



WATER SELLERS, PORT SAID.

FROM LONDON TO DAMASCUS.

I SUPPOSE most girl-readers will understand the thrill of surprise and delight with which I read the following sentences from a friend's letter one February morning.

"My uncle thinks I need a change, and suggests my going abroad. Will you go with me to Palestine for two or three months? We ought to get off before the warm season begins there. Do you think we could leave England at the end of this month?" Two or three times I read the words in a dazed sort of way, and then astonished my hostess (a well-known contributor to the G.O.P.) by quietly remarking—

"Would you be greatly surprised if I started for the Holy Land in a few days? Elizabeth N. has asked me to go with her."

"The Holy Land!" echoed Mrs. B. "Do you really mean it?"

For answer, I handed her my letter, and greatly enjoyed the sensation it created at the breakfast-table.

"How lovely," said kind Mrs. B., "to visit the sacred spots where our Lord began and ended his ministry. How I wish I was strong enough to go with you!"

"Shall we order the camels to come round to the front door?" exclaimed a lively and irreverent member of the family. "I can already picture you, dear E., riding over the trackless desert (composing poetry under an umbrella), living in Bedouin tents, and finally being carried off by a wild Arab chief, on a wild Arab steed, while we at home mourn and frantically petition the Home Secretary or somebody to institute a search for the missing English lady."

We all laughed at this ridiculous, unpunctuated speech, and then fell to discussing the possibilities of eastern travel.

The next post carried my answer to Elizabeth's letter, and in a few days we were in

London making our final arrangements. We decided from motives of economy to go by long sea, and selected the North German Lloyd line of steamers because of their excellent second-class accommodation. We booked our passage to Port Said in the *Prinz Heinrich*, sailing from Southampton on February 28th.

Our remaining days were fully occupied with business, in the intervals of which we packed our small portmanteaux (not omitting warm wraps), got our passports *viséd* at the Turkish Consulate, and attended to the hundred and one trifles which seemed to crop up at the last moment. It was not till we were safely on board the steamer and waving our good-byes to the friends who had come to see us off, and who were now returning to shore, that we felt our eastern travels were to become a reality.

Fair indeed looked the green slopes of the Isle of Wight on that glorious morning, and as we passed the Needles, many eyes filled with tears, for the ship was bound for distant China and Japan, and few of her passengers could hope to look upon Old England again for many long years. As for us, our hearts were light, and we were eager to go forward. Not even the unknown terrors of the Bay of Biscay appalled us. Fortunately it proved most kind. We passed Gibraltar at midnight, on March 3rd, the wonderful old rock looking awful and mysterious in the moonlight. Genoa was reached on the 6th, but, alas! heavy rain and cold winds set in, and the "superb" city did not look tempting enough to draw us from our comfortable ship for the forty-eight hours we were tied up in her harbour. There was a general murmur of satisfaction when the last cargo had been shipped and we were on the move again. As we entered the bewitching Bay of Naples the weather cleared, and the sun shone warm and

bright. Here we had to wait until the evening for the mails, and everybody seized this opportunity of going on shore. How well I remember my sensations of delight as we wandered about the old streets, admiring the queer, tall, gaily-painted houses and the quaint bits of picturesque Neapolitan life which we came upon in our long climb to the top of the old ramparts which overlooked the busy city. From this height we gazed our fill on the pretty picture. The lemon trees with the golden fruit shining through the glistening leaves threw a shade on the irregularly-built houses. Beyond glittered the glorious bay, dotted with stately vessels and other smaller craft, while above loomed the giant Vesuvius, his sullen frowns adding a touch of melancholy to the scene. All too swiftly that dream-like day passed, and once again we were sailing Eastward Ho!

Wickedly did the fair Mediterranean behave for the next four days, and wildly did our good ship pitch and toss on those treacherous blue waves! Those days were days of intense bitterness of spirit, when to most of us past sorrows and future hopes were forgotten in the agonising longing for immediate annihilation. But even sea-sickness yields to time and smooth water, and we had begun to take a more cheerful view of life when we dropped anchor in Port Said on Sunday the 13th. Our curiosity was strongly excited, and though we were truly sorry to say good-bye to our travelling-companions, whose lives had touched ours for a brief space in pleasant intercourse, we were eager to get our first glimpse of eastern life. We smiled in quite a superior manner when an old gentleman, noticing our impatience, remarked cynically—

"Well, young ladies, if you can find anything pleasing in that hole"—indicating the town—"I should say your capacity for enjoyment must be abnormal."

Summoning a boat, whose boatmen bore on their scarlet jerseys the legend "New Continental Hotel," Elizabeth and I stepped into it and waved adieu to the good ship *Prinz Heinrich*. We were quickly rowed ashore, where the hotel guide took our passports, showed them, and us, to the Turkish official, who courteously handed us over to the customs-house officers. These gentlemen proved to be equally civil, evidently seeing nothing suspicious either in us or our modest luggage. Our formal introduction to Egypt being thus agreeably made, we walked to the hotel, and were soon seated under the cool verandah, discussing delicious tea and bread and butter. We ascertained that the steamer going to Jaffa did not leave before Tuesday evening, so that we had ample time to become acquainted with Port Said. What an un-Sabbath-like appearance our novel surroundings presented! Noisy donkey-boys, with bold inventiveness, were loudly urging the new arrivals to mount Queen Victoria, Lord Salisbury, Prince Bismarck, Mrs. Langtry, Mrs. Cornwallis West, etc., for these high-sounding names were tacked on to the wretched little donkeys. Bare-legged shoe-blacks, with most engaging smiles, seized your feet and began operations without even a "By your leave." Importunate blind beggars, whose picturesque garments were indescribably dirty, demanded *backsheesh*, and according to the response, poured out a choice selection of blessings or curses in Arabic, which would have astonished the most accomplished Irish professor of the same craft. Shrewd, hook-nosed Jewish money-changers sat in the high-way, each before his glass box, which contained a wire tray covered with a tempting store of bank-notes and coins. These had doubtless been exchanged at an exorbitant rate of interest for Turkish money. Black men, white men, brown men, yellow men in their native dress, sat drinking coffee and playing backgammon and dominoes in the open street, or walked leisurely along the road. It was a strange, fascinating scene, unlike anything we had witnessed before, and the ubiquitous bicycle as it flashed by with its British rider failed to break the charm.

Towards evening we strolled into the town, where we discovered an English "Sailors' Rest." We opened the door, and following the sound of voices, boldly walked upstairs. In an upper room knelt twenty Jack Tars, who had come in from one of her Majesty's ships lying in the harbour. Very hearty and refreshing were the simple prayers uttered by the men. Only too well they knew the dangers and temptations of a shore life. We heard afterwards from the gentle lady who presided at this gathering how that bright little room, with its books and pictures, and, above all, the presence of kindly friends, had proved a haven of peace to many of our British sailors, for whom the perils of the ports are more terrible than the perils of the deep. On our return we found letters from our friends in Jaffa, telling of unprecedented storms visiting the coast, and reminding us, that unless the present wind went down, we should find it impossible to land. In the event of this happening, the only other alternative was to go on to Beyrout, and from thence to Damascus by rail. This plan did not commend itself to us in the least, for we particularly wished to begin our Palestine wanderings from Jaffa, and also we desired to consult our friends there as to the best routes, and other important items relating to our tour. It was no use grumbling, however, and as we could not arrange the weather to our liking, we wisely agreed to let it alone, hoped that all would be well, and that we should yet enter Jaffa with a fair breeze and in smooth water.

Two days served to satisfy our curiosity and exhaust for us the delights of Port Said; therefore we were not sorry when Tuesday night

arrived, and we were once more on board a ship, which we trusted would bring us in a few hours to our desired haven.

Before the sun rose next morning we were straining our eyes towards the dim coast-line. Presently the compact little town of Jaffa came in sight, and before long our last fear about landing was set at rest, for we saw the boats putting off from the surf-beaten shore and racing one another towards our ship. In one of them sat our missionary friends coming out to meet us, delightedly waving their pocket-handkerchiefs. On board the steamer wild excitement prevailed. Travellers were hunting for lost luggage, or rushing distractedly hither and thither, while everybody seemed to be talking at once in unknown tongues, making confusion worse confounded. In the midst of it all our friends managed to find us, and gave us a warm welcome to Palestine. They kindly undertook all the difficulties connected with the customs and passports. A porter was secured, who seized our boxes and wraps, and promptly disappeared. We wondered whether we should ever see them again, but our friends said they would turn up all right. We then joined the group of nervous passengers who were being encouraged to jump into the boat below. I don't remember how we managed it, but I think we blindly took the "leap" at the right moment. Anyway, we discovered ourselves unhurt on the top of a big trunk, which swayed perilously with our weight. Passengers and luggage were hopelessly mixed up,

but we were delighted to find all our party together. At last we were off, and in a short time the dangerous reefs were passed safely, but we were on the Jaffa beach, the dreaded landing having been accomplished without any accident.

We were now marched through the Customs House into a narrow lane, muddy from recent rains; here we had to wait until our baggage was examined. An hour or more elapsed before we and our belongings came together again. Occasionally we would see a portmanteau, which we knew to be ours, rapidly vanishing in an opposite direction; then ensued a lively dialogue in Arabic between the porter and one of our missionaries, which ended by the disputed article being brought and placed near at hand, to await the arrival of the remainder. I may mention that the Jaffa porters are veritable Samsons. They carry with the greatest ease a couple of boxes, one of which would break the back of an ordinary London porter. We were told of one who carried a grand piano bodily on his back from one house to another, a distance of several hundred yards.

We were greatly interested in our muddy lane. The scene was so truly oriental that it is worth describing, though the vivid colouring and the intensely blue sky must be left to the imagination. Turbaned merchants, indifferent alike to puddles and slush, sat on little straw-covered stools smoking the hookah, or hubble-bubble, in the dignified leisurely manner of



LANDING AT JAFFA.

the East. Hawkers carrying huge brass trays, filled with curious cakes and sweetmeats, cried their wares. Water-sellers, with their uninviting-looking goat skins slung across their shoulders, went to and from the well. Moslem ladies thickly veiled, and covered from head to foot with a white sheet, stopped to look at the new arrivals. Fellaheen women, their faces uncovered, did their marketing, grave Syrian gentlemen, tall powerful Abyssinians, Jews with lovelocks on each side of their faces, graceful Levantines, stately Persians, fair-complexioned Armenians, long-haired, black-bearded Greek priests, shaven Latin priests, pilgrims from many lands on their way to the Holy City, stopped to exchange greetings, or passed on with a brief salaam.

Strings of camels, laden with oranges, ambled by, their long necks bobbing from side to side, their "melting" eyes looking such unutterable things—we felt quite drawn to the creatures. Afterwards, when we knew the camel better, we liked him less, and ended by accepting Mr. Kipling's unflattering estimate of him, who—

"When all is said and done,
Is a devil, and an ostrich, and an orphan
child in one."

Swift little donkeys, and gaily caparisoned Arab horses, ridden by resplendent-looking Arabs, pushed their way unceremoniously through the crowds. We noticed that nearly all the animals were decorated with blue bead necklaces, or else one or two beads were tied to their tails or forelocks. These are believed to act as a charm against the "evil eye." Mothers fasten these charms to their children's hair, and it is neither safe nor wise for a "Frangi"—as the European is called—to look admiringly on either child or beast, for fair-haired, blue-eyed people are credited with possessing special power of casting the evil eye.

