wedding, which was to take place at his village, where the famous Abd en Neby was sheikh.

This sheikh was, like all others of his district (in the Hebron country), noted for his hospitality to guests, and the wedding was a very gay one, being attended by sheikhs and people from all the country round. One of the chief guests had put on a new *aba* (mantle) of fine black camlet in honour of the occasion. According to custom, everybody on observing this new garment saluted the wearer with the word "*Mobarak*" ("May it be blessed"). To each one the customary reply was made, "*El Habaleh b'yedak*" ("Its halter is in thy hand"), which is equivalent to saying, "It is at your service." Another guest, very greatly his inferior in rank, but who from private motives was seeking a quarrel, pressed forward with the salutation, and on receiving the answering compliment as above, said, insolently, and to the amazement of the assembled sheikhs, "*Kabbaltuha*" ("I have accepted it"), a reply only made by a great man to his inferior in such circumstances, to show his gracious acceptance of the proposed gift as an act of becoming homage.

But custom required that the garment be forthwith handed over, unless the wearer had chosen to mar the festivities by saying, "Come and take it by force," which would involve a combat for life or death. He therefore simply said, "For the honour of our host, Sheikh Abd en-Neby," and taking it off his shoulders gave it to the man, who instantly put it on, saying, defiantly, "If he and two hundred men at his back were to try, he should not have it again." That man was then seeking to compass the death of the other, and he accomplished his purpose some months afterwards—not openly, for he was a boastful coward, and the other was known for his skill and prowess, but by paying others to do treacherously what he himself dared not to attempt. He had an ambush set and his victim murdered by hired assassins. One of the men concerned in the deed, not as actor, but as spectator, had been the night before actually eating with the victim. On hearing what had happened, the poor Fellahh woman who had cooked their supper, and who was much attached to the murdered man, bewailed herself, beating her breast and crying, "Woe is me! woe is me! I left out the salt by mistake when making the bread last night for their supper. Oh, that I had put it in, then would not that Abdallah have dared to let my lord be murdered in his presence; he would have been compelled to defend him after eating his bread and his salt. Woe is me! Woe is me!" And she spoke in accordance with universal custom in respect of the sanctity of life after a meal where people have eaten bread and salt together.

The sheikhs of that man's tribe offered to give him up to justice, but intrigue was at work to screen and hide the criminals, and their offer was not accepted by the responsible authorities (who were not all either Turks or Arabs).

Among the faults of the Fellahheen lying is one of the greatest and most common. They certainly can appreciate truth-telling in others, and even admire it, but can scarcely utter anything but lies themselves. To lie skilfully is considered a very great and useful accomplishment; the merest infants practise it as soon as they can speak. "A man who

does not tell lies is like meat without salt." And even the Fellahheen of Christian villages are almost as bad as their Moslem country-folk in this respect.

"Why didst thou tell that falsehood?" was asked one day of a Bethlehem Christian woman.

"Oh, lady," she replied, "thou knowest the *a'adeh* (custom) of us Fellahheen is to tell lies."

"But what, then, is thy religion, is it Fellahh or is it Christian?"

"Christian; but lying is our custom."

"Where, then, is your honour" (*sharaf*)?

She laughed. "We have no honour."

But there is a proverb that shows that the difference between truth and falsehood is understood. When a very wonderful tale is told, the hearers will contemptuously ejaculate, "*Kizb*" (a lie)!

"How dost thou know that it is a lie?"

"*Min kuburho*" ("From its bigness"), is the ready response.

Some villages have an evil reputation for untruth, or, as the natives put it, "The people of so-and-so are not good, their tongue is long."

Stealing, in the sense of petty pilfering, is another common fault described in the same fashion. "So-and-so is not good, her hand (or arm) is long." But pilfering is commoner among the Moslems than among the Christian Fellahheen. And indeed we found many of the Bethlehem Christians, especially the women, to be scrupulously honest, not even taking little portions of food for their children, a kind of pilfering which is considered quite lawful by people who would on no account take any valuable article or money from their employers.

