

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP G. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

(Continued from "Quarterly Statement," 1905, p. 38.)

BESIDES the rifle, the natives also have pistols, and though the new and lighter breech-loaders are becoming very common, they still prefer the old arms, which they call fellah arms. These are inlaid and ornamented with designs of various kinds and material. Thus, the barrel of the rifles has sometimes a silver coating, which is called *injâhan* (عجوه), a feeble survival of the priceless arms with which Orientals always liked to adorn themselves. The butt-end, *ka'ab* (قعب), is much narrower than that of the modern rifle, and is usually ornamented with mother-of-pearl.

Their swords are of two kinds—one with the edge on the concave, the other with it on the convex, part. The *šârem*, with the sharp edge in the concave curve, has a hilt of wood or horn, with the end projecting on both sides, so as to prevent it slipping out of the hand when a good stroke has to be made. The *sayf* (سيف) is a common sword with the hilt, *saylân* (سيالان), protected by one single bow. The sheath, *ke'âb*, is of two pieces of hard wood, over which a skin is drawn, often with the hair still adhering.

The *šârem* is stuck into the girdle with the hilt, *nešâb*, inclined to the right; but as it is about 2 feet long, it is not drawn from the sheath whilst it is in the girdle, but the whole is taken out before it is unsheathed. The *sayf* is hung upon a thick woollen and hair band or leather belt, which is thrown over the shoulder, and the sword dangles on the right thigh.

The dagger of the fellahin is invariably the two-edged *shibriye*[t], curved, and varying from one to two spans. *Shiber* means a span, and was, perhaps, originally the measure of this dagger. The *shibriye*[t] in its sheath is fastened to the girdle by the right thigh. The sheath is covered with brass bands, as well as the hilt. Of such a kind, perhaps, was the two-edged sword which Ehud girded on his right thigh to stab Eglon (Judges iii, 16).

The fellah has always some kind of weapon (*s'láh*) about him, and in former times he would enter the town arrayed with all his arms. Nowadays they are not allowed thus to enter the gates of Jerusalem, but must deposit them outside. The *dabbús*, however, which is of wood, is not prohibited; on its use see *Quarterly Statement*, p. 36. When David came to Nob without a weapon, he applied to Abimelech, who gave him Goliath's sword (1 Samuel xxi, 8, 9), which David accepted thankfully. Weapons were always dangerous in the hands of the public, and the Government has been obliged at times to gather them in, or to prohibit their use; on other occasions they have been distributed among the people. Daher, the Bedawy Pasha of Acca, armed the Bedu with fire-arms; Ibrahim Pasha, of Egypt, gathered in as many as he could in 1834 to quell rebellion, and even impounded a certain number yearly, which were afterwards bought back at very high prices. The succeeding Government distributed arms after the retreat of the Egyptians, but were obliged to collect them again after the events of 1860. One is reminded of the policy of the Philistines in prohibiting arms in the days of Saul (1 Samuel xiii, 19). In the days of King Hezekiah arms were gathered at Jerusalem to withstand the Assyrians (2 Chron. xxxii, 5), but again under Nebuchadnezzar all arms were confiscated. It was one of the greatest calamities to be deprived of weapons, as the words of Ezekiel show (xxxix, 9).

When the fellahin were deprived of their weapons, and could not manage to have them returned, they alleged that a wild beast called the *shibe*[*t*] (شيبة), or leaper, was making inroads upon them. The animal was said to have been seen in the Jordan Valley about the years 1865-66, and to have come from the north somewhere about the Euphrates, and was tearing and devouring flocks and herds, then children, and finally grown-up people. Some supposed that a great fire on the Euphrates drove the lions from the jungles, others that it was merely a trick of the fellah. It was said to have been of the size of a donkey, slender, and yellow in colour, but possessing a female figure. In consequence of it the Government, who since the recent civil wars had prohibited the sale of arms, now allowed them to be sold again, but still kept in force the prohibition against carrying them in the streets of towns. The fellahin now only bear fire-arms when they leave the

towns to go to the desert districts, but they regularly carry their powder-horn hanging at the hook of the girdle.