During our week's stay in Jaffa, as guests of our missionary friends, we had exceptional opportunities of seeing the country and the inner life of its people. Most travellers leave the same day they arrive, going up to Jerusalem by the afternoon train, and carrying away the impression that Jaffa is a dirty, uninteresting

town. We found our days all too short, there was so much to see and hear. Several afternoons were spent in the famous orange gardens, or *bayaras*, and very grateful was the shade of the trees even in March. The scent of the flowers and fruit fills the air; indeed, in certain winds, it is wafted miles away out to sea. We often had boughs of this delicious fruit presented to us. To eat it seemed almost a crime; the oranges looked so beautiful hanging amid their shining leaves and silver blossom. We were constantly reminded of the appropriateness of Solomon's simile, as we listened to the courteous speech of our Arab friends, accompanied by pleasant smiles. "A word fitly spoken is like oranges* of gold in pictures of silver."

Within the last few years Jaffa has shown a desire for progress. The thrift and prosperity of the German and Jewish colonies are teaching the Arabs the value of commercial intercourse with other nations, as well as the best methods of cultivating their land. The missionaries are also doing much towards civilising the people, by teaching the gospel, and opening schools for the children, where they learn invaluable lessons to carry back to their homes.

The English hospital is also another proof of missionary zeal, and brings the fellaheen from distant villages into touch with skilful hands and loving service, unknown and undreamt of by these poor men and women; for the Moslem is a fatalist; his religion makes him one. If his favourite wife or child dies, he accepts it without emotion, as being "God's will." If he is ill himself he takes little or no pains to seek remedies; his illness is "from God." I heard of a man who went on pilgrimage to Mecca last year. He was sincerely attached to his wife, and allowed her to accompany him as a very special mark of his favour. After five months' absence he returned, having exchanged his ordinary turban for the sacred green one, and resumed his interrupted work. One day he called at the house of a friend of ours. She inquired after his wife's welfare, and received the

* Prov. xxv. 11, "apples" in our translation being now generally thought to mean "oranges." The former fruit is not cultivated in Palestine.

unexpected answer, "The Prophet had need of her, and I left her in the desert." It seems that the poor woman fell ill on the long journey, but with an unusual display of affection her husband cared for her until she recovered. She again became sick, and this second attack convinced him "that the Prophet wanted her," and allowing fatalism and superstition to stifle the feelings of humanity, he left her in the desert to die, where, in a few hours, the vultures were feeding on the poor dead body.

We visited the prison one morning, and saw the wretched prisoners huddled together, in cells like cages, ranged round an open courtyard. Eager hands were thrust through the bars, and cries of "*backsheesh*" filled the air. One of the "cages" was called the blood prison, in which several murderers were imprisoned; they clamoured with the rest for money. We looked with pity upon the miserable creatures, for we were told that it was quite possible most of them had not committed the crimes of which they were accused, but that private spite and intrigue had brought them there, where they would probably remain, unless large bribes were paid for their release.

Another day, as we were riding across the plain of Sharon, we were much amused at seeing a camel ploughing. He strode along, ostrich fashion, with his most supercilious air, pulling behind him a ridiculous little plough of primitive make. He looked so irresistibly funny that we burst out laughing. In other parts of the country we saw camels and oxen yoked together, but more generally the latter animals only. Ploughing would seem to be but a pastime in Syria. The soil is so rich and fertile that it only needs turning over slightly, when the seed dropped into the furrows springs up in a marvellously short time and yields a rich harvest.

We had many discussions with our friends about plans for further travel. Eventually we decided to go to Jerusalem, and while there engage an experienced dragoman to accompany us through Judea, Samaria and Galilee. We made up our minds to go alone, and avoid tourist routes and tourist parties. Though this decision was thought somewhat rash, we had no occasion to regret it.

S. E. B.



THE GIRL'S OWN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS COMPETITION.

Readers will find full particulars of this Competition—in which everyone has a chance of winning either a prize or a certificate, and the certainty of largely adding to her stock of information—by turning back to page 14.

QUESTIONS 25-36.

25. Who was the monarch who once attended a rehearsal of his own funeral?

26. What is the largest palace in the world used as a residence?

27. What is the exercise most conducive to physical beauty?

28. What was the first street ever lit by gas?

29. How fast can one read, when reading silently?

30. What famous philanthropist was known as the "Nightingale of the House of Commons"?

31. How many hours a day should we give to sleep?

32. What is the most famous signal ever made to the British navy?

33. What useful discovery was made by lighting a fire on the sand and using pieces of natron (sub-carbonate of soda) to support the cooking-pot?

34. What are the "Borrowed Days" and how do they come by their name?

35. What is the simplest and least troublesome of all cookery processes?

36. Are there any extinct volcanoes in Great Britain?

The answers to the above questions, Nos. 25-36, together with the answers to questions 37-48, which are yet to appear, must be sent in on or before January 27, 1899.

Address to THE EDITOR, THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER Office, 56, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., and at the left-hand top corner of the envelope or wrapper write the words "QUESTIONS COMPETITION."



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FROM LONDON TO DAMASCUS. JERUSALEM.

ELIZABETH and I mounted a camel and took our last *schimmel hauer*, or airing, in Jaffa the beautiful. As our ungainly steed swung up the road with us on his back, and a peculiarly contemptuous expression on his face, we became objects of much curiosity to the natives, who stopped to gaze and point at us. We were amused to see the women in their excitement stand with unveiled faces unmindful of the men, who equally excited had joined them. Their remarks on our appearance were not exactly complimentary. "Look at the Frangi ladies, how they sit! How funny they look! The Frangis are all mad! See, they smile!" We did not understand Arabic, and our missionary friend was too kind to translate freely, otherwise we might not have smiled.

What a glorious morning it was! The remembrance of it now brings a delicious dreaminess over my senses. It must have been on such a day that Lothair and the radiant Mr. Phœbus journeyed from Jaffa to Jerusalem, when the lovely Euphrosyne "rode through lanes of date-bearing palm-trees, and sniffed with her almond-shaped nostrils the all-pervading fragrance." Sharon, the great maritime plain, once a huge forest, from which it takes its name, lay stretched before us. In the midst of its magnificent orange groves, its flower bedecked meadows, its peaceful cornfields, rose the stately palms, their plumed heads nodding in the faint breeze. Beyond, like an *Arabian Nights* Geni, the stagnant clouds rested on the peaks of the Judean hills, while in sharp contrast the restless Mediterranean flashed a thousand brilliant lights. Even the dreaded black rocks at the entrance of the harbour were robbed of their terror by the soft sunshine. We were loath, indeed, to leave so lovely a scene, but we comforted ourselves with the thought of returning again some day.

An hour after midday we had said good-bye to our kind hostesses, and seated in a ramshackle old carriage which threatened to come to pieces at any moment, were driving—save the mark!—in all haste to the railway station. Our road lay through the market, whose odoriferous Asiatic smells are particularly unpleasant to English noses. We thought our driver divined this, for he wasted no time, but with terrific shouts and pistol-like cracks of an enormous whip, scattered to the right and left everything and everybody in the line of route, and brought us up to the station in dashing style but exhausted condition.

We had barely got on to the platform with our luggage when the booking office, as if by magic, was invaded by a howling screaming pack of men trying to force their way through a hastily closed door into the station. The voices of the officials demanding order were drowned by the noise, but the speedy arrival of a couple of stalwart Turkish soldiers armed with formidable-looking whips, which they applied impartially to the heads and shoulders of the unruly mob, soon created a dispersion, and peaceable passengers were allowed to take their tickets. This sudden raid on the railway station was made by a number of unauthorised porters, who had become a grave source of annoyance

to travellers. The officials were determined to rid themselves of the nuisance, and the order of "No admittance" was being put into effect that day. The Arab seems incapable of learning obedience



TOWN LADY AND COUNTRY WOMEN.

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through any medium but that of corporal punishment. Whether he can be taught reason by less drastic treatment under a more reasonable form of government has yet to be proved. At present, the only law he condescends to understand is represented in tangible form by a powerful soldier armed with a weapon which he promptly uses, indifferent to life or limb of the offender. This measure, if not pleasing, is at any rate effectual.

The railroads from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and from Beirût to Damascus, are justly considered to be the most valuable innovation from the West. The primary idea of the French Company who work them was, that the thousands of pilgrims who visit the Holy Land every year would use the line as a shorter and less expensive mode of travelling. The original idea has developed, for the demands of commerce require goods trains, and merchants are not slow to avail themselves of these advantages. Besides this, the railways have proved a powerful means of breaking down ancient prejudice and bringing the larger culture and refinement of the West within reach of the more ignorant but intelligent East. We found the train service moderately good, the officials civil, and the route pleasant and full of interest. We travelled for the first few stages in the men's compartment which was large and airy, built like a modern tramcar, with an extra seat extending the whole length of the centre; windows and door were wide open, the former protected by blinds, so it was not to be wondered at that we should prefer this carriage to the narrow stifling compartment reserved for the women. The advent of three ladies excited no comment, for were we not "Frangis"? And "Frangis" did extraordinary things! Our fellow-passengers were nearly all Orientals. Magnificently turbaned and gorgeously dressed Moslem gentlemen sat side by side with dirty, travel-stained pilgrims, and dirtier pedlars from distant lands. Jewish and Armenian merchants held lively discussions about the price of stuffs, while two German colonists discoursed on the approaching visit of Kaiser William. A wretched, miserably clad soldier-boy occupied a corner; he was going to join his regiment, and looked sullen and downcast. I offered him an orange, which he accepted, for the day was hot. I felt sorry for him, poor fellow, for well he knew that a Turkish soldier's life "is not a happy one."

Occasionally stray brown locusts flew in through the door, "flopped" down on the floor and remained stationary, apparently dazed with the unusual sight and sound of the "iron horse" and its long tail.

The arrival of more passengers of the masculine gender at a roadside station demanded that we should vacate our seats and retire to the women's quarter at the other end of the train. We accomplished our exit with as good a grace as possible, reflecting that Eastern customs being the exact reverse of those practised in England, we would show our good breeding by yielding to them—when there was no other alternative. In this instance the change was not for the better. The space was limited, and the air stifling, but the friendly native ladies made room for us and offered us a share of the nuts they were eating, the shells of which plentifully bestrewed the floor. Miss B., our missionary friend, and the ladies exchanged lengthy compliments, inquired minutely into each other's business and commented upon it, as if they were members of the same family. We discovered that these untidy, unshapely-looking females were the wives of the above mentioned resplendent Moslem gentlemen. Like good-tempered children, they seemed absolutely contented with their nuts and dolls—for as

such they treated their brown-faced, dark-eyed babies—desiring nothing more in this world than to please their husbands, and to purchase the latest pattern of *maudeel*—or veil—imported from Beirût.

We had now passed through the Wady es Sura and were speeding rapidly through the Valley of Rephaim, once the way in which the Philistines used to come up in the days of the Judges and David. Great rocks lifted their heads on either side, whose barren wildness suggested the home of the eagle and vulture. The sun was setting, and soon a shrill scream from the engine announced that we were nearing the end of our journey. We had just time to collect our wraps when the train drew up at the little station, and our ears were assailed with loud cries from the porters of "Jerusalem!" Before we had time to think, friendly hands grasped ours, and the kindly voices of Miss K. and Miss C. were bidding us welcome.

How delightful it was to escape the noise and worry of an Oriental railway station! To know that all our luggage would be sought for and looked after by a well-trained servant! To feel that we had no care but to answer the polite inquiries of our friends! A few yards and we were crossing the Bethlehem road on our way to Miss K.'s house, which was perched on the top of the Mount of Evil Counsel. The impressions that short walk left on my mind will never be effaced. Before us, clothed in the magical light of the setting sun, rose the mystical blue wall of the distant Moab Hills, while at their feet the Dead Sea gleamed like a thin line of quicksilver. On our left stood Mount Zion, while beyond, Olivet, "the mount before Jerusalem," crowned with a white church, looked down on the sun-gilt walls of the Temple Area. The hum of the city below, the cry of the shepherd in the Kedron Gorge as he called his flock home, and the sharp quick bark of the dog, sounded indistinct and far away.

