

in amount from a shilling to £250—have now to appeal to them for help for the next.

They have to finish what they have begun. Unless we receive additional support Captain Warren may have to return before another summer. The Fund begins the year with an assured income which, while it is larger than that of any previous year, is yet far short of its requirements. Nothing is spent in England, or on anything but "exploration," that can be avoided. The sum of £5,000 is asked for the next year; and while letters from all sides reach the Committee, expressing confidence that wealthy and educated England will keep up a movement which asks so little to effect so much, that sum has not been reached this year by £1,000. The friends of the Fund can help in many ways: by extending knowledge of its work or its intentions; by contributing money; and by circulating the *Quarterly Statements*. The words of Mr. Deutsch, at the last annual meeting, may again be quoted: "There are ruins enough in the City of Sorrows. Do not add fresh ruins. Do not leave broken shafts and abandoned galleries, and let it not be said that this England, the richest, proudest, and most Bible-loving country in the world, has abandoned one of its greatest undertakings—for want of money."

## THE CEREMONY OF THE DOSEH AT BAALBEC.

BY WALTER MORRISON, ESQ., M.P.

It is said that, among the other changes which have come over Cairo, the ceremony of the Doseh has been discontinued. It has been described by Mr. Lane and by other writers. On certain days the Sheikh es Saadeeyeh, the chief of the Saadeeyeh dervishes, rides into the Ezbe-keeyeh, or park of Cairo. "Here a number of the darweeshes and others, (I am sure there were more than sixty, but I could not count their number,) laid themselves down upon the ground side by side, as close as possible to each other, having their backs upwards, their legs extended, and their arms placed together beneath their foreheads. They incessantly muttered the word 'Allah.' About twelve or more darweeshes, most without their shoes, then ran over the backs of their prostrate companions; some beating 'bâzes' or little drums of a hemispherical form, held in the left hand, and exclaiming 'Allah!' and then the Sheykh approached; his horse hesitated for several minutes to tread on the back of the first of the prostrate men; but, being pulled and urged on behind, he at length stepped upon him, and then, without

apparent fear, ambled at a high pace over them all, led by two persons who ran over the prostrate men; one sometimes treading on the feet, and the other on the heads. The spectators immediately raised a cry of 'Allah la la la la lah!' Not one of the men thus trampled upon by the horse seemed to be hurt; but each, the moment the Sheykh had passed over him, jumped up and followed the Sheykh."—*Lane's Modern Egyptians* (Chapter 26).

I believe that it is not generally known that the same ceremony is, or was, performed at Baalbec and Tabariyah. I happened to be a spectator of it, in company with three friends, at the former place. On the morning of the 26th of April, 1862, a few days after the Feast of Bairam, we were at Baalbec, when we observed a crowd of people on the ridge east of the town. We climbed up to them, and found there apparently the whole Mahommedan population of the place. The women sat apart on a knoll in their white dresses; the men were dispersed in picturesque groups here and there, clad in clean, bright coloured cotton dresses; and the children played about among the groups. The scene was as gay and festive as it could be; and full in sight was the grand view of the Bekaa plain and the range of Lebanon, with the Baalbec Temple in the foreground. In the midst a circle of men and youths were performing a "sikr," and as it proceeded they worked themselves up into a state of frantic excitement. As the noise of the "sikr" increased, the detached groups closed in around them, and suddenly, as if by a simultaneous impulse, the performers leapt to their feet, and, without interrupting for a moment the wild chant, a procession was improvised, and the whole concourse streamed down the hill-side into the town. First marched men with eastern drums, drumming lustily; then men with a green banner; then came the performers in the "sikr," still mad with excitement; then the bewildered English "Howagees." Immediately in their rear came two "Shereefs" or descendants of the Prophet, in green turbans, on horseback; then more green flags and the rest of the men, while the rear was brought up by the women in white. All were yelling and howling with great energy, while the children danced about on our flanks like young imps. Arrived at the market-place, the procession suddenly broke up, the men, redoubling their vociferation, rushed on the "sikr" performers, slapped them on the back, screamed in their ears, and as it were huddled thirteen of them down to the ground side by side. Any traveller who knows the din which can be raised by half-a-dozen Arabs in so commonplace a matter as the choice of a porter to carry a portmanteau to his hotel, can readily understand that it was not easy to observe very accurately what was going on in the midst of the turmoil, but it seemed to me as if the crowd were endeavouring, half by force, half by persuasion, to induce others to submit to the ordeal. I observed, at all events, one or two men upon the ground who leapt up again with great alacrity while the confusion was at its height. At last, when thirteen men had thus prostrated themselves, there was a sudden lull in the tempest around. The crowd ceased to yell, formed a lane, where we obtained a front place

about the middle of the line of bodies, while one or two men passed over the bodies, packing them closely together in a very business-like manner, and arranging the head and feet of each person in a true line with the body. This done, we observed at the eastern end of the lane—the line of prostrate bodies lying east and west—the two shereefs. The elder was an old gentleman with grey beard, of a portly presence and good-natured face. I fancied he looked a little bored during the procession. He was mounted on a heavy and powerful flea-bitten white horse. The second shereef, the son I believe of the first, was a handsome slender youth of about seventeen, and was mounted on a neat little Arab mare. As the elder (and heavier) shereef approached, two men leading his horse by the bit, while some men with the green banners among them preceded him, the yelling broke out again louder than ever; the crowd in its frantic excitement surged to and fro; the men gesticulated; it was as if Pandemonium had broken loose; and in the midst the two shereefs approached. The crowd closed in behind them; and the knowledge that their retreat was thus cut off probably had its effect in inducing the horses to move forward: at last the elder shereef's horse reached the first body. For a moment it hung back, but the two men hauled in front, others pushed behind, the bystanders gesticulated and shouted, and the poor beast, bewildered and terrified, suddenly sprang forward, and at a pace between an amble and a scramble cleared the prostrate bodies, the two men who held the bit running lightly with bare feet over the heads and calves respectively of the devotees. The second shereef followed immediately, but his mare, having seen her companion show the way, passed with a light step over the bodies with very little hesitation or show of fear. The moment they had passed, the devotees sprang to their feet, the crowd surged in round them, and in a few seconds the tumult ceased; and, with the sudden change characteristic of the people, the faces even of the devotees resumed their usual calm and solemn expression. One man indeed lay rolling on the ground apparently in a fit, nobody paying much attention to him, but he soon got up and walked away with an indifferent air.

Probably at least one-half of the devotees were trod upon by one or the other of the horses, and the first horse was a heavy, clumsy animal. Nor did his action in passing over the bodies, almost leaping upon them from the ground, diminish the momentum of the impact of his feet upon their bodies, and yet no one seemed to be hurt.

Perhaps the ceremony may be already extinct. I do not recollect any description of it, except at Cairo, in any book; and so, as one of the objects of the Palestine Exploration Fund is to collect the customs of the country, this narrative may find a spare corner in one of our *Quarterly Statements*.

W. M.