Even under the Roman rule swords at least were tolerated, and nobody went out without them. There is an illustration of this in the familiar passage, Luke xxii, 35-38.

We shall now turn to the family and social life of the fellahin. The fellah woman rises at about two o'clock in the morning, and having lit her small lamp sits down to grind with her leg bared to stretch it along the fixed mill, and as no man is up at such an early hour she removes her veil, thus *uncovering the locks*, which the prophet (Isaiah xlvi, 2) deems so degrading to the daughters of Zion. Certainly if the prophet himself were one of the Royal family there would be no women in the house to grind, for in towns, at the present day at least, the meal is sent to the horse-mills. As soon as the woman begins turning the millstones and putting in the grains she begins "to sing" in a rather monotonous wailing tone (Ecc. xii, 4). The fellahin have little variety of tone in their voice for joy or for sorrow, and the difference is scarcely perceptible save to an accustomed ear. The lively songs, when the women dance around the graves, seem even more tuneful than the wailing and mournful praises at the marriage ceremonies. When there are two women of course they grind the flour together; they do not disturb the sleepers, who are quite within reach. No singing in the morning is a "desolation," as it was in the days of Jeremiah, who treats the silence of the millstones and the darkened room as a calamity (c. xxv, 10). About daybreak they leave the mill and knead the dough. This is in summer; in winter the dough is already prepared overnight to leaven the whole lump. When the dough is ready it is carried to the heated oven and baked in from 10 to 15 minutes, and brought home. By this time the head of the family has risen from sleep, and has said his morning prayers. He gets ready for his work in the field, and the boys have also each some daily task. The eldest may help the father ploughing or gardening, the second is the shepherd of the flocks, the third drives out the kids, a girl takes the donkey to graze about the village grounds. About 10 o'clock breakfast, *ṣābūḥ* (صباح), is ready, a few loaves of bread and some "dipping" *ghemās* (غماس), which may be oil, honey, treacle, milk, vegetables, &c.; in fact, any food with the bread is called "dipping," no matter

how little it is adapted for the purpose. The woman carries it to the field at the appointed "meal time" (*mī'ād es-ṣabāh*), and all gather round and eat hastily and then return to work again. Boaz tells Ruth: "At meal-time come and eat thy bread, and dip thy morsel in *hīmeṣ* (vinegar)." When the fellah woman comes home she proceeds to fetch water from the spring in the *kirbe*[f], this she carries on her back with the supporting band round her forehead.¹ If she has a jar she puts it on her head, and without steadying it with her hands will climb the worst roads, rarely slipping or upsetting the jar. At the water she washes her face, arms, and legs, and as she is always barefooted she has no need to dry them. The "washing" is also carried to the spring, and after being thrown in the water is drawn out one piece after another, and rubbed and beaten on a flat stone with a stick (*mīr[ū]d*), and then put to dry on bushes or on rocks with small pebbles to keep them in place. It is now high time to prepare the dinner, and as the women have neither matches nor tinder they go to their neighbour and bring a burning coal on a potsherd (see Isaiah xxx, 14) to light the fire, with a little straw and pieces of thorn bush, on which the stouter logs are put, as the "crackling of these thorns" (Ecc. vii, 6) do not last long enough to prepare the food.²

I will now give a brief notice of some of their queer notions regarding prohibited food, and of the food which they eat but which are not eaten by Christians and townspeople. Boars and pigs are prohibited by all, but they will eat a piece of pork (preferably from the wild animal) to stave off fever. Fish are eaten only by the inhabitants of the villages near the sea, and by some Bedu. These villagers also eat the dry herring *f'sīkh* (فسخ), but the mountain villagers consider them as little better than carcases. Reptiles are not eaten as a rule, but the Rasheidy and Ta'amry Arabs eat the *ṭab* (*Uromastix spinipes*) found about the Dead Sea regions. Once when Dr. Schmidt and Mr. Lange of Haifa heard of a crocodile having been captured in the Zerka River they went to secure the animal, but could only recover the tail; the captors had feasted on the meat. Serpents are eaten by the Dervishes of the Erfa'i order in accordance with the command of their uncle (*'Am*), the founder of the order, as they told me. They cut away about a span at the

¹ See *Quarterly Statement*, 1904, p. 54.

