

WOMAN IN THE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

(Concluded from "Quarterly Statement," 1901, p. 184.)

CHAPTER VI.—EVERY-DAY LIFE.

As already mentioned, when they are near towns the Bedawin women flock to the market and sell their products—especially milk, for such as have great droves of cows, goats, &c.¹; but when they are further away—and this is generally the rule—the women turn the milk into butter, make the butter into *samn*, that is, cook the butter till the watery parts are evaporated. And they look after home affairs generally, the children forming, of course, their chief care. When the baby is quite young it is exposed during forty days to sunshine, with its eyes heavenwards, which is said to fortify eyesight for ever. If it cannot stand this treatment it is not fit for this hard life, though they do not add this last sentence; yet there is a kind of selected breeding, on the principles of the Spartan laws and the natural laws of the "survival of the fittest." Where the tribe is of an agricultural turn of mind, the boys at an early age are shepherds or help the parents in tilling the ground, whilst, where they are not agricultural, hunting and robbing are learnt. The Bedawin disdain the "dirty Fella" and the "pale townsmen" as profoundly as one creature can disdain another. They are exceedingly proud, and the women are as shy towards strangers as those of the towns.

Badawy means "desert man"; and of this name they are as proud as Baron or Count in Europe of his descent.² Being always out in the open air, or under the light tent, they fear buildings as if they were ever on the eve of falling. They dread towns and government, being independent; though laws of their own regulate the discipline of the tribe, as good a discipline as can be

¹ *Cows*.—The pure desert tribes, such as the Beni-Sakhr and 'Anazeh, have usually no cattle, but only horses, donkeys, and camels.—C. R. C.

² *Bedawin*.—This word is a vulgar plural of Bedawi—a "man of the desert." My experience is that it is only used by the settled population, and much disliked by the nomadic Arabs. I was once reproached by one of these for calling him a Bedawi. They call themselves 'Arab, and are proud of pure descent from the tribes of Arabia.—C. R. C.

imagined in any place. Of course this applies to them in their tribes—their hand being against every man and every man's hand against them, just as was promised to their forefather Ishmael; so it is natural that they should avoid buildings, or even sleeping in unknown places.

Though filthy in many ways, still I think them clean in their customs if compared with the Fellahîn, who have generally water at their disposal, which is very often miles away from the Bedawîn camp. The camp is moved when it has become full of fleas; sometimes they move away not more than a mile, in many cases they move many miles, except in regions where they have not much space and where the tribe is very small. For around all sea-coast towns of Palestine and Syria—from Gaza in the south, by Jaffa, Ramleh, Lydda, Cæsarea, Caifa, and Acre, in the Carmel Bay; Tyre, Sidon, and to Beyrout, in the north—there are small tribes of minor importance who call themselves Bedawîn, having mostly Bedawîn customs, living in tents, because this exempts them from military life. They do not wear the turban, but the flying head-cloth, held to the head by a double cord so characteristic of the Bedawîn. Yet they have lands which they cultivate either in shares with some proprietor of the town or some saint, and they have droves of cows and buffaloes, which wallow in the swamps of the rivers, and are almost as savage as their Bedawîn lords.

The greater tribes are generally very little under Government control, and roam about the plain of Jezreel in the centre of Palestine, retreating towards Gilead and Bashan in case of need; others have all the northern Syrian desert from Damascus to Bagdad; some occupy the east of Jordan plains and mountains of Moab and Ammon, and are the terror of all southern Palestine. The Tayaha and the Terabeen of the Sinaitic peninsula would never have been under the Turkish rule, few as they are, had they not disagreed amongst themselves, and carried on petty wars for a number of years.

Some of the women of these tribes, especially in the north, who flock to the markets, have more gaudy dresses, and many have done away with the veil, so strictly bidden by their primitive laws. High red boots may also be seen amongst some. Especially among the Bedawîn women are tattoo marks yet to be seen on the face, though, as already remarked, other classes also have this custom. The face is marked with diverse figures, lines, &c., tattooed in blue. These markings are as old as human history, for in

Leviticus xix, 28, we read: "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you." Prohibited to the Jews, the practice was carried on by the nations all around. Judaism could not crush those old customs. On the other hand, as they are allowed by the more tolerant Islam, their minutest details have been maintained side by side with the three great religions of Palestine proper—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Illiterate generally, the Bedawin probably followed more or less indifferently the prevailing religion, as it benefited their commerce or simply suited their convenience. And none of these creeds have ever really influenced them in the least. They were friends and foes with the Canaanites, had several wives like Abraham, when they could afford it, kept herds, and were hunters or robbers. During the heroic age of the Maccabees they became as Jews but continued to talk Arabic, sometimes became Christians in the latter years of the Byzantine empire, and subsequently fervent defenders of Islam during several centuries. The exploits of the wild crusader, Renand de Chatillon, made them change the name only. As Christians they still went on robbing and killing, wearing ever the same style of dress; always fond of horses and arms, while the coat-of-mail of the Crusaders was very attractive to them, and when Islam was lord again they again became Mohammedans. They pray and even fast sometimes, like other Mohammedans, but the further away from towns the less they observe any religious rites at all. Superstitious as all others, they believe more in signs and traditions than in actual religious laws and ordinances. In fact, they care very little even for the Mohammedan religion, to which most of them now claim to belong, a very few beyond the Jordan excepted, who belong to the Greek Church. They have their saints and prophets, and it is usually round the tombs of these that they have their cemeteries.¹

