

# UPPER EGYPT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FOUR DAYS IN A COUNTRY TOWN

#### FIRST DAY.

WE are standing upon a mound of rubbish entirely destitute of vegetation, above us the deep blue cloudless vault of heaven; a gentle north wind guards us from being scorched by the glowing rays of a vertical sun; so dry and transparent is the atmosphere that the eye can wander unimpeded to the distant horizon, and take in every detail of the surrounding landscape. Verdant crops, interspersed at intervals by groves of palm-trees, clothe the level valley that stretches away towards the north; and through it a large river pursues its winding course, lending moisture and fertilization to the arid soil. Eastwards and westwards the green valley is bounded—the line of separation being sharply defined—by the bare, yellowish-gray desert, which sometimes loses itself in gently rising plateaus over which the eye cannot reach, sometimes terminates suddenly in precipitous rocky hills.

At our feet lies a confused and labyrinthine collection of houses forming a considerable town. The houses, built of crude unburnt bricks, are mostly one story high, flat-roofed, pierced with few apertures for light, and often growing narrower towards the top in the antique style. Amidst these rise a number of tall minarets, large cupolas with their vaulted roofs, and neat quadrangular battlemented towers, the last having their walls pierced with numerous holes in which the pigeons carry on their busy traffic, while the grayish

clay-colour of the houses is richly relieved by the perennial green of the palms and other trees interspersed among them. Most of the buildings show signs of decay, and a considerable portion of the town is in ruins. With difficulty we make out streets and thoroughfares in this labyrinth, the houses, standing apart from each other, and being arranged in rows; and here and there larger areas are left free from buildings. In these open spaces we next observe the thronging and movement of human traffic like the globules in the capillary blood-vessels.

In the general murmur arising from this mass of human dwellings the ear can distinguish the harsh barking of numerous dogs, the trumpet-like and painful bray of asses, the angry roar of stubborn camels, the shouts and calls of street-boys at play, and the warnings of the scampering donkey-boys; while from the markets rise the ceaseless cries of the brokers and petty dealers, from the battlements of the towers the clear voice of the muezzin calling to prayer, and now and again we catch also the quavering strains of some love-sick youth, or the feast-enlivening notes of a pipe with an accompaniment of drums and clapping of hands.

No rumble of carriages is heard as in the busy North; tall chimneys have not yet gained the victory over the towers of palaces, temples, and pigeon-houses; the voices of men and animals are not yet drowned by the buzz of machinery, or the knocking and hammering of manufacturing industry.

In a shady grove in front of the town a man with a full beard and expressive features is seriously and quietly spreading a carpet on the ground; his head is covered with a large roll of linen, the turban; his body, bronzed of a deep brown colour, is enveloped in a full toga with wide sleeves, reaching down to his feet; he takes off his red slippers, steps devoutly and composedly on the carpet, turns his face towards the south-east according to an invariable rule, and prostrates himself before the Almighty. In another spot sits or squats a son of the country, who in contemplative mood imbibes from a long pipe and a tiny cup the permitted luxuries of tobacco and coffee. Round the walls of the house before us

a ghost-like being steals, the whole figure from the crown of the head to the feet—which are alone visible—carefully enveloped in a wide mantle, which falls in numerous folds; we are told that it is one of the fair sex.

We have seen enough, even though we had been carried away by a genie in the darkness of night and set down here on this mound of *débris*, to let us know that we are standing before a town in the Mohammedan East, far away from Central Europe, much farther even for the imagination to reach than the land of the West beyond the Atlantic. We are on the classic soil of the primeval Nile, far up in the south of Egypt, where the Mercury of the nineteenth century has indeed begun already to stretch out his wire feelers, where he goes and comes occasionally with his steam-pinioned sandals on road and liquid highway, leading after him the narrow-trousered bearers of civilization, but where he does not yet feel himself at home, and where the people rejoice in their aboriginal state of existence.

#### ENTRANCE INTO A TOWN—THE HOUSES.

We descend and make our way towards the confused mass of houses. No rampart surrounds the town, but the outermost houses form a close barrier, in which here a regular archway, there an open street, there again a narrow doorway affords an entrance, or a ruinous building forms a breach which no one thinks of building up. The best way is to follow the raised causeway, which winds along towards the town, and during the time when the river is high and the country around covered with water, conducts the passenger without danger into the midst of the houses. The street into which we enter is not much broader than the causeway, which barely allows two riders to pass. It leads us gradually onwards, widening and narrowing, twisting and turning, sinking and rising. The walls of the houses display little of geometrical accuracy; the line of direction is often broken and bent, though each individual house has an approximately rectangular type.

In such a provincial town the houses are seldom of more than one story; nothing meets the gaze but a bare gray wall of clay, seldom plastered, and often common to a whole stretch of houses. Very different are the houses here from those of Cairo, with their numerous projecting windows; here we see little externally but a few small air-holes, and even these are mostly closed by a wooden lattice. In this way the interior is shut off and secluded from the outer world. Air and light enter the rooms from the court-yard, which is entirely surrounded by the house. The wall is constructed of rough unburned bricks of a longish rectangular form, such as those used by the ancient Egyptians for their private dwellings, and then always stamped with the government mark. These bricks, still called by their ancient name *tub*, are a material suited only for rainless districts such as this; a heavy rain of some duration would soon convert a town so built into a ruinous heap, a convincing proof that the climate of Upper Egypt in ancient times was quite as dry as at the present.

Two things, however, arrest attention—the gateway of the house and the pigeon-tower, which adjoins or surmounts so many of the buildings. The sides and top of the gateway must possess a certain amount of solidity, which is secured by the use of squared stones, burned bricks, and cross-beams, and advantage is taken of these to produce at the same time something of architectural ornament, by the interchange of colours and a kind of mosaic arrangement. Less success is attained when attempts at painting or sculpture are made, the Arabic artist only succeeding in producing hideous childish caricatures. The *Hâdj*, that is, one who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca, is fond of distinguishing his house by such bizarre gate-paintings. Among the ancient Egyptians also the pilgrimage to a temple was an exploit that was painted on the houses. To neutralize the glance of the envious it is common to put quotations from the Korân over the entrance to the house; and to turn aside the evil-eye, a stuffed monster, such as a crocodile, or it may be an aloe plant, is often fixed above the entrance. The ancient Egyptians were likewise in the habit of putting inscriptions and symbols of good

omen in the same place. In the middle of the large gate, which is only opened to admit objects of large size, there is usually a small door through which persons and the smaller animals pass out and in.

The pigeon-towers, which are either placed in groups on the tops of the houses, or rise singly by themselves, now in the shape of cubes, now narrowing towards the top, after the style of the ancient temples, form a large—often indeed the largest—portion of the buildings. They give to the houses of the towns and villages of Upper Egypt a characteristic and distinguished appearance. Chimneys are wholly wanting, and in their stead are erected on the tops of many houses short sloping structures of boards projecting above the roof, and having a vertical side open towards the north, to catch the cooling wind and afford a shade; such was also the practice among the ancient Egyptians.

#### STREET TRAFFIC—DONKEY-BOYS.

In the provincial town the Old World and the New have not yet, as in the capital, come into dangerous collision. Here none of that hurried driving and running is seen, none of those carriages that whirl noisily along, and may have bumped the back of the pedestrian before he has had time to distinguish the warning cries of the driver. Everything proceeds at a measured pace; and if, at any time when lost in thought, a person suddenly feels the grinning jaws of a camel in his neck, or a donkey running lightly along treads on his heels, he has always time to step aside, if the circumspect beasts do not do so of themselves. The nearer we approach the chief centre of traffic—the market-place—the greater grows the bustle. A push, a kick, or a collision with some one of our fellow-men, demonstrates to us the existence of a non-ego. Behind us we hear youthful voices shouting nearer and nearer to our ear, and warning us to take care of our back, our legs, our head, and whatever about us is liable to be broken. These are the famous donkey-boys, who, themselves running behind,

are driving a company of riders at a gallop through the bustling crowds and narrow streets to the place of their destination. The somewhat sluggish disposition of their long-eared charges is animated by continued cudgelling, or if the blows fall harmlessly on a hide rendered callous by long custom, a stick is driven into their sores, which are thus continually kept open. At the same time plenty of abuse is poured out upon the animal, the favourite epithets "son of a dog," "son of a Christian," "son of a Jew," being followed by a prolonged emphatic "Ha, Ha" such as only a genuine Arab is able to produce, and then by a strong push against the lean hind-quarters of the beast, which is thus driven forwards and sideways. The bold notion comes into our head that we will also mount a donkey; but the donkey-boys that have their stand hard by are quicker than the thought. Already half a dozen have surrounded us before we have made up our mind. Rescue or flight is no longer possible; a speedy choice alone remains. An angry glance around, a stick brandished threateningly, and the quarrelling, scuffling crowd around our person is scattered, towards which result the boy of our selection has effectively contributed.

The donkey-driver, throughout the whole of Egypt, is the same brazen-faced poltroon, but at the same time a really good-natured fellow so soon as one has become better acquainted with him. In the provinces of the interior he has fewer opportunities for cultivating his linguistic talent than in the capital; here he does not address us in the rich Alexandrian mosaic language of the *lingua franca*—"Nigi ja musyo, voulez ride good esel, un abrico theyib, bono," which means "shall we come, oh sir; will you ride good donkey, a donkey good good." The donkey-boys are wonderfully quick at detecting the nationality of a traveller, and when offering their donkeys for hire regularly call them—of course only for the occasion—by the name of some public man belonging to the same country as the stranger. An Englishman accordingly may find himself urged to accept the services of "John Bright" as a German would be offered those of "Bismarck."

Well, we are now firmly seated, and shoot forwards with hanging reins, but require to be constantly on the alert to preserve our equilibrium, since the *vis à tergo* of the cudgel-wielder falls now to right, now to left, and the latter end of the beast we bestride always turns suddenly and instinctively to the opposite side to that on which the blows fall. Scarcely has our donkey begun to trip along in his not uncomfortable trot when a general stoppage of the current of traffic in the street brings him to a sudden halt. A camel that carries upon his ribs a load projecting at each side like a pair of expanded wings has failed to keep right in the middle when turning the corner at a bend of the street, allowing space only for the width of his own body, and so has struck against the corner. He has accordingly to be pulled back for some paces, and gradually led into the middle of the street. Immediately after the removal of this obstacle, and when traffic has again begun to circulate, we see a laden donkey lying on the ground at another corner; it has been the same with him as with the camel, but the collision with the corner has disturbed the equilibrium of the excessive load upon his back, and his burden being out of all proportion to his strength he has not been able to keep his feet.

Annoyed at the continual stoppages we dismount, and prefer to rely upon our own personal agility. We thrust a few copper coins into the hand of the donkey-boy, who is always discontented when he has to deal with a Frank, and besides what he ought to get always insists upon *Backshish*<sup>1</sup>, that gratuity of so many significations, the name of which continues to haunt a stranger who has been in Egypt. According to humour and disposition, and in order to avoid a row, we satisfy the impudent demand either by giving something more or by making a threatening movement with our uplifted stick. A native who knows the charges gives him half what we have given; the youngster kisses the gift thankfully, and, without looking how much it

<sup>1</sup> This word is Persian, and is generally used in addressing Europeans only; it seems also to have entered the country with the Europeans, since at the French period the natives still used the words *Fida, Fida*, in begging.

is, thrusts it into his bosom, into the folds of his turban, or into his ear. The European, however, must at all times and in all places pay too much; but on the other hand, he is an object of the most abject outward respect throughout all Egypt, on account of his ability to pay, his power, his energy and acknowledged cleverness, less perhaps in virtue of his moral superiority.

#### THE GREAT MAN.

What is the meaning of this? Those who were walking rapidly stop and remain still, whoever was sitting stands up, pipes or cigarettes are taken from the mouth, animated conversation ceases, scolding and quarrelling are at an end, the parties bending their heads and remaining motionless, groups step aside, and right and left a wall of people is formed. Out of the multitude that parts on either side springs a swift-footed light-clad young fellow, with dress tucked high up, holding a rod in his hand; this is the *avant-courier*. After him, and seated high on horseback, or on a snow-white ass of noble race, as tall as a horse, trots a wide-trousered Turk<sup>1</sup>, followed by a crowd of heavily-armed Turkish police-soldiers panting after him, and a number of domestics and slaves. The great man, after the manner of Islam, first graciously salutes the citizens standing rooted in reverence on either side of him, while they bending low raise dust from the ground as a mark of their subjection, and carry it to their mouths to kiss, testifying to the sincerity of their respect by laying their hand on their forehead and their heart. This Turk of high rank is the *Mudir*, the head man of the province. The pomp, without which he never stirs from his house, is the passion and necessity of the race to which he belongs, and clothes him at the same time, to the eyes of the people, in the precious nimbus of majesty.

