

## WOMAN IN THE EAST.

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## CHAPTER VII.—EVERY-DAY LIFE.

THE newly-married couple are the talk of the village for several days, the wedding criticised or praised till everyone is acquainted with the details. The woman's duty now begins; she has a family responsibility. Most of her doings have already been stated in Chapters II and III. The water is always brought in by the woman carrying the skin water-bottle on her back, or else the earthenware jar on her head; a large jar is placed in a corner of the room, and the skin bottle is emptied into this. If the husband possesses a flock or cattle, the milking business is generally the work of the woman, aided by the shepherds; she dexterously holds the milk jug and one leg of the goat or sheep between her knees and draws the milk from both teats alternatively. If the village is near a town the woman carries the milk to clients, or for sale on the market, and, alas! here, as all the world over, this market milk is often doubled in quantity by water and often whitened by an ingredient. Those villagers who frequent the towns are more corrupt and foul-mouthed than their more secluded country sisters; they are ready to swear "God and the prophets!" for the purity and freshness of their articles, no matter how far away from truth it may be. My father, who generally bought or received the milk from the milkwoman, said one day to her: "Now, look here, be careful another time at least to put in *clean* and *sweet* water." The milkwoman swore that they "always take it from Job's well." Job's well is a deep well near Jerusalem. When Jerusalem wants water—which happens as often as rains are rare during the winter—the people of Siloam near by take the water from it in skin bottles on their donkeys' backs to the Jerusalem market for sale. This is the only sweet water then to be had in abundance. Siloam has another fountain with brackish water, which is utilised only when none from Job's well can be had in years of drought. The milkwoman was ever after ashamed of her unheeded confession.

Where they have plenty of milk, the woman's chief work is to carry it daily into the market in small jugs. As the Arabs are very fond of sour milk, this is sold in every Arabic town. Half-a-dozen or more of such small jugs are put together in the wicker-work basket and carried to the market on the head. The women are very dexterous in carrying loads on their heads and keeping them in equilibrium. Everything, except the babies and the skin water-bottle, is carried on their heads. If the milk is not sold in the town, on account of the distance, it is made into butter or cheese. The milk is put in a skin bottle, which is blown up with the liquid in it and tied up fast; this is to give an empty space to facilitate the churning. The bottle is now suspended to three sticks attached together and forming a coverless tent; the bottle is held by the woman sitting down and rocked to and fro for an hour or so till the butter is made. When a sufficient quantity of butter is made it is either sold fresh in the market by the woman, who takes every saleable thing, as hens, pigeons, eggs, milk, vegetables, to form a load worth the journey, or else it is stored away, either for home use or to be sold as cooking butter. *Samn* is indispensable to the townspeople and always fetches a good price. This is the butter cooked till no watery part remains, saffron being added to give it a yellow colour. It is liked best thus and keeps for months. If there is any very large quantity of *samn* it is put into skin bottles and sold in the bazaars by the men; women always sell small quantities. When the butter is taken out, the skimmed milk is used as food by the members of the family. The skimmed milk is put into a sack, and after the water has dropped, the remaining substance is made into small cakes, well salted, and put to dry in the sun. These small white cakes are sold when dry, and when no fresh sour milk can be had, or are used in the family. They resemble pebbles, and when wanted for food are put into a wooden basin with water and rubbed till they are dissolved. In this way the water dried out by the sun is again added, and the sour milk is eaten with almost the same relish as when it was fresh.

The fig trees which belong to the family are put in charge of the women as soon as the first fruits begin to ripen. A hut is built in the fig garden, and the whole family remove to this hut during the summer months, not only from the villages but also from many minor towns, as Hebron, Gaza, Ramleh, Lydda, and others. The women daily gather the figs and put them to dry

on red earth in the sun, in a shut-up space, to prevent the dogs, chickens, or children walking over or eating the fruit by day, and to keep away the jackals and foxes by night. This is certainly the happiest time in the year for the women and girls. With their loud rolling notes they sing from morning to night. Very often one girl sings a line, and another in the next garden one, or even across the valley on the slope of the opposite mountain, a girl continues the second line and so on. The dried figs are stored away for winter food. In some places where they have too many for the family use, they sell them in the markets of Jerusalem and Jaffa. Long garlands of dried figs are put on a string, weighing together seven or eight pounds. This is a speciality of some villages north of Jerusalem, as Bethel, Gibeon, Ram-Allab, Nazareth, and its villages. Es Salt is renowned for its figs and raisins.

About November the olives begin to ripen, and though the men have here the more difficult task of taking or beating down the fruit an active part is reserved to the women, who whilst gathering the fruit from the ground, say or sing verses or repetitions of two lines, always repeated by one part of the workers whilst the other part take breath. "Oh, olives, become citrons," *i.e.*, as big as citrons, is repeated a dozen or more times, then another sentence is said till one of the party has hit a better idea; all the while the berries are gathered in the baskets, and thence into the goat's-hair sack, never without calling on the "name of the Lord" to prevent the Jân eating part of the olives. The olives are taken to the oil mill by the men, as the village itself often has no mill. The first olives falling prematurely to the ground are gathered by the women alone, and are crushed on a flat rock with a stone and then put in water to extract the oil; this is the finest oil that can be had. This mode of beating the fruit is most primitive and ancient. Such oil Moses commanded the children of Israel, in Exodus xxvii, 20, to bring for the use of the light in the tabernacle; it is said there "beaten oil," which answers well.

From time to time the women and girls go together to bring home wood or whatever fuel they can find. This is considered by most as a kind of picnic; they go singing up and down between the rocks and bushes, and every one is busy gathering as big a bundle as she feels she can well carry home on her head, often many miles, for Palestine, and especially Judea, is now quite denuded of forests—thorn, thyme, or sage bushes often being the

only "wood" they bring home. Whilst on their way home the mountains re-echo again and again with their merry voices, though to the Occidental's unaccustomed ears it seems like wailing, still it is full of joy and life. They are quite free on these errands, as being almost the only time when they are (expected to be) quite abandoned to themselves and unobserved by any man.

