

## THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

*(Continued from Q.S., 1910, p. 268.)*

THE general character of the natives is altogether different from European conceptions. In the first place they are no idealists, but on the contrary, realistic in the strictest sense of the word, and in consequence, a stranger, and with much more reason a European traveller, who has come all the way from over the seas, must be rich and therefore put under contribution. The language, very sober at first meeting or in the morning, becomes very foul after a little more acquaintance, and is supposed to be very witty, especially if the answer can be made to rhyme with the question or observation received. Honour, honesty, truthfulness are very relative, and they will deal with much greater loyalty towards each other than towards Europeans, whom they do not consider their equal, and by no means superior, as the case may be. If a European should believe them thoroughly, he may be considered as an imbecile; if he does not pay at once what he is charged he is called avaricious; if he does pay extravagant prices he is a fool, and so on. Money can do anything provided it is not against the Mohammedan religion. The Christians of the Greek Church are of the stock of Palestine Christians, and those of the Maronite Church that of the Lebanon Christians. From these two Churches the other Churches have recruited their followers; in most cases, it is to be feared, money effecting the conversion from one Church to the other, whilst of Islam converts there are virtually none. The commercial turn of mind is bred into the population of the towns; ever since the Canaanites—as the word “Canaan” is applied in the Old Testament—honesty in the true sense of the word is rare. They know all kinds of tricks to palm off upon the fellahin or the Bedouin. For example, they will put a considerable number of pounds more into the *rotl*, thus making the agriculturist believe that a *rotl* of

cabbages must weigh at least  $1\frac{1}{4}$  or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *rolls* of meal, or that a piastre offered to them for vegetables means of course a small piastre. Thus they give themselves at least an appearance of honesty; for they do not care to be *called* cheats provided they can cheat unawares.

The wheat market has an official measure, the *ḡa'* (صاع), equal to about 26 pounds of wheat (4 *rolls*). The Jerusalem *thimnet* is 8 *rolls*, wheat piled up. The measurer of wheat has his tricks, whether he measures for the buyer's advantage or for the seller's. If it is for the buyer's he will force corn into his measure and dig into the wheat with both fists, then pile carefully as much as he possibly can. If on the contrary he works for the advantage of the seller he will hurry the filling, and does not push in, or press, or shake, or pile up more than he is strictly bound to. The Israelites also used all kinds of tricks, but are bidden in the law to have "no divers measures" (Deut. xxv, 14); "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over" (Luke vi, 38) is estimated lawful. While the measuring is going on the man calls out and repeats the number, and sometimes adds a rhyme or says instead of *one*, "Allah is one." Seven is omitted, being the number of the seven devils, which may come and take away the wheat; he then says: "in six," or else *samḥat*, "pardon," which vaguely resembles *sab'at*, "seven." After eight (*thamaniet*) he adds: *Yā Rab il-amānet*, "O Lord (give) honesty!" and so forth.

Disputes are generally of a very harmless character, in Jerusalem at least: a few curses and more or less insults, where the worst are of course such as concern the women. But they have rarely a tragic termination, whereas in Jaffa the knife is more easily drawn, and the seamen are known for their courage and spirit of vengeance. The inhabitants of Nāblus and Hebron have more of the character of the fellahin, and are more vindictive. In former days the inhabitants of Neby Dāūd, near the Zion Gate, were considered very dangerous adversaries, but since they have been incorporated into the town they have become more quiet. Murders are almost unknown in Jerusalem: if murder is committed on a townsman it is certainly nine times out of ten perpetrated by a fellah or Bedawy in the country. Being of a very quiet disposition the men of Jerusalem are usually pacific, rarely carry arms, and are seldom seen out of the gates or suburbs after sunset.

Vices of all kinds are universal, and there is hardly any distinction between the inhabitants of the towns and of the country. The

reputed *'ard*, or reputation of the women, who are very carefully watched, cannot be called very meritorious; the Ramadan month affords more liberty and is in consequence marked by scandalous scenes, in spite of the jealousy and watchfulness of the husbands.