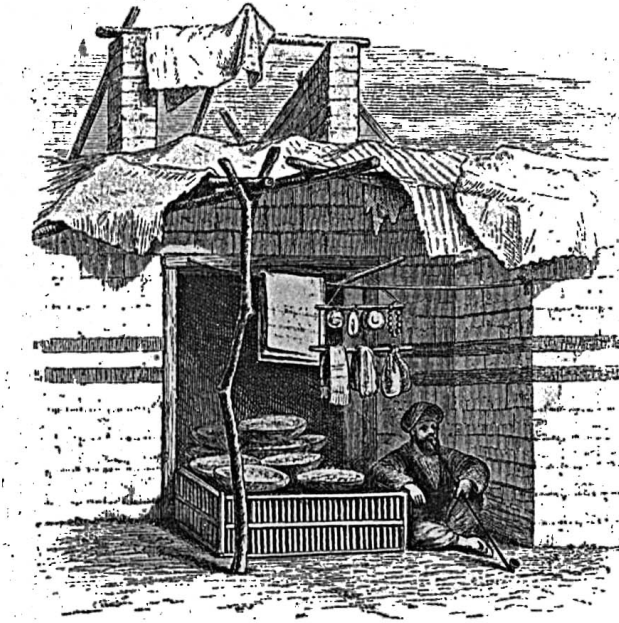
<sup>1</sup> In modern times, however, officials of high rank must appear in a suit of European black.



## THE BAZAR.

We follow the human current for a few steps farther and reach the centre of traffic, the market, or as the European and Turk, but seldom the Arab, are wont to call it, the bazar. The wide open spaces of the town are only intended for shady hours and on certain days of the week for the sale of provisions, the retail trade on the other hand goes on in the narrow streets, where the shops are situated. In these streets there is a continual twilight either from the closeness of the houses to each other or from an awning stretched above from side to side, so that the hottest periods of the day or year can here be passed in comfort. The shops consist of rows of low-roofed cells formed in the ground story of dwelling-houses, or situated in special long, low buildings. We have heard a great deal of the splendid bazars of the luxurious East, and there was perhaps some excuse for our ancestors waxing enthusiastic over them at a time when European industry and Europe generally was far behind the wealthy East in the production of costly merchandise; but at the present day a bazar, even in the larger towns of Upper Egypt, appears poor and insignificant when compared with the handsome shops of Europe. The Arab dealer is perhaps not altogether in the wrong in not giving to his little shop the splendid exterior which consumes a considerable part of the capital required to start the business, and behind which often enough hollow-eyed bankruptcy lies in wait. The finest and richest native shop in one of the towns of Upper Egypt is, as a rule, inferior in outward appearance to a petty retail-shop in the outskirts of a European town, or even to the booth that a wandering trader takes round with him to country-fairs. In the provinces it consists at best of a quadrangular chamber, raised some feet above the level of the street, only high enough to let a person stand upright, so that prayers may be duly performed in it, and usually measuring less in the other dimensions. The few goods that are kept in stock are piled up openly on some rough shelves or benches in the back part. Some pieces of

cloth and finery hang from the upper half of the door, which half is raised so as to project in the manner of a roof, while the lower half is let down, or is extended outwards table-wise in order to add to the surface of the shop-floor. Here and there also a case with a glass top displays a variety of small ornamental wares. Large bills and tickets need not be looked for here; while few can read a written announcement



Shop of a Retail Dealer.

what is in the shop can be seen by any one. The only pieces of writing that are stuck up are passages from the Koran. An outspread carpet and a few cushions are all that the easy-going shopkeeper requires in the way of comfort, and there he sits with his legs crossed, a long pipe or a paper cigarette in his mouth, and waits for purchasers in silent dignity. Another, who cares still less for show, drags his wares day after day out of the dark store-room behind into the doorless hole of a shop, fills his straw baskets with them,

and sets them out for show upon old boxes or crates made of palm twigs, while lighter goods flutter picturesquely from extended cords and poles.

## INDUSTRIAL SURVEY.

The workshops of the artisans differ little from the booths of the shopkeepers, and the occupations of these people are carried on in full publicity. By a very ancient rule the market people arrange themselves generally according to trades and guilds; but in the provinces, where the division of labour is not so well marked, this system is carried out to a less extent than in the capital. This arrangement does not seem to be prejudicial to the individual society. From the quiet district of the grocery and drug shops one can pass to the noisy quarters occupied by the tinsmiths and copper-smiths; from the savoury hearths of the cooks to the vile holes of the tanners. Let us make the round of the industrial establishments. At the present day any one who undertakes a journey of investigation with the view of adopting from the industries of foreign peoples anything that may be advantageous for his native land, will certainly turn his steps last to that country from which, in former times, the first light of civilization shone over the world. Still an industrial inspection is here by no means devoid of interest, seeing that we find, beyond doubt, a picture of the handicrafts practised by the venerable fathers of the human race, and very often living images of the ancient Egyptian forefathers themselves. The principle that prevails throughout the industries of the modern Egyptians is to produce from cheap readily procured materials articles that "will do," without regard to durability, accuracy, and taste.

We halt in astonishment before the stall of a workman who is using a strange kind of boring-tool. Holding in one hand a bow something like a fiddle bow, the string of which he has twisted round an upright rod, he gives the rod a rapid circular movement by urging the bow backwards and forwards. In this way a piece of iron wire projecting above

the rod, and having a lancet-like point, cuts its way deeper and deeper into the heart of a reed which he holds down on the top of it with his other hand. With a few strokes, which produce a scratching, rattling sound, he produces an excellent tube for a tobacco-pipe. Beside him sits an assistant or brother, the *turner*. The whole of his portable apparatus consists in a foot-board, with two small boards rising perpendicularly from it, between which the object to be turned, be it wood, bone, or amber, is firmly fixed by means of projecting pins. By the bow in his right hand this object is made to revolve on its axis, while his left hand applies the sharp steel chisel



A Borer of Pipe Stems.

that cuts the object smooth. The apparatus is steadied by planting the naked right foot upon two cross-bars, the left upon the foot-board.

The cabinet-maker or carpenter—in Arabic there is but one name for both, *neggâr*—has neither a bench, nor in general a vice. What would be the use of such an expensive appliance? He squats upon the board that he is to plane and hew, supports his log with his foot, or in the case of finer work takes the object between the second and the great toe of his prehensile foot, as the ancient Egyptians did; his teeth even serve instead of a tool. Instead of a rule he is generally satisfied with a cord or a palm twig, on which he

marks his measurements, and for a pair of compasses he uses a cord with a piece of wire stuck through it as a centre. His boring tool resembles the instrument of the pipemaker, and like it dates from ancient Egyptian times. It is a piece of iron wire with one of its ends flattened to a lancet shape, inserted in a wooden cylinder. The upper end of the wire enters into a hollow knob, which in most cases consists of a doom-nut (the fruit of the doom-palm). The cylinder is made to revolve by the bow already mentioned. The manipulation of this boring-brace, in the hands of the Arabic artisan seems easy and playful; the unaccustomed Frank prefers a gimlet. The chief tool of the carpenter is the small axe, in the use of which he displays great dexterity.

The tinsmith, the locksmith, and the silversmith use a remarkable kind of bellows. A little heap of earth is pierced by a piece of an old gun barrel, one end of which is directed towards the fire, this consisting of a little heap of coals kept together by a few loose stones. The bellows part consists of a goatskin, probably an old water skin, of a conical form, ending in a point, which is attached to the other extremity of the tube. In the posterior part of the skin is cut a transverse slit, the edges of which are strengthened by slips of wood. In the back of the stall squats the plump-cheeked apprentice boy, who with the fingers of one hand works the valve of the bellows, raising it so as to open the slit, and then depressing it so as to close it, when the air, being expelled, passes under the heap of earth through the tube and acts upon the fire.

The bellows of the blacksmith is somewhat more complicated. Behind a sloping wall of boards are two large cylindrical leather bags, strengthened by a number of wooden hoops, and both closed posteriorly by a wooden bottom, with an air-hole and with a valve. By a very simple arrangement—namely, several wooden bars fastened perpendicularly to the wooden bottom of the bellows, and having a kind of hinge movement on a foot-board below, by means of an iron ring—the two air-holders are alternately made to take in and give out air through the backward and forward motion given to

them by a young fellow standing upon the foot-board. The air-bags converge, and terminate first in two separate tubes, then in one common one, and the air-current is directed upon the front part of the hearth, which consists of an earthen mound surrounded with rough stones. The Arabic Vulcan has on his raggedest clothes, or it may be is bare to the thighs on account of the heat. The ceiling of the roomy smithy is festooned with hanging rags or fragments of straw matting, for it is his belief that elegance of appointments does not help work forward. A knotty undressed piece of wood, as it grew from the soil, contents him for a handle to his hammer as well as if it were of the most finished kind.

We cast a glance into the open booths of the tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, lacemakers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths or braziers, the mat and basket weavers, and enter the more retired and half-open premises of the tanners, indigo-dyers, weavers, bakers, and potters. A bed-cover maker is loosening into a fleecy mass, with the tightened string of a bow-shaped instrument, a quantity of old cotton which has become lumpy. The silver and gold smith melts down the fine gold of old zechins and Austrian ducats as well as the silver mixed with tin of the Maria Theresa dollars, and manufactures from them very handsome and highly prized trinkets by the help of some matrices, a simple conical blow-pipe, pincers, and hammer. The fondness of the Egyptian women for gold and silver ornaments enables such a goldsmith to do a thriving trade in every small town. The manufacture of glass, which had its native country in ancient Egypt and not in Phœnicia, and here was once so famous, has greatly declined, and now only a few wretched productions are turned out. Almost all goods made of glass, as well as of porcelain, even the coffee-cups in such general use, and which are scarcely to be had in Europe, are now brought from the land of the Franks. The manufacture of pottery, on the other hand, in some places of Upper Egypt, as Keneh, Balas, Siout, is in a very flourishing state, the processes scarcely differing from those employed in Europe. The products are a porous, unglazed ware, and the vessels still have the same shapes as those depicted in the

ancient Egyptian tombs. The large handled jars of Balas, named after that village, are fastened together into rafts and by this means are transported by water.

We observe also the dexterity of the barber, here as elsewhere always loquacious. He scrapes bare all craniums that come under his hands, and has, therefore, acquired a quite astounding facility in shaving; his customer complacently views his magnified features in the concave mirror which is held before him by its handle. A patient may here get himself cupped, the barber making crutiform incisions with his razor on any affected part, and the cup being formed of a conical-shaped horn with a leather valve at top, from which the air is sucked by the mouth so as to make the blood flow freely.

In the mill, located in the lower part of a house, we see a horse walking round in a circle; he carries a rough trunk of a tree on his neck, and with it sets in motion a cylinder, a toothed wheel, and a millstone. The latter receives the grain from a hopper, and lower down the flour and bran, ground and mixed together, stream out. We learn that the wind-mills formerly introduced by the French, and still visible at a distance on many an elevation, do not generally succeed, and that the "steam flour," that is, the fine flour of the steam-mills, already enjoys a continually increasing sale. Much flour is also made in the houses by means of a hand-mill, the basis of which is also the millstone. It always demands great strength, and the grinding is done by strong female slaves, or by women of the lowest ranks. The work begins at the first dawn of day; and the women are fond of joining in grinding parties, at which they sing peculiar monotonous grinding-songs, and keep hands and tongues both going.

A *kafaz-maker* manufactures from the fresh twigs of the date-palm a multitude of cheap articles in basket-work, such as bedsteads, chairs, benches, cages, and crates for all kinds of brittle wares, as glass, clay pitchers, &c. From the prevailing scarcity of wood, palm twigs are very serviceable for this purpose. These articles, however, have the unfortunate peculiarity of furnishing excellent lurking-places for bugs.

The Egyptian artisan is dexterous and quick at learning. He excites astonishment indeed when we consider the rudeness of his implements. It can at once be told, however, whether an article has been made by an Arab or a European. The natives know this very well themselves, and have a keen sense of their own inferiority in such matters. An Arab chair never stands quite firm on its feet, a table or a door is always a little off the truth, a trunk or box always gapes about the lid, a tin-case has always the joints smeared with solder, the corners too sharp, or has a small hole somewhere.

The native artisan learns from his childhood onwards; so soon as he can walk and speak he passes the greater part of the day in his father's workshop, and helps or hinders as much as he can. The son becomes apprentice as a matter of course, then journeyman, and lastly his father's successor in business. When a man has no son he buys himself a slave and teaches him his trade. As soon as the young fellow is as far advanced as his father he is master of his trade; to wish to know more would be presumption. If the master becomes old and feeble he is supported by the gratitude of his apprentices and sons.

We may add that every one can drive what trade he pleases, since industrial freedom has always prevailed in the Mohammedan East. Among the ancient Egyptians, on the other hand, trades were rigidly exclusive; no artisan could, on peril of punishment, encroach upon the trade of another, and the son always followed the calling of the father.

#### SURVEY OF THE PEOPLE.

Having become acquainted with the general features of bazar life, let us step aside and enter some shop or other in order that we may quietly, and at leisure, observe how the current of street life flows on. The owner gives us a friendly invitation to seat ourselves beside him on the shop-bench, quickly orders refreshments from the neighbouring coffee-house, and offers us a chibouk. Man after man crosses the open



doorway as we gaze; our thoughts begin to become dreamy, we see passing bodily before us all the figures that stirred our enthusiasm in our youthful days when we read the Arabic stories of the Thousand and One Nights. There is Ali Baba, who discovered the cave of the Forty Thieves; there the old cobbler Baba Mustafa; there the merchant Ali Çhüge, who concealed his money in olives; there the fortunate Aladdin, who found the wonderful lamp; there are they all, the Hassans, the Hossens, the Ibrahims, the Ahmeds. It is more than ten hundred years since Harun er Rashid rustled past; many a thing is changed in the great world since; no mighty Khialif rules any longer over the faithful; but the people, at least those who speak the Arabic language and profess the religion of Islam, do not differ notably in speech, dress, and habits from the type of their ancestors. We shall even go farther. Let us pick out at random a man belonging to the common people of Upper Egypt and divest him of his modern outer dress (loose shirt and turban), let us strip him of his undoubted thick varnish of Mohammedanism, or it may be of Christianity, take from him his pipe, his coffee, and his beard, and there stands before us a genuine native of Kemi. He will be sure to exhibit the same slim yet strong limbs, the broad chest, the same type of face with its broad cheeks; projecting lips, wide nostrils, and almond eyes; also the same solid shaven head, and in spite of all the buffets of Fate, at bottom the same inherited nature. In Upper Egypt, too, we find, lastly, a multitude of individual customs and usages dating from the great Pharaonic period, which have partly been transmitted directly by tradition, and partly have become naturalized in Islam indirectly through Judaism.