I began to realise that we were in Jerusalem, and felt already the magic of its wondrous associations. It seemed almost incredible that we should be calmly gazing upon the very place where the world's Redeemer had "suffered and bled and died," and our thoughts were busy as we passed into Miss K.'s charming home to receive a second welcome. After supper Elizabeth and I slipped out into the garden and stood spell-bound at the lovely scene which met our eyes. The sparkling heavens high above us, the hills round us touched with beauty, while below, the City of our God lay shrouded in silver moonlight, like a babe asleep in the arms of its mother. Involuntarily the words rose to our lips: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people."

The next morning we engaged donkeys, and with Miss B. for guide and counsellor rode round the walls of Jerusalem. There was no magical moonlight to soften and glorify the ruin and desolation which met our eye at every stage. Where was the beautiful city and temple which caused the stern Titus to weep because he could not save it? Gone! Buried beneath the seventy feet of rubbish which one day will be cleared away. And could that offensive pool, overshadowed by the public shambles, infested with scavenger-dogs, be "cool Siloam's shady rill"? Yes, and the poor little village above is all that remains of the town of Siloam. Even the olive-trees added to the dreariness of the landscape, for they were stunted and badly nourished. We were now riding up the Mount of Olives, the very road trodden by the Man of Sorrows. Loving thoughts and holy memories gathered round every step of the way till we reached the top and "beheld the city." I cannot do better here than quote

from Dr. Macduff's *Memories of Olivet*. "So far as the Mount itself is concerned, thousands of scenes in our own and other lands are alike grander and more beautiful; there is nothing conspicuous in height; nothing picturesque in form, nothing remarkable in colour. An unobtrusive green swell, with triple top sprinkled with trees, and crowned with a Russian church; this, with a walled town fronting its western slope, studded with a few domes and minarets, at once and for ever took its place in the most sacred shrine of memory as the first view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives." True, there is nothing really beautiful about Jerusalem, according to our Western ideas. Its situation is fine, but the city itself is ugly and surrounded by "mountains" of rubbish. The Mosque of Omar occupies the Temple area, and Islam has taken up its abode in the place once dedicated to the true worship of Jehovah. But in spite of its present misfortunes, Jerusalem possesses a charm for Jew, Christian and Moslem alike, which no other city in the world can claim. Coming down from the Mount, we rode through Bethany, the home of Martha and Mary. It is a small village, and like many places in Palestine, disappointing to the traveller unless he looks away from the present to the past, and fills in the picture with the vivid colours of sacred and profane history.

It is a mistake to suppose that the East never changes. The march of progress has reached Jerusalem, Western influence is felt within its walls, as the red roofs of the numerous Frangi houses and the glass windows of European shops strongly testify. Residents told us that the Jerusalem of to-day bears little or no resemblance to the Jerusalem of a few years back, except in its natural features.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the chief place of interest in Jerusalem. A visit to its great porch carried us back to the days of chivalry, when the iron shoes of the Crusaders clanged on its stone pavement. Christian knights no longer are required to fight the Turk for the possession of the Holy Sepulchre; instead a strong guard of Turkish soldiers is always on duty to protect the Christians from the violence of each other. Fierce fights, and even bloodshed, are not uncommon among the various sects, Latins, Greeks, Maronites, Copts, Armenians, etc., who have set up their worship in different parts of the sacred edifice. The Holy Sepulchre itself is claimed and held by the Greeks, and every Easter thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the world worship at its shrine. We made our way one day with much difficulty into the narrow cave-like apartment, lighted with huge wax candles, and filled with adoring men and women rapturously kissing the stone slab which covers the supposed tomb, while a Greek priest stood by to receive the offerings of the faithful. We were glad to force our way out, but found some difficulty in doing so, the pressure of the crowd was so great.

This Easter there were five thousand Russians in the city; impassioned-looking men and women, tall, blue-eyed and well favoured, they poured in day after day. We constantly met large parties covered with the dust of travel, each carrying his beloved teakettle which he filled at a running brook or neighbouring convent and boiled for his favourite beverage on the *semavar*, or copper charcoal brazier, which a friendly native would lend. Hundreds of weary miles had they tramped over the hot sand, under the burning sun, deterred by no difficulty, but ever keeping their faces steadfastly set towards Jerusalem. These Russian peasants have one great object in life, for which they save and work with an enthusiasm which never fails: to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to touch the



JERUSALEM AND THE MOUNT OF OLIVES FROM SCOPUS.

Holy Sepulchre, to visit the holy shrines, to be baptised in the Jordan, and to return to their fatherland empty in purse but rich in candles, vials of oil, unleavened cakes blessed by the Patriarch, and garments dipped in the Jordan, to be worn only once again—as shrouds.

We once witnessed a touching sight in the Church of the Sepulchre. Four hundred of these peasants, all middle-aged and very old men and women, were toiling up the steps to the tomb, and with looks of rapt devotion kissing the sacred spots. One aged woman was carried on the back of her son, who tenderly kept her from being hurt. We joined them at their Greek service, and longed to be able to tell them the Gospel story in all its sweet simplicity. Their belief seemed to be a series of superstitions with very little foundation of truth. We were told that each pilgrim left with the Patriarch a gold napoleon (or French pound) as a gift. We often came across these poor peasants, sometimes in the convents where they were resting, at others in their churches, or again in the markets, and at all times found them courteous and gentle.

Space would fail, if I chronicled all our doings, but we were never tired of going into the town and watching the people. Outside the Jaffa gate, huddled together in one undistinguishable mass, were always to be found camels, donkeys, horses, dogs and lepers. The last were terrible objects, thrusting their fingerless hands into the faces of the passers-by, begging for *backsheesh*, and drawing attention to their frightful infirmity. Poor things, outcasts because of their awful and mysterious disease! Inside the Jaffa gate, the bazaars attracted us. The Armenian and

Jewish merchants eagerly drove their bargains with their equally keen customers, who unblushingly offered a third or fourth of the sum first demanded, and seemed to spend a vast amount of time and talk but very little money on their purchases.

Mingling with the leisurely crowd of pedestrians, we noticed several dignified Abyssinians clad in spotless white robes, their commanding stature and intelligent ebony faces giving them a distinguished air which was very remarkable. Before General Gordon freed them they were slaves, now they are the "learned men" among the Moslems, and live within the precincts of the Mosque of Omar.

The markets were thronged by numbers of countrywomen, whose dress excited our admiration, for it was always picturesque and often beautiful, differing entirely from that of the townswomen. It consisted of one straight garment, cut with much simplicity of style and reaching from the neck to the ankles, with wide hanging sleeves, which could be tied back when the wearer was engaged in household work; the material of which these dresses were made was sometimes cotton, but oftener thick native silk, dark blue in colour, striped with red and yellow (the front or vest being exquisitely embroidered by the owner's clever fingers), and secured round the waist by a handsome silk scarf; over this a smart scarlet cloth jacket, with half sleeves and of no particular cut, came to the waist; this also was elaborately worked. The long embroidered veil of stout cotton, capable of holding somewhat heavy purchases, was thrown over the head leaving the face free, while heavy silver and gold coins adorned the neck, arms and forehead. Stockings were disdained, but the feet were sometimes thrust

into red Turkish slippers, though more often than not, these impedimenta were dispensed with. A camel's-hair *abbaye* or cloak was sometimes worn for protection against both extreme heat and cold. The perfect carriage and fine figures of these women, who are guiltless of corsets, might well excite the envy of the fashionable Western lady, as with free and graceful step they walk barefooted for miles, carrying on their well-poised heads heavy water-pots, or baskets filled with market produce and livestock in the shape of cocks and hens. To the casual observer the dresses seem all alike, but a practised eye can discern at once whether this woman comes from Nazareth, or that from Bethlehem, or another from the mountains, by the set of the veil or the colour of the gown.

The townswomen affect hideous modern French fashions from Beirût, and cover their tightly-laced figures with cheap jewellery, never omitting to pin the tiny watch (which seldom keeps time) on their bodices. Coloured stockings of a fearful pattern are worn, with a charming indifference to neatness, and gay little satin slippers with high heels, and rather the worse for wear, are added. For the street the pink or blue silk dress must be covered with the universal outdoor mantle, made on one pattern, but often of rich white or coloured silk, embroidered in silver or gold. In shape it is like a very full double petticoat divided into two equal parts at the waist by a girdle—one half forms a skirt and the other is thrown over the head, making the wearer appear at the back like a huge animated cottage loaf. The *maudeel* covers the face. Hats are reserved for the heads of foreigners.

S. E. B.

(To be continued.)

invitations. And I have managed to hold back one or two young fellows from those miserable gaming-tables. No doubt he prefers to have me out of the way for a while. It may be only for a few weeks. But—"

Roy walked to the window, and stood with his back to Denham. Silence lasted fully three minutes. Denham remained where he was, looking sadly enough towards the boy. He had much to do, but Roy was his first consideration; and he knew from his own sensations what the parting would be to the other.

"Come," he said at length. "It can't be helped. And—I don't know what you feel about it, but I have an objection to letting Wirion see that he can make us unhappy."

Roy came back slowly.

"That—brute!" he burst out, choking over the word.

"Yes—I know. There's no sort of excuse for him. Roy, I want a promise from you."

"What?"

"You know the sort of thing that is going on here. Promise me faithfully that, whatever happens, you will keep clear of the gaming-tables. You may be tempted, and I shall not be at hand to look after you."

Roy was silent—perhaps because of those last words.

"Promise. I can depend upon your word."

"I do—promise," Roy said with difficulty.

"Faithfully?"

"Yes—faithfully."

"And you will do your best to keep up your mother's spirits? You must be

the same plucky fellow with them that you have been all along with me. Don't make any difference. They will need it now, more than ever."

"It's so beastly hard," muttered Roy.

"Yes—it is!"—and a pause.

"There's one thought that always is a help to me, and I hope it will be to you. Whatever happens—remember, God is over all. By-and-by we shall see it to be so. Things won't go on always like this."

The interview was getting to be too much for both of them, and Denham drew one hand across his forehead. "There!—that will do. No need to say more. You won't forget that I depend on you; and you'll be just the same as if I were here. The same—every way. I shall miss my—"

He was going to say "friend;" but he stopped in time. Roy could stand no more; and Ivor hardly felt as if he could himself. The boy's face worked painfully, and Denham's hand grasped his.

"Not for long, I hope," he said in a cheerful tone. "Now I must go and tell your father."

Three days later the third company of forty détenus quitted Verdun for Valenciennes. Roy and his father, with others, were at the gate, to see the detachment off upon their enforced pilgrimage. Denham had never held his head higher, or looked more sternly composed, and Roy did his best to imitate his friend; but he found it hard work. This was not like an ordinary farewell. He and Denham were alike in the power of an unscrupulous martinet, behind whom was another equally unscrupulous and quite

irresponsible despot. Neither could guess what might become of the other, or whether they might hope again to meet before the close of the war: and each could be sure that every possible impediment would be thrown in the way of their communicating by letter one with another.

"Remember, Denham, you are always one of us. Wherever we may be, there is your home," Colonel Baron said, in moved tones. "When you can join us again, your welcome is certain."

"I could never doubt it, sir, after the past," Denham answered.

Then he was gone, and Roy returned with his father to M. Courant's house, a heavy sense of blank weighing upon them both. Ivor's was a personality which never failed to make itself felt, and he had largely the power of winning affection, without apparent effort. The difference made in their little circle by his departure was more than could beforehand have been imagined.

