

OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON THE MODERN INHABITANTS
OF PALESTINE.

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TALES OF WELYS AND DERVISHES.

(Continued from Q.S., 1915, p. 179.)

IV.—*Sultān Badr of Deir esh-Sheikh.*

Deir esh-Sheikh is a small mountain village on the right of the railway line from Jaffa to Jerusalem and about half-way between the railway stations of Deir Abān and Bittir. It is famous for its maḳām dedicated to Sultān Badr. The veneration in which this saint is held is illustrated by the following tales :—

(a) *The History of Sultān Badr.*

Sultān Badr is said to have been born in the Hijāz, but later went to Persia, where he became king and reigned seven years. One night, as he slept, the Spirit from Allah appeared to him and said: "Rise up, O Badr! and leave thy throne and thy kingdom and become a dervish for the love of God. I have brought thee here for many purposes." Immediately, he left his kingdom, and, from the love of God, set forth upon his wanderings, together with him his naḳīb (administrator), Sheikh Ahmed el-'Ajameh, and his servant, Sheikh Marzūk, and at length they arrived in Jerusalem. He found this city besieged by King edh-Dhaher and Sheikh abu Midiān, a Mughrabi, and he joined these men. But Sheikh Badr found the place very narrow, and so he took quarters for himself in the country at a place called Karafāt, now called Sharafāt. He used to come daily to Jerusalem to fight against the infidels, and returned and slept at night at Sharafāt. After Jerusalem was captured, everyone came to Sultān Badr regarding the division of the spoil, and they awarded to the Sultān Badr forty shops in Jerusalem as his wakf. After this the sultān, as he was travelling

from Jerusalem to Hebron, passed a spring near Rās abu ‘Ammar, called ‘Ain el-Wahsh, so-called after a wely named el-Wahsh (“wild beast”). When the sultān reached the stream he took off his clothes and began to wash them, because they had long been in a dirty state. In doing this the water above and below became defiled. At this moment six girls, daughters of the wely el-Wahsh, came to the source to draw water, and found the water defiled from this reason. The eldest girl, whose name was Khadijah cried out in indignation: “Oh, thou man! thou art spoiling the spring. How can we fill our jars now?” and, seizing a stone, she threw it at Sultān Badr and wounded him in the head. When he felt the stone and saw the blood running down, he reviled the girl and carried off his clothes, still wet, to a place called Deir esh-Sheikh (there he found a convent for the Christians—most of the people then were living in caves). At a little distance from the village he found a fountain of water before which stood a kharrūb (carob) tree, which everybody knew had been withered for a long time. Upon this the sultān hung up his clothes to dry and laid down to sleep in their shadow.

Meanwhile el-Wahsh had returned and found his daughters at the spring and, seeing the blood, asked them: “What has happened to you, and whence is this blood?” They told their father that when they had come to fill their jars, they found a man at the spring washing his clothes and defiling the water, and that Khadijah, after abusing him, had thrown a stone at him and wounded him, whereupon the man had reviled Khadijah and gone off with his wet clothes. Then el-Wahsh knew that the man was Sultān Badr, because a spirit had appeared to him and told him that he should that day encounter Sultān Badr. Then el-Wahsh began scolding and abusing his daughters, and enquired which way the sultān had gone. They told him he had gone to Deir esh-Sheikh, and so he went in that direction, making enquiries as he went. At length he reached the cave in which the fountain rose, and there lay the sultān, sleeping below the kharrūb tree on which hung his clothes; and the kharrūb, which he knew had been withered, was covered with green branches. And he approached the sultān and began to kiss his hands and feet and to entreat him for pardon, saying that his daughters were ignorant girls, and had not known him and had made a great mistake about him. “I entreat you,” he said, “for your honour’s sake and for the sake of your blood and flesh (*i.e.*, relations) to forgive them this crime.” And when the

sultān heard the words of el-Wahsh he said: "I will forgive neither you nor your daughters unless you give me as wife the girl who hit me with the stone (وانزل دمها مثل ما نزلت دمى)." el-Wahsh replied: "I present her to you as your slave." And when the people of the city saw that the withered tree had become green, and heard that the dervish el-Wahsh had given him his daughter, many of them believed in him. All the people of the village before were infidels (Christians).