Stealing cattle is considered a very grave offence, to be atoned for only by returning fourfold in case of a sheep, and fivefold in case an ox has been stolen.

Some villages have a much worse reputation than others for thieving. Siloam used to be considered one of the worst; also the village of Esawiyeh, north-east of Olivet.

The Moslem Fowagris of Bethlehem always had a very bad reputation in this respect. Indeed one quarter of the town of Bethlehem, inhabited by one of the two Moslem clans, was known as a perfect nest of robbers. Abbo er Rummān and his son, Selāmeh, with the chief of their clan at Bethlehem, Sheikh Salim Shakhtoor, were among the ringleaders, and they were many of them desperate and villainous men. In league with these was Hamin Hadoob and others, of Jerusalem, and some of the Siloam folk. They robbed the peasantry on the road or in the villages, as well as pilgrims or travellers, or people living in Jerusalem. Nothing came amiss to them in the way of plunder, and they did not stop short of murder when it suited their ends.

In former years there were other notorious thieves, one of whom, Saadeh, was at last, after being often taken, and escaping only to renew his depredations, caught and hanged on a tree outside the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem by the Government.

In years gone by Sabbuhh Shokeh, sheikh of the other clan of Fowagri Moslems of Bethlehem, was as great a thief and robber as the people of Salim Shakhtoor still are.

There is a story of Sheikh Sabbuhh joining Khalàweh of Urtas in sundry midnight marauding expeditions. The favourite amusement of at least part of a night thus spent by robbers is to steal one or more sheep from some flock out with its shepherd in the open country. A Fellahh will think nothing of throwing a sheep over his shoulders and running off with it, while his companions engage the shepherd either in fighting or in pursuit on a false scent. The thieves meet at their rendezvous, where the sheep is soon killed, flayed, and roasted whole in a pit dug in the earth, and the party feast upon their ill-gotten booty before returning to their own villages. Of course, when the shepherds are vigilant, and have firearms, they can and do offer successful resistance; but sometimes they are killed by the thieves, who are also armed with sword and gun.

The shepherds, when they lose a sheep or a goat by death, are always expected to bring at least the ears to the owner, if the distance be too great for them to carry the whole carcass; and thus to prove that they have not themselves slain and eaten of his flock.

The two men above mentioned had been out one night, and had been stealing sheep and other trifles. They were near the high road from Jaffa where it passes through the village of Aboo Gosh, and falling in with a camel carrying up to Jerusalem a load of calico for market, they stopped it, and, unloading the beast, each of them carried off half the calico on his back to a convenient hiding-place, whence they could get it safely off to their respective villages unobserved.

On another occasion Sabbuhh Shokeh, by way of bravado, said to his companion, as they were returning home at daybreak after a night of robbery, that he would carry home a hand corn-mill of stone on his shoulders. Presently the sound was heard of a woman, who was up with the dawn, grinding the corn for her family baking. Sabbuhh told his companion to wait outside, and, walking into the cottage, he saluted her with a "Good morning."

"Who art thou?" said she, not liking his looks.

"A guest," replied he; and perceiving that there were two corn-mills, he asked her which was the best one.

She said, "This one which I am using."

Without further ado he lifted it, heavy as it was, on his shoulder, and got clear off before she could awaken her husband.