## DRESS.

In his dress the oriental does not allow himself to be tyrannized over by the despotism of fashion; taste has the fullest play subject to certain unchangeable rules. It is only the higher officials, from the head clerk and the doctor upwards, who require in modern times, even in the provinces,

to follow the dictates of a higher will, and provide themselves with a black Europæo-Turkish suit (with a standing collar on the coat), this being regarded as the basis of all civilization. The man of the lower ranks in the towns wears a kind of loose shirt or blouse of cotton reaching to the feet, or somewhat shorter, with or oftener without a girdle. Underneath this he has a kind of short, light drawers, or only a thigh-cloth round his middle. The shirt is only laid aside when the wearer is engaged in hard, wet, or dirty work. The ancients were still less particular about this matter; the workman, the warrior, even the king in the heat of battle exposed himself with nothing on but a short loin-cloth or apron. The well-formed hairy breast is seen through the broad triangular opening in the front of the shirt, or is concealed by a bright-coloured, striped waistcoat, which is put on under, or even over it. The colour of the shirt that is worn by the black natives of Soudan and the light-tinted Bedouins is white; but the thrifty Egyptian of the towns, who is never in a hurry to change his linen, more prudently wears generally a blue one. The peasant of Upper Egypt, on the other hand, wears even in summer a wide, coarse woollen shirt of a brown colour—a mark by which he may be at once recognized—and his sleeves, which are wide enough to admit the body of a man, hang down almost to his ankles. Countryman as well as townsman, when he goes afield, always carries with him his *milayah*, a kind of plaid or shawl of a striped pattern, fringed at both ends, and worn round the shoulders. This article of dress serves for many different purposes, being used to keep its owner warm in winter, as a cushion for his head when lying down, as a carpet, as a screen from the sun, as a wrapper to put purchases into, as receptacle for provender, and as a table-cloth.

The feet, hardened by early practice, are bare, or are covered with bright-red leather slippers, generally somewhat peaked in front, or sometimes sandals are used. Stockings or boots, as being obstructive to the practice of religion, are little worn; the head is all the more carefully attended too. Youths and many of the labouring class must be contented

with a white cap of cotton stuff fitting closely to the head, and leaving the ears free. Youths of a more advanced age or higher standing wear above this a red cap of fine cloth, called *tarbush*, in Turkish *fez*. (those of European cloth are not liked by the natives), from which hangs down a bold tassel of blue silk. The *tarbush* or *fez* is usually bought only once in a lifetime, or descends by inheritance from generation to generation, till no trace of its original colour remains. Grown up men wear besides the *fez* the turban, which is usually white or red; among the descendants of the Prophet green, among the Kopts black or blue. The turban, which may be regarded as the symbol of Islam, consists of a piece of gauzy material of immense length wound round and round the *fez* a great many times. It forms a picturesque and imposing but somewhat heavy head-dress. Some Fellahs, as well as the dervishes, wear a thick felt cap of the form of an inverted flower-pot or of a sugar loaf. The Bedouin of the East, and many of the inhabitants of the towns, have bright-coloured cloths, often of silk, fluttering about their head and shoulders as a protection against the sun and weather. In the stormy days of winter the native is concerned before everything about the protection of his bare shaved head, since, in spite of the turban, it is only about his head and neck that he seems to feel the cold, his lower extremities being left naked as usual. The winter mantle of black, or white, or striped woollen cloth is then drawn over the head, or only the hood, which is attached to the mantle above. The long striped *kaftan*, which hangs loosely from the neck down to the heels, and is confined by a Tripoli silk or cashmere girdle, belongs to the better classes. Above it is worn a wide-armed blue-black garment like a toga. The elegant Arab gentleman puts on above the costly and brightly-striped silken *kaftan*, a coat of fine cloth, simply but generally brightly coloured, open in front, as long as the body, and mostly of a very simple cut. The Turk, with all who affect the title of *Effendi*, flings himself into a jacket, and those wide many-folded trousers, the superfluous cloth of which

dangles coquettishly like a sack behind. In his girdle the warlike Turk sticks daggers and pistols, the peaceful "son of an Arab" (so the Egyptian calls himself, Arab meaning Bedouin) an ink-bottle. There is a comfortable dress worn, especially by semi-orientals, such as Levantines, Jews, or Syrians, and even regarded as fashionable on the street and in the reception-room, consisting in a combination of the kaftan (usually, a simple white one) with the Turkish jacket or the European coat, and when this is worn the turban must give way to the tarbush. The official also, so soon as his position allows, and especially in summer, exchanges his uncomfortable uniform for this easy suit, under which drawers alone are worn. Arabs even of good position do not recognize the value of proper underclothing; they wash and bathe much, and carefully; but their shirt consists of a flimsy, semi-transparent, gauzy material, which is ill-adapted for absorbing the perspiration. The costume worn by the ancient Egyptians, so far as we can judge from the figures in outline shown in their paintings, was considerably different from that of the present day. The common people wore, as already mentioned, only a cloth round the loins, or a short coat reaching to the knees, and on their heads (bare-shaven like their cheeks) a close-fitting cap like that still in use; those of higher rank had a longer coat, with a fringed skirt hanging in many folds, and confined round the thighs by a girdle, and above this again a wide woollen mantle, similar to that now worn by the people of Marocco. They wore a wig on their heads, and a carefully trimmed beard on their chin, while they had no shoes, but only sandals.

#### TYPES OF THE MARKET.

The loudest voice to be heard in the chorus of market people is that of the broker or auctioneer. Unweariedly he runs up and down, right and left, through the market, lifting up his arm to show off his wares, consisting, for example, of a carpet, a pistol, or an amber mouth-piece for a pipe, which he is commissioned to sell for some invisible owner. Formerly

one might see a slave disposed of in this manner. A would-be purchaser at one end of the market calls out, "A hundred piasters." "A hundred piasters," he shouts, and runs down to the lower end of the market-place, where another buyer has offered 99½ piasters, in order that the latter may know the advance. Some one in the middle now offers 100½, and again he runs up and down proclaiming the new price. For his trouble he receives 1 meyti or 1 para per piaster, that is, one-fortieth of the selling price. He is the lion of the market, all listen to him, he knows everything and everybody, and no small part of the traffic passes through his hands. The merchant himself makes use of the brokers when he wishes to dispose of his goods quickly; or the latter may buy at a low price the goods of a person who is pressed for money, in order to sell them at a profit when an opportunity offers. When he has important sales on hand the broker goes through all the town, visiting the coffee-houses, warehouses, inns, and other places of public resort, knocks at the doors of private houses, and even penetrates within the sacred precincts of the harem. His rivals in trade work hard against him, but the strongest voice and the greatest cunning gain the day.

In the second rank comes the cry of the pedlars, who sell nick-nacks on their own account. The pedlars consist mostly of children with lucifer-matches, cigarette papers, fruits, and sweets. The stationary dealers, and even the substantial merchants, also find it necessary from time to time, publicly and by word of mouth, to make known to the crowd passing the existence and excellence of their wares. This they do in stereotyped, laconic phrases, which are often in rhyme, and frequently quite poetical, and are chanted to a melody set apart for each class of goods. These cries lose their charm when translated, for example: *Ya tin ya akl es salatin*—"Figs, the food of sultans;" or as the seller of liquorice juice cries, "Oh, refresher of the body;" and so on. In a corner sit some money-changers beside a money box jingling their dollars. Scribes are to be seen everywhere, mostly Christian Kopts, who try to derive a livelihood from the ignorance of the people; even the higher class merchants make use of their

services for their calculations, partly because they feel they are not equal to the task themselves, partly because it is considered the correct thing to keep a clerk.

Water-carriers, with earthen water-jar on their backs, are always ready to present the refreshing fluid in a brazen cup such as the ancient Egyptians used, and very often gratis, being engaged by some pious institution. The clinking together of two of these cups is a regular element in the hub-bub of the market. Another kind of water-carrier bears on his back a large leathern bag with stumps projecting from it which vividly recall the form of the goat, its former owner. From the opening of the neck he squirts the water over the dusty street. To sprinkle smaller areas, such as the floor of a room, water is taken into the mouth and spirted out again, so that the sprinkler resembles the figure of a triton on a fountain.

A porter skips groaning along the market with a huge chest weighing more than a hundredweight on his back; he believes he makes the work easier by skipping. Heavier burdens are sometimes carried upon two wooden staves connected by cords crossing between them; this mode requires four men, who sing to keep time as they bound along. Everything is carried, and that mostly on the back, partly by men, partly by beasts of burden; wheeled carriages are not met with in any country town. The ancients made much use of carriages, but, as appears, only for war and the chase. Lighter burdens, such as water-jars, were carried by them attached to bars of wood laid across the neck and shoulders, an equal weight being hung at either end, whereas now they are carried on the head or shoulders.

Numerous beggars, mostly blind, steer boldly and safely through the stormy billows of street and market, feeling their way with their stick, and asking the reward of their poverty in words almost of command, though only indirectly addressed to the people, such as—"I ask of God the price of a loaf of bread;" or, "I am the guest of God and of the Prophet, oh God that givest abundantly!" Others stand in one spot and chant melodiously from morning to night a passage

#### A STREET-QUARREL.

which they have learned by heart from the Koran in the expressive old Arabic tongue. A few lunatics or imbeciles, filthy and with only a few rags to cover their nakedness, wander restlessly up and down. Nobody disturbs them in their aimless occupation, and whoever attracts a friendly glance from them thinks himself lucky. For they are considered saints, favourites of God, and their blessing works wonders.

#### A STREET QUARREL.

A crowd suddenly collects. Some persons have come to words about an insignificant matter of business, and the affair soon degenerates into an open quarrel. Offensive words are used, gradually rising to the highest pitch of opprobrium, such spicy expressions as, "son of a dog," "brood of the Pharaohs," "infidel," "son of a monk," "pimp," "mongrel," "accurst be your father, your beard, your mother's womb," "may the grave seize you," "mischief upon you," follow one after another. A bloody issue seems unavoidable, and no police are to be seen, when an old man passing by, a sheikh, steps solemnly within the circle, and the parties separate respectfully. He makes them tell him the cause and history of the quarrel, and passes sentence or calms the contesting parties with the words *ma'alesh* (never mind), and in a few moments the deadly enemies embrace each other, and after kissing the old man's forehead, or his hand, or the hem of his garment, march away hand in hand. Such a result, of course, does not always happen, but happens often enough.

#### THE MARKET AND THE WOMEN.

But what has become of the other sex all this time? Woo to her who should dare, however closely muffled up, to set foot in any part of the public market; she would lose her good name for ever. Even the charmers that flutter past from time to time, and belong to a class who set but little

store by a good name, here find it necessary for decency's sake to veil themselves partially. Only here and there a solitary old peasant woman, who has lost all her charms, wanders unveiled. The strictness with which the fair sex are treated in public increases in direct proportion as we approach the sacred land of the Prophet, in saying so, however, we do not mean to say anything as to the strictness of the people's morals. The farther north we go the more these phantoms swarm, especially in the chief towns; indeed they sit there (veiled of course) like ordinary merchants in their shops.

#### A COFFEE-HOUSE.

The tumult allayed we proceed on our wanderings again, and find ourselves before a café. The places so called, which correspond still less than the shops to Frankish ideas of elegance and comfort, may be found in abundance in every small town and village. In style they range from the simple straw covered shed to the spacious pillared saloon not altogether devoid of architectural ornamentation, especially when they are owned by well-to-do private persons, or belong to a mosque. Elegant waiters, showily-dressed barmaids, glittering wall mirrors, are not to be seen. Even the carpet, the basis of all oriental comfort, has disappeared, and in its stead simple straw mats are spread upon the earthen floor, or on the seats of clay and stone. Or one may seat himself in front of the shop and next the street upon a seat made of palm twigs, or upon a clumsy chair woven basket-fashion. It savours somewhat of *mauvais ton* to visit a common café, and the guests belong chiefly to the lower classes; still for our good money we may venture upon one draught. For a few paras we receive a tiny cupful of the bitter muddy beverage. The native almost always drinks unsweetened coffee; the sugar is said to take away or lessen the exhilarating effect of the beverage. If we ask for coffee "alla Franka" we are not likely to get a cup of coffee with milk, or brandy, such a mixture is to a native quite inconceivable, but merely black coffee with a small lump of



sugar in it. The landlord of the coffee-house is always thrown into a state of excitement by such an order, and has to send some of his satellites expressly to the market for the lump of sugar. For the future it will be better to follow the example of some of the natives who have got a sweet tooth and carry always a bit of sugar in our pocket to sweeten the bitter cup for ourselves when we pay a visit to a café. Since such a café could not afford a clerk or book-keeper, and as the proprietor himself belongs to the lowest ranks, and cannot write, he marks up each man's score with strokes upon the wall, using coffee-grounds instead of ink. The house itself is not exactly dirty, but the landlord always is so, since he sits at the fire in the middle of the room like the stoker of an engine. A large pot with hot water is always on the fire; a panikin, either without a cover or with a fragmentary one, serves to make ready any single order. The beverage prepared is excellent in spite of the fact that much of the aroma has escaped through the holes in the lid. *Mokha* is near, and chicory almost unknown. Roasted chickpeas are the common substitute with the thrifty, and they do not taste badly, especially when a few cloves are added, as is often done, to improve the flavour. The crushing of the roasted coffee-beans with a heavy pestle, which reduces them to a fine flour, such as coffee-mills never produce, no doubt contributes essentially to the satisfactory extraction of all the elements in the coffee. Coffee-grinding or rather pounding forms a distinct trade. At every blow of the long and heavy pestle, wielded in the two hands, the workman emits a loud groan from his chest.