The songs here also are often improvised on the existing tunes, sometimes they may be in connection with what is done, sometimes romantic adventures, princely honours; the load of wood is turned into costly presents, they themselves are turned into fairies, and so forth. The beloved comes forth to meet her (though he never does, in fact), and has a camel and slave to serve her. These all show how the present population have thoroughly changed in gallantry towards their women, which lives on only in their poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The bundles, according to the nature of the material, are often higher than the women themselves. Large circular bundles, sometimes not thicker than two feet, nicely arranged, are carried home by long files of women. In the plains, where wood, bushes, and even straw is wanting, the fuel consists of cattle manure.

Charcoal is seldom used by the Fellahin. If they are charcoal burners themselves the coals are taken to the towns for sale where alone charcoal is burned. In the country they burn exclusively wood or thorns for cooking, and manure for the oven; whilst in the towns wood or thorns are burned in ovens, and charcoal in the kitchen.<sup>2</sup>

As in the fig gardens, so also those possessing vineyards go to live there from the moment the grape berries begin to look like

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mr. Justice Ameer Ali, in an article in "The Nineteenth Century" for May, 1899, shows that the degradation of the Moslem woman is of comparatively recent date. He states that: "Almost to the end of the twelfth century women mixed with men with dignity and self-respect, held reunions, gave concerts, and received visitors." Of the lady Sukaina, who was a grand-daughter of Fâtima, he says: "She gave the tone to the cultured society of her age. The reunions in her house of the poets, scholars, jurists, and other distinguished people of both sexes, became the model for similar social gatherings at the residences of other ladies of fashion." Mr. Justice Ali states that Kâdir the Abbasside promulgated the edict forbidding women to appear in public without the *burka*, and adds significantly, "and with that commenced the decadence of Islâm."

<sup>2</sup> Charcoal is also used in the towns in the *manḥāl*, or chafing-dish, for warming rooms.

grapes, for the Arabs in general almost prefer the green unripe grapes to the ripe ones. Green grapes always find a ready market, being used either for dyeing wool, together with the necessary colour (the acid of the grapes fixes the colour), or else they are sold for flavouring the food or eaten raw.

Hebron, a Mohammedan town, is all surrounded by vineyards, and the best Palestine grapes grow there. Here the townspeople become Fellahin during the summer, living in the vineyards, and are occupied all the time. Where the grapes are not sold to Jews or Christians of Jerusalem (in Hebron itself only Jews live besides the Mohammedans), the grapes when ripe are cooked in large kettles after having been crushed in rock-cut reservoirs, from which the sweet juice flows into a second reservoir, reminding us of the "brooks of honey" mentioned by Job xx, 17. The juice gathered is boiled during several hours, and these molasses are very much in request amongst all classes of the population. The women's part in this work does not go beyond bringing the grapes and preparing the jars to receive the molasses and grape conserve. The merchants of Hebron go about from village to village selling this grape treacle to the Fellahin, who put it away for the winter months.

Life in the vineyards in the summer months is certainly a time when a good deal of care is done away with. It is pleasant living, fruits to eat, no house sweeping, and all kinds of house-work reduced to the least. The second chapter of the Song of Solomon is, perhaps, the best example. It is like living amongst the Fellahin, feeling with them, to read it, and remark the details. The vines with the tender (unripe) grape give a good smell. "Take heed of the foxes that destroy the vine . . . a roe on the mountains of Bether."

Solomon had certainly passed days and nights in the vineyards of Bether, where I never remember to have passed without seeing gazelles roaming about on the mountains.

Where they keep bees, the women take an active part in harvesting the honey. A man is usually the bee-master for the whole district, having all the paraphernalia appertaining to bee-culture, consisting of a jar-bee-smoker, a mask, leather gloves and boots, and a large knife to cut out the comb. The cut out combs are handed over to the women, who press out the honey between their hands in a dark room, and with heaps of manure burning before the door to keep away the bees, which still may try to enter. The pressed out comb-balls, dripping with honey, are washed as clean

as possible, the comb reduced to wax, whilst the sweet water of the washings is boiled, flour being added all the time, till the whole is almost as thick as honey. It is now poured on laid-out sheets, and left to dry for a day or two. Pine-seeds are strewn on the paste as long as it is still warm and soft. This sweet, known as "malban," when dry has the appearance of very light-coloured leather. It can easily be torn, and is either sold or stored away for winter food. Usually it is eaten in winter-evening assemblies, after a game or story-telling. It is saleable only where the women are experts in manufacturing it. Small bee-keepers keep it generally for family use. The crushed and pressed combs are put into sacks and boiled in water. The wax always finds a ready market. Pure wax candles are sold by the thousand in Jerusalem, about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mosque. Those sold to Christians are ornamented with scenes of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ; whilst Mohammedan pilgrims only buy such as have no images whatever. The Christian candles are many-coloured, and the Mohammedans' usually dirty white, and offered in the sanctuaries as a vow for the recovery from sickness, deliverance from accidents, safe arrival home again after a long journey.

The vow in the fashion of Samuel's mother's vow is not so usual—at least, not among the Mohammedans. Christians dedicate their children to such-and-such a saint. For example, a child may be dedicated to Saint Francis for a year or two—the boy then wears a monk's hood for the time; whilst Mohammedans and Christians vow to saints or prophets in case of help, a quantity of wax candles, olive oil to burn in the sanctuary, or a sacrifice of a kid or lamb. Thus the person vowing may say: "O ever-green Green One" (St. George of the Christians), "I offer you a lamb and two pounds of pure wax candles if thou savest me from this water," if in danger of being drowned. Or: "If thou savest my boy from the small-pox, O Prophet Reuben, I offer thee a lamb and three pounds of oil." These vows are made by both sexes alike, and are often fulfilled months or years afterwards; as long as the person has the intention of holding his promise, there is no harm in putting it off till a favourable occasion. As they are very expensive, as many as possible of the friends and relations are invited.