Rachel's tomb near Bethlehem, for example, is the burial ground of the Ta'amry Bedawin of the wilderness of Judea, and when a person dies, no matter how far away, sometimes near the Dead Sea, a distance of more than twenty miles, the dead person is transported on camelback, hanging in a carpet on one side,

¹ *Religion*.—One tribe is known (in the desert of Judah) as *Jahalln* or "ignorant," a term which strictly means Arabs before Islam was preached. The Bedawin have very little knowledge of Moslem beliefs, but Islam originated among them. Before the time of Mohammed most of them were Pagans, but some had become Christians and some Jews by religion, even in Arabia, while others were "enquirers" of no fixed creed.—C. R. C.

whilst earth in a sack forms the counter-balance on the other. The Bedawin of the plains of Philistia transport their dead to near the shrine of the prophet Saleh, near Ramleh. The burial and mourning do not differ from those of the other classes; but on account of distance they cannot visit the tombs on Thursdays, and instead visit them occasionally, when they pass near by chance, and if possible on the Thursday of the dead. In some tribes it is customary for the women to cut a tress of their hair and fix it on the tomb, as a token of love for the departed. The tombs are not tended with the same care as those of the townspeople, who sometimes have inscriptions cut and plant trees or flowers in their cemeteries; but neither the Fellahin nor the Bedawin plant flowers on their graves, excepting those who frequently mix with the townspeople.

A woman of the Bedawin had lost her only son, about ten years of age. After the usual compliments of condolence, I told her God can give her another son, a compliment often used in such circumstances. "No," says the desolate mother, "if God wished to give me another, he would not have taken this one." Having no more hopes to get any others, some mollah told her that she should go with her husband and hand in hand dip themselves seven times in the Mediterranean Sea, repeating the Fattiha. She took her husband and she dipped seven times, but the husband afterwards confessed to me secretly, that he so much dreaded dipping, that he only feigned doing so, making his wife dip and he looking on, like the clown in the circus, feigning to stand on his head and looking only at his companion, who expects all the time his comrade to do the same. Very generally speaking the Bedawin women are the liveliest and quickest of the three classes of native women. The townswoman with her slow aristocratic walk, as they call it, looks with disdain on the European or American lady walking quickly, "like a servant in a hurry."

Wild and rude as they may be, it is but fair to say that womankind, even among the sands and thorn-bushes of the Jordan valley, have a kinder feeling than men. I have lain sick and wanting nursing in towns, in villages, and in the Bedawin tent, and they all did their utmost to make me forget the seclusion, each one as much as could be expected from them, and according to the degree of their knowledge.

In the plain of Jericho, more than twenty years ago, I had grown quite friendly with a Bedawin woman, and one day when

the caravan from Jerusalem arrived and brought us neither news nor victuals from home, my Bedawin friend took an old rag and blackened it with soot, and said: "This is the letter I shall send to Jerusalem, they will know well enough that we are in the most miserable state that can be imagined." And when at length the long expected victuals and ammunition arrived, this wild Bedawiyeh divided them into equal parts on the banks of the Jordan, giving me a part, as if we had gained booty from some passing traveller.

CHAPTER VII.—LEADING WOMEN.

That when women choose to rule, they well knew how, is true of the Bedawin woman as well as of any other, and perhaps to some degree she is more imperious than any other woman in Islam.

My old Bedawin friend in the plain of Jericho was a widow and had an only son, aged about 22. We had rented their lands to sow wheat and barley, with a family of Fellahin. Although the young man, Mohammed-et-Talak, had to arrange the contracts and so on in Jerusalem, yet at home his mother wholly commanded him. And even in my presence she beat him and scolded him till he simply cried, and contrary to the habits of the Fellahin, said: "She is my mother, and I have to obey her, and receive her chastisement." Im-Mohammed, the old woman, would sit down, without a veil, smoking her big pipe, and giving orders, at the same time emphatically striking the ground with her pipe, as much as to say: "So will I have it." And when the young man one day showed impatience, she told him: "Sure, you chicken, I shall retreat to the mountains, and see what will become of you." On such occasions he again became quite tame, and promised to follow her instructions.

Another Bedawin widow, in the plain of Philistia, was very wealthy, possessing 300 or 400 cows; this fact alone gave her superiority, and everything regarding the community was discussed with her and even to a certain degree had to be ratified by her. I was very much surprised that she should not have gone to the expense of erecting a stable of some kind for her cattle, to protect them against thieves or rain or the heat of the sun. Of thieves she was not afraid, as for the rain she thought this was God's will, and besides, building expenses were too great, no matter how primitive the building might be. Very soon after my interview with her, a heavy rain swept over the camp.

and the whole region, and in that very night she is said to have lost three-fourths of her cattle. Stoically she bore this loss, and like the Bedawin Job, hearing of his losses, she also said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

A legend of an old Bedawin woman so independent that she even braved the seasons is told of February 24th.

Having had much rain during February, the old Bedawiyeh, to spite the month, put herself and tents in a mountain pass in the wilderness of Judæa, and said: "February, the roarer, is past; I'll kick him a hundred times, for I and my goats are saved from his waters"; but February, whose reputation is known, and of whom it is said: "February, the roarer, climbs and kicks, but summer's odour is in him," was furious at the woman who had thus abused him, and said to his cousin, March: "Please give me three days, I have only four left; we can make the waters flow once more." February and March thus agreed, and during seven days there was unceasing rain. When the weather was fine again and the sun shone on the camp of the old Bedawiyeh, not even a trace of it was left. The terrible waters had washed her away with her tents and goats and all appurtenances, and the dead bodies alone were found floating about the Dead Sea. These three days are therefore called the borrowed days, as February had borrowed them from March.