² For the dishes which are used, see *Quarterly Statement*, 1904, pp. 262-277.

head and a span at the tail. Camels are eaten by Moslems but not by Christians. Hyænas, porcupines, badgers, and hares are eaten, but the hyænas only by Moslems. Wolves, jackals, and foxes are declared unclean because they eat carcases, but as the hyæna also eats carcases they excuse themselves by saying, "He chews the cud once a year." As foxes eat fruit, they sometimes eat them also. Birds are eaten almost without exception, and though ravens, vultures, and eagles are feeders on carrion and are considered unclean, they will eat them when they accidentally happen to kill one. Falcons eat only live birds, and are therefore *hallâl* (حلال). An exception is the kestrel, *skîre* (صقير), which eats mice and lizards.

Certain birds are sacred, and are not to be killed: the swallow, for visiting the Ka'aba; the pelican, for having carried water at the building of the Ka'aba; the stork, and the laughing turtle nestling on the Haram in Jerusalem; but their meat is edible, and if without intention of killing them they get hold of one, they will feed on it. All migratory birds, *tiyâr il-bahr* (طيور البحر), are allowed to be eaten.

When dinner is over the women make their toilet, with an occasional combing of the hair, which, for reasons I need not specify, is extremely necessary. A few clothes are made by them, and some spin, but this is more the work of Bedu women. The women take an active part in selling the produce of the field and flocks, as they are more patient carrying the loads on their heads or in driving the donkeys, and awaiting customers in the markets. The women of Bethlehem are well known in Jerusalem as sellers of articles in mother-of-pearl, *sadaf* (صدف), which their husbands make at home; those of Siloam, Malha, and Lifta are known for their milk, water, and vegetables, &c.

The children to the age of eight or ten run about the streets and play at "seek and find" or "war," or marbles, &c., as already stated in a previous chapter. The village schools introduced 12 years ago have not been followed very assiduously; the teachers, who are paid very little by the Government, may receive gifts of bread and fruits from the boys, but in most places they are almost neglected.

The women of the different houses meet together, every one with her sewing or spinning, late in the afternoon to a kind of

“*tabûn* meeting,” corresponding to our “tea meeting” or “five o’clock tea,” and exchange the news of the principal events, and the tidings which they have heard in the towns or villages.

When the men are not at work, *e.g.*, on rainy days, or when the weather is not favourable, they gather either in the house or in a public meeting room to talk over the news. They smoke their *arghileh* and prepare coffee. The *fellahîn* (except in Christian villages, and even they are very sober) never drink wine or strong drinks, nor anything save water after their regular meals. The coffee drinking is almost a religious act. Only a man can prepare the coffee, and it must be done with the greatest care. The grains are roasted in the coffee pan (*mehmâşec*[*t*]), and when they are half roasted they are pounded in the wooden or stone mortar; then the coffee-pot (*bukraç*) is put on the fire, whilst the rhythmical pounding goes on with the enormous pestle (*mehbâsh*), often weighing six or seven pounds. When the coffee boils it is taken away, then put a second time, and again a third time on the fire. The first cup of coffee is poured into the ashes for the Sheikh *esh-Shâdhilly*. Who is this *Shâdhilly*? Or what has he to do with the coffee? Was he the one who brought the coffee to Palestine? He would, therefore, be prior to the Sheikh of *Yémen*—*Shéhab-ed-Din Dhabany*, who brought coffee from *Abyssinia* in the middle of the fifteenth century—for according to *Ibn-Batûtâ*, *Shâdhilly* was dead before his days, and he was in *Egypt* in the beginning of the twelfth century (1325 A.D.). He says—“In *Alexandria* I heard the Litany of ‘*Abu-l Hass esh-Shâdhilly* (*الحس الشاذلي*), who, having made several pilgrimages to *Mecca*, knew that he was going to die at *Homaithra* (*حميثرا*), in *Saïd* (*Upper Egypt*), took with him a hoe, a basket, and aromatic herbs for his burial. On his grave is written all his genealogy down to *Hassan*, the son of ‘*Ali ‘Am* (*على عم*).