Having received one day from the mother of a boy who had recovered from the small-pox an invitation to assist, we started to the Greek Church of St. George, though the vower was a

Mohammedan. The men with firearms were firing all the way; the women, in their best clothes—excepting the mother, who, as a widow, never put on any gaudy apparel—were singing all the while. When we arrived at the church and convent, which is also an asylum for lunatics, the abbot, as the custom is, gave the kettles and wood to prepare the sacrifice. The men killed the lamb in the courtyard of the convent, and cooked it, except the head, feet, liver, lungs, and skin, which belong to the convent as tax. A kettle of rice is now boiled, and all is served in the large wooden dishes (*batié*). Before the food is ready the men and women all touch the huge iron chain which is fixed in the wall of the church, and to which lunatics are chained, and are supposed to be healed, after a stay of several days or weeks, by the influence of St. George. The chapel is opened, and everybody visits the sanctuary. Now the women dance and sing in front of the chapel during several hours. The abbot receives a small sum of money for his services, lending the kettle and the wood, besides the meat already mentioned. The abbot was about seventy years of age, and, like all Greek abbots in Palestine, talked only broken Arabic. Notwithstanding his age, he calmly stood the shouting and shooting within the walls of the convent as quietly as the thousands of pigeons nestling all along the old convent walls in crevices and holes, old jars and boxes hung up for the purpose. Everybody seemed impassive and accustomed to these ceremonies, and went on with their duties as if nobody was there. The abbot took us up to his reception-room, put a table and plates at our disposal, and bade us partake of the sacrifice in his rooms. Coffee was served afterwards, and, the vow thus having been performed, the whole company went home singing and shooting, as they came.

Vows are sometimes either forgotten or neglected, and the following fable illustrates this class:—"A fox was roaming about the mountains, looking for a lizard here and a bird there, when all of a sudden two hounds were on his track. He ran hard for his life, but, being almost overtaken, he said: 'O Prophet Saleh, if thou rescuest me from these dogs, I will give thee a measure of lentils and a wax candle for thy sanctuary.' At once the hounds lost his track, and the fox drew breath. After trotting awhile he said to himself: 'I'm a good runner anyhow, and have escaped those dogs. It is true I vowed; but then I am no farmer, and produce no lentils, nor do I own any bees to give the prophet wax candles.' He had hardly finished this soliloquy, when suddenly

the hounds reappeared. The fox again ran as fast as he could, and said: 'O prophet, take your measure and follow me; I'll give you the lentils at once.' So he was again saved."

During the harvest the women pick out the best straws they can find, and bind them into bundles; in their leisure hours they make baskets, trays, and the like for the household furniture. Some of the straws are coloured green or red, and symmetrically woven into the work, designed generally in curves or broken lines. Some are very dexterous in making these trays, and produce a certain quantity for sale, for they always find a ready market.

Almost every woman or girl gleans wheat or barley for her own benefit, if her time is not wholly taken up by her husband, or brother, or father. The gleaned bundles are nicely arranged, and put in a heap beside the other corn; on account of their being particularly fixed up and fast tied together, these bundles are easily recognised and respected by everyone. The women in their spare time knock out the grain with a stone, and store it away or sell it at once in the neighbourhood of the threshing-floor to travelling grain-merchants. If, as in many cases, the family be short of flour, she is supposed to lend them this grain for the time being for family use; but seldom, if ever, will she receive it back again if she does not take it by force. If she sells it, the money is put on her head-dress, or, if a widow, lent out on interest or used for her own wants. As already remarked, the woman's purse is quite separate from that of the whole family. In some cases, also, she will invest her money in live stock—sheep, goats, cows, or the like, which are a continual source of profit, as on no account will she pay anything for stable rent or shepherd, unless the whole herd be her own. In this last case the husband benefits by the milk, cheese, butter, and a sacrifice from time to time. This arrangement is tolerated by the husband to a certain degree, as it discharges him of many obligations, such as paying the tax, for sheep and goats have to pay a Government tax of about 15 cents. a head; besides, the husband is considered poor, and unable to contribute to municipal wants, though he personally benefits to a great extent.

Sacks of goats' hair and carpets of wool, saddle-bags, baby-sacks (in which the women carry the babies on their backs when going on errands), and the like are all woven by the women; they are not all experts in this, but generally such as either possess herds themselves, or whose husbands or next-of-kin are shepherds. The woman works at a fixed price per yard, and is generally fed



by the party to whom the carpet belongs as long as the work lasts. The apparatus is of the most primitive kind. Most women and girls can spin, and they may be seen all about the towns spinning as they walk. A bundle of wool, or wool and hair, is rolled round the right arm, and the little distaff is spun continually on an uplifted knee as they walk along, thus spinning the threads for the future carpet or sack. The carpet manufacture itself is also very simple. Four pegs are driven into the ground at the proper distance, according to the quantity of thread ready, but seldom over a yard and a third in breadth, whilst the length may be many yards. Two thick sticks form the beginning and the end, fastened against the pegs mentioned. The threads are now drawn across from end to end and one touching the other, necessarily in an upper and a lower row. A flat piece of wood several inches wide and well polished, usually of oak, is passed between the threads, dividing them or changing the position, pushing the upper down and the lower up. This shuttle is not always used; the ball of thread is simply rolled in an oval shape, and thus passes to and fro. To fasten the cross-threads, the woman has a gazelle-horn, the point of which is slightly filed to form a hook, and thus pulls each thread backwards into position. The operation takes less time to do than to describe in words, although, as the whole work is very long, it may take some weeks to make a carpet. As the work is always done in the open air, and must remain in position, a man generally sleeps by it at night, to watch against mischief or thieves. The woman is only responsible by day; she is never expected to watch by night.

All the woman's earnings are her private property. Though in some cases her husband furnishes her with necessary clothing, in most cases she buys it herself. She has also to furnish the oil for lighting the house from her own money, and she knows well how to calculate what may belong to her husband and what to her. On returning from market the women sit down with their empty baskets and square up the accounts before going to their homes. In her spare time the woman mends and also makes the clothes for herself, husband, and children. It is true it does not require very much skill, as the whole consists in a kind of very large shirt with very wide sleeves: thus a few inches more or less does not matter, and the merchant of whom the sheeting and shirting are bought knows exactly how many yards are wanted for a suit. The men are all

clothed in a white shirt or gown, which is for the most part of the year the only clothing they wear; towards winter a second gown, either yellow or red-striped, is worn. Women are always clothed in blue—a long blue shirt or gown of coarse sheeting, hanging down to the feet, and with very wide sleeves form her every-day clothing. Dirty clothes are generally carried to the nearest running water; sometimes this is far from the village, and where there are only wells, water must be drawn; but seldom are things washed with warm water. In houses where they have cows or camels a second hand-mill for breaking the vetches is to be found, and the woman also prepares these, which, after being broken, are slightly wetted so as to render them soft, and when the camels or cows come home in the evening after a day's labour they find their supper awaiting them.