The frequenters of the coffee-house, as already stated, are of the poorer sort, such as artisans, petty shop-keepers, attendants on public offices, Turkish soldiers, seldom a peasant. The civilian prefers the floor, and despises the chair standing beside him, leaving it to the more honourable customers, the Turkish soldiers to wit. One man finds it exceedingly comfortable to assume a crouching position intermediate between sitting and standing, with his knees much bent, so that his hams come within a few inches of the

floor, but do not touch it; another in a similar position supports himself on the floor with his legs bent and his arms clasped round them; a third sits with his legs crossed in the well-known position in which tailors sit. This, as well as the squatting position on the floor, was common among the ancient Egyptians, and is a genuine oriental custom. They, however, were fonder of sitting upon chairs and tasteful fauteuils, and were likewise accustomed to sit resting upon one knee, a practice which is never observed now, possibly for religious reasons, since it is held that one ought to kneel and prostrate himself before God alone. In the one hand the guest holds the small cup containing the hot coffee, tasting and sipping the beverage, in the other the long pipe stem with the broad smooth amber mouth-piece to his mouth. Here a customer has laid himself down on his side, resting his head upon his elbow, the feet carelessly stretched out, there another has sunk into a deep slumber. Over there is a group of domino players lying on their bellies; in the background a rakish fellow may be noticed dallying with a hetera.

From time to time a peculiar gurgling, bubbling sound is heard; it proceeds from the nargileh or hookah, a kind of tobacco-pipe which has scarcely established itself anywhere but in the East. A person who gives himself up to this enjoyment smokes from the chest. The smoke from the tobacco rises with a slight noise through the water in the hollow of a coco-nut, and being thus purified is sucked through the tube or stem, which is either flexible or made of a reed. It penetrates deep into the lungs of the smoker, and only a small portion issues from the chest again in the next expiration. It may be suspected that many, indeed most, of those who smoke the hookah put into their pipes, in addition to the innocent Persian tobacco, a little pill of hashish, the well-known narcotic prepared from Indian hemp. The peculiar odour wafted from the café betrays this unmistakably. The keeping of hashish has, to be sure, been again forbidden lately; generally, however, such ordinances are strictly enforced only for a short time after they are promulgated. Already a few may per-

haps have smoked themselves into a state of the most rapturous happiness, yet the intoxication is of a mild and good-natured, often humorously loquacious kind, and is mainly characterized by mental delusions. On the whole there reigns in these resorts of the common people a stillness and gravity peculiar to the oriental. Here are never heard the wild shouting and noise which issue from the beer-shops and pot-houses of the "civilized" world. Unintentionally we have fallen into conversation with a neighbour who proves talkative. We have to smoke a pipe alternately with our friend, receiving it with the mouth-piece wet from his lips; but finally break off the conversation, as the good nature of our comrade threatens to degenerate into unblushing inquiries regarding our person and concerns.

## GREEK TAVERN.

In most Egyptian towns, large and small, even in the remotest provinces, shopkeepers are to be found, almost exclusively of the Greek nation, who sell some European or Levantine commodities, such as olives, olive-oil, cheese, preserved fruits, gunpowder, toys, and nick-nacks, but especially spirituous liquors. These goods being much in request their shops become taverns. We enter one of them. It is a dark dirty place, with necessarily more room in it than in an Arab shop, since it has to serve as store as well, and barrels, boxes, and bags lie heaped in wild confusion. Arab comfort is discarded, and European has not yet taken its place; we find very few seats for the guests, and still fewer tables—the counter excepted. The owner wears the Græco-Turkish costume, with long blue trousers of coarse linen, or he may have procured a European dress, in which, however, the former barbarian still remains. An orthodox Mohammedan will not use a glass in which there has been a drop of spirits until it has been cleaned with the utmost care, and, though lying on a sick-bed, will refuse a medicine in which he scents a few drops of an alcoholic tincture, since indulgence in alcoholic liquors is one of the most awful offences possible; it is

natural, therefore, that he should view with horror the establishment of such a tippling-house in the provinces, as yet but little contaminated by the Franks, and look down with the deepest contempt upon the person starting it, even though little else could be brought against the character of the latter. One may often hear abusive expressions testifying to this feeling, the epithet "tavern-keeper" figuring along with "pimp" and "hashish-smoker." Were a Mohammedan to start a spirit-shop he would soon be compelled by his fellow-believers to give it up. This "disreputable" occupation is left to Christians, and almost exclusively to Greeks. But we by no means intend to say that the Moslimin always abstain from spirituous liquors. On the contrary, they are extremely ready to learn to drink them, and soon surpass their teachers the Christians. Where the teacher sips a few glasses the follower of the Prophet swallows as many bottles of strong spirit, and the charm of forbidden indulgence leads directly to unbridled and vicious excess. One after another becomes a prey to the habit, as the steady rise of new drink-shops and the prosperity of their owners show: to be sure the taverns are never found full, for people are ashamed to show themselves there openly, so the guest slinks into a corner and sits down, or he makes a number of successive visits, in order to refresh the thirst of the inner man. So much the more drink is carried outside, especially to places which will presently be mentioned. The liquors to be had are mostly grain-spirit mixed with mastic and aniseed, and therefore becoming turbid when diluted with water; more seldom a Greek red wine, also cognac, burgundy (at least so the labels on the bottles say), and even champagne. The dear and mostly soured beer of Europe is not much thought of.

#### NATIVE BEER-SHOPS

The common people, including the peasantry, more frequently drink a native beer (*būza*), which is sold in very primitive reed-huts in towns and villages, and in the time of

harvest also in the field. The beer-seller, generally a Nubian, serves his guests by pouring it out of a large cauldron into a wooden dish which passes from mouth to mouth. This beer is made from malt, and is a milky, acidulous, half fermented, and therefore non-intoxicating mash, resembling the German "white beer;" it is one of the luxuries that are not forbidden. Still these shops often present a very lively scene; playing and singing are heard in them, and daughters of Eve of doubtful character may be seen going out and in. The women also drink this beer at their peculiar curative meetings, when they put themselves into an ecstasy, in the so-called *seri*. (See Chap. VII.). The beer of the ancient Egyptians, called *zythus*, was intoxicating, like that which is still so largely drunk in the Soudan and Abyssinia. On the whole, however, the drinking of alcoholic liquors is rare among the temperate and thrifty people of Egypt, in so far as the Mohammedians are concerned, while the native Christians, almost without exception, are greatly addicted to this indulgence. The peasant knows almost nothing of this luxury, and is therefore preserved from much evil. "Wine has many good qualities," says the Prophet in the Koran, "but also many bad;" indeed, as even the faithful relate, Mohammed himself is said at one period to have sometimes got tipsy, and on one such occasion to have stabbed his beloved teacher. Hence the strict prohibition. The common people of Islam indeed are distinguished from the same class in western countries essentially by their temperance and sobriety, and through the absence of drunkenness, by less rudeness, and a certain staid and dignified air. The very considerable portion of their income that western people, even the temperate among them, expend upon their gullets, keeping body and soul together only with the "necessaries," the Moslim expends on the maintenance of a family, and though drinking only water, he finds himself as healthy, strong, and capable of the severest labours as the workman of the North with his constant craving for stimulants. And this craving, when it has established itself, is not less powerful in the warm South than in the cold North. Indulgence in opium, and still more in hashish,

however much the custom is reprobated, is more widely spread among the Moslimin, and that too in the class that have to represent the religion, namely, the Kadis, the Ulemas, and the Dervishes. The ancient Egyptians, as is well known, were very fond of wine, and it was not uncommon even for women to get tipsy.

#### DANCING GIRLS.

From the dram-shops to the quarter where live the frail sisters of the dancing profession is but a step—both actually and mentally. The occupants of both work into each other's hands; neither thrives without the other. Under the influence of alcoholic liquors a man forgets the considerations and scruples that actuate him at other times, and falls into the arms of the tempting siren beside him; once under the power of his hetæra he sends for bottle after bottle, and it becomes an easy matter for her to induce her companion, intoxicated by drink and sensual desires, to sacrifice his ready money. These dancing girls, an Egyptian institution from the earliest, even from Pharaonic times, ply their trade in large numbers in all the towns of Upper Egypt, both great and small, especially since they were expelled the capital. They boast to be descended from Barmek, the well-known favourite of the Khalif Harun er Rashid; according to some they are genuine gipsies; but with such loose morals as their purity of race is out of the question, and their ranks are certainly recruited from the rest of the population. They are called *Ghawâzi* (sing. *Ghazîe*), a name said to be derived from the fact that they sported before (?) the Ghus, as the old Mamelukes are called. Many writers speak of them as *Almel*, but these are singing girls of somewhat better fame. They are not tolerated near the houses of respectable citizens, but certain streets or quarters are assigned to them, which, it must be stated, are often the very ones most frequented. Their trade is not wholly put a stop to, both because they are employed to dance at feasts, and because the wise Arab regards them as "a protection for the women," that is, they

serve to keep the rakes from running after "the forbidden ones," the *Jarim* or virtuous women.

Discarding scruples let us wander through the headquarters of this tolerated immorality, and, selecting afternoon as the best time, let us seize an opportunity seldom occurring of admiring the charms of the Egyptian female world in all its splendour and adornment, for otherwise the few muffled figures seen would scarcely lead us to imagine it existed. Here, then, we are met at once by three ladies, the highest of their class. Classically wide and pleasingly coloured upper garments of silk flutter around them, and a narrow, closely-fitting gown, with narrow sleeves, and made of costly materials, falls perpendicularly from the thigh to a few inches above the ankles, so as to display the bright-coloured baggy trousers, followed by a shoe of glazed leather, or a yellow slipper. The whole person from head to foot is hung and bedizened with gold ornaments, so that such a dancing girl is rendered thereby really a very valuable object. Though poor little girls only a few years ago they have made, in their line, such a skilful use of their charms and advantages that they can now show themselves off in this costly guise, and their money-box is perhaps better filled than that of many a merchant, or even a Turkish pasha. The first of the three graces is full, robust, strong as an oak, with Semitic-Arabic lengthened profile; the second, small, pale, and slender, is built in the famous full-moon style of the Arabic fables; the third, dark almost as a Moor, is modelled after the broad-checked sphinx type (the Egyptian sphinxes are said, however, to represent male beings) of the Fellah women, the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptian women.

We hasten away, for already we hear their peacock-voices and vulgar language which destroy the illusion. We work our way successfully through among the siren-voices of all the fair ones, whose skin varies in colour from the deepest black through coffee and nut brown to clear lead colour, but is never so fair as that which belongs to the blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked blonde. We rather admire their purple mantles,

their yellow trousers, and emerald jackets, than are attracted by the fineness of their features. Convinced of the ugliness of the greater number, we endeavour to escape from the scene of their activity.

All at once a hideous fury holds her Medusa-head right before us; our footsteps thus arrested, we stand staring at her, hair on end. The woman, a member of the same trade already in the late autumn of her years but unable to believe in the loss of her charms, has attempted to smear a second youth upon her cheeks by reddening them with cinnabar; while on nose, brow, cheeks, lips, and chin, a great number of round black spots of colour show themselves very distinctly. Her thin hair, which is either her own simply smoothed down or may be false, shows here and there a clot of grease not yet melted; the rancid smell is smothered in the strong odour of a kind of musky perfume that exhales from the surface of her skin. And thus she cowers by her doorstep, puffing thick clouds from a long pipe, in the company of her gray-haired mother, who sucks away at her hookah.

With horror we turn away from her allurements and look to the other side of the street. There our glances light on a pretty childish face that smiles towards us. Fancying we have found innocence at last, we nod in a friendly manner. The dark-skinned maiden darts towards us and clings to us; we soon learn that she is an Abyssinian slave, lately purchased by a Ghawazi mother. But imagine our astonishment when we see and hear, as we must, how this lovely young thing four feet in height, and scarcely nine years of age, points to her little room, and with a bold smirk makes known her desire to receive us there. The class of dancing girls, now when the slave-trade is being abolished, is more generally than ever recruited by purchase from among such young Galla maidens.

#### NIGHT AND ITS ACCOMPANIMENTS.

Meantime it has become dark, and we betake ourselves to our domicile, musing on the plasticity of the human soul.