Truthfulness can hardly be expected in a high degree of cultivation in those towns where strangers abound, and where money can be so easily made by dissembling the truth, though the people cannot be called liars; nor can they be said to be lazy, their activity is limited by their wants, though their avidity is not less great than that of any other nation. But the hindrance to the craze of procuring wealth is to be looked for in their fatalism, and with few exceptions they will not work outside the hours of daylight, already very much lessened by the ablutions and prayers. "God will provide" (*yefrej Allah*) is the firm belief, just as in the time when Abraham going to offer his son Isaac (Gen. xxii, 8) did not draw back till he found the ram.

In Jerusalem, as a rule, the natives are decently clothed. In all towns the turban is considered holy, and is very carefully put on the head, and before lying down is always removed with equal care. When a man comes of age he receives the *luffet* or *'amet*, the second name being derived from *'am*, "nation" or "universal." The turban, being a sign of admission into the "universality" of believers, can never be used in a profane way. It is carefully arranged in the morning and the effort is made to keep it as decent as possible all day. The man has no quick movements and the turban remains in place, it is never disarranged, and cannot easily tumble off or be blown away by the wind as the European hat; in fact the easy way the latter is handled and removed seems to the Oriental the reverse of respectable. The Oriental does not remove the cap or turban as a sign of respect for a superior or on entering a sanctuary, but simply bows or touches the forehead as in saluting. Some Christians take off the turban in very holy places, but this is only imitated from their European tutors and ministers.

In direct contrast to the most sacred, the head and the turban, are the feet and shoes both vile; the shoes are left at the door of houses and sanctuaries: clean and unclean must not be brought into contact. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" is the order given to Moses and Joshua (Exod. iii, 5 and Joshua v, 15). In the matter of shoes the Israelites differed little from their modern descendants, the

Palestine Arabs. Prayers are never said by a man with his shoes on, and it is a sign of great disrespect to talk about the head and turban or beard without an interruption for the shoes.

The construction of sentences is a very meticulous and exclusively Arab monopoly, which often causes the Arab to smile when a European talks and badly confuses "clean" and "unclean" ideas. An Arab must not say: "My shoes are inside," for the question can be put: "Inside what?" Of course the natural deduction with the Arab is a disrespectful one; it means "Inside your beard!" Moreover he cannot say: "There is dirt somewhere," for "Where is it?" may be asked, and again it is supposed to be "on the head." And even to push this idea of respectability further it may not be said: "It is here or there," for "it" may be a shoe, and "there," "on a beard," therefore to talk correctly and decently it is well to say: "My shoes are in the room" or "My foot was on the floor." Amongst themselves they are very vigilant, and the least *lapsus* is taken advantage of, to the great amusement of the bystanders who find these "*mots d'esprit*" only possible in the mouth of an inhabitant of Arabistan. If thus in an unguarded moment one would say *fiḥā*, "It is in it," of course the rhyme is guessed by more than one in *khara temaliḥā*, "Dirt fill it." "It," is the beard, and anyone thus taken inadvertently is said "to have fallen" (*waka'*), to the great hilarity of all. The beard is not touched in the streets, for it may be defiled by the thoughts of anyone, if it is held.

The turban of the Mohammedan native of Jerusalem is usually white, and of fine linen; the *shāsh* has been in use in Jerusalem for untold years: from the days of the priests and Levites. In Hebron the turban is red and yellow silk. In Nāblus it is red and white cotton, not so coquettish as the above two, and the Jaffa turban is white and gold, as the Damascus mode, and made of cotton. By the headdress most towns can be at once distinguished.