The woman is called by her name and the name of her father; never does the name of the husband apply to the wife. Thus, if the woman's name be Fatmé and her father's name 'Ali, she will be called Fatmé 'Ali as long as she is without children; as soon as she has a child she will be called after the name of her eldest son or daughter if she has no son. If her son be Eh'mad, she will be called Im Eh'mad, that is "mother of Eh'mad." This is the politest way of calling a woman; if she has no children she can even be called "Mother of 'Ali," her father's name.

#### CHAPTER VIII.—TRAINING THE CHILDREN.

This is a most neglected matter, at least in my opinion. It is more of a let-it-alone system than anything else. Boys are more left to their own free will than girls, and they are even taught to curse and to swear when they can only just pronounce the first words. As a matter of course, when only one boy is in the family he is the tyrant, and his will dominates over all. When there are more than one, and perhaps some girls, then necessarily the parents are more severe, and sometimes administer brutal correction; there is nothing like a kind, systematic bringing up. As with all illiterate people, amusement of some sort must be had, and the children naturally form one source of general amusement. They are considered most clever when they can abuse the bystanders or the squatters in the circle of visitors. No wonder, then, if the stranger riding through a village finds himself assailed by the younger generation, cursing, and even throwing stones for nothing more than their own

childish amusement. This is rarely done to Arab strangers, but is reserved for Occidentals, as these are considered in all Mohammedan countries, and more so in out-of-the-way places, to be mortal enemies. The boys and girls of six to ten years old keep the kids and lambs round about the village. When the girls are older, but not after puberty, they may also be shepherdesses, if the family have no boy. But after puberty a boy is taken, who may at the same time serve as shepherd for seven years and receive a girl for his wages, as Jacob did with Laban. Thus in a family where there are more boys than necessary for the wants of the family, one or two may be sent to serve outside, and villages which are near towns send their boys to work in the stone quarries or at mason's yards. Mohammedan girls are kept at home till they marry, but some villages near Jerusalem have begun to send their daughters as servant girls to the town. Amongst the Christian population of Bethlehem, Ramallah, and some other places, girls are regularly found in the houses of Occidentals as cooks, or the like.

A servant girl from Bethlehem, staying as cook in a French hotel at Jaffa (illiterate, as they generally are), one day received a letter from her mother, and though fully acquainted with the contents several days before receiving it, as the letter was written in public, the girl brought the letter to me and asked me to read it. She told me her mother wanted two wooden bowls and a trunk. The letter was worded thus:—

*“From Bethlehem to Jaffa.*

*“3rd November, 1891.*

*“Eastern calendar.*

*“To the most honoured and excellent lady the respected Catherina,  
God liveth and endureth for ever. Amen!*

*“After having settled on the principal question, that is, your dear health and security, which is with us the essential cause of writing, and the occasion of our prayers; firstly, if your question about us be admitted, we are, God be praised, in perfect happiness, and do nothing but ask about you and the security of your health which is with us the essential cause of writing, and the occasion of prayer. Secondly, that you send to ask us why we never answer, seeing ‘by the Almighty God’ we have sent you four answers, two by the post and two by the camel drivers, nor do we know what is the matter that they never arrived. After that we assure you that we are continually pleased with you, and ask the*

Virgin the mother of the beloved, that you may soon be united with us, by the help of the Lord Christ. Then your brothers, Elias and Jirius, salute you with many salutations, and your sisters, Sultany and Maria, are in perfect health and salute you. You have sent to ask about the health of Joseph, your brother's son; he is, to God be praise, in all health and security, so you must not be troubled at all. Also we ask of you, our beloved and honoured daughter, to send us two wooden bowls, without mistake, by the kind camel driver, my contentment rest on you. I also announce to you that we have let the house to Aziz, the son of 'Otallah Ody, and he sends you salutations, and even Khaleel 'Otallah salutes you, and your brother, Elias, salutes you, and begs you to send him a Hungarian trunk, like the trunk of Tufaha, the daughter of your uncle, Jirius. For its price is from us, and when you will face us we will repay you its price. What we now want we have told you, and if you want anything tell us. God liveth and endureth!

"Praying for you. In the honoured, holy and blessed Nativity Church, Helwy.

"The writer of these words, your uncle's son, Salamy, salutes you with many salutations, may you live and endure.

"To be addressed to the esteemed and honoured Mister Baseel, whose presence may it live. Jirius and Khaleel.

"'Otallah salute him, and from his hand to be rendered to the excellent lady the respected Catherina."

On account of their going to European mission schools many Christian villagers are brighter, cleaner, and more up to the times, though despised by the more austere Mohammedans, who either never go to any schools at all, or else go to the village schools, which have been instituted of late, and are intended to be obligatory under penalty of paying a certain sum for those who do not attend; this last object is never missed by the greedy officials, ever ready to take advantage of the slightest money-making occasion. A teacher is appointed to every village by the Government to oppose the Christian mission schools. Months and months may pass ere this unfortunate schoolmaster receives his pay, but as the school children have to furnish him with a certain quantity of bread and whatever they may happen to possess, he is at least kept from starving.

In and about the house the countrywoman is more of a personality than her sister of the town. She has all the house-

hold affairs necessarily under her control, as the husband is often absent for days and even weeks. Being never veiled, like the townswoman, she can step in and out freely, look after the animals, and to some extent give information to her husband, and at least strongly influence him in regard to his business with strangers.

When visitors come the elder girls and wife are to keep aside, bringing only the food; but they never entertain male visitors. Female visitors are very rare, except on solemn occasions—as births, deaths, marriages, and in these cases they are received only by the women. The younger children, boys or girls, of course, come to sit down in their father's lap and listen to what is said, or partake of the food with the strangers. Women come and congratulate when a child is born, as has already been mentioned. When the children grow older, a boy of twelve or more is utterly out of his mother's control. Girls are influenced a few years longer, but obedience is next to unknown; yet there exists a natural reciprocal dependence which makes the families very intimate, especially as regards the family interests. Thus a child of seven or eight will defend the family rights like a grown-up person among Occidentals. Their living in one room and assisting in all conversations explains how they are so soon versed in all family incidents, and can even keep secrets; for necessarily their bloody feuds often oblige them to have secrets. Even before a boy arrives at the age of puberty he may receive a turban, which he gets either when he marries or even before, on a feast day. If the proud father, anxious to show off his offspring, hands him a turban, it is wonderful, if not amusing, to see the little man of ten or twelve years old squatting down gravely for the first time, seemingly conscious of the new era of life now dawning upon him.