And Sultān Bahr returned back to the village and lived in a cave called *el-Ghār*, and he had with him as *naḳīb* (manager) Aḥmed el-'Ajameh, and as servant Marzūk. But the Sheikh el-'Ajameh left him and went to Beit Maḥsīr. And the sultān married *Khadijah*, the daughter of el-Wahsh, and lived in Deir esh-Sheikh. And there he had five boys and two girls, and they were the Sheikh Munjid, and the Sheikh Ismā'īn, and the Sheikh Muthkūr, and the Sheikh Yūsuf, and Abu Fātmeh. And the names of his daughters were our lady Badriyeh and our lady Aḥmadiyeh.

One day, when the sultān was sitting on a mountain top near Bīr es-Saleb, he saw there were soldiers in the valley in number like the sand of the sea, and he knew at once that these were the soldiers of King Dhaḥer; and he descended from the mountain and invited the king and his soldiers to come and rest and drink coffee, and the king accepted the invitation. While they drank their coffee, the sultān observed that the soldiers were very tired, and remarked: "I ask you kindly to be my guests, you and your soldiers, and pass the night here." The king thought that there would not be provisions enough for the soldiers and their horses, and that it would be better to go to a place with food and water sufficient for them all. The sultān knew what he was thinking, and said to the king: "Fear God, and everything will be to hand for you and for your soldiers." Then the king wondered at the sheikh, and instructed his soldiers to ask their host for water for the horses, after which he proposed to go, thinking it was impossible that the sheikh could have food enough for all. Immediately the soldiers said: "We beg you kindly to give us water for the horses because they are suffering from thirst." Then the Sultān said to Marzūk, "Take this jug (*ibrik*) and go with the soldiers to water the horses and climb with them to the summit of the mountain. When the soldiers are weary because ye have not enough water, exclaim

‘O Sultān Badr.’” And the servant went as his master told him, and arrived with the soldiers at the summit, and they began to show impatience towards him saying: “We are very tired, and the horses are suffering from thirst and there is no water here. Where are you leading us?” And he cried out “O my lord Sultān Badr, come quickly to me.” At the same moment Sultān Badr appeared and said to Sheikh Marzūk: “Stay where you are till I reach you.” On his arrival in their midst he said to his servant: “Stand on this rock and throw the jug in your hand with all your might.” And Sheikh Marzūk did this, and as he threw it the jug broke into six pieces, and at each place where a fragment fell there burst up a spring of water. And these are the names of the six springs: ‘Ain el-Hobīn, ‘Ain et-Tuff, ‘Ain el-Haiyāt, ‘Ain el-Kubaibeh, ‘Ain el-Jōzeh, and ‘Ain Wādy el-Amrār. And the water descended into the valley. And all the company on the top of the mountain and those in the valley below began to drink. And when they returned to the king and narrated what had occurred he was astonished at the piety of the sheikh. Then they asked the sheikh to give them barley for the horses. The sultān brought a *saa*‘ (half a *tubbeh*) of barley and spread his *‘abā* (cloak) and poured into it the barley, and told the soldiers to help themselves. When the soldiers saw that all the barley which he had provided was not enough for a single horse they began hastily to help themselves, each one filling a nosebag for his horse in turn. But, at last, not one soldier remained without barley, and there was left over at the end as much as there had been at first. When the horses were fed the soldiers waited for their food. The sultān then led forward a kid and produced a *rotl* of rice, and when the food was prepared he began to distribute the meat and the rice among them until all were satisfied; and the food proved to be enough, not only for them, but also for the people of the village. In the morning Sultān Badr asked the king where he was going with his army. The king replied that he was going to Ascalon to capture it, but that before going he would like to kill the people of this country, because they did not believe in Allah nor in His Prophet. The sultān replied: “This country is obedient to me without war.” Then the king asked: What is your opinion about Ascalon? because I like to have your opinion and I believe in you.” The sultān replied: “Ascalon is a strong city and the people in it are giants; it will be impossible for you to capture it unless you plant a fig tree and eat of its fruit.

After that you will be able to take Ascalon. But after you have taken Ascalon, and you return this way, you will find that I have been dead three days. You must then build a makām to me." The king then bade farewell and left with his soldiers.

