

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

(Continued from Q.S., 1922, p. 67.)

*Arab Life.*¹

The most ancient inhabitants of the borders of Palestine lived practically in the same districts, and surely in the same state, as do their modern representatives. The Canaanites who were landed proprietors of Palestine would not find the wandering Abraham a novelty when he pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai (Gen. xii, 8) without opposition, and remained a Bedawy all his days. Moreover, Abraham remained a shepherd, whereas Isaac became an agricultural Bedawy, working on hired lands which Abimelech granted him. The tribe was greatly reduced by successive losses, first of all by the departure of the Ishmaelites, and Jacob was still more reduced by the separation of his wild brother Ishmael. The Ishmaelites were not exclusively shepherds by that time, as they carried goods and spices on their camels to Egypt, and bought Joseph as they passed by Dothan. It was Joseph who, according to an Arab song,

Was thrown into a well at Jibrin

Surrounded by all kinds of serpents.

(ورمو الى بدير جبرين ملان حيايى ملتمين.)

To-day the 'Arishiye(t) Bedus on the Egyptian frontier carry goods by land from Gaza to Egypt and *vice versa*. They are a peculiar intermediate class; they practice commerce and agriculture and are camel-rearers. They come from el-'Arish and its environs during the winter, when traffic is brisk, principally between Jerusalem and Jaffa. On their miserable camels they carry small

¹ [The reader is reminded that these sketches were written before the Great War.—Ed.]

loads at very low prices. They feed their camels on next to nothing, except for the thorn-bushes and other shrubs they find on the way. They remain many days on the road, and sell the camels to the fellahin when the season is over. They buy fresh camels in their country and pass the summer months in Egypt, where they help to harvest the *durra*, etc. In the following year they come again with two or three camels—ten seems to be the height of their ambition—and with this number they retire and enjoy the labour of many years' misery in their sandy homes. This type, it is only just to say, is exposed to the incursions of the south Palestinian robber Bedus, and is very little respected.

Among the pure non-working Arabs are the Teyaha and Tarabin in the south, the Beni Saḫr or Skhur ("the sons of the Rocks") in the east, and in the north the 'Anazeh. The last-mentioned roam all over, from Syria to Mesopotamia and the Jauf, with their innumerable herds of camels, which spoil the land through which they pass, as they do not leave a single blade of grass. As lords of the desert they are haughty and rule despotically over all who come within their reach. They live on whatever they can hold; they will rob stray travellers who are not confided to their special care, or will war tribe against tribe. The Billy living south of Gaza are the most audacious and terrible of robbers in Philistia. They come and infest the road from Jaffa to Bab el-Wad, but will not venture into the mountains, where their horses cannot escape with the same ease as in the plain. They clear out of the way whenever they feel inferior to their adversary, and hardly ever attack Europeans. In the north plain of Jezreel the Beni Saḫr and in the east the 'Adwān go forth on robbing expeditions far away from their own districts. In rare cases 'Adwan, who have been known to rob near Bethany, have advanced into the plain of Sharon by the north, crossing near Bethel, Gibeā, down to Yalo.

The oldest calling of the Bedu was certainly the rearing of camels, though they now attribute this to a gift from the prophet Mohammed himself. As camels carried the prophet and his companions on his flight from Mecca they are considered sacred, and must never be utilized as freight animals, except it be for private use, to carry tents and household utensils when the camp is moved. The fellahin and 'Arishiyeh are certainly cursed for living on the work of their camels. A camel is so sacred that if two associates disagree their

camel will either die or cause some disaster to fall upon their heads—at least, so it is said!

Abraham, the wealthy Bedawy Sheikh, sent his servant across the desert with 10 camels, which was only a very small part of what he possessed (Gen. xii, 16, and xxiv, 35). Isaac, being an agriculturist, would certainly possess very few. Jacob had camels when he came from Mesopotamia (Gen. xxx, 43), but he must have lost them later, as we subsequently find that his sons go the long journey to Egypt each with a single ass to bring grain, instead of taking the useful camel, which they undoubtedly would have done if they had had any. Moreover, they would have utilized camels also for the transport of their wives and children and baggage, instead of accepting the wagons which Joseph sent (Gen. xlv, 19).

