

## THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

*(Continued from Q.S., 1907, p. 21.)*

HAVING gathered the crushed straw on a heap, another instalment of straw is made ready for threshing, and the work continues till before sunset. Sunset is a very disagreeable hour, the genii are hovering about, and it is time to say the prayers; so there is a pause in the work. After supper, when the wind is favourable, *winnowing* begins, for it must not be too strong, else it will carry away the *tibn*, the man goes to the floor and watches the wind; often it is not before midnight that the most work is done. Boaz also, who had the threshing business performed in the day-time, went to winnow in the night (Ruth iii, 2). The *tibn* is gently carried away to some distant spot, the small straw or chaff called *kaṣwal*, Heb. *mōš* (Hos. xiii, 3), falls between the wheat and the *tibn*. When the wheat is all clean, the heap is properly arranged and signed with the Mithra cross-ways. The heap is then called *salēbe(t)*, "the crossed," and remains there till morning, the man lying down to sleep near the heap to be ready in case thieves may try to steal.

Precisely the same proceeding is found in the case of Boaz, who, after having winnowed the barley, made a heap, Heb. *'arūmāh* (*cp.* Arab. *'arna[t]*), and lies down to sleep till morning at the end of the heap.

When the sun is out, the family comes with their animals, and all their women, in order to take home the grain. In the name of God, the owner sits down with his legs stretched on the ground, for to put up the knees is genii-like, and this squatting (*taḳambaz*) is avoided whenever any sacred or serious act is performed. The measure is now put into the heap, and "one God" is repeated till "one measure" is filled and put into the sack of goat's hair (*farde[t]*), then two, three, four, five, six, "blessing" (for seven) "faithfulness," *Yā Rab el-amane(t)* (rhyming with eight, *thananie[t]*), and so forth; whenever the man who is counting knows any good qualificative to

rhyme with the number, he repeats it. The wheat is carried home and put into the store dividing the foreroom from the ante-room.

The rough straw and the remaining grain are sifted in a sieve made of wire (*kerbâl*), which only carries away the coarser pieces. Stalks (*kash*) are put aside, and are used to make trays.

Without his agriculture—*felha*[*f*] is what they call the whole proceeding, from sowing to gathering the grain into the barn—the Fellah is not happy, and though he may have other occasional occupations, still agriculture as a kind of home-sickness will draw him to the beloved fields, and though he possess no lands, he will hire them, in some far-away Bedawy-country, and risk the venture. One of my farmers who had irrigated gardens which gave him plenty of work all the year round, explained to me “that there was no blessing” in bought wheat, and wanted to have a try at farming; accordingly he started, and when the year was terminated, I made the following account to him:—

MUSTAPHA ABU EHSANE'S FELHA-YEAR, 1881.

1880.			1881.	
Dr.		P		Cr.
Nov.	Bought 2 cows at 16 Mej. (P. 864)		July 10	tappies of barley at P. 10 ... 100
	Interest at 10% p.a.	86·20	Aug. 31½	„ of wheat at 1 Mej. 717·20
	Sowed 6 Mid at 4 Mej, at P. 22½ ... ..	546	Sept. 31½	„ of durra at ½ Mej. 358·30
	8 rotls rice for the helpers ...	52	„ 1	Tappy of sesame ... .. 45·20
	2 goats for the feast ... ..	187	To balance accounts ... ..	391·30
	<i>Tilm</i> for the cows in the season ... ..	200		
	Food ... ..	60		
	Carriage of wheat and straw back and forth from Urfas to Beth-Natif ... ..	482		
		<u>P. 1,613·20</u>		<u>P. 1,613·20</u>

Having showed him clearly that he lost not only P. 391·30 cash, but also all his time and minor expenses, which we undoubtedly overlooked, he came out with the very characteristic philosophical remark, that the wheat was now *his own*, from his *own* work, and therefore more blessed (*abrak*); at all events, the demonstration was not convincing, and he said, fortunately he had no pen, and could not make accounts, and was happier for it.

Where they have plenty of wheat, they put it in a pit (*maf-mura*[*f*]), which is covered with loam and earth, so that the place cannot be detected by anybody who does not know of its existence.