Then, also, the sexes separate in their play, which up to this first growing out of childhood had been in common.

Still, brothers and sisters protect each other for the causes already mentioned, the family circle is holy, and every inmate is considered of one flesh. Therefore, also, the mother, though very much esteemed by her children, still, in family matters, may be wholly sacrificed for the sake of her family, who are perhaps on bad terms.

## CHAPTER IX.—SICKNESS AND DEATH.

When a person is reported to be seriously ill, the room is soon filled with noisy visitors—men, women, and children; if it is winter, a fire is made, filling the room with dense smoke, whilst all kinds of remedies are discussed by all and every one at a time, so that the person interested may hear a portion of this remark and another of that. Fresh visitors pour in, the others leave, and, in fact, such a sick room is easily recognised by its beehive appearance, where continually some are going and some are coming. They are not in the least sympathetic with the sick; they talk of his malady in the harshest way, or draw him into their conversation, however disagreeable this may be, and coffee-drinking and pipe-smoking are continually indulged in.

No matter how contagious the sickness, none refrain from visiting. They have sometimes doctors of their own, but generally this is the priest, who writes a few mysterious nonsensical words, and may give this to the patient to swallow, or put under his pillow, and so forth. Barbers are the doctors in more serious cases, and they either give purgatives or bleed the patient. Yet, again, the national remedy is fire applied to any part of the body and in very different ways—either simply with burning lint, or with a red-hot iron or nail applied to the crown of the head, to the arm, temple, and so forth. Efficacious as the fire remedy may be in some cases—as, for instance, a venomous bite—yet they do not apply it then, as they believe the bite is burning already, and fire would make matters worse. European doctors are called for in extreme cases, and are also paid highly; but doctors' prescriptions are never followed fully, they follow them partially, and should the remedy not produce immediate benefit it is at once discarded, and the doctor called a humbug. Hygienic rules are still more difficult to be enforced, thus rendering the doctor's task difficult, if not impossible. Nature, as everywhere else, helps more surely and rapidly. Strained nerves are unknown, and so is punctuality.

They are subject to the same ills as are foreigners, with this difference—that the foreigner more surely gets the intermittent fever and is harassed by it, whilst the indigenous inhabitants may sometimes escape from it, according to the position of the village and the occupation, whether they stay at home or are obliged to go to the low lands during the summer months. The

plains of Sharon, Jezreel, and the Jordan Valley are terrible centres, especially the last-named. In the year 1874 I passed two months there with several hundred Fellahin of the Judean mountains; I do not think that a single person escaped the fever, and more than fifty per cent. lost their lives. Though more than twenty years have passed I still feel the effects.

They live, however, to an old age too, as in northern climes. It has often been supposed that, as they really begin life so very much earlier than Occidentals, they die earlier too. But though they do not count their age, and if asked will reply: "God alone can know"; still the age can be discovered by periods which they point out. I have known many very old people of eighty or ninety, and above. Thus it may be safe to say that the average is the same as everywhere else. Great events in Palestine history, which impressed themselves on the minds of the people, are: — Buonaparte's war in 1798; the first Jerusalem revolt, 1820; Grecian wars, 1820-30; Egyptian invasion and government, 1830-40; Crimean War, 1855-58; Christian massacre in the Lebanon, 1860; Locusts in 1866-67; and so forth.

A moslem of either sex when dying is turned with the face towards the Kibleh, *i.e.*, where the religious feelings are concentrated at Mecca, and if any strength or presence of mind be left, the dying person says: "I witness, that there is but one God, and that Mohammed is the prophet of God." Everybody present witnesses the same. As soon as he or she is dead, the mollah is called for a man, and the midwife for a woman. The corpse is wholly washed by one of the abovenamed persons, with soap and water, the performer chaunting slow and melancholy chaunts all the time: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is God's prophet. God! Prayer be to Him and salutation." As at the burial of Jesus, new shirting is bought, and when all the issues have been stopped with cotton, the corpse is wrapped in this shroud and wholly sewed up. No woman may look at the face of a man after his burial ablution, except such as could never have expected to marry him, that is, his mother, sister, or daughter. His own wife is divorced, either because he pronounced a divorce himself, or else by the fact of his death; in consequence, a look from her, who is now a marriageable woman, would be considered as adultery. The same applies to a man in the case of a deceased woman. When the body is washed it is clean and ready to enter into judgment.

The body is always carried by men on a litter or in a

carpet towards the mosque, where it is put down for awhile, the men chaunting all the time in two parties: "There is but one God," &c.; whilst one party chaunts, the other takes breath. When the body is put down, the whole assembly of men sit down round about in front, the women further off. The priest reads chapters of the Koran, and when this is done they take up the body, and proceed chaunting to the cemetery. The women follow behind, crying and shouting and singing; the next of kin and friends with dishevelled hair and no head-cloth on; the clothes are rent from top to almost bottom (but for decency's sake, as they have only this one on, they sew it up in large stitches, to show that it was rent). They put earth on the head, and sometimes their faces are blackened with soot. Though they are reproved occasionally by the men, and bade to be quiet, as it is sinful to mourn, yet this goes on, the warnings or threatenings being unheeded.

The grave is very shallow, the body is placed between two rows of large stones, and covered with flat stones above, thus forming a space in which the dead may move, if asked to do so after the burial is over. It is believed by Mohammedans that when the body is alone in the grave he or she awakes, and sits up, and says: "God! have I died?" Then they see two executors of justice—Nakir and Nekeer—armed with clubs, fiercely looking at the person. In front is Roman, the examining angel. He interrogates about the good and bad deeds done during lifetime; of course, here is no denial, and for the good, Roman shows the most shining face and widens the grave, whilst for the wicked he shows an ugly face, and the grave becomes so narrow as to make the bones crack in crossing each other. For every bad deed, moreover, the executors give two stripes with all their might. Good deeds are almsgiving during lifetime, and all other virtues. After this examination the person lies down to die again, and the soul of the Mohammedan goes to the Well of Souls at Jerusalem, whilst the Christians or Jews at once go to the devil, all awaiting the judgment day, which is to take place on the platform of Mount Moriah before the Temple.