Some Bedawin women also enter holy orders, but this does in nowise exclude marriage, as for the nuns in monasteries. A woman may be born holy, and in this case she is believed to work miracles. A Bedawy in Philistia, very badly sick with the malarial fever, and whom I could not help any more than I could help myself, being badly taken with it too, told me the only remedy for this was to go to the Darwishy of the Hrari family. "God's party—yâ Hrari,"¹ is an exclamation always used when the name of any holy person is pronounced. She was expected to heal the sick by a mixture of herbs, a secret of her own.

¹ شيل الله يا رجال الله—*Shael Allah ya rijâl Allah*—is an exclamation used by every Mohammedan when the name of any holy man is pronounced. شال—to lift up; to take away from the place. The Bedawin say شال—*Shâl*—to move camp. The Bedawin decamped—شالة العرب—*Shalat el'Arab*. Thus it means "from the (same) camp," or "lifted up by the same movement of departure," i.e., "the party"; and "Shael Allah ya rijâl Allah" would be "(Respect before) God's companions (ya) men of God."

Another woman of holy orders, known under the name of the "prophet's foal," walked about for years, begging or asking alms without pronouncing a single word, but neighing like a young foal. This is, of course, understood by all believers. Dr. Chaplin, for many years a physician in Jerusalem, says: "This is a peculiar nervous affection, not very uncommon among girls born in Palestine, which seems to compel those labouring under it to go about imitating the sounds made by animals."

A holy woman of renown, said to have lived somewhere about the fourteenth century of our era, only known by the name of "Daughter of Bari," and who had drunk of the jug of Paradise water, which entitles everybody to become holy, was so ambitious that she tried to drink the whole, leaving nothing for some of her companions, who were already holy too. She was so beautiful that she had to wear seven veils, laid on each other tile-fashion, the lowest being shortest. It is known that no Derwish may look at a woman lest he lose his holiness, unless he be so well proved in virtue as to withstand all evil thoughts. As she had taken the sacred jug, three of the leaders of holy orders went to take back the jug, but at her beauty had to withdraw. The fourth one, by the name of Bedawy, now came in old ragged clothes, with vermin all about him; of course she, being a Derwisha, at once could read his thoughts. He now came and asked for the jug, but would not be moved by her beauty, so she uplifted one veil, which discovered a part of her neck, without effect; a second veil was lifted, discovering her chin; still it was useless. Finally, she asked him to marry her, but not only would he hear nothing about it, but even ordered the earth to swallow her deeper and deeper, till on the fourth summons she ordered a servant to get the holy jug and give it to the Bedawy.

PART IV.—THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.

As regards the Egyptian woman it must be understood that I attempt only a general description of her as she lives in Palestine. Though Palestine really borders on Egypt, still the great sandy desert lying between has, in many instances, given another character to their respective peoples. The Egyptians in Palestine

have settled in the country successively; the Egyptian Pashas trying from time to time to colonise Palestine with their own subjects, as being of a more submissive character than the independent Palestine mountaineer, ever ready to revolt. The last great attempt was made by Mohammed Ali, founder of the present dynasty of the Khedives of Egypt, who sent a force to invade Palestine in 1831 under the command of his son, Ibrahim Pasha. During the nine years following, while the Viceroy was absolute master, he established colonies all about the plains of Philistia, Sharon, and Jezreel. Their descendants still remain, having kept their own customs to a certain degree, as well as their language, or rather dialect, which, however, is now fast becoming merged in the Palestinian.

The Egyptian is a separate type, resembling the flat-nosed and thick-lipped African to a certain degree, but not black as most African nations are. He is a real link between the Caucasian and the Negro.¹

Naturally those transplanted to Palestine, either by order of the Viceroy or voluntarily, are mostly of the agriculturist class, as commercial men have much better chances in Egypt than in Palestine. The blue dress worn by the women is less wide than that of the Bedawin, and a little wider than the Fallaha's. It is covered with a white or dark head-dress, with a heavy black face-veil attached to the head like that of the Bedawin, but instead of being short, like the Bedawin, so as to cover only the lips and chin with dangling coins, the Egyptian veil hangs down to the breast, and coins are sewn at the bottom to hold it in place.² The general character of the Egyptian woman is softer than that of the three other classes of women already described; she is more polite, and will more readily answer even a stranger. The townswoman is scandalised, or fears the appearance of her husband or of some

¹ *Type*.—The Egyptian type is rather that of the ancient Egyptians before 2000 B.C.—a race distantly connected with the Semitic peoples. The Copts alone preserve the old language. The Arabic which is spoken by Egyptian Moslems is, in some respects, nearer to that of Arabia than to that of Syria. Syrian is considered the more elegant dialect, but the Egyptian Arabic descends from the time of the Moslem conquest.—C. R. C.