When the wheat is to be taken out, the pits are opened, are aired by throwing a bundle in and drawing it out again, till the noxious gases are gone. Often this goes on several hours, and then a person only enters if a lamp continues to burn. The "treasures" of Jerem., xli, 8, were such field-pits, with wheat, barley, oil and honey.

Watered gardens are called *jenân* or *basâtin* in general, but the special names of the divisions of the land are the same as with the unirrigated land. As a rule the perennial spring flows down the mountain side, and the gardens are in terraces, *habâ'il*, one above the other, or in the valley. The water belongs to the villagers, and everyone who possesses land on a level with the water has a right to water it. To avoid disputes, the water is divided between the families, and these again in their turn divide it between themselves. In some places it is divided into degrees; thus, the water flows into a pool, and a marked pole shows when a degree has flowed out; according to the quantity of land possessed, the owner receives his share (*karârât*). When the necessary quantity of water has flown, the guardian stops the pool, and instructs the next in turn to take charge of the water. In Urtaş it is divided by hours, going the round of the village in seven days. Every family holding it twenty-four hours and sub-dividing it between them from morning to noon, noon to sunset, sunset to midnight, and midnight to morning. As they have no watches and no other sign but the sun and the stars, there are sometimes great quarrels and fights, especially in rainless seasons, when the water decreases. Canals (قنبي) are made for those gardens which are far away, and a pool (*birke*[t]) is built to hold the water when the flow is too slow. The Urtaş gardens, the gardens of Solomon (Cant. v, 1), the "pools" made to water the gardens (Eccl. ii, 6) and "canals" (Ps. i, 3), were known probably in later days. For the Israelites hoped to be rid of those naturally watered gardens of vegetables (Deut. xi, 10), where, on account of the soft soil, they could water and stop the water-passages by pushing the earth with the foot. Though the fellahîn are very dexterous with their feet, yet they have various gardening implements to work the gardens. A hoe (*fâs*) is used to till the ground where the plough can not be brought, or to break the clods. The *majrafe*(t) is a kind of shovel to level the earth and to turn the water in the canals, and the *kad*(d)ûm, a small hoe to till the ground

round the young plants. A very tiny hoe is the *fahâra(t)*, for very tender plants; it is hardly an inch broad, and has a handle not quite a foot long.

The water-melon plantations, where the plants are often several feet apart, and grow very slowly, have to be ploughed again between the plants; this ploughing is done with a mule, to avoid damaging the tender plants.

Those villages which have the good fortune to possess large springs of water—as Siloam, Wallaje, Lifta, Battîr, Urtaş, Silwad, etc., carefully raise such vegetables as are saleable at the Jerusalem market, and they manure, weed and plant two crops a year. Two villages, Jôrah and Hamam, near Gaza, may claim to be the best horticultural spots in Palestine. They raise the earliest vegetables (as tomatoes, haricot beans, etc.) when there are none to be had elsewhere, and these often arrive as early as February. Of the villages in the Jerusalem district, Siloam is best known for its beautiful cauliflowers (*harnabit*), beet (*silk*), and parsley (*bakdânes*). Battîr is famous for its garden-eggs (الباذنجان), Urtaş for its tomatoes (*bandâra*); this last is evidently an imported fruit, the name being a corruption of *pommes d'or*. Urtaş is almost alone among the watered villages in growing fruit trees, and its pears (*injâs*), though of a very poor quality, are renowned. So also are the very fine peaches (*durek*). The imported American fruit has done splendidly. The watered gardens of Tanur, below Beth-Ëtab, are the only ones in the mountainous region which produce fine citrons.

The once renowned gardens of En-gedi are now in the hands of the Ta'amry, who produce early cucumbers (*kheyâr*), which are not the same as the hairy serpentine cucumbers (*fakûs*) which the same produce in unwatered lands.

Fattîr, near Bethnej-Jamal is known for its onions, so also the two 'Allars, near Beth-Ëtab. The gardens of Jaffa produce almost exclusively oranges, of world renown.