Not in their own little circle only. Many in Verdun knew that they had lost a valued friend that day; and even downstairs Denham was strangely missed. Somebody else, besides Roy, shed at night a few quiet tears, when nobody could see. Lucille herself was perplexed at the acute consciousness which clung to her of Captain Ivor's absence.

Somehow, she had not of late thought a very great deal of that poor young De Bertrand, whose image once had filled her thoughts. Not that she forgot him, but that other thoughts and other interests had taken possession of the foreground of her mind.

(To be continued.)

FROM LONDON TO DAMASCUS.

PART III.

ENGAGING A DRAGOMAN.

WE had been strongly advised by our Jaffa friends to take as guide for our long journeys a young English-speaking man living in Jerusalem. He was represented as thoroughly trustworthy and intelligent, besides being willing to fall in with our plans, rather than insisting upon our falling in with his. This was exactly the man we needed, and as the travellers' season was at its height, one of our first duties must be to find him. With this object in view we started one morning in search of his home. Two rival dragomen, of whom we inquired the way, assured us that Ameen—for so I will call him—was in Damascus with a party, and would not return for forty days. As this gratuitous information was imparted to us with unnecessary vehemence and exaggerated regrets, we distrusted its veracity and continued our search. Ameen's dwelling seemed to be hidden away in some remote region "far from the madding crowd," but after many false turnings, we at length espied a neat little house standing in a garden, and a neat little woman with a baby in her arms standing in the doorway. We opened the gate and walked up the path to the young woman. "Does Ameen live here, and is he at home?" we asked in English. For answer she smiled, pointed to a divan inside the house, and by signs invited us to go in and

"sit." We did so, and continued our conversation by smiling inanely at each other, for our hostess evidently understood no other language but her own barbarous Arabic, which was the more disappointing as no Ameen was visible. He might be in Damascus after all. We were not going, however, to give up the object of our visit so easily. We must try another method of rousing Mrs. Ameen's understanding. A bright thought flashed through our mind. There was that Saracen maiden who long ages ago travelled from Palestine to England in search of her lover Gilbert at Becket. She only knew two words of English, "Gilbert" and "London," but they were the talisman which, after many adventures, brought success, and her lover to her side. Why should not we try the effect of two words on the little woman before us? The louder you shout to an Arab the more important does he consider your communication, so we shouted "Ameen—dragoman," accompanying our duet with gestures expressive of our desire to see him. Our hostess redoubled her smiles, and we redoubled our shouts, until "Ameen—dragoman" became a monotonous chant, which grew more despairing at each repetition. When our efforts seemed most hopeless, Mrs. Ameen allowed the light of intelligence to dawn on her countenance, and murmuring some indistinct apologies, she suddenly darted through the door and disappeared.



A DRAGOMAN.

Congratulating ourselves on our success, we waited patiently for ten minutes or so before the welcome sound of voices and footsteps sounded near at hand, and in walked our little friend, still carrying the baby, and proudly escorting the redoubtable Ameen, whose preposterous Turkish trousers gave him a swagger as consequential as that of a Highland piper. He greeted us courteously in excellent English, but as one who had been expecting us, and immediately inquired whether we had left his cousin in Jaffa in good health, and if he had told us any family news. Happily we had met the cousin, and were able to give the desired information, which was received simply and as a matter of course.

We were favourably impressed by Ameen's honest face and gentle manners, and though he looked delicate, he seemed capable. He told us that twice he had acted as guide to a celebrated English explorer and that he knew the country thoroughly. We were rather alarmed, on his producing an enormous sheaf of testimonials, and modestly requesting us to read them. If the few we glanced at were to be relied upon, our friend must be a Solomon in the matter of wisdom, a prince among guides, a servant with so many superlative qualities—we felt excessively small in his presence—while his record as a "provider" might have caused the cheek of the renowned Mr. Whitely to grow pale with envy.

Ameen was evidently a treasure (and such he afterwards proved himself to be), and must be secured, so we plunged at once into business, and for the next half-hour discussed routes and other minutiae. The bargain was concluded by Ameen agreeing to take us for a four days' trip to Jericho, and a five or seven days' trip to Tiberias. The charges were to be a pound a day each. He was to provide everything, including good horses, and saddles, a muleteer, and when necessary an armed escort, which a thoughtful government—with an eye to *backsheesh*—insisted upon, lest the confiding traveller should fall among thieves. As the escort was invariably chosen from a tribe of raiders, the moral was obvious. We considered these terms very moderate for this time of the year, especially so, as the party was to consist only of Elizabeth and myself.

We further stipulated for the horses and saddles to be brought round for our inspection the evening before we started on our journey. Everything being now satisfactorily settled, we partook of coffee, said good-bye to the little wife, kissed the baby, who resented deeply the familiarity, and, preceded by our picturesque guide, who had already assumed an air of proprietorship, made our way into the city, where we dismissed him and continued our prowl unattended.

On one of our excursions we took part in an adventure which might have ended seriously to one of the party. Looking back now, it seems like a modern version of the story of the Good Samaritan.

It was a hot afternoon in April when Elizabeth and I, accompanied by Elias, Miss K.'s native servant, carrying a tea-basket, set out for Neby Samwil, the ancient Mizpeh, where we intended picnicking.

As we were riding slowly down the hill in the direction of Jerusalem, we noticed afar off an unusual cloud of dust, out of which there presently emerged a horseman riding furiously. Almost before we could exclaim he had turned the sharp corner by the Pool of Hinnom and was tearing madly on towards us. In another moment the horse wheeled suddenly round and, flinging its rider to the earth, galloped back to the city gate.

We reined up near the unfortunate man, who lay stretched out unconscious in the middle of the road, a tropical sun beating fiercely on his uncovered head, and the blood

slowly trickling from a nasty wound in the temple.

In an incredibly short space of time a crowd collected. White-sheeted women, like flocks of seagulls, scudded down the hill slopes, and were joined by dark-faced men, who seemed to spring from nowhere.

They stared with much curiosity at the little group below, but neither signs nor talking could induce them to approach nearer than the stone wall which bounded the road. They answered our appeals by jabbering among themselves like so many monkeys, pointing at us and gesticulating excitedly. Clearly we were each unintelligible to the other.

We next tried to awaken the sympathy of a family living close at hand; but, much to our indignation, they refused help though they showed considerable interest in us, wondering why we took so much trouble about a stranger who was nothing to us. We could only be sorry that with the knowledge of English had not come the knowledge of our Lord's answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour?"

Appeals to the passers-by met with the same heartless indifference. They stared at the unconscious cause of the commotion and looked at us with eyes which plainly said, "The English are mad, they are always minding other people's business."

In the meantime the man was in great danger from the heat. He was too heavy for us to move, and Elias, with true Oriental timidity, refused to touch him. The case was becoming desperate when we saw a benevolent-looking priest coming along the road. He joined the circle, looked at the wounded man, and turned to resume his journey.

Elizabeth stopped him and eagerly accosted him in French, but he was evidently ignorant of that tongue. She then attacked him in German, but he shook his head deprecatingly. As a last resource she bombarded him in Italian, which language he did understand, for he immediately replied that he was at the signora's service.

"Then," said Elizabeth, "will you kindly tell us, signor, what to do with that poor man? He was thrown from his horse a few minutes ago. He is wounded, and may be dying. Could you not get him carried to a place of safety and find out who he is?"

During this address the priest's countenance changed from courteous attention to grave disquietude. He scarcely waited for its conclusion before he gathered up his skirts and, murmuring that "he knew nothing—it was not his affair," walked rapidly away.

We were more perplexed than ever. Could there be defilement in the touch of the wounded man? Or did the fact of his wearing European clothes proclaim him an infidel and one whom it was best to leave alone?

While we were deliberating on the best course to take, Elias shook off his fear and began talking to a big porter who was looking on. After what seemed to us an endless discussion, he came forward and intimated that the porter would carry the man to a *hakeem* (doctor) in Jerusalem.

It was not without a great deal of talking, appealing looks from the porter, and, I must add, evident reluctance on his part, that the wounded man was placed on his shoulders and the procession started for the city, Elizabeth riding on ahead in the hope of finding some intelligent person who would interpret for us, for we were still puzzled how to act for the best.

Among the motley crowds always assembled at the Jaffa Gate, we caught sight of a young clerk, with whom we had had dealings, and who spoke English fairly well. He was standing near his office. In response to Elizabeth's sign, he crossed the road with alacrity, and was all attention to her commands. When, however, he understood their

extent, and grasped the fact that a stranger had met with an accident, and saw him apparently dead on the back of the brawny porter, he bolted into his office, shut the door with the words, "Excuse me, madame, but I am too busy to help." There was no time to analyse our own feelings, for the procession had increased considerably, the babel of tongues was deafening, donkeys braying, camels grunting, men screaming and gesticulating; even the lepers rushed forward and added to the noise and confusion. The porter's face bore a look of unmistakable terror, as he caught a glimpse of the ragged uniform of a soldier, but on we went, hoping that the *hakeem's* house was not far off.

Happening to glance round we saw to our intense relief the swaggering form of Ameen approaching. In him we saw also an end to all our difficulties. We attacked him at once.

"Find a doctor, please, or do something for this poor man, and do, if you can, stop that awful noise!" we exclaimed. Alas, Ameen manifested the same extraordinary unwillingness to interfere, though his sympathy was excited. "Do look at him," we urged, "perhaps you may know him, and why are all the people calling to him and shouting *hakeem*?"

Yielding to our entreaties Ameen examined the face of the object of our solicitude, added his contribution to the hubbub, and exclaimed—

"He's the Russian doctor from the hospital, the people say; he was riding into Bethlehem this afternoon, it is the day he sees patients among the pilgrims there. Poor man, we will carry you to the Russian hospital, that is," continued he, turning to us, "if you will take all the responsibility, Miss N."

"Of course I will take the responsibility!" was the impatient answer. "Be quick, unless you want him to die!"

Ameen now assumed leadership, issued his orders with much importance, using the English lady's name with great effect, we could see. The porter, however, kept close to us, talking earnestly.

"What is he saying?" inquired Elizabeth. "He is afraid that he will be punished. He thinks he will be accused of the doctor's death and be put into prison; he begs of you to say that he is only acting under the English ladies' orders; he is their slave, and cannot help himself," replied Ameen.

"Assure him that he need have no fear, he shall not get into trouble for helping us; we will see to that," Elizabeth answered, looking down kindly on the man, who seemed as grateful as if he had been rescued from some terrible danger.

"You see, Miss N.," said Ameen, "we are all afraid to help in an accident of this kind, the risk is too great. We might be seized and thrown into prison, accused of having murdered, or attempted to murder, the person we were only assisting. Certainly if he happened to die, we should be held responsible for his death, and could not escape prison unless a big *backsheesh* were constantly paid to the governor. You of the English nation are different, you are just, and do not understand our Government. Your word they will take, ours they would not believe. We are not naturally inhuman, we have to pretend to be."

This explanation threw a new light on the indifference to suffering which we had witnessed. Under the circumstances it certainly required a very brave man to follow the dictates of ordinary humanity where a stranger was concerned. We were truly thankful that we were "of the English nation," and free to exercise our privileges here.

But we had now reached our goal after being nearly forty minutes on the road. The poor porter's strength was giving out, but he managed to get up the steps of the hospital

and lay his burden down on the cool floor of the hall. The nurses gathered round the unconscious doctor, talking volubly in Russian, which none of us understood. There was a look of consternation on their faces as they carried him gently into an inner room. We could not explain what had happened, but we waited until we thought we heard sounds which indicated returning consciousness, then telling Ameen to reward the good porter with a liberal *backsheesh*, and bring us news of the patient on the morrow, we rode on our way to Neby Samwil.