² *Egyptians*.—In Ashdod especially the Egyptian dress may be observed, but the colonies of 1831-1840 spread even to Galilee, and the name *Kefr Musr*, or "Egyptian hamlet," still applies to a village in the Valley of Jezreel, near Beisan. The Egyptian veil is distinguished, not only by its length, but by the peculiar fastening of metal (usually brass) which connects it to the head-dress in the middle, between the eyes.—C. R. C.

indiscreet visitor, and will therefore be rather unpolite with you. The Fallaha, thinking that you are mocking her language and costume, will therefore remind you of your business; the Bedawiyeh will indignantly point to the men as if to say: "If you have anything to say go there and leave me in peace." The Egyptian may even answer you with expressions like "my eye," "my heart," and "my life," though the Egyptian husband may be as jealous as any other in the East. Perhaps the simple fact that they are strangers in the land makes a difference in their behaviour. They are not masters. Whether they live in the towns or in the country they are more or less given to occupations connected with agriculture. Round about Jaffa they are dairy women, and in the villages they are Fellahîn, but do not call themselves by this name in Palestine, and do not easily intermarry with natives. The Palestine Fellah is as proud of his pedigree as the Bedâwin, and if you ask him or her whether they are related to so and so he will say: "No, they are Egyptians, whilst we are Fellahîn." Generally speaking, they also say in talking of an Egyptian: "With my respects to yourself, she (or he) is an Egyptian." This same contempt is almost as old as history. In Numbers xii, 1, we read: "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the *Ethiopian woman* whom he had married: for he had married an *Ethiopian woman*." After showing why they spoke against Moses, the writer seems to excuse them in the last sentence, which means as much as "it is true he did take such a woman." This sentence shows us that already in those remote times it was considered degrading for the Israelites to enter into unions with the Africans. At a later period many Israelites took Canaanite wives, though it was against their laws. Even men like Samson took daughters of the Philistines.

The plain of the Philistines being the highway to Egypt, with Gaza as the last city, it is, as might be expected, very much peopled by Egyptians. And even whole villages of Egyptians exist in the same plain, the people of which do not mingle with the Fellahîn save now and then, and always with repugnance. In the towns of Gaza, Jaffa, Ramleh, and Lydda there are very important Egyptian settlements, for the most part such as were fixed in the country by the great soldier, Ibrahim Pasha, from 1831-40. An Egyptian woman living in Lydda is blessed with worldly goods, and with the honourable name of Sit Ikhwetha, that is, "Lady of her brothers." For many years this important lady not only ruled amongst her own family, but even had

influence on the whole town. She used to go to the Government Hall, whence women are excluded, imprison this one and loose that one, and the Governors of Lydda and Jaffa trembled when she wanted anything. But in most cases she had no need of help from anybody. She simply enforced her will on those with whom she had to do. Her sons and relatives had no wish or will of their own, for she arranged everything. In marriage affairs she would prescribe this woman to that man, as respected her relatives. But as everything has an end in this world, the riches which, it is said, had been unjustly accumulated in the Egyptian wars of 1830-40 gave out: process after process was lost, and in her old age she even had to endure arrest and imprisonment. Although the old Turkish law forbade imprisonment of women, the husbands having to undergo that penalty, the new law allows money to be claimed from women, and in serious cases imprisonment of women in the house of some honourable citizen of the town. Women generally are talked of with contempt as inferiors, and many will not even admit that they have an immortal soul like the men. But though they be beaten by husbands or brothers, on the other hand the women are considered holy, and the title *Walîé* may be interpreted "Saint," as woman has the holiest of duties to perform, such as bearing and rearing children, and making the bread. Then again another expression for woman is "the weaker rib," and this prevents any stranger who respects himself from lifting his hand against women, even if he should be attacked. Women are to be avoided in all cases; and, as Abimelech was half killed by a woman at the siege of Thebez, and asked his armour-bearer to slay him "lest they say a woman slew him," with the same feeling such a fate is avoided nowadays. I remember a man killed by a stone from the hand of a woman in a general skirmish in the village of Abu Ghôsh; and his name was ever afterwards mentioned with contempt: "Ah! such an one who was killed by a woman." A young man who had beaten his mother was reproved by his uncle for the deed, and she left her son to live with that uncle, but needing her very much in the house, and to save his honour, the son came and asked me if I would be arbitrator to bring her back. We went together, and, having drunk coffee, explained our mission. The uncle reproved the nephew somewhat in these terms: "Your mother who bore you and brought you up when your father died remained a widow to help you to succeed in life; how dare your criminal hand touch not only the Saint but a person, who, though

old, is not abandoned by everybody. By the most mighty God, by the merciful God, oh Ethman, this same Amrié that you see wrinkled and ragged, if you do not respect her and obey her I will forbid to go back to you. She is happy in my house: may she be on my eyes and on my head, and if I have nothing to feed her with, let her sit on my right shoulder and eat my flesh, and when there is nothing left, let her change shoulders and begin eating my left." Of course, the son promised everything, and they both went home and lived again as happy as before, without going to the extravagance of shoulder eating.

CHAPTER II.—GENERAL LIFE.

Religion and superstition, as may well be expected, are in the same degree of development in Egypt as in Palestine. In Egypt the people are Mohammedans and Copts; these last have been Christians from the remotest ages, before the invasion of Egypt by the Arab Moslems. A small colony of Copts live in Jerusalem, and have their own church and khan, a kind of hostelry in which the pilgrims of their church live when visiting the Holy City at Easter.

Egypt is supposed to be full of holy men of all kinds, and of evil spirits, whilst Palestine is the home of the prophets, not to be confounded with simple saints of historical reputation only. Among Egyptian women, more even than amongst the others, the most extravagant beliefs as to ghosts are found.

The ceremonies of birth, marriage, divorce, burial, and mourning are not very different from those already described and need not be repeated. Cradle songs are customary among them all to lull the baby to sleep, often, of course, improvised, as was this one to a little girl:—

Helwé died, Helwé is dead. No! by Allah, she liveth still,
She'll grow up and eat her bread, that might stick right in her throat.