A nocturnal walk offers us little. The streets are deserted as soon as the last rays of daylight have disappeared, except at full moon and during Ramadan. Whoever now walks out carries a glass or paper lantern, otherwise he runs the risk of being taken by a night watchman to the nearest watch-house. Here and there perhaps a fruit-seller still stands, endeavouring by the scanty light of an oil-lamp to dispose of his fast decaying wares at any price they will bring; or we come upon some peaceful citizens of the poorer class conversing together as they lie stretched out on the dust in some open space. From a neighbouring dram-shop some late toppers raise a sound of mirth or quarrelling. The last glimmer of human intercourse dies out round the above-described grottoes of Aphrodite and Terpsichore.

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## SECOND DAY.

### WEEKLY MARKET.

The Moslem is a child of the day. Unlimited dominion over the dismal night he gladly leaves to the dogs, the owls, and the ghosts. But no sooner can a black thread be distinguished from a white than activity reigns everywhere, and the rising sun already sees the tide of public life in full sweep.

We too rise early and proceed to a pretty large open space. Here there is an unusual crowd of brown-skinned country people bustling about. It is the weekly market. The sellers, many of them having their wives along with them, sit on the ground, with the products of the fertile soil before them—a soil which gives two or three crops in the year, and does not cease to bear even in winter. Thus there is no lack of fresh vegetables all the year through, though there is much to be desired on the score of variety. Their wares are stowed in baskets, or are heaped upon their shawls, which are spread on the ground for the purpose. According to the commodity

they sell their goods by the piece, or they have them parcelled out into little heaps, or weigh them on home-made scales, using stones previously weighed to serve as weights. Country pedlars sit there too, who try to attract the rustics by offering trinkets of little value, pocket-knives, &c. There are not wanting also geomantists, soothsayers, amulet-writers, and so forth.

#### A SLAVE MARKET.—SLAVERY.

In a corner of the square, beside the cattle-market, we observe a group of raven-black, scantily-clad children of both sexes; they are slaves exposed for sale. In the capital and its neighbourhood the slave-trade has of course been greatly curtailed in recent times through the vigilance of the higher authorities, and the inhabitants themselves are now chary of buying slaves, as they have no longer any recourse when they run away, since every slave on reporting himself to the police becomes at once free. From time to time whole caravans of slaves are confiscated, and the slaves escorted to the capital, where the government takes charge of them. The boys, as soon as they become strong enough, are generally turned into soldiers, though some of them are distributed as domestic servants, and a few of the cleverer sent to the government schools. The girls are also sent into service. But as there is nothing more certain to bring a foreign bird to an unhappy end than suddenly giving it its freedom in a foreign land, so too for these slaves freedom is not the best lot, as long as they are unaccustomed to it. A male or female slave is to his or her master always a valuable which he guards and takes care of; the free servant is not to be depended on, and stands in a looser relationship towards his master. He is no longer fed, but must himself struggle for his bread in a country of whose language he is quite ignorant. In the present transition state of matters mere anti-slavery societies, or societies having for their object solely the rescue of men from slavery, are not sufficient; humane societies should be formed for the purpose of sending back to their native lands those who

have just been made free, a task which in those days, when the interior of Africa is becoming more and more accessible, can at any rate be partly accomplished, although at a great expenditure of time and trouble.

In Upper Egypt the slave-trade on the whole still remains pretty much as of old. The public sale of slaves in the market-place has by no means entirely ceased, although sales are no longer so extensive as formerly. The government officials themselves lend a hand when an escaped slave is to be tracked out, and more than that, it is an open secret that the native Christian or Mohammedan consular agents of European powers often invest their money in the slave-trade, though not under their own names! In the ordinances which are issued for the purpose of putting a stop to this traffic, and which are renewed from time to time, permission is given for people of respectability and position to purchase one or several slaves for domestic service. But so long as slaves can be bought so long will they also be sold.

The slave-dealers have ordinarily their depôts in the public hostelrys. We intimate our intention to make a purchase, and are conducted into the court of such an establishment. There we find some Sauahli girls, with skins of a deep-brown colour, occupied in pounding in a large wooden vessel the kind of grain called *duchn*, which forms the basis of the Soudan bread, and which has been brought by their masters from their native lands. They do not much concern themselves to cover the nude portions of their persons, which are already pretty fully developed. A smaller negro girl wears nothing else than a girdle of tufts. A carefully veiled Abyssinian miss is brought before us, a Galla girl, the noblest of all coloured races; the owner points to her graceful limbs, uncovers her agreeable brown face with its large speaking eyes, and is prepared for all the investigations of the purchaser. He next opens the mouth of a little Moor who is among them that his white teeth may be inspected, and draws our attention to his plump and firm thighs. The prices mentioned to us are: for a male slave of black race £8 to £14, and for a female £12 to £16; for a male Abyssinian or

Galla (of brown colour) £16 to £20, for a female of the same race £18 to £26; for a white Circassian woman not less than £100 to £200. Slaves are valued most highly some years before or at puberty, when they are still pliant, and "their brain is not yet dry."

Are these creatures really so unfortunate? An account of their lives as given by some of themselves will show. A child in a tropical village in an evil hour, when darkness has come on, removes to the distance of a few steps from the hut of its parents. Suddenly it finds itself seized by a strong hand, a gag is thrust into its mouth to prevent it from crying out, and away it is carried on the shoulders of a man for many miles in the dark. It is taken into a house and food and drink set before it, but it refuses these and cries for its mother. Grief, anxiety, and fatigue struggle for the possession of the poor little creature; the last conquers, and the child falls into a profound slumber. It awakes, finds the hut like that of its parents and hears the language of its village, though the faces are strange. A swarm of youngsters of every age, forming part of the body of stolen children here assembled, gathers round and makes friendly advances to the new comer; there is no lack of food and drink, there is no work to do, and in a short time the child, being still at an age when feeling is not yet deep, forgets its home and parents. The stealing of children is, however, a mild form of procuring slaves; far worse are those well-known forays or razzias, which often assume the appearance of open warfare, when bands of armed slave-dealers surprise whole villages, carry into slavery women, children, every one who is worth the trouble, and tear asunder all family ties.

The period of rest does not last long. The full complement of slaves being made up they are dragged over hill and dale, field, and desert; the mule, the horse, the ox, and the camel alternately assist them on their journey; they are conveyed down a swollen mountain stream in a crowded boat; tropical heat and torrents of rain vie with each other in their assaults upon their tender, ill-protected bodies; one child after another is attacked by fever, the sick and the

healthy lie huddled together; the dead are buried in the sand; ceaselessly the caravan moves onwards. Some rashly make a desperate attempt at flight, but are immediately caught, and, being beaten and bound, are dragged still onwards. The girls, however small they are, are sacrificed to the lust of their drivers, so that an unviolated female slave is a great rarity. At last, they reach a town. The captives are shut up in confinement, from which they are brought out fettered at night for a promenade; on the market day they are sold by public auction, the would-be purchasers feeling their limbs, making them leap about, and opening their mouths as if it were a horse market. The highest bidder gets the goods that please him, singly or in groups. The companions in misfortune, who have become friends on the journey, separate in tears; though in the more civilized localities the Mohammedan slave-dealer commonly avoids parting brothers and sisters, parents and children. The new owner acts pretty much like the old one: he gives the slave children plenty of food for a time till they have recovered from the fatigues of the journey, and then sells them; and so they pass from master to master, and from place to place, or they are fattened in the same house for years and left without work—especially the girls. This and the tedium of their position have both a moral and a physical effect, the girls develop early, and now is the time to sell them at the highest price. Indeed they are eager for this themselves, and lay warm dough upon their bosoms, which is said to hasten the swelling of the breasts. Meanwhile they are also civilized, that is, they are made to veil themselves and not appear forward; they must learn to believe in Islam, Mohammedan names are bestowed upon them, and all trace of their native ideas as far as possible swept away.

The semi-mature maiden is now sold, and if she is merely brown and of good race, if she is, for instance, a Galla or Abyssinian, her lot is generally by no means hard. If a man in good circumstance takes a fancy to her, she shows no reluctance, since she is not thereby dishonoured, but proud

of playing the part of a wife or *sitt*; her owner provides her with clothes, ornaments, and sweets to her heart's content, gives her male and female servants, allows her the management of the house, nay, often neglects or puts away through his passion for her his own wedded wife. And their little ladyships know how to play their part very well, and are fond of acting the tyrant. They are ambitious enough, but their love is mostly deep and ardent; they are faithful, tidy, domesticated, and have fine sensibilities. They are therefore preferred by many to the native women. Their position is by no means that of a mistress, since, on the one hand, no stigma of immorality attaches to it, though the free women are accustomed to despise a woman who is merely a slave; and on the other hand, as soon as they become mothers, they are free, or at least cannot be sold. While in certain countries the gallant is wont to make himself scarce when he perceives that his victim is *enceinte*, or as soon as his child is born, here such a result serves as a closer bond of connection, for the Moslem is not allowed to deny or to sell his own children. Such a slave has even this advantage over a free woman, that she cannot be divorced and sent away, seeing that she has no relatives. It is not rare for a female slave who has presented her master with a child, especially with a boy, to be raised to the position of actual wife.

Of course fortune does not smile thus upon every female slave, especially if she has the ill luck to be plain or black, to belong to one of the inferior races, or to prove unfruitful. Then she passes often from hand to hand, she has to allow the finery that has been presented to her to be torn from her person—calamity hard to bear—when it is not sold along with her, and she sinks, with the decrease of her charms and her price together, lower and lower in the scale of society. Or, as we have already seen, the slave girl is bought by a procuress, who gives her an education according to her own taste. By far the greater number of slave women, most at least of the true negroes, are employed as domestic servants, and the highest position they attain is the dominion of the kitchen.

If their behaviour is good their master gets them a black husband, and any children that may spring from this black marriage become the vendible property of the slave-raiser—of course with this restriction, that the family must be sold together. It is the rule, however, for such a family to remain, and to wish to remain, for life in a household, constituting the serving element in it perhaps for several generations.

The male slaves enjoy a brilliant career more seldom than the girls. When they fall into the hands of masters who are in a good position they are generally well fed and dressed, and often look down with scorn upon men who are free, but are also hungry and ragged; still they are nothing but servants who may be sold at any time, and have not their future in their own hands. Many, however, gain the full confidence of their masters, transact commercial and other business for them, and frequently inherit all their property. Slaves are often set at liberty, an act recommended as praiseworthy by the Prophet, and when liberated they generally receive a gift of some kind. Such persons usually retain all their lives a kind of dutiful feeling towards the family to which they have belonged, and often prefer to remain in the house of their masters though free. Slaves are seldom ill treated in these parts, and punishment is rarely greater than what is deemed necessary to train them. In the patriarchal Mohammedan system the slave has more the position of a member of the family (whose duty, of course, is merely to serve), and an injury to the slave is an injury to the family. But there are exceptions, and cruel masters may be found who are more liberal with their whip than with their bread, and who kick the poor slaves and load them with heavy fetters to prevent them from running away. On the other hand, there exists that excellent law of the Koran, that a discontented slave may demand before a court that he shall be sold. Their treatment is less harsh too for the reason that they may become dangerous, or, as not seldom happens, may commit suicide, whereby the slaves themselves lose little, but entail a loss upon their owners.

The white slaves, male and female, are the best off. They

are now almost exclusively of Circassian race (formerly they were often Greeks). On account of their price they come into the hands only of the rich. The males (Mamelukes) often receive a superior education from their masters, are treated like sons, and generally pass comfortable lives. A considerable number of the higher officials at present acting in Egypt were once such slaves. They frequently receive in marriage the daughters of their masters; indeed it sometimes happens that a father purchases a good-looking Mamelukè for a daughter he has got to marry, and makes him his son-in-law.

The white slave women are an essential ornament of the harem of the great. They are said to be ambitious of power and fond of finery. The colour of the skin, in this country as elsewhere, is generally regarded as pointing to superiority of race even among the natives themselves. But there is no such thing as contempt for a dark skin, whether free or in slavery. That would be contrary to religion; besides, the population is already so commonly dark skinned that it would have to despise itself.

#### CHANCE MEETING WITH WOMEN.

We now step aside into a dark and narrow lane. Our way twists and turns, so that in its course it follows all the points of the compass. Without plan or guide we fearlessly wander about in the labyrinth. Pistol and dagger we may allow quietly to rest in our pocket; the poor people who have settled here have none of the Greco-Alexandrian bandit proclivities about them. They are rather inclined to suspect us of such a character, timidly retiring from us, while the little children regard us with mistrust and terror, and run off screaming.

After a time the street forks, and we turn to the left by way of experiment. An invisible female voice issuing from a house suspiciously asks us what we want. We find we are caught in a *cul de sac* and turn back. We now come upon a creature entirely enveloped in a large brown or striped gray cloth, and as our glance lights upon it it darts in at an open



door. Another creature of the same kind that does not at once find a place of refuge squeezes itself close to a wall till we have passed by, drawing the cloth together firmly over its face. Turning a corner we suddenly come upon a third, and catch a glimpse of the face, but quick as lightning its head is shrouded in its mantle. Wishing to act with propriety we behave as if we had observed nothing, and turn aside to let it pass. After a few minutes both of us—we and this being—seized with curiosity, turn round at the same moment; our eyes again meet, and the two large black beaming orbs betray to us that under the uneasy covering a heart warm as our own is beating, perhaps beating for us. Wherefore then this fear, this flight, this anxiety; what crime have we committed; are we robbers or enemies; are we hunters laying our plans to catch the gentle gazelle? Modesty will have it so; we are men, and unbelievers to boot, and the creature we have just seen is a woman. We meet quite a drove of such modest walking suits of clothes, who lay their heads together, like cows before a wolf, and form square against us with their backs. The veil which the bolder ladies of the capital wear, and which allows the eye, the mirror of the heart, to be seen, is not worn by the fair sex in the provincial town, and they have always their hands ready at both sides of the slit in front of the face, in order that they may at once conceal their features with their outer wrapper in times of danger, that is, when a man's form becomes visible. A woman that does not do this is certainly of doubtful character, or else we have become intimately acquainted with her, and have seen her fully on some former occasion as in attending her medically, in which case veiling before us is no longer thought of. It is not the case that good-looking women are ready to let themselves be seen, while old ones, on the contrary, when neither dangerous nor likely to run any danger, are not so particular.