It was a glorious day, and we were glad to get away from the noise and dust of the city into the open country where quiet and beauty reigned.

The watch-tower on the top of Mizpeh, though three hours' distant, was plainly visible in the clear atmosphere. It thrilled us as we called to mind that it was on that spot Laban and Jacob made their covenant of amity and settled their differences for ever. There the judges had assembled the Israelites together in times of national danger or calamity. It was at Mizpeh the prophet Samuel anointed young Saul king of Israel. From its summit the Israelites, after humbling themselves before God, rushed into the plain, routed the host of the Philistines and discomfited them.

Through the very passes we were traversing and over those grey stony mountains had Samuel, Saul, David, and hosts of the famous men of old walked. If they could speak, what marvellous stories could those ancient hills

tell of all they had heard and seen of triumph and defeat of great armies, of God's anger towards His stiff-necked people, of His unbounded love and forgiveness!

It was not easy riding. The flat smooth rocks were slippery footholds for our sturdy little horses; but they were hardy fellows and stepped over the most break-neck places with the ease and confidence of mountain goats.

We were enchanted with the gorgeous carpet of flowers spread out at intervals before us. Here was a patch of cyclamen, covering a space of about twelve feet, nestling under the eaves of a sullen brown rock. Masses of scarlet anemones, yellow flax, pheasant's eye, and many other lovely flowers disclosed their beauty to us, making up in their colouring and variety for the lack of trees and foliage.

The slopes of the hills were dotted with handsome, long-haired goats feeding side by side with the ungainly "fat-tailed" sheep. These sheep are far from pretty. Their tails, hanging like great bags, touch the ground as they move, giving them a most unsymmetrical appearance. The fat of the tail is considered a great luxury among the natives. It is made into "seminy"—a strongly-flavoured grease used in all native cooking and, to our taste, rancid and unpalatable.

The summit of Mizpeh was reached without further adventure. A few olive trees grew there, and the watch-tower seemed old; but, otherwise, there was nothing to remind us of the past.

We tied up our horses, and in a few

minutes the kettle was singing merrily and we were enjoying a cup of tea, which was very refreshing after our long ride. Elias was made happy with a great piece of sugar, which he ate slowly, smiling upon us the while like a dusky cherub.

There was but little time to indulge our fancy, though the spot on which we sat teemed with memories. It was getting late—sunset would be upon us in an hour. If we did not wish to be benighted among those desolate mountains we must be up and going. So, as soon as tea was over, we mounted our horses and turned their heads homewards.

Before we were half way, the great sun left us suddenly (as if he were pressed for time and must make it up on his next journey), and we were plunged into darkness, for there is scarcely any twilight in the East.

It was a hard matter to keep Elias in sight; but, fortunately, the horses knew the way, and we rode with a loose rein. Soon the silver moon rose in the heavens and flooded the landscape with her brilliant light. A couple of hours later saw us cantering through the deserted streets of Jerusalem, throwing long shadows as we passed under the grey walls of David's Tower.

The ghastly Pool of Hinnom looked more ghastly in the moonlight; but the shining road gave no indication of the scene in which we had acted a few hours before. Ten minutes later we were dismounting at Miss K.'s hospitable door, well pleased to be back again among our friends.

S. E. BELL.



BEAUTY IN WOMAN: FROM A MAN'S POINT OF VIEW.

By "MEDICUS" (DR. GORDON STABLES, R.N.).

"Shalt show us how divine a thing
A woman may be made."

Wordsworth.

THAT I am an admirer of female beauty and loveliness goes without saying, nor would I care to take tiffin with a man who isn't.

BEAUTY LIKES TO BE ADMIRER.

Yes—that is true, and I don't blame beauty a bit. Nevertheless ladies who are not gifted with this great glory, prim, demure women, with prim, demure ways, may look sadly sour and say, "That Miss So-and-so thinks she is entrancing, and maybe she is good-looking after a fashion, but I feel sure she spends quite a deal of her time indoors attitudinising and gavotting before the looking-glass, and she can't pass a shop window without using it as a mirror to note how she looks." Well, for the life of me I cannot see any harm in Miss So-and-so's turning a shop window into a mirror if she chooses. Her mind is thus satisfied. That dress does hang nicely, and she carries herself well in it.

As to Miss So-and-so spending some time before the mirror at home, the Misses Prim can only be reasoning from analogy. They themselves doubtless do the same, but it is as

a forlorn hope and in order to see if there be anything about their faces and figures analogous to beauty.

But Miss So-and-so is right again. What are mirrors made for, I wonder, if not to study before, to study attitude, the set of the head, the proper use of lips and eyes, and the contour of the neck. Indeed, indeed, I'm all on beauty's side.

But in this, as in all other matters, there is a danger of over-doing it. It is quite proper to assure yourself that you look your best, but it is unwise to think too much of the matter, or to allow yourself to become a piece of human vanity.

EVERY WOMAN HAS A MISSION.

I should be sorry indeed to speak disparagingly about the Misses Prim.

There are a great many of them in this world, and they can do much to make the world better and happier. That is their mission. Some fulfil it, some don't. Some want to die right off the reel because nature has made them somewhat angular and gray and has, in fact, denied them beauty. They become sour in temper and sharp in tongue because of envy. Ah, but just see the happiness they could shed abroad among others were they only cheerful and always

willing to assist their neighbours with good sound, solid advice. And this happiness would come back to their own hearts and take up its abode there, so that blessedness should shine in their faces. Women of this description ought to dress very neatly but not gaily. They often have good figures, and these may be attired to advantage without their making any attempt at dressing to kill, which would obviously be somewhat ridiculous. They should be neat also in hands and feet and hair, the arrangement of which lends itself to much that is artistic and beautiful.

The Misses Prim may be thirty or forty years old, or more. What matters it? Their mission lies chiefly among the young, and thoughtless though these may be, they are loving and have ten times more gratitude in their souls than grown-up people. Alas! though, I may be addressing some who have but little time to help those around them, little time even to read; theirs only to work, to long, and sometimes to weep. I do in my heart feel for such as these; but the very fact that they do long for something better to come shows, I think, that there is a better world than this, and that this life is but probationary.

It is their mission then to work, and to try to do so willingly, for methinks duty well performed is a reward in itself.

"Well, they seem to have it all arranged for us, and we can't exactly ask them to alter. But we'll see all about it when Uncle Tom comes. He'll tell us everything."

Mr. Thomas Cossart was the younger of the brothers who now were the heads of a thriving business in one of the eastern counties. Their father had begun from small means; but prudence, upright dealing, and industry, combined with shrewdness and skill, had worked up the business to something very considerable. He had died a wealthy man, but his daughter had not succeeded to any farther portion of his wealth. The old Cossart had been hurt and offended at the way in which his child had been separated from her own people through Mr. Cholmondeley's pride. He had made no complaint, but he had felt it keenly. The sons took it more quietly. They were busy men, and possibly the knowledge that what would have been their sister's portion had fallen to their share, disposed them to take the matter with equanimity. They used to write and send presents at Christmas, just to show there was no ill-feeling, and as long as Mrs. Cholmondeley lived she had always done the same. When it was told to the Cossart brothers that Mr. Cholmondeley had died rather suddenly, leaving his affairs in a very involved state, and asking their help and guardianship for his two children, the response had been prompt and kindly.

"I shall come as soon as I can possibly arrange to be away from the works," Mr. Tom Cossart had written. "My brother is laid up with the gout and is unable to move, and I cannot be present at the funeral as I have too many important engagements to fulfil. But I shall come immediately afterwards and do my best to assist in the winding up of affairs."

He had written also to his nephew, stating briefly that there would be a home for them with their relatives and a place for him in the works. Now they were waiting with some excitement of mind for the arrival of the unknown uncle, in whose hands their future seemed to lie.

"I hope he will be nice and kind!" cried Sheila, as she paced the big hall with excited steps. "I want to like him if I can; but what shall we do if he is harsh and unkind, or"—here she lowered her voice and added, as if half afraid of her own imaginings—"if he is dreadfully common and vulgar?"

"He is our mother's brother," said Oscar gravely. "We must try always to remember that."

"Yes, but mother had been sent away to a good school, and father saw her and fell in love with her when she was

on a visit just after she left. She had scarcely lived at home at all. I don't think that is any proof. Oscar, shall I have to kiss him when he comes?"

"I think you had better, Sheila. He is our uncle. I think he will expect it."

Sheila made a little grimace; but she had been petted all her life, and kissing came easily to her.

"I wonder why girls are expected to kiss everybody and be kissed? Boys get off. It isn't quite fair. But I'll try to be as good as I can."

Sheila was trying to keep a brave face, though her heart was heavy to-night. The coming of Uncle Tom seemed to emphasise the fact that the father's place was for ever empty; that it was a stranger who must in future rule their lives for them—at any rate, for the next year or two. The blank in the house was keenly felt at all times, although perhaps a little less keenly than it would have been had Mr. Cholmondeley not been much of a recluse during the latter years of his life. It seemed so strange that a visitor should be arriving, and that there should be only the son and daughter to welcome him.

Sheila choked back a sob more than once, as she stood listening for the crunch of wheels upon the gravel, which would herald the approach of the carriage.

It was like the beginning of the end. When once Uncle Tom had arrived, the old home would not seem like their own any longer. The guardian would be there to look after and arrange everything; and before very long they would have to leave—never to return.

As that thought came into Sheila's mind, she ceased her excited pacing and came and stood beside the glowing hearth, her eyes full of unshed tears as she gazed into the heart of the fire.

Oscar saw the tears and came and put his arm about her. He knew very well the nature of the thoughts within her.

"Sheila," he said softly, "we must try to be brave and good. We know that God will take care of us as much in one place as another."

She nodded her head, and a great drop fell glistening down. She pulled Oscar's hand more closely round her.

"I don't think things are as real to me as they are to you, Oscar. I like to be taken care of by somebody I can see. Papa always did, and now he is gone, and they are going to take you away from me too."

"I shall be quite near, Sheila; we shall always be meeting."

"It isn't like being in the same house."

"You will have Uncle and Aunt Cossart, and I think there will be some cousins too. I know Uncle Tom has

children; I'm not quite so sure about Uncle Cossart."

"Perhaps I sha'n't like them. I don't like everybody," began Sheila; but then she caught herself up quickly and added, "But I am going to try and be good, Oscar, I really am. Perhaps I've been too happy all this time—made too much of. It may be good for me to have some snubbing now. I'll try not to mind very much—to take it patiently—like the early Christians, you know. When I was little I used to think it might be rather nice to be persecuted."

Oscar smiled a little, and over Sheila's face there glimmered a flickering smile, as though she were half amused at her own fancies. The firelight played over her face and form as she stood in its rosy glow. She was a little over the average height, and was growing graceful and maidenly, though a year or two back she had been rather a hoyden in appearance, with long limbs and a good many angles, and a mane of wavy brown hair tumbling over her shoulders. Now the long plain black dress, a little open at neck and wrists—for it was close upon dinner-time—seemed to give grace and dignity to the figure, and to heighten the clearness of the girl's complexion. The plentiful brown hair was coiled about the head. The big grey eyes were arched over by brows of the same dusky tint, and the features of the face were well cut, though not quite regular, and very mobile in their play of expression. It was the constantly varying expression which gave to Sheila's face its chief charm. It was like an April morning—always changing from gay to grave and from grave to gay. Gaiety certainly predominated in the play of lips and eyes; but there were many stormy or appealing or wistful expressions flitting constantly over the face. Sheila was accustomed to get her own way with everybody about her; and her big appealing eyes were answerable for a good deal of the spoiling she received.