The Bedawy Job of the "Children of the East" (Job i, 3) possessed 3,000 camels, 7,000 sheep, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 she-asses. Hence he was also an agriculturist, but he had no horses. Again, in the days of Gideon, the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the Children of the East covered the land with their tents and camels without number, but no horse is mentioned. The Reubenites who fought against the Hagarites took away 50,000 camels, sheep and asses (1 Chron. v, 21). The camel always was and will be the inseparable companion of the Bedawy. Without the camel it would be impossible for the nomads to carry their tents and furniture over the vast sandy spaces, where asses can pass only with difficulty and carry only a very small load, and cannot endure hunger and thirst for the same length of time as can a camel. The desert camel is not very strong, and cannot carry such heavy loads as the well-fed working camels of the fellahin. On the other hand, it is more sturdy and can feed on the hedges when necessary, living a meagre life and ready to stand all the privations of the desert. It seems veritably to swell up when it receives its food daily and at given meals; and the longer the journey, the more this wonderful animal seems to progress, provided it is fed regularly. The small and miserable 'Arishiyeh camels, which work and travel from Egypt to Jaffa and Jaffa to Jerusalem, are fed very irregularly and remain small and comparatively weak. The Hauran camels, on the other hand, who carry wheat from the Belka and Hauran to Nablus and Accho are very strong, and easily carry six to seven hundred pounds all the way. The same can be said of the North Syrian

camels which undertake the regular and long journey between Syria and Mesopotamia.

In previous chapters we have seen that objects or animals which have been in the country for a number of centuries have far more names to designate their different states and conditions than those that are of more recent introduction or are less known to the people. The generic name of the camel is *jamal*, the Hebrew *gāmāl*, under which name it is generally known in towns and villages. But the Bedawy has scores of names—*ba'ir*, *abal* or *el-bal* the idle roamer, *ta'un* the irritable, *rahel* the migrator, *wasek* the forced carrier, *hayrūn* the exceller, *katūb* the pack-saddle carrier, and so forth. The dromedary is called *hajin* or *delūl*, and is used in order to carry news very rapidly. The post is often carried by the dromedary for long journeys for which horses are not fitted. In Palestine proper there were various dromedary posts; the Turkish Camel Corps is sufficiently known, as also the similar corps in those North African countries that border on the desert. The Algerian Camel Corps render great services to the French Government. When Ibrahim Pasha was stopped in his progress to Jerusalem by the fellahin above Wady 'Ali, he communicated with his father in Cairo by means of Tartar express riders, who carried the news to Egypt on dromedaries, and a few days later Mahomet 'Ali sent four regiments of infantry across the desert, and the passage to Jerusalem was opened. These dromedary posts were utilized by Ahasuerus to make known throughout his vast empire his will about Mordecai; he used footmen for short distances, horses and mules for the further, and dromedaries for the furthest (Esther viii, 10).

A female camel is called *nākat* or *'azuf*; a year old camel is a *ka'ūd*, *fazīl* or *huwāre*; a young she-camel is *kālūz*, *'anūk* and *bikra(t)* and a new-born camel is *bū*. The great herds of camels (*wadhā[t]*) are only found east and south, or in the far north, as Palestine proper is not the real camel land. Troops of working camels, *wasīkat*, or small herds of between 50 to 100 (called *hajme[t]*), are often met with in Philistia. Besides the many names for the camels and for herds of camels, there is a name for every movement, its resting-place, the noises it makes, and so on. A camel kneels, *binākh*, for rest, but kneels down, *bubrūkh*, to receive or to be relieved of its load. When an Arab wishes his camel to kneel down he touches the neck and utters a succession of *kh*'s (خ) or a prolonged sound of the letter. When the camel kneels

down the Arab may sometimes say *ubrūkh* (أبرخ), i.e., kneel down. Was the same meaning attached to the word *Abrekh*, which was called out before Joseph when he was proclaimed prime minister in Egypt (Gen. xli, 43)? Yet it must be observed that the last consonant is different.