On the road the king ceased not to command the people to worship only Allah and to believe in His Prophet. When he reached Ascalon he at once attacked it, but, though he fought against it for three years, he was unable to take it. At length, in perplexity, he called a council of his generals to consult with them about this great delay, and one of them said: "O my lord, you forget the advice of the sheikh, whose guest we were on our road, and who showed us great wonders; he directed us to plant a fig tree." The king exclaimed, "This is true," and immediately he brought a branch of a fig tree and planted it in the ground, and gave orders to his soldiers to cease from fighting till the tree bore fruit. And on the second day the tree produced branches, and daily the king made his devotions on the ground around the tree. After three days the fig tree bore fruit and the king plucked the fruit and ate it. Then he said to his soldiers: "Now we shall capture Ascalon," and he led them to the assault. Among the soldiers was one from Dūra el-Khalil who, while on the road, had found the bone from the leg of a camel, and he took this in his hand, and when entrance was made through the walls of the city, he slew many of the inhabitants with the camel's leg, and with it, too, pulled down buildings and walls. And they called him Abū 'Arkūb, because with the leg ('arkūb) of a camel he pulled down the city. And he is now a wely in Durā el-Khalil. When the army had taken the city and reduced it to order the king set out on his return. He arrived on his road at a place called Wādy Būlus and stayed the night there, and the next morning he commanded his soldiers to go on to Wādy Bāb el-Wād, and he did not remember that the sultan had told him that when he returned he would pass by him. But when the soldiers took the way to the Bāb el-Wād, bees appeared in vast numbers, so that they could not take that road nor find any other way. These bees came out of a cistern of water which is, to this day, called Bi'r el-Nahl ("cistern of the bees"). And the bees stopped the soldiers from following that route and compelled them to go by the Wādy Isma'in, a way they had not thought of taking. And when they came close to Deir Eyyūb, near the trees, they again were unable to proceed farther on account of the bees. And so the

king halted and asked his officers why it was that the bees followed them wherever they went. Had any of them gone out of God's way, that the bees would not allow them to pass on their road? One of the soldiers said: "O lord, you promised the Sultān Badr, that, after you had taken Ascalon, you would on your return, pass by him, I think this is the reason." Then the king ordered his soldiers to return by the road of Eshua'. And when they left the trees the bees remained in the trees, and to this day they are known as *Sejarāt ez-Zākarāt*, "The trees of remembrances" (سجرات الزاكرات), for they reminded the king to return by the way of Sultān Badr.

And when the king arrived at Deir esh-Sheikh he found that Sultān Badr had died three days before, as he had told him. And he began to build a maḳām. And he built it one day and on the next morning he found all he had built pulled down, and this happened daily till the Friday. And the king rose up in the morning and prayed and called upon the Lord and said: "O Lord, direct me how I shall build the maḳām." And the next morning he rose and found a paper with directions on it how he was to build the maḳām, and the place of prayer, and the place for cooking, and the place for the women, and how everything was to be made. Also, how he was to bring *karamid* (tiles) from Egypt for the dome. And the king did all that has been mentioned, and now it is a wakīl for the descendants of Sultān Badr.

(b) *Another Story about Sultān Badr.*

It has been already mentioned here that when Sultān Badr was fighting against Jerusalem he used to sleep at Sharafāt, which was then called *Karafāt* (the opposite of Sharafāt, which means "noble"). *Karafāt* was so called because there was in it a monastery belonging to the Christians, in which wine was made. When the sultan came to the place he used to be always annoyed at the making of wine, and he asked Allah that this should be put an end to. In answer to his prayer the wine became spoilt and never came to any good. And this happened for many years, until at length the monks became very angry and accepted his offer to buy the monastery and its environs. And when he had bought the place he sent away the monks and made the place a *wakf* (religious endowment) for his descendants. He afterwards moved to Deir esh-Sheikh, but he gave his daughter Badriyeh in marriage to Sheikh Ahmed et-Tubbār, and

she continued to live at Sharafāt, which received its noble name because of the sultan and herself residing there. And now in this village are the makām of Sittna (our lady) Badriyeh, the makām of her husband Ahmed et-Tubbār, and, close beside the former, the graves of Badriyeh's children. Of Sitt Badriyeh many tales are told.

