

south of the city, in which are grown quantities of the salads, cauliflowers, and other vegetables supplied to the city. One effect of these and such-like arrangements is the universal occurrence of "round worms" among the native population, and here too we have all the necessary antecedents for the propagation of enteric fever and cholera.

(*To be continued.*)

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSBERGER.

(*Continued from Q.S., 1917, p. 165.*)

III.—THE SISTER-TOWNS RAMLEH AND LYDDA¹—*continued.*

THE Christian natives live on good terms with their Mohammedan fellow-citizens, as it was only after great events in history that they suffered persecution, and life was made intolerable to them. Since the departure of the Crusaders from Acre, they have greatly diminished in numbers, and certainly have had to endure every kind of humiliation during the "Great blank" from 1291 to the end of the eighteenth century. During these five centuries their existence was little short of slavery, their condition rising or falling according to the ruler of the empire, kingdom, or province. During the short occupation of the coast by Bonaparte—February to May 1799, they hoped for a final recovery of the Holy Land by a Christian power, and showed their contempt for their Moslem co-citizens—a Christian even allowed himself the liberty of calling out to the Muezzin in irreverent terms and shooting him down. Many joined the retreating French army, and many were killed by the mountaineers who followed on their track, while the women and children were carried away and sold in the markets of Jerusalem,

¹ [It will, of course, be borne in mind that these sketches of the modern towns of Palestine were written several years ago.—ED.]

Hebron, and Nablûs. Evidently the few who outlived the catastrophe had again to undergo all sorts of trials for the next fifty years. Their little knowledge of reading and writing has, perhaps, been the main cause of their preservation, as they were secretaries to the effendis, and, in time, became the real skimmers of the fat of the land. They lent money, sold or exchanged goods which they carried on their animals, and thus also became mukaris. They are the only expert beekeepers in the whole plain, and collect the honey out of the hives owned by the fellahin, who receive a part of the honey—the wax always belongs to the madâni. A certain late millionaire of Ramleh obtained his wealth in this way, and was owner or partner of almost every apiary for many miles about the plains and the mountains of Judah and Ephraim. Several sesame oil-mills also were his own, and the cereals flowed into his granaries.

In spite of their little knowledge of reading and writing, they are still the most superstitious and stubborn set of people one is likely to meet with. They are kept in the deepest ignorance by their ignorant priests. The early vegetables, and such as are not produced in the mountains (as cactuses, water-melons, pomegranates, etc.), are almost all carried up to Jerusalem by the Ramleh and Lydda mukaris—mostly Christians and one-eyed, although, if they have two eyes, they cannot see very much, ophthalmia being the great plague of these two towns. This ophthalmia is more probably caused by the tiny cactus thorns and filth than by the heat and sand, to which it is often attributed.

In large caravans they leave Lydda and Ramleh towns four or five o'clock in the afternoon, to avoid the unbearable heat of the plain, and arrive in Jerusalem at daybreak, when the vegetable dealers come out to meet them and buy their goods. After having slept a few hours and done their errands they drive back and again pass the night on donkey-back, after having earned a few beshliks, often not more than is enough for themselves and their donkeys, for the goods are extraordinarily cheap. Fellahin robbers also lie in wait for them when they remain behind the caravan, and the meagre gain is often lost together with their donkeys.

The men differ from the Mohammedans inasmuch as they have Sunday clothes for going to church; this they do in the early morning, and follow their ordinary calling as soon as mass is over. The better classes pass their Sunday afternoons in picnicking among

the olive yards along the Jaffa road, enjoying the sight of the passers by, and making merry over a glass of arak.

When there is plenty of fruit and no ready sale for it, many families go out to live in booths ('*arāish*), which they make with a few poles and thorn bushes or reeds, to protect them against the sun. During the summer months they live chiefly on raw vegetables, and have very few kitchen utensils with them. At the end of the season, that is about the end of October, the '*arāish* is quite dry, and is either abandoned or used for fire. Did the Psalmist refer to such an '*arāish* when he said: "My strength is dried up like a *kheres*"? (Ps. xxii, 15). In the Authorised Version the word is translated "potsherd," but may one compare the word *khōresh*, which means a forest or wooded height, like the Arabic *harsh*? On the other hand, a potsherd becomes dry once and for all, whereas, whilst a booth is always made of green branches, and dries gradually as the season advances, it can be rebuilt again in the spring.

The Ramleh inhabitants say of the Lydda garden owners, and *vice-versa*, that when the time draws near for going out to live on vegetables, the various kettles are "re-tinned" and carried in procession through the streets (زفة الطناجر), *zafet it-tanajer*), bidding them farewell for a few months as useless articles with which they cannot be encumbered on their outing. Be this as it may, the injudicious use of raw vegetables causes many serious indispositions.

The cucumbers, melons, and the like are generally hedged all round to prevent cattle from entering. Jackals and foxes live in the hedges by hundreds and destroy the fruit; being mostly fond of mulberries and grapes, they do not cause damage to the melon fields, which have to be guarded rather against thieves than against the animals. The field is called *mektha* (مكتة); we may compare the cucumber field of Isaiah i, 8 (*mikshah*) where are also mentioned two kinds of lodges. The keeper, when hired, is called (ناطور) *nātūr*; he was known in Job's days, for in chap. xxvii, 18, he is called *nōsēr*. The Prophet Jonah set himself up a booth ('*arishat*), it is called a *sukkah*. What has been said of Ramleh is also generally true of Lydda, except that the inhabitants of Lydda, being a little more out of the way, are rather more ignorant and self-willed.

Ramleh has a weekly market on Wednesday, when the fellahin and Bedouin of the environs pour in with their produce, such as milk, butter, chickens, eggs, and mats, baskets, etc., from Beth-dajjan.