The resting-place of camels, which is also a very healthy place, is called the *manākh*. From it Europeans are said ultimately to have derived the word almanac.

Special words denoting growling, *karkara(t)*, chewing the cud, *karūl*, galloping, *hajem*, braying, *ghat*, are used of camels only. The camel, being the pet of the family, has been the familiar beast of the Bedawy for thousands of years. It is not only the beast of burden, but the wool growing about the lower part of the neck and on the hump is spun and woven into such articles as the cap, *-ube'*, the head-cord, *merir*, and so forth. If a fatal accident happens, the meat is eaten, and the skin tanned and utilized for different purposes.

A milch-camel is *tehdab*, whilst a cow or goat is *tehlab*. The halter (*khetām*) is highly ornamented on feast days, and the rope by which the camel is led, *zemāme*, means also "a tie of friendship." Tying the hind legs is called '*akel*, and the forelegs *rafek*. Bedu camels have usually no halter at all. A very angry camel will have a muzzle, *kemāme*, made of palm-leaves, on the snout (*ke'āme*). When a camel is required to walk fast, this can be done either by words, such as *ahāb*, or by singing, *ahfaz*; but singing to camels for pleasure only is called *ahdah*, and the song is *ahdiye(t)*.

When a camel has to carry a man, the *makhūfe(t)*, or man's saddle, is placed on it; but for a woman or a bride, the *hudaj*, with a big tent-like covering, *sadil*, is set on the camel, and the animal really seems the prouder for the honour. Pet camels will also wear necklaces with lockets, pearls, or ornaments of silver or gold, attached either as talisman or for adornment. Blue beads are often to be seen, but richer ornaments are more rare, and are reserved for the sheikh's animals. The tusks of the wild boar, though more often hung upon horses, are fastened together in a silver frame to represent the crescent. After Gideon had conquered the "Children of the East" (Judges viii, 10) he slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the "moon ornaments" that were on their camels' necks (v. 21). The Venus morning star, which was also represented

by the crescent, was therefore not an invention of the modern Arab, but evidently in those remote days was the emblem of Ashtoreth.

The Midianites, Amalekites and "Children of the East," ever associated in the incursions on the land of Israel, would come, they and their camels without number, and impoverish the south of Palestine as far as Gaza (Judges vi, 3-6; vii, 12). Nowadays they come with their droves of camels, and the land through which they pass suffers for the next half-year. Such incursions are the consequence of a long drought, which drives them out of the otherwise barren wilderness to try and save a few of their animals. In Urtas we often received the visit of hundreds of herds, principally in quest of water.

The nomads are also breeders of cows, but these, like their camels, are small, and are brought up on a kind of *laissez-faire* system. The cattle (*tarsh*) were always the property of the tribes living in the rear of the nations, and now the pure desert tribes can and will have nothing to do with the degrading cows or oxen, which in a way represent agriculture, which they disdain. The fellahin buy their calves from the nomads and bring them up for ploughing or milking purposes. The *Bedu* women who flock to the markets of the minor towns in the plains are half sedentary, and belong to the agricultural classes; but they live in tents, and expose their cattle to the inclemency of the Philistian winters, which, though relatively short, are often disastrous. The wadis are swollen up, the soft sandy roads become dangerous, and inextricable marshes cause the death of hundreds of their cattle. But the Bedawy will not improve—poor he was born, and poor he will live and die.

They also have sheep and goats in large herds, but they are not generally kept together. In and about Rubineh and north of Jaffa they are cattle-owners, and have neither camels nor herds. The Ta'awery have principally goats, which roam over the barren mountains of Judea; they have very few camels, some tiny donkeys, and only a few horses. The Jahalūn and Rasheideh are camel-owners. The 'Adwan have camels, horses and sheep. The Hameideh (south of the Dead Sea) keep camels and flocks, as also do all the 'Anazeh and Beni Saḡhr.