Whilst the grave is being prepared the priest and all the people sit down, the priest chaunting all the while. The men are solemn, but the women now and then give vent to a shout, and are energetically called on to be quiet. "May God curse them," the men will say; nevertheless, this has no effect whatever on the women. As soon as the grave is covered all men embrace each other as a token of reconciliation for all wrongs they may have



done each other. All male relatives are invited to a supper by one of the relatives of the departed, no matter whether the departed be man, woman, or child. The supper differs in nothing from a wedding supper, except that the women do not sing or dance; yet it is not true that they are glad when a person dies, as has been represented by some writers. Some have pretended the joy to be on account of the supper to follow, yet again many are under the impression that the Mohammedans are glad when they have dead friends because they know them to be in Paradise. They really do believe that all true believers are admitted into eternal joy and luxury of all kinds, manufacturing their happiness as they expected it to have been on earth if wealth could have given it, but from this belief to joy for the departure of a dear person is a great way off, in spite of all their stoicism. An Arab proverb says: "A day on earth is worth more than one thousand below." This says more than heaps of commentaries. They also believe in purgatory. The pious go directly to Paradise, and generally such as die on Friday, but those that have done any deed needing expiation must suffer in the most cruel way for a time. A legend about a woman gives an idea of what this purgatory is like:—"A woman had a son very dangerously ill, and she vowed that if he should recover she would leave the world for seven days. When the son actually recovered she did not know how to fulfil her vow, so she went to one well-versed in law and religion, and asked him how she could perform her vow. He told her that she must be buried seven days; so she was buried, but had food and air to support her. As soon as the burial was over, a round opening was seen in her grave, by which celestial air entered. She ventured out and saw people in torture. Some were hanged by their eyelashes, others by the ears, others upside down, and they were receiving floggings. She also saw a woman of her own village hanged by her hair-plaits. The tormented woman smelt the earthly smell, and asked her if she would go back. When she had told her how she was only temporarily buried she begged her to tell her husband, who was still living, that she had stolen money from him and hid it in a certain place, and that he should look for the money and forgive her, as without his forgiveness she would continually be tortured. Accordingly when the seven days were over, the buried woman was disinterred and came back, but nobody would acknowledge her, as purgatory air had wholly blackened her. When at length they were induced to believe it was herself, and had been told what sufferings await the wicked beyond the tomb, and especially when she told the man about his wife's message, they

believed in these things, and also now know what it is to be dead and buried."

The day after burial the women assemble early in the morning and go to the grave, where they wail, now quietly weeping for the dead, now with dishevelled hair jumping and dancing in a circle, holding each other's hands. From time to time they loose the hands, and while hopping strike themselves in the face with both hands at a time, three or four times in succession. Having wailed for the space of an hour they go home, to begin again the next morning, till the following Thursday. On this day oil-cakes are made and eaten at the cemetery by everyone present.<sup>1</sup> Men never join in these wailings. Thus the wailing goes on seven consecutive Thursdays, or until the great Thursday of the dead, which is in Spring, about the Greek Easter. This duty-day is obligatory to everybody. Food of all kinds is carried to the tombs and eaten by everyone. This practice is common to Christians and Mohammedans, townspeople and villagers. They carry the food according to wealth in greater or lesser quantities to be given to all present. The food is called "Mercy," and nobody is expected to refuse. When I was a small boy I remember the quantities of food the Jerusalem people had at the entrance of the cemetery. Usually there was cooked wheat, well sweetened with honey, which the women distributed, giving the passers a big spoonful, or throwing it into the pails of the beggars who flock around the cemeteries on Thursdays. This food distributing, as its name implies, is made to implore mercy for the repose of the departed.

The women go about with rent garments for months, or even years, according to the degree of affliction. Some do not wash the white head-cloth as long as they are afflicted, others do not even wash their own faces. This last practice is the more striking amongst the Christians of Bethlehem, because they are particularly careful about the cleanliness of their clothes, and the whiteness of the head-cloth.

Mohammedan men never show by any outward and visible sign the real affliction caused by a death; all show is considered sinful, though some are as sorry as they can be. A young man had two wives, one very ugly, who had sons and daughters, but was not loved in spite of this. His second wife was beautiful, and

<sup>1</sup> *Eating at Graves.*—This is also an ancient and widespread custom. It appears to originate in the idea of feeding the spirits of the dead, who can be nourished, as it were, on the ghostly part of the food eaten by the living.—C. R. C.

had an only daughter. Being very pretty, this child was the pet of the family, at least the half of the family which was on the side of the beautiful wife. When the girl was about three years old she got the whooping cough and died. The disconsolate father was angry with Providence, and thus expressed himself: "God left me my stupid, ugly son, but my good and wise daughter was too good for this world. I think the world is only made for the foolish to live on, the clever are taken away prematurely."

Another case of a man who lost his wife, and whom I assisted, shows the deep sorrow which men feel, and even show, on some occasions. When the corpse was brought and laid down in front of the tomb, a kind of ossuary, the husband objected for fear of the rains entering in and wetting her. He told the assembly that he had lost his own self; though he had many grown up sons and married daughters, he considered them all not even worth repeating their names.

Several men tried to console him in some way or other, but to no effect.

Now Ibrahim, the husband of the deceased, said: "Carefully put her alone; don't mingle the bones of the other dead with hers."

One of the assembly said: "At the resurrection all creation will be gathered, and there will be no fear about the individualities; every bone will go to its owner, no matter how dispersed they may be."

Says Ibrahim: "Don't talk nonsense; this is the priest's invention. I think that all flesh is as grass: it withers, decays, and will never be restored to its primitive form."

One of the assembly: "This is blasphemy; we all know that the resurrection of the body is true, and you will meet her again."

Ibrahim answered: "Good people, then I am an unbeliever, and if God had anything to do with it, or power to do so, he would have spared my wife. For myself I see and know she is dead for ever and ever."