A man from Beit Safâfa hid his money in a cave near Mar Elias. On the top he put a shoemaker's hammer with his own mark, in order that should any one find and steal the money, it might be the means of convicting them. Two young fellows, great rogues, having stolen two sheep one day, went into this cave to kill them; and wishing to hide the heads and feet and offal, dug a hole for that purpose, and thus they came on the jar containing the money. They took the money, and for

mischief filled it instead with the offal, burying the heads and feet in another hole. As for the shoemaker's hammer, they being as clever as the owner of the money, flung that away on the high road. Here it was picked up by another man, a stranger, who sold it in Jerusalem to a shoemaker. The owner of the money, on visiting the cave, found something less than money in his jar. He went immediately to the city, and examined the hammers in the shoemakers' shops. He found his own hammer. "Where did you get this hammer?" "From so-and-so." The latter was then arrested and taken to prison for the robbery; but he proved his innocence. "I heard of the case," said our informant, "and suspected the real thieves, and questioned them. They gave evasive answers. 'Why do you trouble yourself about such affairs?' 'That doesn't concern you.' I was satisfied they were the thieves, but could not bring it home to them. Two or three days after they, in their turn, were accused of something of which they were innocent, and had to spend eight or nine thousand in bribery to get clear. 'Well,' said I, when I next saw them, 'what became of all your money?' They laughed, and said, 'The winds brought it, and the whirlwind carried it off' (a common proverb, answering to 'Lightly come, lightly go'). The other said, 'Surely it was better not to have to spend one's own money in bribes. If it must be spent, let it be another's.'"

It is remarkable to find that truth, honesty, and honour can be thoroughly appreciated by people with whom lying and theft are so common.

The "English word" was synonymous among the Fellahheen for truth, and they were convinced of the integrity of English people. Of this we had innumerable instances, and of the way in which they would trust the simple word of an Englishman. "Cease bargaining," a peasant in the bazaar would say; "I have given the English word; I won't alter it."

They would also trust us with their goods and animals, having no doubt as to failure of payment.

One of our people, a European, was going to Jaffa on business, having with him an officer in Turkish service, whose horse fell lame, and he dismounted, giving the officer his horse, and walked on across the plain. Meeting a Fellahh, a stranger, who was well mounted, he asked him to let him hire his horse.

The Fellahh replied, "Good! I can trust a Frank; but I shall want fifteen piastres."

"You shall have fifteen piastres, but where shall I leave your horse? Come you and meet me at the gate of Jaffa."

The Fellahh agreed without a word more, dismounted, and allowed the Frank stranger to ride off on his horse, who, of course, duly met and paid him afterwards as agreed.

We have known horses taken in the same way when standing for hire in the city, with only a message to the owner through some bystander. So complete was the faith in the horse being returned, and the proper

hire paid, that the owners were pleased to have their beasts thus used, and would come to the house named for their pay.

Cursing and swearing are lamentably common among the Fellahheen. The children utter imprecations almost before they can speak. Oaths are mingled with the most ordinary talk. Simple "yes" and "no" are unknown, and affirmations are always accompanied by an appeal to God or the Prophet, or both.

It is not according to the idiom of the language to say "Yes," "No," as in English. The usual form of an affirmative reply is the repetition of part of the question. "Is Ibrahim running?—He is running." "Has he brought his camel?—He has brought him." But if "Yes" were said it would be combined with an oath. "*Eiwa-ei-wallah*" ("Yes, by God"). "No" is more common than "Yes," and is often expressed by a significant click of the tongue, with a toss up of the head and eyelids. But "No" is also more commonly and decidedly expressed by a negation of the question: "Has Ali come?—He has not come." A very emphatic negative is usually preceded or followed by a sonorous "*Wallahi*" ("By Allah").

False swearing is another most common vice among the Fellahheen. For a few pence a man will come forward as witness and swear anything that is desired of him. A case had been tried in the Pasha's Turkish court at the Seraglio, in which two Fellahheen were in litigation. After the proceedings were over, a friend of ours was riding along the Bethlehem road, and the man who had won his cause was walking by his side. They overtook two other Fellahheen who were going the same way, and were talking busily. One of the two was almost blind, and he was talking of that very case, and telling how he had been engaged by the opposite party to come and bear false witness for a payment of 60 piastres (about 10s.). "But," continued he, "the stingy fellow who wanted my evidence shut me up in a room to wait till he was ready for me to appear in court, and he never so much as gave me 100 paras (about 5d.) wherewith to get my breakfast. If he had but given me that I should have been content, but he shut me in till I got so hungry that I climbed over the wall and ran away; and he never told me, either, what I was to say in my evidence for him—he was in such a hurry. If he had told me what to say I might have gone to the court and earned the 60 piastres he promised me for my witness." Our friend here addressed the man. "How, old man (may God give thee a good evening), wouldst thou, being blind, have testified about what happened in a dark night? Thou canst not see much even by daylight. And dost thou know Esau?" (This was the person under accusation, and who was at that moment walking beside our friend.)