Camels are the property of the Bedu, and camels must participate in every serious act in life. A young camel is killed in order to honour a guest. Camels are given in the marriage ceremonies;

they are paid over as in the law of the *talio*, and but for the *diyye(t)*, which is paid in camels, Mohammed would never have been born. In fact, Abd el-Mottaleb, born in 497 A.D., Sheikh of Mecca, delivered the land out of the hand of the Abyssinians, and, like Jephthah, vowed one of his sons to be sacrificed at the Kaaba, to commemorate the event. The lot fell on his beloved son Abdallah, then 24 years of age. The Koreishites protested against the barbarous act. A diviner (*'arife(t)*) was consulted, who said that the blood of Abdallah could be bought by the *diyye(t)* and the lot. The *diyye(t)* being ten camels, two arrows without points were put into a bag, one with the inscription "10 (camels)," and the other "Abdallah." Nine times the name of Abdallah was designated, but the tenth time the camels were drawn, and a hundred camels were sacrificed instead of Abdallah, and the *diyye(t)* for human blood among the Koreishites was fixed at one hundred camels. Abdallah married soon after Amina, the daughter of Wahb, and Mohammed was born from this union in August, 570 A.D.

A true Bedawy never ought to appeal to town tribunals to judge differences between himself and one of his tribe, no matter how serious it may be. The *diyye(t)* is well known, and however poor the Bedawy may be, he cannot easily be induced to receive the blood money; the *thar* must be taken, and if he cannot kill the murderer (*gharim*) himself, he takes the next-of-kin, even though the latter be a member of the next generation. A truce (*'atwe(t)*) is asked for a month or two by the relatives of the *gharim* to try and arrange matters: compare the Hebrew laws (Numb. xxxv, 25); as a rule the relatives of the murdered man do not accept arbiters, and when the *'atwe(t)* is over, everyone is warned to be on his guard. Corresponding to the cities of refuge of the Hebrews, the Arabs have their *tanib*, which are often a help to the murderer. The *gharim* is in greater danger if he is a sheikh or strong man (*jad'*), but if, on the contrary, he is not worth very much, a better man is chosen.

The *Bedu* laws allow an arrangement, whilst the Hebrew law permitted no pardon. "Moreover ye shall take no ransom (*kōpher*) for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death" (Numb. xxxv, 31). Should matters be arranged, the *tiyābe(t)* is accomplished before the whole tribe, a specified number of camels, and a girl given in marriage, by which alliance peace is more likely to be restored, and the men kiss one another's

heads. If the man who accepted the *tiyābet* should break his promise and kill one of the murderer's family in revenge, he is rejected from the tribe, deprived of all his portable property, and should he be killed in the attack, his death is accounted just (*hallāl*), and several of his family may even suffer death into the bargain, without even the right of appeal. If the transgressor, the man who broke his promise, should insist on remaining in the camp or among his tribe, his tent may not be put among the others, but he must pitch it a hundred yards behind the camp for five months, and nobody is allowed even to talk to him or help him. At the end of this period a new judgment is passed, and if his promise is considered satisfactory he is admitted, but will be a ruined man for the rest of his days.

If the murder was committed inadvertently, the *diyye(t)* is easier ; the number of camels vary only as the man is considered of greater value. A sheikh who has led his men into war and who was liberal is certainly worth more than a common obscure Bedawy without wealth or renown.

In case of theft or debt the guilty man is warned to appear before three neutral arbiters, mutually chosen, on a given day. If the culprit does not appear, a second warning is given, then a third one, and if he does not appear he is judged and condemned by contumacy. In consequence of this his camels, horses, hens, and tents may be seized by the claiming party when and where they like—if they can get hold of them. But if the guilty man appear and protest against the judgment, he is allowed to appeal to three fresh arbiters, till they agree. The sheikh has nothing to do in these judgments ; he may or may not be chosen as one of the arbiters, but his vote is not worth more than that of any other man.

The principal *rôle* of the sheikh is that of directing public affairs, discussing expeditions, arranging government affairs, receiving guests and entertaining strangers in general, dividing the spoil, and bearing the responsibility of the general policy of the tribe.