We were surprised at the walking suits of clothes, but we now light upon one riding. The ladies of the East are still as good equestrians as formerly in the time of the Virgin Mary, and sit so firm and secure on the saddle of their donkeys,

with stirrups buckled high up, that the business of suckling is never interrupted even while they are riding. The eastern lady, unlike the European lady, has no scruple about riding with legs astride. These respectable women are rarely met with in the principal streets, and never in the markets, but chiefly in the minor streets. In other countries a state of matters the reverse of this may be remarked.

#### VISIT TO THE INTERIOR OF A HOUSE.

We meet a well-dressed native gentleman with whom we are acquainted, and are soon engaged in a discursive conversation with him, which it seems desirable to carry farther undisturbed and in comfort. *Tefaddal* ("If you please"), he says to us, shaking and rattling the bar of a gigantic wooden lock on the door of a handsome house. We hesitate to accept his abrupt invitation to dine with him, but the adherent of the Bedouin religion is in earnest. While we stand hesitating, he takes us kindly by the hand and half pulls us over the threshold of the small middle door, that is just opened from behind. "Your faces! Cover yourselves!" he calls out, gently detaining us, and clapping his hands, as he enters alone the sanctuary of the house. We hear some half-uttered cries of fear, whimpering children's voices, whispered scolding, and smothered giggling. In a few minutes the inmates of the harem, thus taken by surprise, have fled to their hiding places, and our host invites us to step into the interior of the house, now no longer debarred to us. He might, in accordance with custom, have preferred to order soft carpets to be spread for his guest on the stone bench, or floor of the entrance hall, without disturbing his family. We follow him, and passing along the narrow lobby and round a corner that prevented us from seeing farther enter a spacious courtyard.

**THE COURTYARD.**—This open, airy space, and the half-covered-in sheds and porticoes (*sufa*) open on the side next it, serve, at least among the middle and lower classes of the provincial population, as the general family-room. Here both

women and children, in company with sheep, goats, fowls, and pigeons, spend the greater part of their time, not troubling themselves about the common belief, according to which they pass a monotonous existence imprisoned in the harem. Here the wife who has to work takes her meals along with her children, eating the scraps which her husband—and his friends if he has had guests—has left over; here is the sitting-room for the female gossips of the town; here the merry daughters and their playmates sing their songs to the accompaniment of the inevitable *darabuka* (a kind of small drum). Among the richer class the date-palm or something green is planted in the courtyard where possible.

THE KITCHEN.—One of the side rooms is occupied by the kitchen, which is almost wall-less towards the court. The fireplace is either built of clay, the favourite form being that of a low stair with holes containing the fire let into the top; or all the needs of the household are satisfied year after year by a fireplace of loose stones such as one might improvise in the open air when travelling. The fire must be low, since the women squat before it when cooking, as standing is highly unpleasant to them. The use of any kind of stove does not seem to be appreciated anywhere. In cooking, a copper pot, without a handle, or an earthenware saucepan, is used, and these vessels do not appear very secure as they sit half on half off the fire. Only a portion of the fire above the gradually rising heap of ashes touches the pot and slowly cooks the victuals, a large square-shaped fan being used to make it burn more briskly; the rest of the fire crackles merrily up without having any useful effect, and escapes outside by a small opening in the roof, which is formed of reeds and beams, black with soot, but apparently incombustible. The kitchen utensils, the plates and other dishes of tinned copper, wood, or earthenware; the iron pans, the wooden spoons and ladles, lie scattered over the earthen floor of the kitchen; or the earthen kneading trough, and the copper washing tub, in shape like a gigantic plate, have been placed over them in order to preserve them from being meddled with by the sportive goats and pigeons. Those utensils not intended for

immediate use are placed upon an open shelf, or put away in a picturesque clay cupboard. The turbid muddy water of the Nile is kept in a tall cylindrical vessel of clay hung upon a frame, rounded buckets of wood or leather, or tin-plate mugs being dipped into this vessel when necessary; sometimes also it is kept in large narrow-mouthed heavy pitchers with handles (*bulas*). A small portion trickles pure and clear, drop by drop, through the pores of the cylindrical clay vessel into a vessel placed below it, in which, if the whole does not stand in a close wooden box, ants, centipedes, perhaps also lizards and serpents, refresh and bathe themselves. The drinking water is poured into porous vessels of clay, in which it is cooled by the rapid evaporation that takes place from the dryness of the air. Water for washing is drawn up by a rope and bucket from wells in the court of no great depth, and always brackish. After it has been used for washing utensils, or for cleansing the person, it is either poured out in the court, the soil of which soon absorbs it, or it is carried off by a deep narrow funnel-shaped sink.

ROOMS ON THE COURT-YARD.—In the middle of the court rise cylindrical structures of clay, usually having rounded dome-shaped tops. These are intended for a pigeon-house, a house for fowls, an oven, a corn-store, or a pantry. The rooms situated on the ground-floor in the irregular mass of buildings surrounding the court, and which are almost devoid of windows, serve for magazines, or in winter for warm sitting and sleeping rooms. In the clothes-room the articles of dress hang openly upon cords, or are shut up in green boxes along with the ornaments and valuables. Wardrobes and chests of drawers are scarcely to be found, though wall-presses with doors are sometimes met with. In these rooms, therefore, the greatest disorder usually reigns. One of the rooms opening on the court, cleaner, more spacious, and better lighted than the others, and usually fitted up with some elegance, is the *mandara*, in which many receive their guests; it is thought preferable, however, to have this room in an outer court, separate from the inner one where the women are. In the warm but dark sitting-room opening to the court the family circle

gathers in the winter evenings before the open brazier, in the dim light of a cup-shaped hanging lanip of glass, or of a small shallow lamp of antique shape supplied with viscid, sooty oil, and standing in a niche of the wall blackened by its smoke. In recent times, however, petroleum has been extensively introduced. The sleeping rooms are almost entirely without windows, or if there are a few slits by way of window they are papered over in order to keep out the cold night air. The sleepers lie upon a portion of the earthen floor at the side of the room purposely raised above the rest, and on which a straw mat and a carpet are spread, or less frequently upon a wicker-work bedstead of palm branches; such bedsteads, however, are quite useless in summer on account of the multitudes of bugs they harbour. Mosquito curtains and European bedsteads of iron are sometimes found in the houses of the wealthy. The sleeper keeps half his clothes on, and in summer, therefore, requires no covering; in the colder nights he draws his ordinary wrapper (*mīlayeh*) over him, in winter he adds a woollen coverlet and a heavy quilted cotton one besides. So soon as the spring sun shines into these dark rooms their human occupants desert them to sleep in airier apartments or in the open air, and, wakening from their winter sleep, the army of bugs, flies, mosquitoes, fleas, lice, sugar-mites, ants, cockroaches, black beetles, scorpions, serpents, geckos, rats, and mice celebrate their entry.

THE RECEPTION-ROOM.—Having cast upon all these surroundings a passing glance, we observe the restless and suspicious looks of the hospitable lord of the harem, who cannot attribute our survey to mere curiosity, and at his earnest invitation we mount the stair, which is jammed in between the walls, and consists of high steps covered with wood. We enter a well-lighted and spacious saloon, the *ku'a*, called also *tábaka*, as being in the first story, the *salamlik* of the Turks. The floor consists of slabs of stone, or of a mass of clay and sand smoothed on the surface and hardened almost to the consistency of marble. The walls are white-washed or show an earthy surface, have numerous niches, and are adorned with

a few verses of the Koran framed and glazed, here and there also with sheets of pictures of Arabic or Frankish production. The ceiling is composed of longitudinal and transverse layers of the midribs of palm fronds, with a coating of clay and lime above, and is supported by rough palm stems stretched across and bending downwards a considerable distance into the room. In the houses of wealthier persons we find an artistic panelled ceiling of mosaic. We are glad to observe there is no glass in the windows, and much prefer the cool air streaming in through the unglazed apertures, or conveyed down through the roof by the ventilator above. When it becomes too cool we have simply to close the shutters on the side next the wind.

Across the far end of the room runs a low bench of stone or clay projecting several feet. Over the mattress that covers it, and is stuffed with wool or cotton, is spread a bright-coloured cloth or a carpet hanging down in folds in front. The cushions, which are of the same material and colour, but without any breach of propriety may be different, lie at fixed intervals free and resting against the wall, and thus the famous *divan* is formed. On the floor, along the sides of the room a splendid Persian carpet is spread over a straw mat, and on it next the wall are laid cushions on which to recline. No other furniture or utensils are here except some water-coolers on window ledges, shelves, or niches in the wall, and religious manuscripts with black, red, and gold letters. Our host invites us to seat ourselves beside him on the divan, but we cannot succeed in finding a comfortable position, since the cushion behind lies too far backwards. To try to touch the cushion with our back and then stretch our legs straight out does not seem either becoming or convenient; the best we can do is to lay a cushion at our side and rest the forearm upon it. Our oriental friend looks with a smile upon our straining trousers and our cumbersome boots, while he himself, taking off his slippers, steps upon the soft couch, and crossing his legs, seats himself at the very back of the divan with the wall cushions to support him behind. In his hand he holds a fan, that is, a flat piece of straw-plait with a

handle, and with this he fans himself and drives away the flies, the great plague of southern countries.

**TAKING COFFEE**—A servant, a slave, or an obedient son enters, and with his left hand on his heart hands us the pipe of ceremony, the stem of which is five feet long, richly adorned with silk and silver-wire, and hung with tassels. The tiny dish of red clay at the lower end of the stem, that forms the pipe bowl, is already filled above the brim with fine cut Syrian tobacco, mixed perhaps with the raw green tobacco of the country; a live coal carried with a pair of tongs or in the hollow of the bare hand sets the narcotic in a glow (if the careful attendant himself has not already set the pipe agoing), we place to our lips the costly amber mouth-piece, smooth as glass and almost large enough to fill the mouth, and "blow a cloud" with all the dignity of an oriental. In a little the attendants again appear, halting respectfully at the door of the chamber. One carries a tray, in the middle of which there is a coffee-pot, picturesquely surrounded with minute porcelain cups without handles, placed in as many small stands of brass or filigree, shaped like egg-cups. The second attendant pours the black-coloured beverage into the cups, the third takes hold of the metallic support which receives the cup and hastens to us with it. We grasp the elegant apparatus carefully with our fingers, but as we hold it up before our eyes and turn it round and round admiringly, the law of the conduction of heat is more and more feelingly brought home to us through the metal support. The heat at last becomes so great, that we give our hand a jerk and spill a little of the boiling hot liquid which fills the cup to the very brim, and if we had not the presence of mind to change our fingers alternately we should run the risk of burning our hand, breaking the cup, and staining our clothes, the divan, and the floor. When we succeed in sipping the remainder, our mouth being now more inured to the heat, and as we and our host exchange expressions of thanks by mutual movements of the hand to the forehead and mouth, the attendant takes the cup from us, covering it with his hand, and retires backwards to the door without turning his face away from us.

In the meantime dinner has been got ready, having been delayed a little in order that some more fowls should be roasted, and various additions made to the ordinary meal, in honour of the unexpected guest. But of the meal we shall treat elsewhere.

**THE TERRACE.**—After dinner our host conducts us up to the *terrace* or *platform*, which is half roofed in, seldom entirely roofless, open towards the north, and surrounded by walls. We express our desire to mount to the flat and entirely open roof above in order fully to enjoy the prospect; but with this wish he does not comply, as he might thereby incur the displeasure of his suspicious neighbours, whose harem might thus be exposed to our view. Besides, there is no stair leading up to it. We content ourselves, therefore, with the view from the terrace. Here in winter some little sunny and sheltered spot may always be found where the limbs stiffened with the morning frost may be warmed and strengthened in the sun as he gradually rises in the heavens. Here the inhabitants withdraw in summer, and enjoy their siesta under the shade of the roof, and fanned by the cool north wind. And in summer nights, after the toil and trouble of the day, what can be more agreeable than to stretch one's self out here on the soft couch of carpets, under the starry splendour of the southern sky, with a loving wife and merry crowd of children around, and to sink into the land of dreams with pleasing thoughts of the delights of earthly existence.

**THE HAREM.**—There are not many upper rooms, but they are more pleasant and spacious than the holes of rooms on the ground floor. No second stair leads to a higher story. Those closely-grated windows that look into the court opposite to us conceal no doubt many of the secrets of the harem; the occupants have certainly ascended from the court and observed us, but we try in vain to obtain a sight of anything except darkness through the narrow openings between the crossed bars. A private stair leads from the court to these apartments to which no stranger can have access.

