

## THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP J. BALDENSPERGER.

---

*(Continued from Q.S., 1925, p. 90.)*

---

*Raids.*<sup>1</sup>

As with the Modern Arabs all Bedu are called 'Arab, so the Hebrews, though designating the tribes by names, often called them simply the Beni Kedem. Kedemah (קְדִמָּה) was the twelfth son of Ishmael (Gen. xxv, 15), and we know that every one of the sons formed a tribe. That this tribe (Beni Kedem) was not exclusively the descendant of Ishmael we may see, because the Kadmonites existed already when Abraham came to Palestine (Gen. xv, 19), that is to say, before the birth of Ishmael. When Jacob left his parents he passed through the camps of the Beni Kedem" (Gen. xxix, 1) going to Mesopotamia. Now, these tribes were in the north, perhaps in the Hauran or even in the desert of Syria, east of Damascus, in the region of the 'Anazeh, whilst the Beni Kedem, who came to spoil the land in the south, came with the Amalekites and Midianites (Judges vi, 3, 4). In other words, the term is a very general one, and is not to be understood in any restricted sense. Job was also "the greatest of all the Beni Kedem" (Job i, 3), and when Jeremiah prophesying against the Bedu (the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Hazorites) says: "Arise ye, go up to Kedar and spoil the Beni Kedem" (Jer. xlix, 28), he means all the Bedu. Referring to the raid, he says: "Their tents and their flocks shall they take away, they shall take to themselves their curtains and all their vessels, and their camels" (v. 29), just as in a modern raid objects and animals are the principal aim, avoiding useless bloodshed and new causes for the blood-feud.

<sup>1</sup> [The reader is reminded that these sketches were written some years before 1914.—*Ed.*]

When a tribe is to be completely destroyed, every male is killed as well as all pregnant women. Happily this is not often, as the Bedawy calculates what the end and consequences will be. That this mode of extermination was known and was reprov'd by the prophet Amos (i, 13) shows that it was practised with the same intention. "I will not turn away the punishment of Ammon: because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border."<sup>2</sup> They prefer to fall unawares on the adversary, and believe in the saying, "victory is to the attacking party" (الفيلة لالي بعيلها) (*il-fayle(t) lalli-bi-filha*). The spoiled must wait their turn, when they also can rapidly make a raid and take their revenge.

The order of an expedition depends on the country in which they move. In the plain rapidity of their mares is the most prudent way; but in Philistia, where villages and towns hinder their free evolutions, they must either advance in small parties to avoid attention, or rob the smaller villages of the necessary food for themselves and horses. The camp has already been spied out, and at daybreak the best horsemen pounce on the tents and cut the tent ropes, thus throwing into confusion the inhabitants, who fly in the panic. The camels and mares are first gathered, and, if possible, tents also are carried away; but if they expect the tribe to receive reinforcements they return as fast as possible with the animals only. A few horsemen ahead spy out the land and communicate between the groups, who must retreat in small divisions as they came.

The attacking party is called *zuf* (صف), or "line," and the enemy *Kōm* (قوم). If for some cause the animals are abandoned, the hind legs are houghed (معتقر), so that they may not be utilized in the future, or for a possible pursuit. The word is the same as that used in Gen. xlix, 6: in their wrath "they hamstrung an ox." The *ghazu* or raid of Joshua from Gilgal near Jericho was determined on the same principles as the above-mentioned one of the Billy tribe (*Q.S.* 1925, p. 90). Joshua came with the people of war against the Canaanites at the waters of Merom, and fell upon them (*Josh.* xi, 7; that is the same as the Bedu attack). "And Joshua

<sup>2</sup> "In the embittered border-feuds between Arabian tribes the same ghastly barbarity is often mentioned." (Wellhausen, cited by Driver, *Amos and Joel*.)

houghed their horses" (v. 9). . . . "And all the spoil (*shalal*), and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves" (v. 14).

The retreat is as rapid as possible, as was the incursion and attack. The droves of camels must be hurried homewards before the pursuit can begin; for the routed tribe may come to an agreement with the *tanīb* (friendly) tribe, and ask not only protection but help. The tribes being usually too far apart, this is not often done, and few chances of recovering the booty remain. One can only bide one's chance. The cattle and herds are driven home and distributed among the tribesmen. When they are out of danger in their retreat they sing, and glorify their heroic exploits in verses well known or improvised.