In naming the child the Egyptians make a small difference; instead of naming immediately after birth they follow the Judaic custom, and give its name on the seventh day. The child is washed and salted, as among others, and then a copper basin is put above its head, which the midwife knocks with a stick to test whether the child is fearless. If it gets frightened it will always be a coward; if, on the contrary, it is not afraid, the midwife asks the father: "How will you name it?" The father gives the name

“Mohammed” or “Aishy,” or whatever he may choose; then the midwife, giving a knock again on the copper basin, says: “Do you hear? Your name is Mohammed,” or “Aishy,” as the father has named the child. If it is a boy it is circumcised weeks, months, or years afterward; no particular age is fixed for this ceremony. In general it is very expensive, as they have to invite all friends and relatives to the feast, so it is put off to some favourable date when they may have money to spare, or for some procession which they care to attend, thus increasing the solemnity. Before they are married the women go about without the veil, or simply throw it back, especially when out to fetch water in the big jar.

Like the others an Egyptian woman may have to live with two or more other women as the wives of one husband. They call themselves *durra*, that is “rival,” a name which exists only among the Orientals. My “rival” is not here, is equivalent to “the wife of my husband is not here.” The rivals almost always hate each other, as is very natural. When they are too poor to have separate houses they live in one and the same room. I have even known an old man who lived in a house with his two wives and his son, and his son’s two wives. Of course it would be very hazardous to state that they lived in perfect unity, yet it is hard even for an Egyptian Fellah to be harsh always to his wives, and these two families lived on side by side for many years, stoically bearing the burden of their laws; and though this one was now a little more favoured, or now that one, according to the mood and temper of one or the other, it is still remarkable how few quarrels they had. Four different women in one household, and almost every instant they might be wanting the same article! My brother and I rode up to these Egyptians in the plain of Sharon, where they were gardeners, and as it was very late in the evening my brother proposed to stop there for the night. Being summer it was too warm to be indoors, so the women brought carpets and we were seated below the huge mulberry trees. To begin with we asked for a jug and basin to wash ourselves. The whole family were sitting or lying around. We received the philosophical answer that the water always flowed at the well, thus rendering jug and basin superfluous—evidently it was less troublesome. Next we asked for a box to put some barley in for the horses, but this seemed as superfluous as the jug. They never bought any barley, their animals had the plain to feed on, and though grass is not as nourishing as barley, their mules, though very

thin, still lived, and in consequence a box was altogether a luxury to keep. When I read the late news of the Italo-Abyssinian campaign it was hoped that Menelek would be soon reduced through want of food and of porters for his considerable army. After the terrible battle of Abba-Garima on February 29th, 1896, and the following days, in which the Italians lost nearly 10,000 men, the prisoners; or such as could escape, reported wonderful facts; for whilst the Italian army had to carry food for themselves and for their animals, and still went into the battle in despair, almost dying of hunger, the Abyssinians carried nothing with them and still were better off, and the numerous mules of the Choan army lived on the fields and came into action more vigorously than their fellow mules in the Italian army, accustomed to better food, but for the time deprived of any at all. As it became dark sitting under the mulberry trees we asked for a light by which to unpack our saddlebags and partake of our victuals. This was more than our host expected to hear. What in the wide world did he, living most of the time in the open air, want a light for? The moon was quite light enough for him and his families, and when there was no moon they went to bed earlier and by turns they watched, being much exposed to thieves and robbers. We left off asking for anything, but soon felt enough of one of the Egyptian plagues still extant in these countries; fleas innumerable invaded our bodies and rest was impossible. I have been out very often and had to share the bedding of the Fellahin, and still I am inclined to give some credit to the inhabitants of the "Vale of Yearning," as the place is called in the immediate neighbourhood of the Vale of Sorek, from their belief that the *Sultan of the fleas* has taken his abode there. At all events if he himself is absent his hosts are there, and remind you of a visit to their court for a long time afterwards.

Two of the women, one a wife of the father and one a wife of the son, were almost of the same age; the elder woman was very old, being the mother of the only son. The old father married the second wife in order to have more children, and so did the son. His first wife had sons and daughters, but they died, so he married a second woman to have children. These four women had to help their husbands in the gardens, watering and tilling, but they never had much work to do, and led a very idle life, dreaming away existence. In a village near, altogether inhabited by Egyptians, settled there for half a century or more,

life was very much the same. As to the morality of the women in general, their reputation was as bad as could be. Delilah's home has also spread Delilah's character broadcast amongst these Egyptians.

These women shriek and scream at the funerals, waving their handkerchiefs; and, though Mohammed forbids mourning altogether, it is curious to see how women have stamped this law under their feet, not at all minding the swearing, cursing, or begging of the husbands to leave off because it is very sinful. Why men have accepted the command of Mohammed, and why women have not, is perhaps to be explained by a kind of egotism. Death of any member of the family is a grief to anyone, and perhaps the woman—who, after all, is the echo of the family—is silently allowed to let the sorrow, which is hidden by the man, be expressed loudly and vehemently—oftenest at the burial, or after the virtues of the departed have been loudly recited in presence of the assembly of women. That the departed was “the camel of the house” is a very general expression. In their extravagance in telling the praise of the departed the most curious pet names are invented, and at the same time the dulness, stupidity, and all bad qualities of those remaining are given in contrast to the brightness, cleverness, and virtues of the departed. All this is said in a half-singing, half-wailing tone, intermingled with individual shrieks on the highest notes. Some are real mourners, some are simply feigning as friends, or are paid wailers. The hair is torn, and the black veil in many cases is changed for a white one during mourning.