The plan of the houses is naturally very different accord-



ing to the taste and the means of the owner or builder. The above arrangement is in general the rule in these parts. The use to which the different apartments are put also varies according to taste and the season of the year; at one time the door room, at another the mandara, at another the tabaka or the sufa, opening to the court being used as reception room; while others allow no male guests into the house, but entertain them in their warehouse, situated elsewhere.

#### ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DWELLING-HOUSE.

A general survey of the house and its arrangements reminds us how closely the plan corresponds with that of an ancient Egyptian dwelling-house. That, too, had a general wall of unburned bricks, a court, court-room or mandara, store-room, and other chambers round the court, folding doors with wooden lock, ventilator on the roof, rooms in the first story, and grated windows. But the ancient Egyptians had more taste and more artistic feeling than the moderns. They did not, like the middle classes of the present day, content themselves with bare walls, but applied ornament everywhere, painted all the walls, and were fond of decorative furniture. Guests received on entering a small cup of wine instead of coffee, and instead of the pipe a nosegay.

#### SUMMONS TO A SICK WOMAN.

In the meantime the neighbourhood has become aware of the presence of a Frank. In the eyes of the common people every Frank is still a doctor. A neighbour comes to our host and begs him to use his good offices with us for some medicine to his "house," that is, his wife. We ask to see the patient first, to which he demurs, but latterly consents. We are fortunately not without some skill in the art of Æsculapius, and gladly embrace this single opportunity allowed us of becoming more closely acquainted with "the forbidden ones" without incurring any risk.

The patient has already gone through a variety of cures;

she has had to swallow the ink of many verses of the Koran; she has been be-read, be-written, be-danced, fumigated, disenchanted, rubbed, and worked all over, till the master of the house has resolved as a last desperate step to call the doctor. All the way to the house we have to listen to encomiums on the true art of medicine and on our own kindness and wisdom, for the oriental is a master of flattery and compliment. We enter after the inmates have been made aware of the sight that is to be presented to them, "The court is filled with a great crowd of women who have come out of sympathy to check and shorten with the gift of eloquence the patient's attack of fever. All that we see, however, is a lot of bundles of clothes lying together, and resembling a bird's-eye view of a crowd of people holding up umbrellas. We march on to our examination, and find the patient, who is veiled, lying in an open apartment next the court. Her hand has to be almost forcibly drawn forward to let us feel her pulse, and it is only after our repeated request, which is supported by the master of the house, that a very foul tongue is protruded through a slit in the robe enveloping her, which is otherwise quite close. The slit is shifted when the cheek, the eye, the forehead, the other half of the face, has to be examined, in order that the whole countenance may not be shown. When we ask the patient how she feels the answer sounds like the oracle of a sibyl from the recesses of a closed temple.

#### REVELATIONS.

At last one of the cloths in the heap opens out wider and wider; a frightful face, above whose brow there projects a tuft of hair dyed with henna of a bright fox-red, but showing also in parts its natural silver-gray colour, looks boldly round, and thereupon the old woman begins in a shrill screeching voice the endless story of her sufferings. Soon the younger generation also acquire sufficient courage to uncover here a hand, there an eye or a foot, only to withdraw them, however, with the slightest movement on our part. But gradually we inspire more confidence; our medical utterances afford

consolation and hope; the figures uncover themselves more completely, and for a longer period; two coal-black eyes are fastened upon us, each encircled by a black ring produced by painting the rims of the eyelids with antimony, the eyes themselves large and fiery, but with a somewhat squinting look on account of a spot on the pupil. The large eye is the strong point with Egyptian women, but also the weak point, as it is commonly affected with some disease or marked by some defect. The blackening of the eyelids was a general custom among the ancient Egyptians also, not only with the women, but even, as is still sometimes the case, with the men. The well-shaped and not too small mouth of the beauty now regarding us smiles upon us with innocent frankness. The covering for the head, made of a coloured woollen stuff of light texture, over which Egyptian women throw before going out the mantle which is in universal use, has meanwhile become loose, and has to be again tightly wrapped round the hair, ears, neck, and upper part of the breast, so that the oval countenance, the hair above the forehead, and the side-lock alone remain visible. During this process of rearrangement we catch a glimpse of that which oriental women keep concealed with the most sensitive delicacy, namely, the hair that crowns the head, with the numerous slender tresses, black as the plumage of the raven, that flow down on all sides. The coiffure of the women of ancient Egypt was exactly similar to this; even the side-lock was not wanting. The locks behind are allowed to hang freely down the back, and are tied at the extremities with long cords of red silk adorned with spangles and gold coins. Curiously shaped trinkets of gold, precious stones, or pearls depend from the ears; golden arrows and combs are stuck in the hair, which, where it meets the brow and sides of the face, is fringed with a row of ducats, sequins, little bells, and flakes of pure gold prettily wrought into the most singular forms. An oriental woman is thus somewhat expensive in her ornaments, for she disdains to wear sham trinkets. These ornaments are procured in times of prosperity before or after her marriage, and are worn all her life as unemployed

capital yielding no interest. In seasons of misfortune the woman may pawn them, but she never sells them unless reduced to the utmost need. As they last her whole life they are ultimately cheaper than the fashionable gewgaws of European cities that are destined to be cast aside at the end of a few months. The breasts are covered, but hardly concealed by a chemise of transparent gauze. Over this the women wear a narrow-sleeved garment, which fits tightly round the body, being fastened in front by a close series of silken knots reaching from beneath the breasts downwards, and which falls in folds straight from the hips to the feet. (See cut of Dancing Girl in Chap. III.) Oriental women are fortunately unacquainted with the confining instrument called a corset, and are still so backward in civilization as to be unable to appreciate a waist of wasp-like tenuity. The legs are encased in a wide sort of drawers, which are fastened under the knee, but are continued down to below the edge of the frock, between which and the feet they move about in a rather picturesque manner. This style of drawers is not, however, in universal use. Instead of them a kind with legs gradually tapering towards the foot is often worn. In addition to the close-fitting dress above described, the women belonging to the towns of Upper Egypt (see the accompanying cut) wear a loose garment of light cotton of a blue colour, or with bright blue stripes and sometimes embroidered. This garment has no sleeves, but on each side there is a long slit extending from the shoulder nearly to the bottom of the robe, so that the arms can be uncovered at any time. In the hot summer months the undergarments are too tight for comfort, and this loose robe and the drawers are all that are worn in the house. Often, indeed, the drawers are forgotten, and the arm being carelessly lifted, the woman's whole profile from the shoulder to the ankles is disclosed to view. These women, while careful to conceal their charms out of doors, are careless on this matter inside the house, where they think they do not need to mind who sees them. It is therefore advisable that warning should be given before a stranger enters the house.

The feet have either no covering at all to prevent one

from admiring their beauty, or they have their natural nimbleness impeded by clumsy slippers. Silver clasps, with little bells attached to them, are worn round the ankles. Bracelets of pure gold or silver are worn on the wrists, and still more commonly on the upper arms. Numerous rings,



Woman and Child of Upper Egypt.

either with or without stones, deck the fingers, but the fore-finger, with which they attest their faith, is always kept free of them. The shocking nose-ring is not intended, as with the camel, to serve as a means of keeping the wearer in check, but the women themselves desire it from their husbands as a charming ornament. Lastly, we manage to see many other proofs of an abnormal taste in the form of temporary as well as indelible skin-painting on the face, hands, feet, and other parts of the body.

A number of little light-footed girls run about in the court. They are dressed like their elders, except that the innocence of their youth spares them the infliction of the heavy outer mantle. Already, however, they begin like their maturer

sisters to practise concealment with the corners of their head-covering, and even the youngest of them could not be induced to expose her head to view completely.

A child which seems too old to be still receiving suck has firmly fastened on the open breast of his tender mother.<sup>1</sup> A thick cape keeps the cold air from his head, which is thus early concealed from view. Sequins and ducats are clustered on his brow, and there are little packets on his breast containing precious spells to thwart the baneful look of the envious.

On leaving, according to traditional practice in the case of a medical visit, we are treated to sherbet, that is, a sweet liquor made from the juice of fruit and water, and served in a crystal cup. This we drain at one draught, as expected by the servant, who attends with a fringed cloth which he holds underneath while we are drinking, and with which we afterwards wipe our mouths (exactly as among the ancient Egyptians). We also receive perhaps a handkerchief embroidered by some fair hand, but as a rule nothing else, unless it may be some trifle wrapped up in the handkerchief.

#### A DINNER.

Meantime evening has come on, and we return to our dwelling; for we must keep ourselves in readiness for the dinner that a well-to-do citizen intends giving this evening in celebration of some such event as a betrothal, a circumcision, or a wedding, and to which we, as being among the persons of most distinction, have received an invitation in the course of the day. The host comes in person to our residence, for it is his duty to conduct the guests to his house. The reception-room is already filled with a considerable number of people, who have settled themselves down on the richly carpeted floor in front of the cushions placed against the wall.

All present rise up to welcome the newly arrived guest,

<sup>1</sup> According to the injunction of the Prophet children must be suckled for two years.

and after we have adjusted ourselves to our satisfaction on the carpet, so far as that is possible, and have cleared our throat, we receive a separate salutation from each of the other guests, which greetings must severally be returned along with a movement of the hand to the forehead, mouth, and heart to give emphasis to our replies. We are asked regarding our health, and we do the like. The inquiries follow one after another in stereotyped and often very ingenious phrases, which imply a bosom friendship that has lasted for years, but which, at the same time, have no other result than that nobody receives any enlightenment as to the health of the other, for the answer is always an expression of thanks or a blessing, and nothing more. After a good deal of time has been spent in such compliments and ceremonies we begin to talk. From the weather, of which there is in this region, properly speaking, none at all, or which, at least, only changes from cold to warm or warm to cold, we pass to the prices of articles of food and other commodities. We express our opinions upon individuals, all the more gently and flatteringly the nearer the persons spoken of happen to be, relate stories and adventures, astonishing feats and tales about ghosts, criticize the government with a surprising freedom of speech, and propound rather sweeping and, in truth, horrible political schemes. The conversation is agreeable, at the same time polite and ceremonious, lively, fanciful and eloquent, with a certain picturesque circumstantiality, a frequent use of similes and comparisons to make the speaker's meaning clearer; often with a degree of pathos and demonstrativeness of gesture, which contrast strikingly with the apparent apathy that the Egyptians preserve on other occasions. In short, the conversation at such parties is often in the highest degree brilliant and intelligent in spite of the amount of ignorance it betrays, and the superstition, fanaticism, and fatalism which are seen in every action and breathe in every word.

During this talk that precedes dinner the guests make use of nothing to invigorate or stimulate the physical system, except perhaps a mouthful of cold water, a little coffee, and tobacco, which last each smoker brings rolled up in

a fine woollen or silken pouch along with his pipe. The rising vapours, the sound of frying and similar noises in the kitchen, the running hither and thither of the servants, the whisperings of the host, and other signs, indicate that the affair is not going to end with the small cup of coffee that had been promised us either by word of mouth or by means of a note of invitation. Soon the large lamp which rests in the middle of the hall on a polygonal stand with four or eight feet (among the ancients only one foot) is removed, and the stand is covered with an enormous circular tray or plate of metal (usually tinned copper, and there are usually engraved on it some arabesques and pentagrams). A basket containing round flat cakes cut in two sufficient in number to satisfy a company of twice the size if they were to get nothing but bread and water, is now brought in, and the cakes are placed round the tray, which is not covered with a table-cloth. Living caryatids of the male sex hold lamps high above the heads of the guests; a cup-bearer passes round, carrying a water-bottle on his arm; there is also a servant whose duty it is to sweep away the vermin. The guests arrange themselves on a carpet round the tray, usually in companies of from ten to twelve, never thirteen. If the company is too large for one table similar arrangements are made in other parts of the room as may be required. A servant goes round to each guest with a vessel of water, and all wash their hands, or at least have water poured over the tips of the fingers of their right hand. They all then lay their napkins across their knees, and turn up their right sleeve. The left hand hangs down by the side, and is kept dry for use in drinking or for other incidental purposes.

To-day the dinner is Turkish (*alla turka*), that is, one viand is brought in after the other. The menu is a long one. Were the dinner after the Arabic fashion, according to which all the viands are laid on the table at once, so that the guests may help themselves at pleasure, there would not be room for the great variety of dishes. A large bowl of soup being served, the host, after squeezing into it the juice of some green lemons or citrons the size of walnuts, and pronouncing



the word "bismillah" (in the name of God), dips his wooden spoon into the bowl, and is followed by all the other guests. In traversing the distance between the common dish and the mouth many a drop and solid fragment fall upon the table and the cakes of bread. In the well-spiced soup lies a bit of boiled meat or a fowl, which the master of the house now takes out, and offers in pieces to his guests. They show, however, no great relish for it; for already a colossal breast of mutton stuffed with chopped flesh, onions, rice, raisins, almonds, and hazel-nuts, is beheld in the hands of a servant in the background. Scarcely is it placed on the metal plate when all the twelve guests fall upon it with their right hands. Each tears off a piece of the flesh, which has been first boiled soft and then roasted. Where it is found rather tough two guests sitting opposite one another begin pulling at the same piece until it gives way. In a few minutes the breast-bone is stripped of flesh, and the precious stuffing lies dispersed over the dish from which the diners convey it to their mouths by means of wooden spoons. This practice of all eating out of one dish in common, and using the hands in doing so, usually appears to Europeans one of the most barbarous usages of the East. Yet the same practice was followed by the ancient Egyptians, who were a people of refined and formal manners, as well as by the Jews. To the Oriental, on the other hand, it seems barbarous in Europeans not to wash their hands before and after eating, although the utmost care and nicety are often insufficient to prevent them from being greased.