The tribes know each other by certain peculiarities of pronunciation, the manner of wearing the *keffiyeh(t)*, the cut of the hairlocks, and the colour of certain parts of clothing. A Bedawy never tells his name, nor his tribe, nor his business, nor the whereabouts of his people, even if he is in a friendly district. Consequently questions not likely to be answered are not put, and if anything is to be found out it is done very cautiously, and with a turning about

of the question in an unsuspecting way. Should anybody—townspeople or Europeans only can commit blunders—ignorant of these fundamental customs venture to ask such silly questions, the dialogue would sound very much like this:—

Inquirer :	“ Good morning.”	Bedawy answer :	“ Morning, or good.”
„	“ How are you ?”	„	“ In wealth.”
„	“ Where do you come from ?”	„	“ From God’s direc- tion — Min Bab Allah (from God’s gate).”
„	“ Who are you ?”	„	“ Abdallah (God’s servant).”
„	“ What is your wish ?”	„	“ Your salvation (<i>salāmtak</i>) (سلامتک).”
„	“ Where are you bound to ?”	„	“ Hither (<i>had hanā</i>) (حد هنا).”
„	“ When are you start- ing ?”	„	“ When God wills, soon (<i>in shā Allah,</i> <i>karīb</i>).”

They are and must be very cautious, and can take no responsibilities on themselves—a word out of season may bring death and destruction—and the Bedawy holds fast to the saying “ Silence is golden.” At the right time, however, he can be very eloquent ; in fact, one of the gifts of the Bedawy is his eloquence, by means of which the traditions of their ancestors are carried on from generation to generation. When a Bedawy is rehearsing some exploits of his tribe, he paints them in such vivid colours, often accompanied on his fiddle, that he seems to have lived and accompanied the heroes, until you happen to discover that the events may have occurred even before the exodus of the tribe from Arabia, when bows and arrows were better known than any other weapon.

Murders are committed openly or in secret, as the cause may be just or unjust, or vile. In 1886 a woman of a small tribe, the Irteymāt, numbering some 60 horsemen, was married to a Wukheidy. Going to visit her brother she was assaulted by two Bedu of the Wukheidat, who violated her, and, in fear of being discovered, killed her and threw her into a well. Her husband went out to look for her, and met an old woman keeping camels, and after a

number of clever questions she remarked that she knew something about the missed. When she was promised a good reward, she disclosed what she had seen, and what the two men, a cousin and servant of the Wukheidy himself, had done, and where the body was thrown. The body was found and buried, and Ibn Thabed, her brother, swore vengeance. When the Wukheidy was recognised in Gaza one day, Ibn Thabed with another companion rode down, and leaving their mares before the town, came up to the café where the sheikh was sitting, and shot him in the heart; after that he drew his sword and walked back through the town, mounted his mare, and both galloped away towards Egypt. The Government being on the Wukheidy's side, the little tribe was completely ruined, with the help of the mighty Wukheidat, after which they settled again and made peace—for how long?

Continual strifes between the tribes, either for the pasture (as in the days of Abraham and Lot), or because of murder or suspicion as to their women, keep the Bedu aloof, roaming about the desert, now increasing till they feel themselves mighty enough to resist the desires of their neighbours, now decreasing by war or elopements. But these strifes are the safety of the fellahin. Sometimes men have risen from the simple Bedawy garb to the imperial purple, as in the case of Philip the Arabian, who forgot his tribe when in luxury in Rome. The Arab conquest of the greater part of the Eastern Empire, by Bedu leaders, taught the Arabs all kinds of luxury and a mode of living unknown to them, and they readily accepted the new condition; but the original tribes remained in the same condition, just as the parent hive of bees continues in its old-fashioned hive or tree, while the swarms which leave are received into new hives of different kinds.

Sheikh Daher, who lived in the eighteenth century, became governor of Accho, and was open to ideas of progress, far more so than the usual retrograde governor, and through him Christian Cyprians were brought over to help to colonize his new state. A Jerusalem Effendy, now living, was a Bedawy in the plain of Esdraelon in his youth, but he wholly abandoned his former ways, and adopted the Effendy Arabic, and was very hostile in his language towards his friends and relatives, who continued the nomad tent life.