#### CHAPTER X.—RELIGION AND PRACTICE.

Whether among Christians or Mohammedans, religious life does not extend beyond keeping the feasts and fasts, and in very rare cases also saying prayers. Application in practical life of any precept is almost unknown. And especially women, who consider themselves inferior to men, are convinced that as long as the men do not show by their deeds what a pure and holy life represents,

women are exempt from every religious practice, or rather they do not think at all about it.

Crimes, such as murder, theft of the burglarious order, or incest, are really considered sinful, but outside this the everyday incidents—minor thefts, lying, and slandering—are not considered such crimes as can throw a shadow on a person's character.

In the Bible women are mentioned very often, and their religious feelings must have been very much the same as those of the modern Fallâha if we except a few here and there. We can very well follow their lives and classify them as now into townswomen, Fellahîn, and Bedawîn.

As already mentioned the feasts and fasts of Ramadân are kept by the women as well as by the men. Prayers are also said by a few. Two principal feasts are observed—the Thursday of the dead may be excepted, for this is considered a duty day.

The feast of Bairam lasts for three days after the thirty days' fasting, when clothes are renewed. To the prayer everybody then comes in his best clothes. At this feast every head of a family kills a goat or sheep and eats it with his friends and relatives. The greeting on the feast days is: "May you be in peace (or present without infirmity) every year"; and the answer: "And you, too, in peace"; this is exchanged by everybody. The women do not stretch out the bare hand, but cover it with their long sleeves, and bow down to kiss the hand of the man.

The second feast is held sixty-five days later. According to Mohammedan tradition, this is the feast held in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ishmael on Moriah. The centre of the feasting is on Mount 'Arafat, near Mecca, whither thousands and thousands of sacrifices are brought by the pilgrims, and as every pilgrim brings a sacrifice, it is evident that a very small quantity of the meat can be eaten. Immeasurable heaps of meat are left to putrify and poison the whole neighbourhood. Though the Government employs men to bury the remaining meat, and though a certain class of pilgrims from Central Africa and the Soudan remain there and dry the meat and live on it for a year, still it is not possible to destroy all the blood and skins and so forth, or to prevent the whole region being filled with a pestiferous odour, and diseases of all kinds are carried home into all countries inhabited by Islam. During this great feast everyone at home also sacrifices, and portions of meat are sent to the relatives, usually to a daughter or sister married in another village. Olive twigs are stuck around the door-posts as a sign of peace, and the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled on the posts and the lintel.

The mollah, who is the only literate person in the village, reads chapters of the Koran before the whole assembly after having said prayers. Most of the features of this feast have evidently been handed down from generation to generation. The blood sprinkling dates as far back as the departure from Egypt. The sending of portions is found in Nehemiah, together with the reading of the law: Ezra then opened the book and the people listened attentively, lifted up their hands and bowed their heads. Just as, after the prayer, Nehemiah commanded the people to *bring portions* to them for whom nothing is prepared, the Fellahin carry the portions to all relatives and friends. Years ago, when I lived in the village of certain Mohammedans, almost every family sent me portions, though not a Mohammedan; and we all were considered as worthy of receiving the sanctified food. Though it is meant only for believers in their faith, the people never considered us as thorough infidels, as we always respected their feelings and assisted at such of their religious ceremonies as allowed of our being present. The native Christians are called Nazarenes by the Mohammedans, whilst Europeans in general are called Franks. Those who have more to do with European and native Christians make this a marked difference, but in out-of-the-way places, such as have no contact with strangers, call all non-Mohammedans *kufar* or infidels. Their law leaves a margin for the Christian as long as he lives, *i.e.*, he is not accursed by law, for he may convert himself on his death-bed, whilst the dead Christian is accursed, as having departed this life without passing into Islam. A Jew is accursed while alive, for a Jew can only become Mohammedan after having previously become a Christian, and then turning Mohammedan. Wherefore the Koran says: "Cursed be the dead of the Christians, and cursed be the Jews." The aversion Islam has towards images and pictures, with which most Christian churches are decorated, and to the cross surmounting religious edifices is a great obstacle against conversion to Christianity. But the most serious obstacle, besides the mystery of the Holy Trinity—as against their one God—and a single wife in marriage, is the rivalry of the different churches, and the manifold pitiful quarrels in which they are often engaged.

Be it said, to the shame of many Christian churches, that they even buy their converts with money and promises, and, what is yet more sad to confess, that the churches buy their adherents from each other—that is, take them away from one church into another. Mohammedans are rarely converted in Palestine. The few who have been made Christians are such as have been

brought up as orphans in Christian schools. As an instance of such religious traffic I knew a full-grown man with wife and children receive money one day from a priest of another church to become one of his flock. Accordingly Christian A for a trifle of about 20 dollars becomes Christian B. After a lapse of nine months he returned to his old creed, and on being questioned why he no more assisted at Divine service he said: "I think it has been long enough to assist at your services for nine months for 20 dollars, but if it please you I will continue another month, and I hope you will have nothing to claim after that." This traffic, which is carried on very largely in all Christian centres in Palestine, has lamed the efforts of the real Christian, who tries to show by his works and example what an honest Christian life is expected to be. Priests are considered by the natives as sly persons, be they Mohammedans or Christians. The legend goes that a Christian priest on his way to town met the devil, and as they walked together the priest proposed that they should carry each other by turns, that as long as the rider could say *tara-lam* he was to continue to ride; the devil, being the more polite, offered his shoulders to the priest, who readily accepted. As they proceeded the priest went on saying *tara-lam* till they neared the town. The devil then said: "Please excommunicate me," but the priest refused for some time; on the devil's insisting, he finally granted it and excommunicated him, but as to the cause the devil said: "If ever I carry a priest again, then let me be excommunicated." This is to show how they believe the priest slyer and more mischievous than the devil himself. Such anecdotes or legends abound among the people.

The Fellahîn have the same belief about the underground dwellers as the townspeople. The Jinn lurk everywhere and take advantage of the forgetful housekeeper. In general the same ghosts and ogres are thought to exist as those in which townspeople believe.

Shrines or tombs of prophets and saints are visited either on special feast days for the said saint or to accomplish a vow as above described. The tomb of the prophet Moses,<sup>1</sup> near the Dead Sea, and that of the prophet Reuben near the Mediterranean,

<sup>1</sup> *The Grave of Moses.*—This shrine (*Neby Musa*) is a great place of Moslem pilgrimage in spring. The peculiar bituminous shale close by burns like coal. The legend of the transference of the shrine, no doubt, is intended to meet objections that Moses really died and was buried on the opposite side of the Jordan Valley in Moab.—C. R. C.

south of Jaffa, are visited—the first in Passion week and the second in September.