There are different kinds of mourning songs for men or for women; riches or love form the principal subject:—

- O seller of corals, come down with your articles, Here is a fair one about to buy,
- O seller of corals, bring the bowl and come down.¹ Fatmé, the beautiful, is waiting for you.

All such singing is thought fine, and is gay to their ears, yet always has a wailing tone to ours; and even as to the words, some sorrowful event is always mingled with the more joyous ones.

In years gone by, when the agriculturists were not yet accustomed to serve in the army, and were pressed to be soldiers, the departure of the recruits was always a very sad event. They

¹ Feigning the dead person to be waiting only.

were generally bound together by fours, and led by soldiers as prisoners of war to their barracks, and thence sent to remote provinces. Such columns of young men were usually accompanied by nearly as many women, shrieking and tearing their hair, very much like the behaviour at a funeral. In modern times the military life, as in all European States, has become obligatory for all, and, as they well know that enlisting does not of necessity mean being killed in battle, the fuss about the departure is less.

An Egyptian soldier's song, full of all kinds of episodes from a soldier's life, still shows how woman is foremost in his mind, and though really a Mussulman soldier can only *imagine* kissing his bride or wife publicly, in the song it is mentioned as though it were really done:—

Born in Galiub, since my birth, sixteen times have I seen the Nile's waters
overflow our fields,
And I had a neighbour, Sheikh Abdelhei, whose daughter's face was known
only to me :

Nothing could be compared to the beauty and tenderness of Fatmé,
Her eyes were as big as coffee cups, and her body was firm with the vigour of
youth.

We had one heart, and were free from jealousies, ready to be united,
But Allah curse the military inspector who bound my two hands,
For, together with many more, we were marched off to the camp.
I was poor, and thus had to serve, nothing could soften the inspector's heart,
The drums and the trumpets daily soon made me forget my cottage and the
wheel-well on the Nile,

But nothing could make me forget the bright sun and the life of my eyes, my
poor abandoned Fatmé.

They gave me new clothes, a gun and a cartridge box.

They made me turn to the right, then to the left, and kept my foot in suspense :
I soon learned the different salutations with my gun, and was finely drilled.

I was sent off with my regiment to Mecca, where I saw the sacred Kaaba.

We fought many a battle with the enemies of our prophet, to him be praise.

After roaming about the rocks and mountains I was sanctified by my visit to
Mecca, and am now a pilgrim, rejoicing in the name of Hâjî.

One day I was promoted corporal, and after three years' wars we were
Re-shipped to Egypt, and I delighted to see my sacred river.

In the camp, near Galiub, how my heart beat to be so near Fatmé,
Yea, yet afraid of going there, for fear of finding a change.

Then I got the fever, and was taken into the hospital to European doctors.

They were worse than the ague—for they forbade me my accustomed food,
And very likely they sold my rations—may Allah curse them !

Dying from hunger and sorrow, I was given a horrible medicine,
The smell alone inspired fear, and made me more sick.

I had the cup at my lips, when a piercing cry penetrated my soul,
And I distinctly heard her voice, crying, " Hassan ! my eye ! "

I flung my cup at the nurse, and new strength flew into my veins.
 I was healed, and those idiots think it was their drug that did it.
 I asked at once to leave the hospital, and it was granted to me.
 I flew into Fatmé's arms, who awaited me impatiently,
 And after many caresses she told me how she had found me.
 She had many difficulties in entering the camp, and heard strange words.
 At the gate the sentinel told her "Dour," and as she continued he stopped her,
 Till an officer came and questioned her,
 And she said: "Give me my love Hassan, absent these three years."
 But the officer turned round, and thought she had lost her senses.
 She had to retire, and happily met the sister of my sergeant,
 Who knew I was in the hospital, and that I was seriously ill.
 But, swifter than the gazelle, the light of my life came near the hospital
 And called in at the window: "Hassan! my eye! my heart!"
 And full of joy I carried her about the camp, and presented her to all my
 superiors, leaving out none, from the colonel down to the sergeant.
 I received my dismissal, to return to Galiub and to marry.
 Old Abdelhei was awaiting us, to bless us. God be praised!

The Arabs' poetry is mostly fiction, but, as may be seen by the above verses, what they think, whom they love, what they feel, can best be given in long-drawn-out notes. Sadly the singer puts her hand to one side of the head, bent as if she were wailing, and with heartrending tones will sing of love or war.

The Egyptians are called "Masarwy" in Palestine—that is, inhabitants of the land of-Masr, the native name of Egypt. The Christians of Egypt—that is, the old Egyptians—are known by the name of Copt. These Copts are the real transmitters of old Egyptian traditions. One example will suffice to show how they have transmitted old customs, or rather kept them alive:—Herodotus says that whosoever killed a cat, even involuntarily, was put to death. It is strictly believed amongst the modern Moslems and Copts in Egypt that a cat is holy, and she cannot be killed, or vengeance will sooner or later fall on the person who has committed the deed. Therefore the proverb says: "The crime committed on a cat will never be pardoned"; and by dozens will they tell stories about persons who have killed cats becoming blind or ending their lives in misery.

PART V.—THE GIPSY.

CHAPTER I.—GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

This class of inhabitants, known under the name of "Nowar," is certainly the most despised by every one. They are the real pariahs of society. To call a person a "Nury" for a man or "Nurié" for a woman, expresses at once the meanest title and the greatest contempt for any person that a Palestinian or Syrian can imagine.