In the Litany of *Esh Shâdhilly* it says—“Put into our service this sea, as Thou hast put the sea under command of *Moses*, O Lord (*‘Am*)! . . . the flames, &c., as unto *Abraham*, O Lord! The iron and the mountain . . . as unto *David*, O Lord! The wind, devil, and genii . . . as unto *Solomon*, O Lord! . . . the water . . . as unto *Şuki*, O Lord! The fire . . . as unto *Bedawy*, O Lord! The iron . . . as unto ‘*Abd-el-ğader*, O Lord!” The poison . . . as unto *Erfai*, O Lord! . . .,” and so forth. Though nothing is said about the coffee in the Litany it is likely that the

same Shâdhilly is meant, as though this most venerable Sheikh were associated with the coffee. The exclamation, 'Am, at the end of every invocation means he is a *Lord*, or a founder of some order having a standard. We know that the above named have their standards.

When the coffee is poured out, a cup is handed to the eldest or more honoured guest, then a second cup, and then the other members. Women of a certain age also drink coffee, but not the young and the children. A third cup is offered, but is almost considered a hostile act. The saying is, "The first [cup] for the guest, the second for enjoyment, the third for war" (الاول لانصيف) .
والثاني للكييف . والثالث لالسيف .

Guests are not questioned as to who they are or where they come from, and what their business or errand may be. Fellah etiquette requires no introduction, but in course of conversations touching this and that motive they may find out the home, and finally the name, of everyone. Should this be known, a new kind of greeting begins: praises about the kindred; deeds of valour in the days of civil war under Lahem and Abu Ghosh; daring acts against Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian invader; and the vile present, where every notable fellah of high descent has to submit to the ill-treatment of some Kurd gendarme (*shâdermâ*, a corruption of gendarme).

The fellah does not willingly give in marriage to or take from the Madani, the greatest insult to a fellah being to have to submit to the pantaloons which a town-wife would require him to put on, and such a one is only considered as half a fellah or, at least, as a degraded one.

Fellahin hospitality is well known, but, as already mentioned, it is more generally practised in the south of Jerusalem, and some of the more generous fellahin, who glory in the title of *Jeyyed* (جيد), ruin themselves by giving suppers to friends or passers-by. There is generally a guest's house (*madâfe[t]*, also called *صاحة*, *shâha[t]*), in the village, and the guardian is supposed to know whose turn it is to furnish bread, coffee, tobacco, and the sacrifice. But either from pride, or from thirst for praise, some are zealous enough, as soon as they see strangers approaching the village, to go to meet them, and swear "by divorce" or "by their arm"