Oscar was slight and tall, well-featured and very gentlemanly in appearance, with a quiet, attractive face and a very bright smile, which was, however, much more rare than Sheila's. They were not much alike; but that seemed only to strengthen the bond between them.

"Hark!" cried Oscar quickly. "I hear the carriage!"

Sheila turned a little pale, and took a step or two forward.

"It is Uncle Tom!" she said; and the next minute the butler had thrown open the door and a figure well wrapped up for the wintry journey was seen entering the hall.

Mr. Thomas Cossart had come!

(To be continued.)

FROM LONDON TO DAMASCUS.

PART IV.

GOING ON PILGRIMAGE.

"Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it."

"A GLORIOUS morning!" was our remark as

we met at breakfast on March 28th. "Just the day for a pilgrimage to Mar Saba."

The hour was early, but long before we had risen the shouts of Ameen and a muleteer mingling with the tramp of horses announced the arrival of part of our escort.

The Arab is a restless as well as a vociferant person, and cannot comprehend why the average Saxon goes to bed regularly at night, sleeps till morning, and keeps awake all day. For himself, well, the hour of repose and the nature of his couch are matters of perfect

indifference. He takes his dog sleep like Sairey Gamp imbibed her spirits—"when so disposed."

If you tell him your wish is to start at eight in the morning, behold, he is knocking at your door before sunrise, and imploring you to make haste. He is convinced in his own mind that the intervening hours will be spent in the absurdities of washing and dressing. If you remonstrate, he shrugs his shoulders, and you may presently hear him confiding to his friend, that "the English are a strange people. True, Allah made them, but He alone can understand them!"

We were very punctual on this particular morning, and at seven o'clock had mounted our rough little horses, whose wonderful necklaces and charms formed no small part of their equipment.

The muleteer highly entertained us. He was a round-faced, scantily-clothed youth, whose evident pride in his cattle was manifest as he pointed to their decorations. He greeted us with broad grins and "Bon jour!" These words being the only scrap of a foreign tongue he had picked up, they were employed in season and out of season. Whenever one of our party looked pleased, or nodded kindly to him, he would stiffen himself, beam on her, and, with a fine air, roll out the salutation, "Bon jour!"

Our cavalcade now formed up, and we started off in high spirits, prepared for any adventure that might fall to our lot. Ameen, of course, led the van, his black horse gorgeously dressed in trappings of "barbaric splendour," and he seated on a wondrous saddle, his purple silk shawl or *kaffieh* tied round his head and falling behind in graceful folds over the voluminous *abbah*, or cloak. The pair were imposing-looking objects in dignified contrast to the ludicrous figures of "Bon Jour" and his beast, who followed next in the procession.

His horse was a fearful and wonderful creature, carefully guarded against the influence of the evil eye by fantastic festoons of blue beads and shells which depended from his neck and mane and tail. Stacked upon his back were cooking pots, luncheon baskets, sunshades, wraps, and other gear, flanked by bursting saddle-bags. In the midst of these articles sat "Bon Jour," complacently ambling on in the jog-trot style peculiar to his tribe, his brown legs dangling down, his leathern belt decorated with

"A bottle on each side
To keep his balance true."

We brought up the rear demurely enough, trying to get our mettlesome steeds under control, with the help of "Bon Jour," who, turning round and facing us, would yell in Arabic one moment to them, and the next encourage us with—

"Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles,"

and the inevitable salutation in the French tongue, looking for all the world like a travelling showman on parade!

The first part of our journey lay along the Bethlehem road, which was fairly good, but has, I understand, been vastly improved for the German Emperor's visit. On either side were smiling plains and grey olive groves, dressed in the lovely fresh hues of spring. Carpets of delicate flowers were spread on the roadside—for there are no hedges in Palestine—the air was soft and pleasant and everything took its colouring from the joyous morning.

The tomb of Rachel claimed our attention for a moment. We were quite familiar with its appearance from the many illustrations we had seen, so that the simple dome-like structure on the wayside seemed an old friend. Pious Jews, Christians, and Moslems offer

their prayers at its shrine, and apparently derive equal benefit from their devotions.

A little beyond, on the slope of a hill, the pretty village of Beit Jala gleamed and glittered in the sunlight. The city of Kish, the father of King Saul, originally stood there. Was it to that hill, I wonder, the young, handsome Saul, after his election as King of Israel, returned when he "went home to Gibeah, and with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched"?

An element of discord was not wanting as we rode through the peaceful valleys. Overhead wheeled a great vulture, hungrily waiting to swoop down on some dead carcase—a camel or a donkey perhaps—and devour its prey. On a crag close by sat a majestic eagle, his piercing eyes boldly fixed on the sun. The solitary bird seemed a fitting type of the departed glory of Israel.

It was pleasant further on to notice signs of human life. Shepherds were tending their flocks and playing on "David's" pipes—a terrible instrument, by the way, giving forth horrible sounds suggestive of Highland bagpipes in the hands and mouth of a beginner—shepherd-boys were hurling stones from a primitive sling (knitted in worsted) with marvellous skill and true aim at an imaginary Goliath.

In contrast to these pastoral amusements, the solemn Moslem, with his shoes carefully removed, his face towards Mecca, performed his religious duties on the roadside, going through his prayers and prostrations unmoved by the curious glances of strangers and pilgrims from other lands.

We were now nearing the birthplace of our Saviour, through which city we had to pass. On the east is a narrow valley called the Shepherds' Plain. Even on this early spring morning it looked a bare treeless spot, with stony slopes shining white, and a few crumbling ruins. It was here, according to tradition, that the angelic messengers announced the glad tidings to the wondering shepherds and sang the magnificent "Gloria in Excelsis."

I am bound to say that my enthusiasm was not kindled by the sight of those holy fields. Indeed, my preconceived ideas received a rude shock—as they often did during our travels—and I came to the woeful conclusion that on the whole it was more pleasing to visit in imagination the sacred spots in Palestine than go on pilgrimage to the actual places.

Just as the sun pointed to nine o'clock, we were entering the straggling city of Bethlehem. We had, as in all Oriental towns, to pick our way carefully through the narrow undulating streets with their hillocks of rubbish and valleys of mud. We were occasionally jammed up against a wall to avoid too close contact with the strings of camels laden with stone for repairing the roads for the expected Imperial visit.

"Bon Jour" of course indulged in lively altercations with the camel drivers; he also unceremoniously pushed aside men, women, and children who happened to be in the line of route. Miss B. told us that a quantity of very bad language was freely dispensed on both sides, but it apparently bred no ill feeling, as we afterwards saw "Bon Jour" and one of the men, who had most violently assaulted him with words, walking amicably across the square.

One cannot fail to be greatly struck by the bright hopeful looks both of the city and its inhabitants, who, we were told, were all Christians. Indeed, it was plainly visible in the thriving aspect of the place and energy of the people, who were busily employed, that Moslem inertness had no stronghold here. The sound of the hammer, the whirr of the wheel, and the grating of the file fell pleasantly on the ear as the industrious workers fashioned the great pearl shells into beads, brooches, and beautifully carved ornaments.

The men and women of Bethlehem are much fairer in complexion than other natives of Syria. The girls are celebrated for their beauty, their large soft blue eyes and brown hair giving them a European look which is almost startling. Their lovely dress adds to their picturesqueness, and the tall cap, covered with gold and silver coins, which the married women wear, gives height to their graceful figures.

There was not much time on this occasion to make more than casual observations, for time was pressing. We rode into the great square and dismounted near the Church of the Nativity, which now stands inside the fortress Monastery of the Virgin.

While our guides took the horses to be watered, we wandered about the open cemetery, alternately "meditating among the tombs" of the brave Crusaders who lie buried there, and watching the animated scene in the portion of the square used as a market.

We laughed heartily at one unwary traveller who, having yielded weakly to the persuasive powers of an importunate shopman, was literally besieged by half-a-dozen others. The unfortunate object of these attentions looked simply desperate, the perspiration pouring from his face as his enemies pulled him this way, pushed him that, shouting and yelling in the Arabic tongue, and gesticulating menacingly with one hand while they held on to him with the other. He could not understand, poor fellow, a word they said, and evidently thought they were going to murder him. We saw him finally dragged into a shop by the two strongest, while the other four waited outside for their victim to emerge, when the attack would be resumed. We wondered whether his friends would come to the rescue!

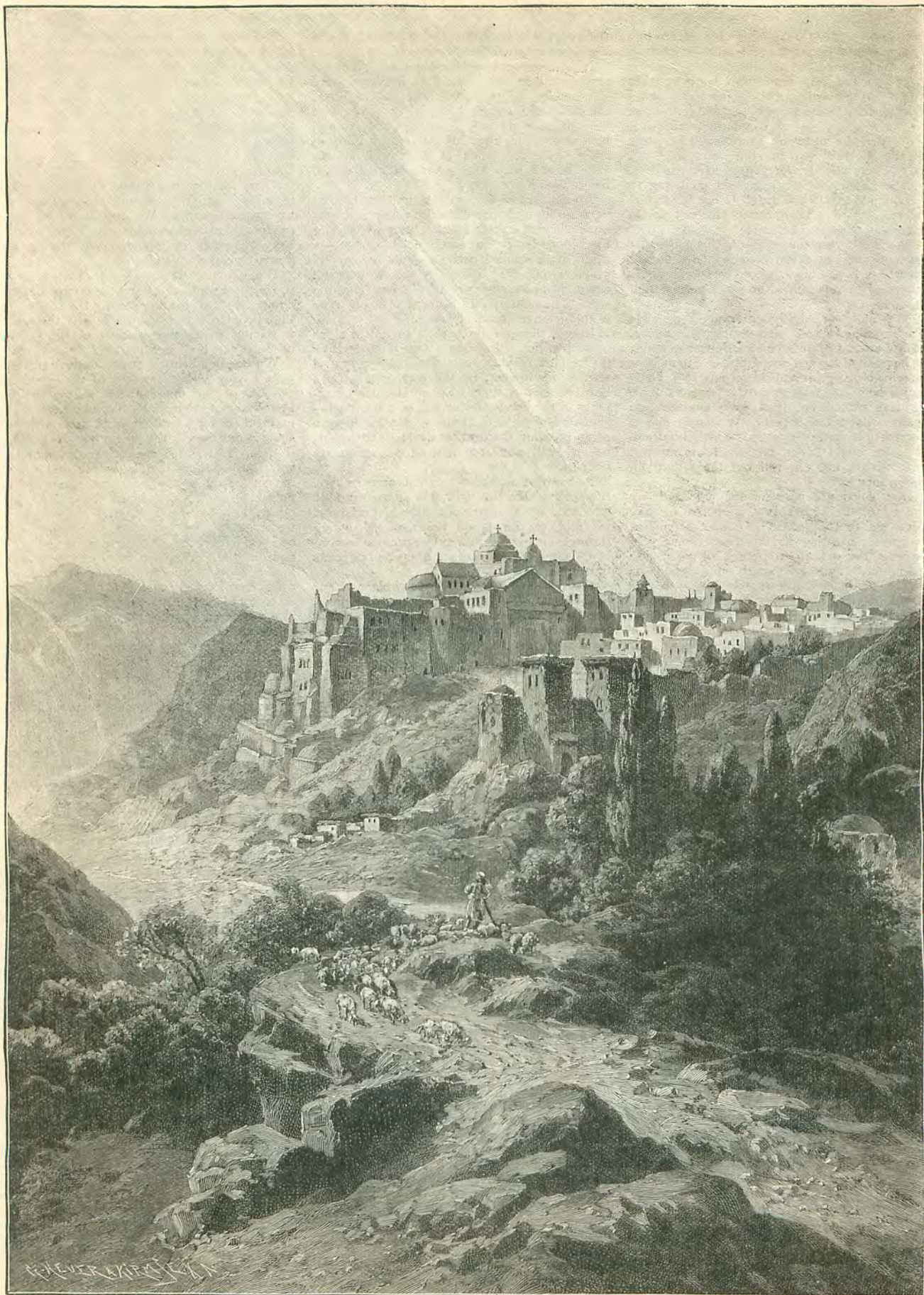
The few remaining minutes at our disposal were spent in visiting the famous study of St. Jerome, a gloomy cell cut in the rock in the vaults of the Church. It was here the great Father spent so many years of his life in translating the Scriptures into the noble Vulgate. He was helped in his herculean task by Paula and her daughter Eustochia—learned Roman ladies—who followed Jerome to Bethlehem and founded a convent there over which he presided. Their tombs, with that of Eusebius, are in the vaults. The Grotto of the Nativity we left for another day.