(c) *A Story of the Makām of Sultān Badr.*

There is a piece of land belonging to the *wakf* of Sultān Badr in the village of Deir esh-Sheikh in the guardianship of a man appointed to cultivate it. In a certain year he was raising on it two kinds of crops—onions and tobacco—when one night two men belonging to the family of Sheikh Ahmed el-'Ajameh came from the village to steal the onions. They collected them in a sack and set out. They took, as they thought, the road to the village, but they found themselves back at the door of the wely. And they tried again and took another road, and once again they found themselves at the door of the wely. And they returned once more to the garden and began to prowl about in it, but then they could not find the gate to get out, and so it happened that they walked about with the sack of onions on their backs till morning. And when dawn appeared, they found to their astonishment that they were still in the garden. And while they were in this state of confusion the caretaker of the garden came up and asked them what they were doing in that place. They had by now hidden the sack of onions, and so managed to convince him that they were only passing travellers. The caretaker had no idea they were robbers. And they went on their way towards Beit Nattif, and on their road they saw a man carrying a sack. This man, when he saw them from a distance, recognized them as belonging to the noble family at Deir esh-Sheikh, and so he dropped the sack and ran away lest he should be recognized. Now this man was from Beit Nattif, and he had been stealing tobacco from the same garden from which the other two men had stolen the onions. When these two reached the sack they saw it was full of tobacco, but they had no idea whence it came. So they took the tobacco and hid it in a cave, intending to fetch it after nightfall; and they seated themselves at some distance off, fearing lest someone else should come and take the sack. And when night came they went to the cave and began looking for the sack but could not find it anywhere. And they waited there till morning, when they dared

wait no longer, lest someone should see them. Later in the day they returned to the cave and found the sackful of tobacco in its former place, so they made a note of its position, measuring out the number of paces it lay from the entrance. And then they sat outside where they had been the previous day. When night came they went to the cave to fetch away the sack and, as on the previous night, they could not find it. Then one remarked to the other: "The same curious things have happened to us here as occurred with the sack of onions: we had better take away the sack in daylight and let happen what will." And so next morning when the sack reappeared in the cave, they took it and went on their way. While they were walking along the road they met *khayyāl* (horsemen) of the government, agents of the Tobacco Regie, who control the planting and sale of tobacco. These took the two robbers prisoner and took them to their officer who was waiting at a place called 'Ain el-Hōbin, near Deir esh-Sheikh, where there is a spring of very good water (one of the six springs which arose at the behest of Sultān Badr—see previous story). The soldiers here handed over their prisoners with the sack of tobacco. The officer thought they had been growing illicit tobacco, and detained them for further examination, intending to send them to Hebron for trial. While they were still detained at 'Ain el-Hōbin, some camel-drivers came to water their animals. These people at once recognized the sack as one which had been stolen from them full of rice, at Beit Nattif. They had suffered for this robbery by having had the value of the rice deducted from their wages by the merchant who owned the rice at Hebron. They at once came to the officer and told him the whole affair, and begged him to take care of the sack and to report the affair to the merchant at Hebron. The officer then said that one of their number should accompany the prisoners to Hebron the next day, to bring the complaint before the merchant.

Meanwhile the news was noised abroad that the soldiers had found two men with illicit tobacco, and the guardian of the *wakf* of Sultān Badr at Deir esh-Sheikh, thinking it might be tobacco from his garden, went to the 'Ain, and recognized in the prisoners the two men he had seen in his garden among the onions, and, on looking at the tobacco, he recognized that it was from the same place. He reported these facts to the officer, but the prisoners at once swore that they had not stolen the tobacco, but had taken it from a man of Beit Nattif, who had left the sack and run away. The officer

said to them: "This is not my business, I shall send you to Hebron, and whoever has a claim against you will make it then." And next morning the officer sent the prisoners in charge of a *khayyāleh* (horse soldier) to Hebron. Then the camel-man told his story to the merchant, and the merchant made a claim against them for the rice, and so it came about that the men were put in prison, both for stealing the tobacco and the rice, neither of which things they had actually done. Later on the authorities heard who the man was who had stolen the tobacco from the garden of Sultān Badr in the first instance, and they sent a *khayyāl* to take him, and they found him lying ill in the house, with one of his legs palsied, so that he could not walk. And, up till now, he cannot bend it; it is stiff, as if all of one piece, from hip to heel.

And all these misfortunes happened to these men because they transgressed against the *wakf* of Sultān Badr.

(*To be continued.*)

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

(*Continued from Q.S., 1915, p. 170.*)

Clothes and Fashions.

(*d*) (1) The mantle commonly worn by the fellahin and also by many a Madani, is the striped brown and white woollen 'abā, with the epithet *mehillāwīya*, "essentially local," as the name indicates (from *mehall*, "place"). The 'abā is also called *radā* in some places in the north. It is made, not only in the towns, but also in the villages of Palestine. It is a square, woven in two pieces, and sewn together. There are no sleeves, but simple cuts through which the arms pass. These armholes, however, are never used. The sides are doubled and sewn together at the top, leaving an empty space of a few inches for the neck, the sewn parts resting simply on the