O inhabitant of the desert, son of the desert	<i>Ya tanak, ya ibn it-tanak</i>	يا تنك يا ابن التنك
Your forefathers were in the desert	<i>Ya'li abūk kabal minak tanak</i>	يا الى ابوك قبل منك تنك
They killed fat goats	<i>dhahab il'aniz is-samēn</i>	ذباح العنز السمين
Don't give the beggar a bone	<i>Mā tet'am is-sāil hanak</i>	ما تتعم السائل حنك
Who fled in the hour of battle	<i>Shāred yūm ilmo'tarak</i>	شارد يوم المعترك
A lion brought up in ignorance!	<i>Ya Sabe' rābi fi wast ghābie(t)</i>	يا سبع رابي في وسط غابة
He started from before a jackal.	<i>Ejak wāwi jafalak</i>	اجاك واوي جفالك

Improvising songs after victories has been one of the commonest ways of preserving the tradition in the minds of illiterate people. The great leaders of the Hebrews never forgot to glorify their acts in song, some of which have lived for thousands of years, when other feats were long forgotten. Of such are the song of Moses (Ex. xv) after the deliverance from Pharaoh, Deborah's victory over Jabin (Judges v), and that of David after his deliverance from Saul (II Sam. xxii)—or, at all events, these are poems which were ascribed to these events.

Like almost every other country and nation, the Arabs in general are divided into two great factions, the origin of which is to be looked for in Arabia—in ante-Islamite days—between the Kais and the Yemen. In the exodus of the Beni Helal from Nejd they met a tribe near the Zerka, under the command of Shbeeb ibn Mālek, Himyarites of the Yemen faction, and asked free passage, assuring them that they would not stay in the land, but continue towards North Africa. Kleley, the sister of the Sheikh, sings :

By God ! I'll go to Shbeeb	<i>Wa Allah larūh illa Shbīby</i>	والله لروح الى الشببيبي
And tell him all the truth	<i>Waa'arefhn bit-tiby</i>	واعرفه بالطيبي
I'll tell him, O Shbeeb !	<i>Wa akullo ya Shbīby</i>	واقوله يا شببيبي
These are Kais, our enemies !	<i>Hadhūl Kais 'adāna</i>	هذول كيس عدانا

A battle ensues, and the victorious party continues the journey, very much as in modern warfare.

Like the Guelphs and Ghibelins in Germany and Italy, or the Red and White Roses in England, or the factions of the *white* winter-faction (snow) and *red* (dog-star), summer faction of the Graeco-Romans in Constantinople—the Kaisy (كيسي) have the white colour and the Yamany (يماني) the red and white.

The feuds of the two factions are very vivid in the minds of both Bedu and Fellahīn ; the traditions were no doubt imported with the tribes from Arabia and preserved in Palestine and Syria, not only among the Moslems, but even among the Christian Fellahīn, who, as in the case of those of Bethlehem and Beth-jala belong to one or the other faction as the case may be.

The Hebron district is generally of the Kaisy faction, but it often happens that villages are even divided between themselves. The north Jerusalem district, Beni H'mai and Beni Harith, are Yamany, the Moslem Farraghry of Bethlehem are Kaisy, and the Christians generally Yamany. The Tarabīn kept with the Yamany faction and the Tayahah with the Kaisy. Originally they may have been very strictly divided between the North and the South Arabians ; but in actual fact they are mixed up. None the less, it

is not likely that the differences will be lost very soon. In fact, the brides' veils have the respective colours of one or the other party, and as the veil is preserved from one generation to the other, there is every opportunity for the factions to continue in a country where fashions have no influence at all, and where colour and costume have been retained unchanged for thousands of years.

The Gipsies also claim to belong to the factions; at least in their legends they tell of the contest between the factions.

There are a few exceptional Bedu citizens beyond Jordan, such as the inhabitants of es-Salt, mostly belonging to the Greek Church, and the agricultural Bedu of Medaba, who left Kerak in 1881, and were distributed some time between the Greek and Latin Churches. The Bedu of Kerak have long been known as fierce robbers; and just as the Crusader Bedawy Renaud de Chatillon attacked the Mecca Caravan in spite of his treaty with Saladin, so the modern sheikh of that fortress, Muhammed el-Mujally, has often broken his promise, both with travellers who have the misfortune to fall into his power, and with the Government regular troops. He never acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sultan, till he was obliged to receive the garrison, which afforded more security to travellers in Moab and about the Dead Sea. Kerak, the ancient Kir of Moab (Is. xv, 1), was always a stronghold, impregnable because built in the rocks, far away from help, between Egypt and Syria, and remote from Jerusalem.

*(To be continued.)*