"I do not know him. I have never seen him."

"Thou dost not know him even by sight; and how canst thou appear as a witness against him, or swear that thou hast seen him do things?"

"But 60 piastres, my lord! That is much to me; and besides, the other one (the accuser) was going to tell me what to say."

"Then I tell thee thou art a wicked man, to go and swear against another for 60 piastres. Here he is, Esau himself, and I tell thee so before him."

"O Esau," said the old man, unabashed, "if I had sworn against thee it would have put 60 piastres into my pocket, and it would have been very bad for thee. But thine accuser did not give me the paras to buy my breakfast; so I could wait no longer, but ran away, and thou hast escaped."

"Then," said Esau, magnanimously, "I will give thee the paras for thy breakfast."

"No," said the old man, coolly, "thou shalt give me more, even the price of mending my shoes; for have not I walked to town and back all for nothing on thy account?"

In enumerating the faults of the Fellahheen we must not omit to mention selfishness; and in some districts more than others, cruelty and indifference to suffering, whether of man or beast.

There is but little cold-blooded murder. But some districts and villages have an evil reputation for this kind of crime. Generally speaking, however, they do not kill each other, excepting in the clan feuds or in avenging blood. There is an ugly expression used among the Fellahheen of South Palestine in speaking of an enemy slain in war. "*Dhabbahtho bisnâny*" ("I slew him with my teeth"). And it is said that there have been instances of killing in battle in this fashion by biting at the throat. In the Nablous district (Samaria), where the people are much more ferocious, the expression is, "I have drunk his blood," but that is understood figuratively.

The virtues of the Fellahheen are few and simple: courage in battle, attention to the rites of hospitality, a certain devotion to their village sheikh, some reverence for old men, respect for various superstitious religious observances, a general conformity to the tenets of Islâm, veneration for Mohammed the Prophet, and loyalty to the Sultan as their sovereign and as head of the Moslem religion—these are the chief points observed by a Fellahh of honour and repute. The Sultan is always mentioned in terms of reverence and devotion. They know but little of Mohammed the Prophet; still he is held in highest honour, and the phrase may commonly be heard, "*Sally en-Neby alai es-Salaam*" ("Pray in the name (or in honour) of the Prophet upon whom be peace").

The religion of Islâm is nominally professed. The resignation which it inculcates is universally practised. But many superstitious observances derived from their forefathers have a considerable hold upon the Fellahheen, and influence their whole life and habits.

To their village sheikh they show but moderate respect; indeed, in most villages there are rival sheikhs and rival factions, but the chief sheikh of the clan or district is much more regarded, especially if he have a character for generosity and bravery in fight.