Animals and pottery are also on show. The same may be said of Lydda, but the market is on Monday.

A yearly fair is held at Lydda, at the feast of Lydda, on the 10th of November. It is a festival acknowledged by all the fellahin as truly as any religious festival, or perhaps even more so, as the other feasts are movable, whilst this one is on a fixed date, being the Christian one.

Ramleh also celebrates the "Feast of the White Monk," or Prophet Saleh (*'id in-Naby Zaleh*), in summer, but it is not so well known as the Lydd feast.

Two events will greatly contribute to change Ramleh, the modern Mukarri town, and if its old splendour is left behind, yet they must not be overlooked: the arrival of Jewish settlers soon after the Russian persecution of 1880, and the railway built in 1891. If it is true that changes are very slow in the Orient, and whilst on the highway modern hotels flourish and the railway station enlivens the locality, yet the back part of the town remains as Saracenic and as mediaeval as though the railway whistle had as yet never been heard. With their conservative ideas the people will cling to the old proverb, *يا ايها الناس اطبعوا الناس* "*Ya eyūhah in-Nās etba'u in-Nās*," that is, "O people, follow the people," meaning that they are not to follow new-fangled things.

The Jews have also hotels, and carriages and shops; very few of them try agriculture, as the attempt of the agricultural settlements does not seem to have resulted in what its founders expected. So here they are, again engaged in commerce.

A small community of Roman Catholics and Protestants have also flourished for some years past, and it must be said to their credit, that light has been brought by them, however little it is, and however slow it has been in coming.

A few have been striving lately to pass their evenings in visiting each other, an old feature though—except that they spend the time in reading books upon different subjects, which they either buy or borrow from a circulating library in Beyrout, as the neighbouring towns cannot yet boast of such a luxury. They are taking to European customs in many ways; the women also are unveiled, though some of them are obliged to wear the veil at least in the streets. The washing of the feet, so often mentioned in the Scriptures, is no more in use, at least in the same way as is mentioned among the patriarchs and also in other books, among women (1 Sam. xxv, 41)

In later days it was done by both men and women, and we read of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (Luke vii, 44), and of the washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus himself. St. Paul enumerates the washing of the feet among a widow's good works (1 Tim. v, 10). A wife will even now wash her husband's feet, but it is not customary now at least to do so for strangers. Some fifty years back, when the wealthy families had slaves, the custom was met with; but one cause of this change among Christians is the introduction of stockings and shoes which keep off the dust, which otherwise so easily finds its way into the open Arab shoes. As for the Mohammedans it may be noted: (1) Every true believer must say his prayers and make his own ablutions several times a day; and (2) A woman is unclean, and as such cannot touch a man even by washing his feet.

Cleanliness in the house is tolerably usual, as likewise that of the clothes of most of the inhabitants. But the streets are not yet what they ought to be. Sweeping is done but seldom, and when it is, must be enforced by the police. Carcasses are thrown down on the road in the immediate vicinity of the towns, but, thanks to the numbers of jackals by night and to the dogs and vultures by day, they disappear after a short time, but leave the stench for several weeks on and around the spot. Nobody ever thinks of burying the remains for hygienic reasons.

The ancient Hebrew towns had very much the same appearance as the Moslem towns of to-day. While Jews were then in greater numbers, it is now the Mohammedans; and the modern Christians of divers beliefs were then represented by the Philistines, Edomites, etc. In the cities of the plain the Hebrews were always in the minority. Here we can be assured that "history repeats itself" in many instances, where it does not simply continue "as it was in the beginning"—of Hebrew history at all events. All the above details may be regarded as simply the continuation of what the manners and customs have always been, from the wealthy aristocrats to the uncleanness of the streets, and the exposure of carcasses for food "to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth" (1 Sam. xvii, 46, Jer. vii, 33), and this continued also under the Roman domination, for, "wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. xxiv, 28).

The streets were not swept more often than they are now, for as a warning the prophet Isaiah says: "Their carcasses shall be

thrown as dung in the midst of the street" (v, 25), thus proving that the streets were not looked after from the point of view of cleanness.

Corpses of unknown persons, whether murdered or killed by accident, as was the man of God near Bethel (1 Kings xiii, 24), who was slain by a lion and brought in a few days afterwards, may have been exposed, though the law prohibits it. The bodies of Goliath and Jezebel were only gathered in when they had been already exposed to mutilation and decay. In 1888 a Kurdish shepherd was killed in the Wady el-Musrara, near Jaffa, and as nobody knew him he lay there thirty days, till finally the inhabitants of Salame thought it indecent to leave the body of a believer without burial, and they carried to their cemetery what had escaped the jackals and vultures. The police had waited for somebody to give tidings of the body, so that they might take him into custody—thus hoping for a clue, but as nobody came the corpse was allowed to lay there all that time.

(*To be continued.*)

ST. GEORGE FOR ENGLAND.¹

By ESTELLE BLYTH.

"St. GEORGE for England!"

How the old battle-cry of England stirs our blood even now, as we picture to ourselves English soldiers charging home to victory with that cry upon their lips!

But while we are being constantly reminded of our Patron Saint by our flag, our coinage, and the numerous Orders called after his name, it is curious how little really is known about him. He is familiar to us chiefly through the legend of his encounter with the dragon, but of the true life of the saint we know little. It may even be that not all of us could answer straight off that April 23rd, "Shakespeare's Day," is also St. George's Day, though in olden times it was held as a great festival,—and rightly so. Perhaps in rejecting the legend of the dragon as a mediæval romance we have

¹ [Reprinted from the *United Service Magazine* (of April, 1908) by the kind permission of the Proprietors.—ED.]