They have a language of their own, of Central Asiatic origin, and though they all talk the Arabic, yet they have a letter "k" which they pronounce very strongly, and by which the gipsy is immediately recognised. Probably they have always had very little attachment to any country, for they live in tents like the Bedawin, but are always found round about towns or wealthy villages, where they can easily earn a living. They are generally blacksmiths, and as the villages have no others, they are welcome guests. The ironwork is always put away for the "Nowar's" arrival.

In Palestine they profess Mohammedanism, though in reality they have very little religion at all. They keep the feasts and fasts if the occasion suits them, and bury their dead in the cemetery nearest to the place where they are temporarily living.

They are mostly darker than the Bedawin, always black-haired, and, like all the tent-living people, are very thin as they grow older. The young boys and girls are fatter, and the young women are often even good-looking.

They are under the jurisdiction of a Sheikh of their own election, ruling in or about Gaza, and the Government makes him responsible for crimes, for paying of tithes, and so forth.

The gipsies living in tents are considered as Bedawin, and never serve in the army. Generally speaking, they are great cowards, and have no arms, though they are almost always out of doors. They pitch their tents next to the most important approaches of the towns, and whilst the men put up the anvil, light the charcoal fire, and put the bellows in motion, and by forging some old iron advertise their arrival, the women go about from house to house begging for bread or whatever they can get, occasionally stealing, if they find unguarded homes.

CHAPTER II.—THE WOMEN.

The women are generally dressed in blue like the Southern Palestine Fellabin, but have somewhat ampler clothes. They have bracelets, earrings, and noserings, and have the head tied round with a kind of turban of blue, this being the veil. They more readily than any other class wear any clothing that they may receive.

Besides the guttural “k” already mentioned as peculiar in their speech, they all have a particular movement of the hips in walking, so that this kind of throwing the hips right and left whilst walking is called the gipsy walk. Whilst the Palestinian generally carries her child of two or three years on the shoulder as before stated, the Nurié carries her child on the hip, distorting her body, or, rather, forming a kind of obtuse angle with her own body to afford a seat to the heavy baby.¹ The dowry in marriage is generally made up of a certain number of donkeys, which the bridegroom has to give to the bride’s family, and the ceremonies are as short as possible. Then again, they are very cautious towards strangers, and seem to ever on their guard for fear of being known, as they generally have either done something they ought not, or are ready to plunder and steal, and thus had better conceal themselves.

The women are tattooed on the face, arms, legs, and often on the whole body; this tattooing very much serves their purpose, as they are often supposed to possess supernatural qualities as sorcerers and geomancers. As they wander about the country and see all classes of people, they are naturally physiognomists, and can tell by the looks of a person either what he wishes, or to some degree guess at the troubles he has.

An old geomancer, tattooed literally from head to foot, was sitting down at the roadside near Jaffa, and had drawn squares and angles in the sand before her. I had lost my brother a short time before and was about to leave Palestine, but was not quite sure what I should do; thus a woman like that old geomancer could probably read in my face that I had troubles of different kinds, besides knowing that Europeans generally go back to their

¹ *Carrying Children*.—The Gipsies came from Scinde, in India, and their language is the Scinde dialect, from the original Sanskrit. It is remarkable that they preserve the Indian custom of carrying the child on the hip, while Arabs carry it on the back or shoulder.—C. R. C.

country sooner or later. It is no wonder that she told me many things which, to the more simple-minded, appear wonderful if not supernatural. I had often seen her sitting there, and wondered what kind of prediction she might have in store for persons with whom she certainly did not very often come in contact. I rode up to her and, without dismounting from my horse, threw her a coin, and asked her "My lot" for some time to come. She had half a dozen shells of different shapes, and threw them into the figures drawn on the sand. Then picking them up, she said: "You have a great sorrow just past you, and, like a black star, it has fixed itself on your forehead, and only time and patience can take this away. A letter is coming to you from over the seas calling you to leave this country and cross home in a steamer, for which you will be glad temporarily only, for you will not receive what you are awaiting, but the struggle for life will be heavy upon you for some years to come; and you will not be satisfied until at least ten years are passed." I now prepared to ride away, when she opened her clothes in front and showed me all her upper body absolutely tattooed, and taking out a bag, she went on: "I have here a very precious stone which I brought from Mecca, this is to be rubbed in oil, and by some other formulas that I will tell you about, *if you give me one dollar*, it will almost wipe away the black star from between your eyes." Of course in this they are quite the same as all people of the clairvoyant family, in whatever part of the world they may exercise their tricks; the soothsaying and prophesying is always a vague expression of some things you like to hear or are likely to undergo, in some way or other, and after having excited the curiosity of the credulous, they easily find scores of people who readily pay a relatively small sum for "some more knowledge." Nor is it the exclusive peculiarity of Orientals, or of these pariahs of Palestine humanity—for a statistician has found that in Paris, one of the most progressive cities in Europe, not less than 250,000 persons are said to consult the "modern witches of Endor" yearly, and such witches make a good living, be they in the East or in the West.

The feminine congress held in Paris in 1895-96 is supposed to be an outcome of nineteenth century Occidental civilisation. But woman in these lowest conditions of humanity is certainly more of an *individual*, having her own say and sway in her humble tattered tent, being more a helpmate and companion to her husband than in many supposed civilised societies.

As with the Bedawin, the woman must answer for her husband, and often keep the tent when he is away, or go out on errands when he is busy repairing some plough or hatchet, so naturally she is forced to represent the man in his absence. Again, as they are usually very poor and never remain more than a few days in one place, they cannot afford to have more than one tent for the whole family, consisting of ten or twelve persons. Consequently, no place is reserved for this or that member. No privileges are allowed; it is simply, perhaps, the right of might, and as might sometimes means finding the easiest way of enabling a family to live, the woman has her great share by begging and bringing home the necessaries. I have also observed elder women, especially, forging in lieu of the men on an emergency.