As opposed to the various factors that make for decrease, we have also increase by men of all conditions and nations, who look to

the Arab camp as a safe retreat and refuge. There are criminals who have escaped from the towns, or fellahin avoiding conscription, and these are readily accepted to enlarge the tribe, and in course of time become absorbed into the whole, leaving no trace of their origin. I have known many fellahin, not only in the agricultural Bedu tribes, but also among the Adwan, who, having passed a few years in camps, and after a more open air life than in villages, become as dry in body and as scanty-bearded as the real Bedawy, for as a rule the fellahin have a larger beard and are fatter than the Bedawy.

Elopements (*jarre(t)*), though rare, occur sometimes, and the couple disappear for ever from their native tribe, especially if they are not related to each other. Cousins are admitted back again after paying 80 to 100 mejidi, but if the man has taken the girl by force (*khatife(t)*) and run away, and should wish to come back again, he must be very wealthy indeed, as the price of the act is no less than a full-blood mare, a negress measuring at least five spans, forty camels accompanied by 100 piastres each: the first and last camels must be fair (*esh'al*) to purify the 'arḍ (عرض), or reputation. A poor man would have to pay with his life; consequently he stays away for ever.

Stealing is really only considered as such when it is done by men in the same tribe or camp, and it is regarded as degrading if the thief be taken in the act of stealing, or overtaken after having succeeded in carrying away the booty. He receives an inhuman flogging if he does not defend himself, or is shot at if he stands and defends himself. If taken he is stripped of all his clothes and set free; nobody can interfere legally, not even if he is shot; of course they will not pardon the *thar*, but the thief generally asks pardon "in honour of so and so" (*ana dakhel fi flām*). If a professional thief is taken he is judged by arbiters, and condemned to restore the theft fourfold.

With regard to religion, the Bedu have always been very negligent; of old they had no temples in their roaming life, and, having no places of worship, they easily accepted the kind of worship which they came across, or which they found established in the country. Jethro was priest in Midian, but joined his son-in-law with his tribes, adhered to his religion, worshipped the golden calf in Sinai, acknowledged Jehovah with Joshua (xxiv, 24). They were on friendly terms with the Canaanites in the neighbourhood of Merom (Judges iv, 17) and of Deborah (Judges v, 24), they

worshipped Baal with Ahab and destroyed Baal with Jehu. In the interval between the last Jewish kings and the Romans, they adopted the religion of the land, and when Herod the Edomite became king of Jerusalem they were circumcised and remained faithful till the decline of the Hasmonaeans. They were Moslems with the Arab conquest, and followed the doctrines of the Fatimid Caliph Hakim. Most Crusading writers call them "Pagans," while the Moslems are called "Saracens." We know that they attacked Saladin when they were Christians, and attacked the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem after Saladin's success. In Egypt they fought St. Louis. They are now all nominally Moslems. When they are very near towns they observe the fast of Ramadan, pray and keep the feasts; but when they are further away they cannot say the prayers for want of water, they give no alms, having nothing themselves, they do not fast, because they are forced to fast the greater part of their lives, they do not visit mosques, seeing God is everywhere, to say nothing of pilgrimages to Mecca and so forth, which cost money, of which they have none to spare.

(*To be continued.*)

THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM, JULY 15, 1099.¹

BY ESTELLE BLYTH.

"One thousand and one hundred years save one
 Since Blessed Mary bore her glorious Son,
 When rose upon July its fifteenth sun,
 By Frankish might Jerusalem was won."

Inscription in the Crusading Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

It was in June, 1099, that the soldiers of the First Crusade pitched camp round about the city of Jerusalem, setting themselves to face the rigours of a siege that must end in its capture, or in their own utter overthrow. They had been three years upon the way; every

¹ From the *United Service Magazine*, Oct., 1917, with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. Clowes & Sons, Ltd.