We were joined in the square by a fine-looking Arab, with loins girded, and his bare feet thrust into red shoes. He saluted us gravely and with much dignity. Pointing to an ancient rifle (which was slung across his shoulders and was patched up in an original and striking manner, calculated to burst if by any chance it was loaded), he informed us that he had been appointed our escort across the wilderness and, further, that he would guard our lives and property as he would his own.

Miss B., who translated his remarks, told us not to be alarmed, for if by any chance we should be attacked by robbers, Mustapha would be two miles ahead of us, and we should run no danger of being killed by the explosion of his gun! This we felt was severe on our aristocratic-looking defender.

The horses and their attendants now came up, "Bon Jour's" beast more grotesquely laden than before. We were soon in the saddle, and winding round the eastern corner of the Monastery, turned our backs on civilisation, and entered the dreary wilderness called in Scripture *Jeshimon* or *Solitude*.

For the next four or five hours we rode through this region, which in winter must be ghastly indeed. Even the glory of the spring flowers, which thinly covered its otherwise naked, soft, chalky slopes, failed to enliven it. Everything but the flowers was of one colour—the glaring ridges, the fantastic peaks, the sharp spurs, the rugged rocks, the narrow ravines



BETHLEHEM. (From the painting by Paul Linke.)

with their stony beds, the camels, the foxes, and the dogs all were a kind of tawny yellow.

We saw neither tree nor water. A few black tents of the Bedawin formed a welcome relief from the blinding glare. Not a sound disturbed these solitudes, except the occasional bark of a dog in the tents below. Ameen told us that the people living in this region are distinct from other races, their dialect is different from that of other districts, their traditions, habits, and dress are those of an entirely different people.

Our brave little horses accomplished that fearfully hot journey in grand style; they carried us up those awful rocks and along the edges of precipitous steeps which filled our minds with horror.

Ameen and "Bon Jour" sang their monotonous Arabic songs in shrill keys, or dozed in their saddles. Mustapha untiringly walked on with his peculiar swinging gait, often lost to sight, but turning up again, bearing in his hands bouquets of exquisite flowers, which he offered to us with a grace of manner which added much to the pretty gift.

The heat grew more and more intense. Not a breath of wind gave relief. I can well believe one writer, who says, "There are probably few places in Asia where the sun beats down with as fierce a heat and irresistible power as in the desert of Judah."

It was two o'clock before we dismounted and sat down under the shadow of a square tower known as the Ladies' Tower and built on a knoll. A narrow fissure divides it from the Monastery of Mar Saba into which no woman is allowed to enter.

We were tired and hungry, but Ameen soon unstrapped the luncheon baskets and spread out on the rock the hard-boiled eggs, the sardines and other dainties for our meal. We fell to with much spirit, while Ameen and Mustapha went to the convent to boil water and make us refreshing tea.

Our first visitor was a yellow dog, thin and mangy, who snapped up hungrily the morsels of food we threw to him. Then a dozen or so dark heads belonging to young girls and boys popped up above the edge of the rock; these were followed by a couple of wild-looking men, from the Bedawin encampment below. They all stared solemnly at us and smiled at our manner of eating, but they did not beg.

Presently a couple of Arab youths, smartly dressed (for they were servants to a party of travellers who were camping close by), made their appearance, and, perching themselves on a crag, gathered the ragged Bedawin together, and held forth with great animation, the audience listening with open mouths.

Miss B. amused us by translating the address which excited so much interest. *We* were the subject of it.

"The Frangi ladies," the Arab youth said, "are like men. They do things like men—they ride, they gallop, they run! They eat what they like. They go where they like—they never ask their husbands! All the Frangis are rich; they have flocks and goats and camels. They can buy the whole world if they like. They have seen the whole world, and they can speak the Arabic!"

This was the climax, the topstone of the pinnacle of virtues and accomplishments of this marvellous race of beings. The Bedawin looked incredulous. Miss B. said a few words to the youth in Arabic, when the whole company raised a shout of delight exclaiming—

"See! Hark! She speaks our language like the Holy Prophet! Praise be Allah!"

The Convent of Mar Saba is built on the side of a precipice, four hundred feet high. It clings to the cliff, while its walls are supported by huge buttresses. It is brown, like everything else in the district. Deep silence surrounds it. There it stands, melancholy and alone, without a tree or shrub in sight. Every breeze is shut out by great crags. The sigh of the wind is never heard. Solitude and death seem to reign everywhere. We heard that the wretched inmates—monks exiled for crimes or small offences—become as fossilised as their surroundings.

It was in 480 A.D. St. Saba and St. Euthymius, following the general custom of ascetics, established the first nucleus of the present monastery.

There is a solitary palm growing high up on the side of the building, said to have been planted by the Saint, which sprang up bearing dates without stones on the same day.

There is also a cavern in the rock (into which we did not go) where the Saint lived with his lion, which at first had occupied the whole of the cave, but, finding the Saint refused to be ejected, he gave up the contest and contented

himself with a cupboard three feet square, where he slept.

One traveller says that "the monks may scarcely read the valuable manuscripts in their library, yet they hide them carefully from the eyes of heretics. Within the walls they may neither smoke nor eat meat, yet raw spirits find their way past the porter, as we were able to prove. A more *hopeless, purposeless*, degraded life can scarcely be imagined than that of such hermits."

Elizabeth and I, accompanied by Mustapha, descended into the Fire Valley, as the huge gorge is called, by which the waters of Jerusalem are carried down to the Dead Sea. It was dry now, and as we looked up at the stern frowning monastery and its solitary palm tree with its bright green leaves, our spirits were depressed, and we hastened on.

It was in that melancholy prison that St. Bernard conjured up the vision of beauty and happiness expressed in his hymn—

"Those eternal bowers
Man hath never trod,
Those unfading flowers
Round the throne of God,
Who may hope to gain them
After weary fight?
Who at length attain them
Clad in robes of white?"

* * * * *
While we do our duty
Struggling through the tide,
Whisper Thou of beauty
On the other side.
What though sad the story
Of this life's distress—
Oh, the future glory!
Oh, the loveliness!"

The monk St. Stephen, in the eighth century, lived here and wrote the famous Greek hymn, the well-known English version beginning with the touching verse—

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
Come to Me, saith One, and coming
Be at rest."

The remainder of our party met us at an appointed spot, and almost in silence we rode home through the Kedron Gorge, arriving in Jerusalem just as darkness fell.

S. E. BELL.

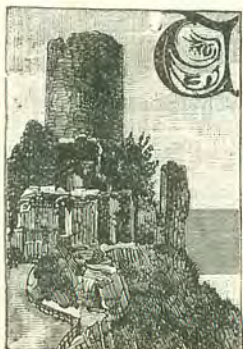
"OUR HERO."

A TALE OF THE FRANCO-ENGLISH WAR NINETY YEARS AGO.

By AGNES GIBERNE, Author of "Sun, Moon and Stars," "The Girl at the Dower House," etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TWO MIGHTY MEN.



THE message sent to Sir John Moore was that Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of State, desired to see him on the next day at 3 P.M., and that he would be required to leave town quickly afterwards. This was all, no hint of

further particulars being given.

Prompt as ever, Moore made his arrangements, and ordered that a chaise

should be in waiting one hour later to carry him—anywhere.

At three he appeared before Castle-reagh, and was enlightened as to those arrangements which, a day or two later, Jack Keene indignantly related to the Bryce circle.

Sir John, with all his sweetness of disposition, had a fiery temper. And though he habitually held in that temper with so firm a curb that he could be described as "the most amiable man in the British Army," yet there were times when it got the better of him. Those hazel eyes could flash with a scathing light, and those lips could pour forth vehement utterances. He was not to be lightly roused; but perhaps that which he could least patiently endure was the sense of being unjustly treated.

It may well be, too, that at this

moment he was physically suffering from the severe strain of those most trying expeditions to Sicily and Sweden. He may have been still under something of reaction from that hard fight in the south of Italy, when his own "feelings" had had to be sternly repressed, for the sake of the young girl whom he loved. In a short letter written three or four days later from Portsmouth to his mother, a note of weariness may be detected, unwonted in Moore. But Rest lay ahead—not far off—though a fierce experience lay between.

One way or another, he did wax wrathful in this interview with Castlereagh; and his answer came promptly—

"My lord, a post-chaise is at my door, and upon leaving this I shall proceed to Portsmouth to join the troops. It may perhaps be my lot never to see your lordship again. I therefore

MY MOTHER.



YES, in whose welling depths would I
 With wonder oft-times gaze,
 And gazing smile, I scarce knew why,
 In those long-vanished days;
 Hand, that of old my pillow smoothed
 When fever burnt my brow,
 And all my infant sorrows soothed
 With love—where are ye now?

Hushed is the voice whose accents soft
 Would cradle me to sleep;
 The eyes that lighted up so oft
 No longer laugh—nor weep;
 The hand, before whose touch so deft
 Sickness and care would flee,
 Is gone, and naught, alas! is left
 Save memory to me.

G. K. M.

FROM LONDON TO DAMASCUS.

PART V.

THE END OF OUR PILGRIMAGE.

ON the 4th of April we left Jerusalem for Hebron, travelling in an ancient vehicle driven by a merry bright-eyed youth, who at intervals would put his head under the hood of the carriage, and inquire, "Are you happy, O ladies?" On this journey we dispensed with the services of our dragoman, Miss B. kindly undertaking for us the distracting business of payments and bargaining, for the coinage of Palestine is as perplexing as its language.

You can never be sure of the value of Turkish money in this country. Every village, though circulating the same coins, puts a different value on them; this is most embarrassing to the European. I do not remember meeting either a native or an English resident, who could give you off-hand the accurate cost of a few trifling purchases. Before you can get near it, mysterious calculations have to be worked out on paper; these must be illustrated by pieces of English, French and Turkish money, accompanied by such profuse explanations that you soon begin to doubt your own sanity. Lucky indeed is the English traveller who survives, and goes forth with a serene countenance, believing that he comprehends the system of accounts as practised in Palestine.

On the road we passed long caravans of Russian and other pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to keep Easter. They saluted us courteously, but showed unmistakable surprise at our travelling in an opposite direction to the Holy City.

Half-way to Hebron we stopped at a khân, and were presented with tiny cups of coffee. We returned the compliment by offering a backsheesh to the khân-keeper.

In the remoter parts of Palestine buying and selling is reduced to a fine art. As a matter of fact you don't buy anything, you merely exchange presents. You wish to purchase something and ask the price; the owner immediately gives you the article, and with a grand air places his hand on his heart and exclaims—

"Take it, my brother; what is that between thee and me?"

If you are foolish enough to accept his words literally, he will be grievously disappointed, and by the exercise of much cunning would, without fail, get his gift back again. No, the correct way is to utter polite protests against such generosity, to which your would-be benefactor again fervently remarks—"Think not of that, O my brother, it is a trifle."