Near Yebna and Shaḥmy also are horticultural districts. Vegetable raising Jews have settled in Wady Iḥnène since 1881, and have fought the fever with little success, having followed Russian-Germans who left the country after burying at least ten out of twelve members of their family. The marshes towards Rubîn are probably the chief cause of the unhealthiness of the district. Among other products, the Wady furnishes Jaffa and Ramleh with sugar-cane.

Among the plants which are cultivated in the unwatered lands are :

Water-melon	<i>baṭīkh</i>	Heb. <i>ābaṭṭīhīm</i> , Num. xi, 5.
Vegetable-marrow	<i>kusah</i>	Heb. <i>ḵišš'ū'im</i> , „
Radish	<i>tijjel</i>	„
Turnip	<i>lift</i>	„
Squash	<i>ḵarā'</i>	„
Onion	<i>baṣal</i>	Heb. <i>beṣālim</i> , „
Garlic	<i>thōme</i>	Heb. <i>shūmīm</i> , „

the three last are also planted in watered gardens.

The serpentine cucumber (*fakās*) may be referred to in 2 Kings iv, 39, although in that verse some wild cucumber is meant, *e.g.* the *elaterium*. But the writer adds the qualification “of the field,” and so means the field or wild cucumber, as distinguished from the edible one.

Haricot-beans (*lūbie[t]*), peas (*bizaile[t]*), and potatoes (*baṭātāh*) are imported vegetables, and not yet universally known.

Cabbages (*maḷfūf*) have been raised mostly in Jaffa and a few in Urṭas, so also has beet-root (*banjar*).

Wild plants are also very often gathered, especially in places where vegetables are scarce—many are eaten raw, others are boiled in water and oil or *samm*.

Wild Artichoke	<i>khurfaish</i> .
Common Nettle	<i>korase</i> (قريس).
Wild Mustard	<i>lufēteh</i> .
Common Mallow	<i>ḵhubaize(t)</i> .
Sorrel	<i>ḵumaidāh</i> , <i>ḵamaṣeṣ</i> .
Horehound (the stalks)	<i>khāmshe(t)</i>
Chard	<i>'aḵūb</i> .
Purslane	<i>baḵle(t)</i> , <i>r'jaile(t)</i> .
Wild “Roquette”	<i>fujaile(t)</i> .
Majoram	<i>za'tar</i> (the leaves are dried, pounded, and eaten with bread and salt).
Fennel	<i>shūmar</i> (eaten in its green state).

The most common trees that are planted and are more or less grown everywhere, are :

Olive-tree	<i>zeitān</i>	Heb. <i>zayith</i> .
Fig-tree	<i>tīne(t)</i>	Heb. <i>t'ēnah</i> .

Quince-tree	<i>şafarjal.</i>	
Almond-tree	<i>lüze(t)</i>	Heb. <i>shákéd.</i>
Apricot-tree	<i>mishmish.</i>	
Pear-tree	<i>injás.</i>	
Peach-tree	<i>dúrak</i> (دریغ).	
Plum-tree	<i>khókh, s'weda(t).</i>	
Zyzyphus	<i>'enáb.</i>	
Mulberry-tree	<i>tút.</i>	
Hawthorn	<i>za'rúr.</i>	
Pomegranate	<i>rumán</i>	Heb. <i>rimmón.</i>
Nut-tree	<i>jáz</i>	Heb. <i>égóz.</i>
Apple-tree	<i>tufáh</i>	Heb. <i>tappuah.</i>

(To be continued.)

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## SOME SPECIMENS OF FELLAḤ WIT AND HUMOUR.

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### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

DURING the interval between the two permits for Gezer the Committee of the *P.E.F.*, at my suggestion, commissioned Yusif Khattar Kina'an, the capable foreman of the works, to travel through Palestine in search of folklore in its various branches. It was felt that there were many points which an intelligent native could extract from the people far more completely than the most expert European. For his guidance I prepared an Arabic translation of the "Questions" issued by the *P.E.F.*, and gave him some other hints. The results of his pilgrimage, which are contained in four notebooks, far exceeded my own expectations. Till now other duties have prevented my giving proper attention to them; but I hope to be able to contribute translations of these notes regularly to the *Quarterly Statement*, beginning with the present number. When they are finished it will, I think, be found that a more complete statement of fellah life and thought will be available than