It is said:—When Moses was old, Ozrain, the Angel of Death, appeared to him and announced to him his death, but Moses entreated of him to allow him at least to say his prayers before death; Ozrain consented, and Moses asked him to wait awhile till he had performed his ablution. Having gone out, Moses went into the wilderness, and the Angel of Death lost sight of him. Six years went by and Moses was still wandering away in a straight line from Jerusalem. Then he saw two men making a grave (they were Ozrain and an angel), so Moses greeted them: "Peace be with you," and they answered: "And to you peace." "What are you about?" said Moses. "Well," answered the Angel of Death, "we are digging a grave for a man exactly of your stature, and as we lost his measure will you kindly descend and see if it is right?" Moses consented, and lay down. Ozrain asked him: "Are you comfortable on all sides? Is the grave wide enough?" Moses answered in the affirmative. "Well then, please remain in, for you are the man." Moses begged for time to say a prayer, and gave his word of honour not to escape, and it was granted him. Moses now earnestly prayed to God and said: "Why am I to die so far away from Jerusalem in a wilderness, seeing this place is six years' distant from Jerusalem, and there is neither sanctuary nor are there inhabitants?" God said: "That is my business, henceforth nobody shall go to Mecca on pilgrimage, but shall visit thy tomb; the years' distance I will change into hours, and the very stones I will cause to become fuel." In fact God himself transported the tomb to a spot six hours' distant from Jerusalem, and as the region is desert the stones were turned into bitumen. Thus pilgrims can perform their pilgrimage and can burn this material.

#### CHAPTER XI.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

When a man comes back from Mecca, or from some other journey, or has done his four or five years of military service, obligatory to all able-bodied men, the women meet him singing, and though the man gives his hand to shake hands a woman must always cover hers with the big sleeve and kiss the man's hand. In busy places, as at Siloam, near Jerusalem, the man, woman, and children lead something of a family life, as being absorbed in business on the one hand, and often secluded from obligatory causes, distance of houses, and so forth. The covering of

the hand is because a woman is ever considered as unclean, and the bowing and kissing as a sign of inferiority. Amongst villagers no prefixes to names or titles are used, except for a mollah, dervish, or mayor of the village, who is invariably called Sheikh, whilst politeness bids the use of many terms. For elder men or women, uncle or aunt is used before the name, and for young persons of the same age "brother" or "sister" is prefixed, whilst for children or persons very much younger, "my son" or "my daughter" is prefixed. When they address townspeople or powerful Bedawin Sheikhs, they will address the men as "my lord" or the women as "my lady," as Abigail in her distress, when she saw David, lighted off her ass, and said: "Upon me, my Lord, upon me let this iniquity be." Never may a woman respecting herself and the man she meets remain on the ass, but like Abigail must alight from any animal she is riding. Rebekah also when seeing Isaac from afar came down from the camel and walked.

Before slavery was abolished in Turkey, late in the seventies, wealthy Fellahin often possessed slaves whom they bought from slave dealers who had brought them from the Soudan. In 1871 I saw such a string of slaves driven past the village of Urtas; a Fellah bought one of the slaves for £T20 (about 85 dollars), but the slave fled a few days afterwards and was never heard of again. Another who had been bought in Urtas more than forty years before had stayed with his master, and they grew so attached to each other that when I knew him he had been married by his master, and on the death of his master had inherited one-fifth of the property, receiving an equal share with the four sons. He had married a black girl, and their children again married black men and women of the same origin, that is, liberated slaves. The old man and his children talked Arabic very well, but the woman had been brought to Palestine by American settlers, who died, and she married in Urtas; though she knew no other language, she never learned to talk Arabic properly, always confounding the genders and the numbers.

On afternoons, when the principal work is done about the house and yard, the women of the quarter assemble together to chat about one thing or another, and more is often said than is necessary.

The Fallâha is very inquisitive. The story goes:—One day a Fellah, whilst killing a man, was asked by the man who was being murdered to stop a moment; the murderer listened, when the dying man said: "My murder will be known." The murderer said: "But I'll bury you below this huge heap of stones, and it will not even be



found out that you are murdered at all, seeing we are far away from any human being." "But," said the dying man, showing a thorn-bush flying past, carried by the wind: "The thorn-bush will repeat the news." He was killed and buried. In the village he could not be traced, and was forgotten. Years passed by, and the murderer one day looking out of his window saw a thorn-bush flying past, carried by the wind. He smiled; his wife asked him what he was smiling at, but he would not say, till, finally, he said he had remembered something that happened on a day like that, when a thorn-bush was carried by the wind, and that made him smile; but the daughter of Eve insisted on knowing all about it. At length he told her, but begged her to keep it secret, and both laughed at such foolishness. One day the man and woman had a dispute, and from harsh words they began fighting, till the woman shrieked out so that everybody could hear: "He is going to murder me as he did X, under the heap of stones, in such and such a place, and of course a thorn-bush will reveal everything." Quick as lightning the news spread, and the murderer was punished for his crime by being killed. Therefore the proverb: "Dirt, son of dirt, who tells a secret to a woman."

Living in the country where no artisans live, we had always tools of all kinds to repair or make many articles, especially wood-work. The women of the village always had this and that to mend. Though I never refused to do anything that I thought myself capable of doing, and without ever asking the least remuneration, but, on the contrary, even furnishing nails and pieces of board into the bargain, they would be greatly astonished if by chance I declared a work impossible for me to accomplish, and even show a certain annoyance if all was not punctually done at a given time. We had even to be doctors and dispensers—of course in light matters. But many a time we had to cure fevers, sore eyes, and the like; and when an animal had a broken leg I was supposed to be enough of a surgeon to put things into order again. In many cases I had very good success, and just these successes made them believe that where I failed it was through bad will.

I am now far away, but am sure my return amongst these villagers would be greeted by feasts and songs, as was the case when, after an absence of five years, I returned once before. Certainly the women showed their greatest joy—dancing and singing in honour of my return through whole nights.

*(To be continued.)*