that the supper is to be at their expense.¹ The guests are installed according to their rank. When all are seated the conversation is carried on, not on the subject of the visit, for it is now even as in Samuel's day, "ye shall eat with me to-day (no drinking of wine in Samuel's house), and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart" (I Sam. ix, 19). The sheep or goat is always called a sacrifice, *dhabīḥa*. It is "killed" in view of the guests, with the neck turned to the *kiblah*, and the throat is cut "in the name of the merciful and compassionate God." It is quickly skinned whilst hanging against the wall. The inner parts are all put away, and eaten afterwards in the family; the lungs, liver, and heart are never put before the guests, and the stomach is carefully emptied, washed at the spring or well, and stuffed with rice and small pieces of meat, also only for family use. It is considered shameful to present this to any guest. The animal is now cut judiciously into such pieces as can be presented and eaten by one guest. The whole of this work is done by an expert cook, who is the organiser of the reception. Three or four hours after the arrival of the guests the rice is brought in in wooden bowls and set before the guests, with bread. The pieces of meat are now distributed to the guests, and each guest, according to his rank, receives a piece equal in size, but considered to be of different degrees of honour and delicacy in flavour. The pieces, in order of merit, are:—

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| 1. The ilium (الشدة <i>ish-shudá</i>) | } These three pieces are always presented to the three first, and alternate in value in different places. |
| 2. The neck (الرقبة <i>ir-rakabe[t]</i>) | |
| 3. The breast (القس <i>el-kass</i>) | |
| 4. The femur (thigh) (مكسر الورك <i>miksar el-werk</i>). | |
| 5. The tibia (leg) (المعلق <i>il-mi'alah</i>). | |
| 6. The scapula (shoulder) (الالواح <i>el-awáḥ</i>). | |
| 7. The humerus (arm) (مكسر اليد <i>miksar el-yad</i>). The bone must be broken, and a piece of meat added to it. | |

The unbroken humerus is called *d'rá el-bagha* (دراع البغه), and must not be offered, as it is considered humiliating. Another

¹ ومن ذراعي , علي الطالك من مراتي *Alley il-taldk min maráti*, or *min d'rá'i*, if unmarried.

piece, which would be held to give even greater offence, is the *tartîr esh-shandal* (ترتور الشندل), the last rib and cartilage. When Saul had been seated, Samuel asked the cook to bring forth the honoured piece, and gave him the shoulder (the Jews do not eat the hinder parts) The guest takes from the piece as much as he can carry off with his fingers, for he must never gnaw, and then hands it to some honoured man or member of the house, saying, "Here, O owner!" (خذ يا مَحَلِّي) *kheth yâ me'hilly*. The other

guests, in like manner, give each of his unfinished portion to some member. Having finished the supper, every man rises from his place, thanking God, and drinking water at the end of the supper only. Squatting with both knees downwards, and with the legs gathered tailor-fashion, alone is the approved fashion when at table.

Squatting, called *tarbiâ'*, because of its forming a "square," is the sacred posture; whilst the *takunbuz*, with the knees up, is profane, and never tolerated whenever any holy transaction is going on—as eating, measuring wheat, reading the Koran, &c. This kind of squatting is supposed to be the devil's mischievous position. Hands may, and in fact ought to be, washed in this position, after supper. Soap is usually employed, and for honoured guests, it must be a new piece. Towels are unknown.

Serious affairs are not spoken about until either after supper, or even the next morning, and then they part, after having arranged matters, without breakfast. This is quite an old custom, for when Abimelech came to Isaac, "he (Isaac) made them a feast, and they did eat and drink; and they *rose up betimes in the morning* and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away (let them go), and they departed from him in peace" (Gen. xxvi, 30, 31).

Before sitting down to meals the guests all wash their hands, because spoons are not much in use, and although wooden ones are to be found in every house, they prefer to eat with the hands. By way of encouragement the supper-giver says, "Give grace to the merciful" (سَمِّي بِالرَّحْمَانِ), which in plain English means, "eat (having said grace)." When supper is over, the men have their hands washed. For very aristocratic guests a bowl is brought to receive the water, flowing from the hands, for a decent fellow will never wash in standing water; water must flow over the hands till they are rubbed clean, first by soap and finally by water only. 'God reward you, O owner of the house,' says the guest (*khalaaf*

Allah aleyk yâ mehilly), and the owner answers, "By your voice" (*alla hesak*). When drinking water, the guest must first say, "Thanks to God" (*il-hamdu lillah*), to which comes the reply, "May it have satisfied you" (*haniyân*). And again the drinker answers, "May God satisfy you" (*Allah yehanik*). All these compliments and formulas are uttered and muttered in half undertones, and do not seem so cumbersome in real life as they do in a description, delivered, as they are, with perfect and enviable elegance.