: All the sheikhs are treated by their people with a certain amount of

ceremony. They, of course, occupy the place of honour in the village guest-chamber, and they are accompanied, in their visits to other villages or to Jerusalem, by a sort of body-guard of followers, called their "tail" (*dail*). These are generally on foot while the sheikh is mounted. It sometimes happens that the shiekh is also on foot; in that case his people literally follow him along the road, those of highest rank or nearest relationship being only just a step or so behind, so that he can converse without the trouble of turning his head. When mounting or dismounting, his people will help him, and hold his stirrups, or his spear or gun, if needful. A great sheikh will of course have a great following wherever he goes abroad, and he is always treated with much respect by his own people. Some of these sheikhs have exercised very great influence over the whole district and upon their people. A Fellahh of Beit Jibrin, having been caught and taken to Jerusalem for the offence of stealing cows from a neighbouring district, was beaten repeatedly and severely by the Turkish Government to make him confess; but all in vain. At length his own chief, Shiekh Muslehh, being in Jerusalem, went to the prison to see him, who, holding up his own beard, adjured the culprit, "By this brown thing, tell me, didst thou steal them?" The man at once confessed, "out of respect for the beard of his sheikh," the beard being the very token and emblem of human dignity and honour among the inhabitants of Palestine.

Courage in battle and presence of mind are virtues esteemed more highly than all the foregoing. The men perform many feats of bravery in battle, and they sometimes show considerable presence of mind in time of danger. We heard of one who, feeling himself hard pressed by his pursuers, flung himself over the edge of a precipice. They ran round to catch and finish him at the bottom; but he had hung on at the top by his hands, and, while they were running round, he climbed up again and got safe off.

Another of whom we were told was pursued to the mouth of a circular well. Being a good swimmer, he jumped in. His enemies fired at him from above, but he dived each time and kept them, it was said, at this work the greater part of a night, until some of his own side coming up, drove off the others and got him safe out.

To beg for mercy when beaten is considered unworthy of a brave man. When a Fellahh warrior falls into the power of his enemies, he generally bears his fate stoically, or rather with the stolid resignation peculiar to the profession of the faith of Islâm.

The Fellahh custom is for them to ask the man in their hands, "Where is so-and-so?" naming one on their side whom he has killed.

"Here!" he replies, pointing with his hand under his girdle. "I claim to have taken his life."

Again they ask, "Where is so-and-so?" naming another of his victims.

Again he answers, "Here!"

A friend of ours once saw a Fellahh answer thus to thirteen names of

men whom he had slain, and then add, "With this right hand I slew them! Do what you can." He was laid down with his face to Mecca and slaughtered like a goat, his throat being cut with the short sword, according to the usual way of slaying sheep or men. By appealing for mercy to one of those present, he might have saved his life. But that is considered too great a disgrace for any one who considers himself "a man."

Next to resignation to the will of God and bravery in battle, one of the very highest virtues is that of hospitable entertainment of strangers and guests. With this many interesting customs are connected, but we have no space to speak of them on the present opportunity.

---

### JACOB'S WELL, ITS HISTORY AND ASSOCIATIONS.

The plain of Mukhna, thought to be the same as the ancient plain of Moreh, is situated in the very centre of the Holy Land. In journeying from Shiloh to Shechem, about midway between the two places, we ascend to the crest of a ridge of hills, and from the summit obtain the first view of this fertile plain. It runs almost due north and south, and extends about seven miles in length, varying from one to two miles in breadth. This great plain, unbroken by fence or village, presented to our eyes during the spring of last year a scene of fertility and rural beauty not to be surpassed throughout the whole of Palestine.

The main road, winding through the plain, could easily be seen by its light appearance, and the clumps of aged olive-trees growing by the roadside, while all around the fields smiled with ripening corn. Many peasants were busy in the cultivation of the soil, and from one spot alone we were able to see at least one hundred yoke of ploughing oxen. The greater part of El Mukhna is enclosed by low undulating hills, and at the north-east extremity, towering high above the other hills, stand the celebrated twin mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. Far away on the northern horizon, on a clear day, can be seen the lofty hill of Great Hermon.

Between Ebal and Gerizim, running at right-angles to El Mukhna, the far-famed vale of Shechem.

The patriarch Abraham, when commanded to leave his home and country, ultimately pursued his journey across the Syrian desert, until he came to the borders of the Promised Land. On arriving at the banks of the Jordan he crossed the river and continued his way towards the west until he came "unto the place of Sichem unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord." The first recorded halting-place of Abram is not without significance, for Sichem stood in