Those who pray regularly are also as a rule very clean as regards both their clothes and body; on the contrary, the others are especially filthy on the body, although in such places as Jerusalem, where water is scarce, there may be some excuse for them. Those who have no money to go to the public bath-houses have the Siloam spring—much frequented by the people of Jerusalem—but all the other towns have plenty of water-wheels and fountains everywhere. The bath-houses (*hamām*), are the well-known Turkish warm baths. They are not mentioned in the Old Testament, although cold baths

were frequently taken in streams. Water purifies, whether it be in flowing streams or even in stagnant pools, and as baths are generally religious ceremonies, both with the ancient Hebrews and with the modern Moslems, they wash and are purified (*yethar*). The lepers were enjoined to wash and be clean (Lev. xiv, 8), and so Naaman the Syrian was sent to wash in the Jordan and become clean (2 Kings v, 10). Cold water was evidently always meant, as we see in Job ix, 30: "If I wash myself with snow-water and cleanse my hands with lye."

Men go into the *hamām*, or warm bath, and after the different warm and hot steam baths are over, proceed to a warmed coffee-room in front of the building, where they quietly sip a cup of coffee and smoke an arghileh before leaving. Every movement of the Oriental is complimented, blessed and so forth, a special sentence is used in accordance with the action, and the actor answers with a well-known formula. Thus after a wash or a shave, the bathkeeper or barber will say: *mā'īm*, "May it be grace or privilege to your body," and the other one will answer: *Allah yen'em 'alake*, "May God give you grace." After a drink of water the bystander will say: *hannīyan*, "May it satisfy you," and the drinker will answer: *Allah yehannik*, "May God satisfy you." After a drink of wine or spirits the expression is only used ironically. When women go to the *hamām* they make a great fuss about it, and consider it a kind of picnic, which they have once a month. They then perfume themselves and put *kohl* on the eyes, and the event is talked about in the neighbourhood. Often the baths are taken in the house in a *bātiēt* or big wooden basin: in this case it is called *ghasil*. Pharaoh's daughter went with her whole suite to take a bath in the Nile, but Bethsheba and Ruth bathed in the house (2 Sam. xi, 2; Ruth iii, 3), and perfumed themselves and put on better clothes.

Markets are held in many towns once a week, and animals, fruits, and various agricultural and industrial products are exhibited. The Jerusalem animal market is held every Friday forenoon inside the Zion Gate. Ramleh has a Wednesday market for animals, milk, pottery, and so forth. Lydda has a Monday market, for mats and the like brought from the villages of the Plain of Sharon.

Beards are very much venerated. Old men have a full and hard beard, trimming it from time to time. The men of Jerusalem wear the longest beard—if we exclude the fellahīn—they trim the beard all round, and cut away the part of the hair of the moustaches

overhanging the mouth; the cheeks and neck are shaved all round. The men of Hebron and Gaza have very short and well-trimmed beards, but the inhabitants of Nāblus and Jaffa shave the beard and have generally fine moustaches, but the trimming above the lips is obligatory. Christians of all denominations shave the beard, except when old age begins and the hair turns white. The Israelites had full beards and it was considered a shame to trim or shave a part of them.

Friday is the day of divine service, sermons are repeated from eleven to twelve, and most Moslems go to the mosque. If possible they go in newly-washed clothes, though this is not strictly observed. They have no special "Friday-clothes," and continue their work after divine service. Christians have special "Sunday-clothes," but these are not so much for attending Mass as for the afternoon walks. After Mass they go back to their work.

The Jews keep the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset in the strictest sense of the word. They wear new, or "Sabbath-clothes," and never do any work on that day.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE BEDOUIN OF THE SINAITIC PENINSULA.

BY W. E. JENNINGS-BRAMLEY.

*(Continued from Q.S., 1911, p. 181.)*

### XXVI. *Account of a Journey from Nekhl to 'Ain Kadis—continued.*

THERE remained nothing more now than to say goodbye and go on our way in search of Saad. Hassan, his nephew, accompanied us a bit of the way, and I gave him some loaf sugar (which they prize immensely as medicine for children) and the price of the sheep, two reals. Of course this was not as payment for it but in lieu of some tobacco which I told him I would have given him had I had it. Hassan left us, but Selim went on with us to Saad's encampment. We found the Sheikh in an extremely bad temper. He was getting into trouble with the Azāzma and had had to bring