Besides being geomancers, soothsayers, or house (tent) wives, they are often dancers, for in this they are very dexterous. When they dance in public they put on a coloured petticoat, and with the castanets at the tips of their fingers, perform very much in the style of Occidental ballet dancers, though not with the same agility, but they could probably be trained to do so, if they had a series of lessons. Very often the dancer has a tambourine, with cymbals all round it, thus timing herself by the sound. They have often two names, one for the Arabic population, taken from the favourite names of Islam, as Fatmey, Aishy, Hamdy; and also names of animals, as "She-wolf"; or even of fruits, as "Peach," and so on.

They never intermarry with any other class of people, probably because of mutual repulsion. Mohammedan law forbids intermarriages with them, for they are "forty times" unclean. This probably points to the fact that in centuries past they were not Mohammedans. Islam leaves many such questions without an answer. For all Mohammedans are equal—no matter in what condition or of what nation. But the same case presents itself as an enigma in another question. Mohammed has promised a number of *huris* in Paradise, and it is not difficult for God to create such, out of nothing. But what becomes of the soul of the woman who was a believer on earth? Some believe her soul immortal, some not. If immortal, where is her place in Paradise? If not, why does she pray and fast when on earth? And why is she to be buried like every other believer?

CHAPTER III.—ORIGIN.

The name of Nowâr is said to have been given them when they were building the Kaaba, in Mecca—which is called the “Imnowara,” that is, “the enlightened,” whence they received the name of “Lighters.”¹ They say they came away from the Najd, in Arabia, with the Beni Hilâl (the story of which exodus has been partly related in Part III), and when in Palestine they fought against their own tribe. As two leaders, Zeer and Jassas, being cousins, were each striving to be the head of the tribe, the Gipsies of to-day held with their leader Jassas, and therefore they also call themselves “Arabs of Jassas”; but they were overcome by the mightier Zeer, who, after a decisive victory, laid a curse on them to ride donkeys perpetually, wherefore they always use donkeys, but say: “Cursed be the father of the Zeer, who condemned us to ride donkeys.” But Jassas said he had the victory, and condemned the party of the Zeer to plough and hold the handle all their lives; wherefore the Fellahîn, condemned by Jassas to hold the handle, say: “Cursed be the father of Jassas, who made us guide the handle.”

It is traditional to say: “You arrive like the Gipsies,” when you arrive in the middle of the day. The Gipsies have their excuse in this—that they have no arms, are consequently very timid, almost cowards, so they always leave a place only in the morning or at noon, to arrive at the next station again at noon, or, at least, long before sunset, as they have to look out in the new locality for a good camping place, and for the most necessary supplies.

They believe themselves to come from Egypt, and they resemble the present Egyptian population a good deal, but their language is not Egyptian. The inhabitants of Palestine call them Zoot, or Nowâr, but they call themselves Dôme, and also Nowâr, as above-mentioned. They believe in good and evil-spirits, like others; especially do they fear the “horned owl,” who is a disguised witch, and very fond of the children.² A white flag is

¹ *Nowâr*.—This is the plural of *Nûri*. I have always heard it explained as connected with *Nûr*, “fire,” rather than with *Nûr*, “light,” as meaning persons who worked with fire, that is to say, “smiths.”—C. R. C.

² *The Horned Owl*.—This is a remarkable superstition, because in Hebrew *Lilith* is the horned owl, and is also the name of the female demon who steals children. Why this should be found among gipsies rather than natives, it is difficult to understand. The small owl (*Bumek*) is sacred to the Fellahîn in Palestine.—C. R. C.

hoisted on the tent where the visit of the owl is mostly feared, to prevent her coming. They have the liveliest children that can be imagined. In the big camps in the plain of Philistia, round Ramleh and Lydda, I have often seen groups of boys and girls of four to ten years run, jump, and dance, stripped naked, and as soon as strangers passed by, swift as lightning wrap themselves in a rag or old cloak, run after the passers by, and ask for alms. No sooner were the strangers gone than they would fling off their rags and continue their interrupted play.

There are other settlers and inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, but in describing these five very different populations and distinct classes a fair view of manners and customs has been given, and in many cases these very much resemble those of Bible-times.

On the market place inside the walls of Jerusalem can be seen the daily life of that town: the Fellaha women selling their cauliflowers and other vegetables; men with camels loaded with roots for fuel; townspeople, Bedawin, Jews with their long gowns and slippers, Europeans, and at the gate of the citadel the Turkish soldiers—a gathering of many nations.

THE SITE OF GOLGOTHA AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

By the Rev. Canon MacColl.

I HAVE said elsewhere that the case of the traditional site of Golgotha as against the new claimant "is not a case of strong evidence against weak, but a case of overwhelming evidence against none." In the following pages I shall endeavour to make good that assertion; and I begin with a few preliminary observations.

The advocates of the new site disdain the superfluous task, as they deem it, of disproving the authenticity of the traditional site. They assume, and some of them have declared publicly, that no person of common sense and competent knowledge can for a moment believe in the authenticity of the traditional site. The number and class of persons who are thus proved destitute of common sense and adequate knowledge are somewhat remarkable. The "Speaker's Commentary" was edited and written by eminent scholars, and it declares: "The evidence in support of the traditional site is strong, and appears conclusive." The most recent authoritative American pronouncement on the subject was