The *chief meal* of the day is not necessarily the supper—it depends on circumstances, whether the members of the family be separated by their several employments or not. If the men work as day-labourers some miles away from home, then the supper, *'ashah* (عشا), is the most regular meal, but if they work round about the village, it is at dinner. In the fast of Ramaḍân the meals, of course, are changed. Heavy meals are taken as soon as the setting of the sun is announced by the voice of the *Khatib*—that is, where they are so far away from the towns that they cannot hear the cannon-signal.

The long winter evenings are spent in games or story-telling; but the *fellaḥîn* are most fond of the long adventures of the warrior tribes in their migrations from Arabia, attacks from other tribes, love-romances, or semi-Biblical, semi-Mohammedanised stories about "Joseph and his brethren," "Job's patience," &c. These are declaimed by the bard, *sha'er* (شعر), to the accompaniment of his one-stringed fiddle (*rabâbe[t]*). The people often pass the whole night listening, when the poem is particularly captivating, but, as in old days, it is only such as are free of care who can enjoy them. "He that singeth songs to an heavy heart" is probably such a bard (Prov. xxv, 20). When the people prepare to go to bed, it is only necessary to take off the girdle, and then lying down on the carpet to cover themselves two or three times with the thick carpet. Shoes, it is well understood, are never worn in the room; they are always left at the door, and therefore are only needed when one leaves the house.

The village amusements, besides marriages, the taking of vows, or the like, are supplemented by occasional itinerant showmen. Instead of the traditional Italian organ-grinder of Europe, they have buffoons, called *barâmkay*, who come in little troops of three or four. The leader (*Abâ Kheşaywân*) beats his little drum with

bells, the second plays the neyey, and a youth puts on a petticoat and whirls around (probably the name *barâmkay* means "whirlers"), to the great amusement of the onlookers. If in making his collections—the drum is held out for the usual hat—he does not receive encouragement to his satisfaction, he begins to talk about the stinginess of so-and-so in such-and-such a place, the meanness of his character, and so forth. If the hint is not sufficient, he gets nearer and makes impertinent remarks about the villagers themselves. This is generally successful, and to escape worse "blame" (*'azâra*[t]), coins or comestibles are given, and a volley of praises succeeds. The fellaḥ is very particular about his reputation (*sît*), and will rather overpay the rascal than be called names in the next village. Bulgarians, also, sometimes pass with bears; others have performing goats or monkeys. The monkey (*sa'adân*) shows how the old man goes on his staff, how the old woman sleeps, how the hunter carries the gun, and so on.

(*To be continued.*)

THE BEDOUIN OF THE SINAITIC PENINSULA.

By W. E. JENNINGS-BRAMLEY, ESQ.

I.—*Natural History.*

As will appear from time to time in these notes, the hyæna and the wolf are the wild animals that the Bedouin of the Sinaitic Peninsula have most to fear, both for their flocks and themselves. When the Hajj went by the road from Suez to Nakhl, instead of as now by the Wâdy Hasil et-Tûr, the former road was infested with hyæna in quest of the dead camels which are always to be found on much frequented roads; now these brutes have almost disappeared from the district. They were then in such numbers as to be a danger to solitary travellers. I was told by a man that one night as he was riding to Suez, his camel stopped suddenly, and he saw close to him, by the side of the road, a hyæna feeding on a dead camel. He went up to it, but could not scare it away. It only howled at him, and went on tearing the carcase. Hunger will embolden them, even to attacking a man. A Bedouin I knew came suddenly upon a yæna which made for him. His gun was not loaded; he could