You go on playing at cup and ball until he deprecatingly yields to your scruples, and names a price out of all proportion to the value of the article. At this point the game becomes exciting. If you are wise, you turn on your heel in disgust, after throwing out contemptuous hints on the worthlessness of the "present." This causes the merchant to reflect; his respect for you is growing; finally he relents and proposes a more reasonable price. The exchange is then made, and you part with mutual expressions of good-will.

While we were sipping our coffee, our driver and a friend washed their hands, carefully removed their shoes from their feet, and turning towards Mecca they solemnly prayed and recited portions of the Korân, bowing their heads and performing the prescribed genuflexions. When this duty was finished, they promptly fell out over some trifle, and said things to each other in what Miss B. described as highly pictorial language. Just as we expected them to come to blows, they embraced, climbed into their places on the box-seat (for the friend turned out to be a fourth passenger), and we resumed our journey, though not before our Jehu had thrust his head under the hood of the carriage with the artless inquiry, "Are you happy, O beautiful ladies?" To which Miss B. replied—

"Transcendently happy, O son of the Prophet!"

In acknowledgment of this compliment to his powers of pleasing, we were entertained with an improvised air, to which he sang in praise of our loveliness and amiability of character. Such is the Arab!

In a couple of hours we were entering Hebron by the narrow valley whose vine-clad hills have immortalised the Vale of Eshchol. We alighted at the door of the English Hospital, which is outside the town, and were

warmly welcomed by the ladies, whose guests we were to be for the next two days.

Under the guidance of Dr. Patterson, the medical missionary, we visited the famous Mosque, but were only allowed to ascend the five outer steps. This even excited the anger of the wild boys and girls, who spat at us and cursed us as Pagan Franks. From one of the prayer holes in the marvellous outer wall which surrounds the cave of Machpelah we took out a paper, which had been placed there that morning by a Jewish mother. On it was written in a curious Judeo-Arabic dialect a prayer "to our Father Abraham that he would look upon her affliction and intercede with the Lord of Hosts that He would give her sons instead of daughters." This desire for male children is common throughout Syria. As soon as the first son is born, the father drops his own name and is henceforward known as Abou Yusef—the father of Joseph—as the case may be, while the mother gains the respect and love of her husband in proportion to the number of sons she bears him. Daughters, as a rule, are of no account.

We looked with reverence and awe upon the ancestral burial-place of the Patriarchs. True, we could only gaze at the polished outer wall, but we knew that therein "was the one spot of earth which Abraham could call his own." The pledge which he left of the perpetuity of his interest in "the land wherein he was a stranger" was the sepulchre which he bought with four hundred shekels of silver from Ephron the Hittite. Round this venerable cave the reverence of successive ages and religions has now raised a series of edifices which, whilst they preserve its identity, conceal it entirely from view. But there it still remains. Within the Mussulman mosque, within the Christian church, within the massive stone enclosure built by the kings of Judah, is, beyond any reasonable question, the last resting-place of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebecca, "and there Jacob buried Leah," and thither, with all the pomp of funeral state, his own embalmed body was brought from the palaces of Egypt.*

Hebron is a Moslem city containing about

* Stanley, *Lectures on the Jewish Church*.

18,000 inhabitants. About 600 Jews dwell in the lower end of the town. Fierce and wild, it is their boast that no Pagan Frank has built his house within their walls nor desecrated their holy shrine with his presence. Whether this bigotry will give place to tolerance under the softening influences exercised by the medical missionaries has yet to be proved. We were told that the people were becoming gradually gentler. To us they seemed fanatical and dangerous. There is no hotel in Hebron for travellers.

Thanks to our good friends the missionaries we were able to visit most of the places of interest round about. The neighbourhood abounds in traditions. To the north, a cave is pointed out as having been the abode of Adam and Eve for more than a hundred years. Farther south is the spot where Cain killed Abel, and there in the "Vale of Tears" Adam mourned for his murdered son, and close by the Father of all living was buried.

The history of Hebron, or El-Kalleel (the Friend of God), is particularly interesting. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, having been built seven years before Zoan or Memphis in Egypt (Num. xiii. 22). "Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar to the Lord" (Gen. xiii. 18). Later on Joshua smote it with the edge of the sword and destroyed it utterly; afterwards he gave it to Caleb for an inheritance, "because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." David reigned here seven years and a half. The murderers of Ishbosheth were hanged by the pool, which is still in existence. Rebelious Absalom made the city his headquarters. Centuries later it was taken from the Edomites by Judas Maccabees, but since 1187 it has been in the hands of the Moslems. To-day it is a picturesque stone town, the centre of commerce for the southern Arabs, who bring their wool and camels' hair to the market. They also trade extensively in glass beads and leathern water-buckets.

We were sorry when our two days had expired, but alas! we had to say good-bye to our hospitable English friends, for time pressed; so waving a last farewell to the groups of deaconesses and servants, who had gathered at the door of the mission house, we turned our faces again towards Jerusalem. A couple of days in David's city followed and then to Jericho, where we bathed in the mysterious Dead Sea, and in consequence were covered with salt crystals. Starting before sunrise, we were back again in Jerusalem at 9 A.M., and late in the same afternoon our little cavalcade, comprising Ameen, Bon Jour, Elizabeth and myself, rode out of the city on our way north.

For the next six days we lived almost entirely in the saddle from sunrise to sunset, sleeping at native hotels or convents, which had been previously arranged for by our faithful dragoman, whose careful attention to our needs cannot be too highly spoken of. Although the sun was hot, the roads rough, and even a shady nook could not always be found for our midday meal, we thoroughly enjoyed these long days in the drowsy air. Every hill and valley, plain and pool we passed on our route had been the scene of

some more or less remarkable event recorded in the Scriptures, and as Ameen was well posted up in Bible history, and eager to impart his knowledge, we missed no place of interest. Travelling thus day by day, seldom meeting any human being, except an occasional shepherd or country woman, we had ample time for reflection, and it was easy enough to give the reins to one's imagination, and ride with Joshua's army through these silent vales, or watch the impetuous rush of the warriors up those bleak rocky hills, as with all the confidence of victory they stormed the cities which once stood there. Again from out of the past we could hear the blessings and curses thundered forth, and see the huge mass of people gathered together, as we galloped through the narrow valley with the towering sentinels, Gerizim and Ebal on either side. Or as we sat on Jacob's well we could listen to the sweet voice of the Saviour talking to the poor woman of Samaria.

On we went through Nablous until we reached Mount Tabor, where on the top, in the Latin convent, we rested a couple of days. Thence to Tiberias, where we dismissed our faithful escort. Here we stayed with our friends Dr. and Mrs. Torrance, of the Free Church of Scotland Mission. Their house and hospital are built on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, and amid its charming scenery we passed a fortnight. One of our excursions took us to Gadara. Our tents were pitched on a green knoll in the midst of wild beetling crags, volcanic mountains, and tropical vegetation. We bathed by moonlight in one of the great natural sulphur springs hidden by immense hedges of oleanders. Striking our tents at five in the morning, we rode hard till twelve o'clock, when we reached one of the ancient giant cities. Here Dr. Torrance held an open-air medical mission. The poor people soon crowded round the *Hakeem* and were patiently examined, and medicines dispensed to those who needed them. It was a picturesque and pathetic scene, the kindly face of the white doctor, with the almost black natives, and hideously tattooed women and girls waiting anxiously for his verdict, firmly believing that his touch and medicines had miraculous power. As we rode through the city we were deeply impressed by its mighty ruins, which testified to the strength and culture of its founders. From Tiberias we went to Nazareth, staying a few days at the Protestant Orphanage; and then engaging two muleteers we set forth again, crossed Carmel, stayed the night in the comfortable German hotel built at its foot, then along the coast to Beyrout, stopping at Acre, Tyre, and Sidon—a five days' journey. This route I should not recommend to those who dislike solitude and Eastern travel without the slightest Western comfort. Dr. and Mrs. Eddy, of the American Presbyterian Mission, received us very kindly at Sidon, as there turned out to be no hotel, though this town was by far the most flourishing we had seen. A large industrial school for boys, worked by the missionaries, was well attended, all kinds of trades were taught, the pupils eagerly and intelligently learning, and eventually going out well equipped to fight the battle of life.

We rested a few days at Beyrout (the Paris of Syria) under the shadow of the purple Lebanon. Here we dismissed our muleteers, for we were now in the region of railways and civilisation. Very early on a Monday morning we got into the train which was to take us to Damascus. The journey lasted ten hours, but it seemed like two, for the railroad is cut through the Lebanon, and the most exquisite scenery meets the eye the whole way. Towards four o'clock the train rushed screaming through the valley of the Barada (the Abana of Scripture), past smiling gardens, and drew up in the station of Damascus. It was a glowing afternoon, but the lovely green of the trees and the plash, plash, of the rapid rivers softened the glare of the domes and roofs of the houses, and gave relief from the dusty roads. In the evening we went up to the top of a hill overlooking "the mother of cities," and sat down to enjoy the scene. How dreamlike it looked in the soft sunset! The brown bare mountains on one side, the pathless desert all round. Damascus, like an exquisite pearl set in a crown of emeralds, nestled surrounded by miles of waving green trees. No wonder that to the sun-baked Bedouin of the desert it is a paradise, or that Mahomet in first beholding it, turned back, saying, "I am not fit to enter."

The bazaars of Damascus are famous in the East. Each set of merchants has its own quarters, so that there is no difficulty in finding the wares you require. There are long straight arcades, and winding, twisting arcades, all aglow with light and colour.

But there is no time to linger or describe the beauties of this truly beautiful city. We spent a week amid its wonders and fell more in love with it day by day. I might mention that the hotels are fairly good, and English travellers are well cared for.

And now our journeys are nearly over. A week at Baalbec, where the famous ruins of the temples of Jupiter and the Sun are the astonishment of all beholders; thence to Beyrout, from which port we embarked for Constantinople, another delightful five days' journey, and we steamed into the Bosphorus.

A week crammed with more wonders in the way of sight-seeing, and then late on Monday afternoon we stepped into the Oriental Express and were whirled homewards, and on Thursday afternoon we were in dear smoky London once more, after an absence of nearly four months.

It may interest my readers to know that our joint expenses for this trip were £170, including £39 for railway tickets from Constantinople to London. This sum took in every item of expenditure except the presents which we bought for our home friends. Of course we could not possibly have seen so much, nor travelled so comfortably and economically if it had not been for the kindness and hospitality of our many missionary friends, who had looked forward to our visit, and who made everything easy and delightful for us. If any of the girl readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* set out on such a tour, I hope they will return with as many pleasant recollections as we did. And now farewell.

S. E. BELL.

VARIETIES.

LASTING A LIFETIME.

Mrs. Crabshaw: "What do you mean by cheating me like this? You said this chain I bought here would last a lifetime, and here is all the plating worn off in a month."

Goldskin: "Madam, I said dot shain would last you a lifetime because when you put it you look so sick I didn't think you would live der week outd."

LIFE IS SHORT.

As shadows cast by cloud and sun
Flit o'er the summer grass,
So in Thy sight, Almighty One,
Earth's generations pass;
And as the years, an endless host,
Come swiftly pressing on,
The brightest names that earth can boast
Just glisten and are gone.—*Bryant.*

ABSURD NAMES.

Amongst absurd names which have been recorded at Somerset House within recent years, we have the following, of which few people would like to be the bearers:—

"That's it, who'd have thought it?"
"Is it Maria?" "Bovril," "Sardine,"
"Ananias," "Judas Iscariot," and "Man Friday."