The breast of mutton serves as a foundation, and is followed by a number of trifles, such as vegetables of different sorts, and onion sauces with small pieces of flesh, usually, as among the ancients, small legs of mutton with the bone. These are brought in on small plates, and each guest takes what he can get either by dipping a piece of bread into the dish, or by forming a sort of pincers with his piece of bread, so as to be able to seize on some of the solid contents of the dish. Some farinaceous article, roasted maccaroni, vermicelli, or

pastry now appears. We have already seen perhaps six different dishes. Our appetite is quenched, and after the farinaceous course we should like to rise; but we have not even yet reached the beginning of the middle of the banquet. Dish still follows dish, butcher-meat alternating with farinaceous preparations. The master of the house offers us, with exclamations of delight, a fowl's leg prepared with quite extraordinary skill. The other guests also encourage us to eat, offering choicé morsels to us as well as to one another; but the climax is reached with the sweet tart (*santeh baklâua*). The whole of the worshipful circle of gourmands salute its entry with a delighted Ah! How wonderfully does it lie imbedded in the deep pie-dish. The use of knives to cut it up is forbidden, but the host digs out a great hole with his fingers, whereupon all the guests plunge in their fingers at the breach and tear out fragments of the firmly baked composition, until the whole artistic structure falls in ruins. The ancient Egyptians adopted at their feasts another way to remind the feasters in all seriousness of the transitoriness of everything earthly. At this stage of the feast servants used to drag round the room the image of a mummy.

We have now struggled on to about the middle of the banquet. The small plates again appear, and gratify our palate with a continually ascending scale of excellence and sweetness. Greatly do we regret having so soon spoiled our appetite. We are becoming giddy with our exertions, but we are not yet at the end; for a huge, massive, and juicy roast still remains to be vanquished. Even experienced guests, who have prepared themselves for the sumptuous repast by fasting from early morning, and have cautiously climbed up step by step, sit despairing and exhausted before this object of Titanic magnitude. The company at last hasten towards the close of the repast. Several plates now offered are mercilessly rejected, and the pilau of steamed rice, which invariably concludes the feast, is placed on the table along with a cooling sweet rose-scented jelly. To crown the whole the guests now take a good supply of this delicate prepar-

ation into their well-crammed paunches, and then each after the other rises with a "Thank God" (which serves as a grace after meat as the "bismillah" does for a grace before meat), and makes his way as quickly as possible to the washing-vessel. The host is the last to rise, as he was the first to make the attack.

The foundation of the feast is always *mutton*. The animals are slaughtered for the purpose on the day of the entertainment, not the day before, and if possible in the house itself in spite of the prohibition of the government. No important feast can be held without animals being specially slaughtered for the occasion, for the consumption of flesh is then so considerable. By the ancient Egyptians mutton was not relished, perhaps was not eaten at all; and their numerous flocks of sheep were kept chiefly for the wool. Beef and the flesh of geese, which at the present day are but slightly esteemed, formed in ancient times the basis of the Egyptian banquets, which were then at least as lavish and frequent as they are now. At the grander entertainments now-a-days a turkey appears on the table instead of a goose.

## BILL OF FARE.

We cannot omit to furnish our readers with the entire *menu* of our feast.

1. Rice soup.
2. Döl'a mahshi: stuffed breast of mutton. (See above.)
3. Bämich burâni: the bämich fruit (*Hibiscus esculenta*) boiled and roasted entire with flesh and a great deal of clarified butter.
4. Kaurirma (Turkish): roast meat with whole onions.
5. Wârak mahshi. In making this dish vine or cabbage leaves are filled with pounded leaves of the same sort, minced meat, onions, rice, and pepper, and fried with clarified butter.
6. Kunâfa or vermicelli. A dough of water and flour not very tenacious is pressed through a perforated mould, which forms it into worm-like threads. It is then fried with clarified butter, then sugar and dripping are sprinkled over it, and lastly it is boiled above a coal fire.
7. Moluchteh. This is a mucilaginous vegetable resembling spinach, and is prepared for the table by boiling with flesh-meat.

8. *Kufta* or meat-dumplings. Minced roast-meat, rice, and onions are made into little balls and fried with clarified butter.

9. *Batingân kûta*: tomatoes boiled with flesh.

10. *Sémak makli*: fish baked in oil.

11. *Sambúsek*. Dough made with water and flour is rolled out into round flat cakes, on which is placed minced roast-meat with rice; half the dough is then folded over, and the edges are pressed together. The whole is cooked by baking.

12. *Kabáb*: small pieces of flesh roasted on a spit.

13. *Jachui*: roast-meat with onion sauce or made into a ragout.

14. *Fakús mahshi*. The soft contents of the *fakús* fruit, which is of the gourd family, are taken out of the shell or rind and mixed with minced meat and the other ingredients mentioned in no. 5, and then replaced, when the whole is boiled.

15. *Batingân iswud mucharrat*. The black *batingân* fruit (fruit of the egg-plant) is cut into small pieces, and added with onions to broiled meat and boiled.

16. *Santehi bakláta* or sweet tart. (See above.) A number of flour cakes are placed in the dish, and between each pair is spread a layer of butter. Honey is spread on the top one, and the whole is baked in an oven.

17. *Sáik*: beet boiled with flesh.

18. "Milk-rice": rice and milk with some water and clarified butter boiled, to which are afterwards added sugar and rose-water.

19. *Mumbár mahshi*: pieces of intestine filled with the mixture already mentioned more than once and boiled.

20. *Kabab bi dím a*: meat roasted on a spit with a plain sauce.

21. *Ful achdar*: green horsebeans (both pod and kernels) boiled with flesh.

22. *Láhma muhúmmara*: a large roasted joint. (See above.)

23. *Balása*: sweet jelly; sugar boiled with water and farina, to which honey and rose-water are added while cooling. Almonds are afterwards stuck in the jelly. (See above.)

24. *Rus mufálfál*, Turkish *piláu*: steamed rice saturated with clarified butter. (See above.)

#### AFTER DINNER

The Mussulman washes himself only with pure running water, and does not splash about in a basin. A servant pours water upon the hands of the guest from a large metal vessel having a spout, and generally of an elegant shape. The dirty water falls down into a large metal bason, having a broad rim and a perforated bottom, through which the water passes into a cavity at its base. These utensils are exactly like those which were in use among the ancient

Egyptians. Much soap is employed, but they do not use it properly, for they allow the lather to be washed off the hands before it has time to act upon the skin. The mouth is next carefully cleansed inside and outside, and all this goes on quite openly in the dining-room. The unused cakes are now collected, and the numerous crumbs on the table and floor are carefully gathered up. Bread is reckoned by the Mohammedan a sacred gift of God, which should not be wasted; and if he finds a small piece of bread anywhere on the ground he picks it up and kisses the hand in which he holds it. Last of all, the metal table is removed.

The company, who, without any breach of propriety, give frequent indications of satiety by loud eructations, again take their places on the carpet before the wall-cushions, and conversation is resumed under the influence of the chibouk. The attendants now have their turn for dining (of these there is no small number, inasmuch as each of the guests brings along with him his own servants, slaves, and dependants), and during their dinner no one disturbs them except for some pressing need. At last, when the servants have satisfied themselves, coffee is brought in; and from this time the company have no more peace, for they all begin to feel uneasy in the stomach. The most important of the guests gives the signal for breaking up. All seek for their slippers, which lie about at the threshold of the door, and depart to their homes overburdened in stomach but with brain quite clear. Each guest is preceded by a servant carrying a large lantern, and is accompanied on his way by the host, for every step taken for the sake of a guest is accounted a step in the ascent to paradise.

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### THIRD DAY.

#### A PUBLIC-OFFICE.

The duties of those who have to provide for the people's weal and woe begin with the bustle of trade and other business at an early hour of the morning. Already the

fierce-looking bands of Turkish police stand armed to the teeth at the open gate in the wall of the extensive seraglio (which, be it noted, signifies a palace or official residence, not a harem). Only a few drunken fellows, overcome by the hashish or liquor of the preceding evening, still lie snorting on their palm-twig couches or stretched out on the stone-bench in the portico. No one hinders us from entering the spacious court, which is surrounded by the plain white-washed irregular buildings of the palace (Mudirieh). Some very old sycamores, dating, like the palace itself, from the time of the Mamelukes, spread a broad shadow which is very grateful during the hot hours of the day. Under the protection of their foliage the head of the province is accustomed to transact his business when he finds the air of the court hall too oppressive.

#### COPTIC SCRIBES.

A man arrayed in a voluminous black toga with wide flowing sleeves, his face well covered with hair, a black turban on his head, and an ink-stand of massive silver in the girdle of his caftan, hurries past us with a friendly greeting. We take him to be a Christian priest wearing his official robes and ornaments; but what is he doing in a secular court of the Moslem rulers? We feel drawn to the man by his courteous demeanour, and make his acquaintance. We soon learn that he is "of our kindred," for we certainly believe like him in the Messiah, read the gospel, and abhor the false prophet Mohammed and his accursed brood. Our remark, that to the Christian all men are brothers meets with no acceptance, and turns the conversation to another topic. We are informed that he is not a priest, but belongs to the strictly exclusive guild of Coptic scribes. He conducts us with every mark of politeness into the scribes' hall, where we find a number of our "kindred" of this class. He bids us be seated, hands us a chibouk, and causes us to be supplied with a few small cups of the coffee of the seraglio. These scribes sit cross-legged on the ground or on a stone-bench. In front of them lies the desk, which is

more used for holding documents than as a support in writing. One of them now opens the lid of his club-shaped ink-vessel, from the long tubular part of which he draws out his broad-pointed reed-pen. After trimming his pen he begins to



Coptic Scribe.

paint thick lines on the long narrow strip of paper that he holds up freely in his left hand without any other support. The pen is dipped with remarkable frequency into the ink-vessel, which has an absorbent flap that gives out sufficient ink to impart strength to the letters, but not so much as to make a blot. The strip of paper has frequently to be adjusted for the convenience of writing, in consequence of which it becomes a good deal folded and crumpled.

The Coptic scribe is a master of style, and, while he has almost entirely lost the language of his own race, no genuine Moslem Arab excels him in the employment of the language imposed upon his ancestors. The official style is somewhat diffuse and archaic. There is no lack of expressions like "seeing that," "inasmuch as," and of labyrinthically involved phrases. It forms the connecting-link between the old language of the Koran and the dialect of the people. The ancient Egyptians in like manner used to write, for example, in drawing up treaties, with an extremely precise and formal circumstantiality.

Another scribe is employed in transferring some official

letters to his large folio, which he finds it more convenient to rest on his knees than on the writing-desk before him. A brother official or a private assistant, who is his pupil, and who is likewise a Copt and of his own family (strangers, and especially Mussulmans, are not admitted into the caste of scribes), reads out to him in a drawling sing-song the prosaic contents of the letters, with all the titles, names, and numbers, his head and upper part of his body swaying all the while backwards and forwards with a rhythmical regularity. A fellah stands before a group of idle scribes, who are deep in some conversation that has no connection with their official duties. He timidly requests that the document he carries in his hand should be attended to. He receives neither a word nor a look in answer, and becomes more urgent. "Be off! We have no time just now." The unfortunate peasant then bares his shaven head, and with a heavy heart rummages about in the folds of his turban, which usually serves as a purse, opens a knot with his teeth, and places a silver coin in the half-open hand of Master Gerges (George), who eagerly seizes it. Now the business goes on like clock-work. The paper is passed from desk to desk, from room to room, from one official to another, until it is covered with seals and scribblings. The cashier, usually a Mussulman, opens his coffer and pays the amount due to the peasant. A small sum, however, wanders into the private chest of the treasurer, which the countrymen silently beholds with rueful astonishment.

#### OFFICIALS OF THE PROVINCES.

Our new acquaintance the scribe favours us with a variety of information regarding the business of his office. The higher and highest circles we here pass over, confining ourselves to the provinces. Each province is subject to a governor, with extensive powers, called a *Mudir*, who corresponds to the "nomarch" of ancient times. Administration, finance, the royal domains, the armed forces of the district, and to a certain extent also the judicial proceedings,



are in his hands; but the Damocles sword of mightier overseers, and still more of informers, hangs over his head, and frequent changes of these officials are made with the view of checking abuses.

A provincial court of justice according to present arrangements, which have come into force at a comparatively recent date, is composed of the kadi, who merely gives his opinion in accordance with the laws of the Koran, and of some of the leading citizens, who act as assessors. No trace of legal learning is to be looked for in these officials; although since the introduction of the present organization of courts of justice, an attempt is being made to train up some of the natives to be real jurists, who are to give their decisions according to the French code. The presidency of the court belongs of right to the Mudir; but his whole attention is taken up with the collection of the taxes and the management of the vice-regal estates. Neither citizen nor peasant places any confidence in the fairness of the judgments of these courts; though the government does all it can to provide for the security of the people and the punishment of the offenders.

The large province (Mudirieli) is divided into several smaller administrative districts, the heads of which are entirely under the control of the governor of the province. The towns are governed by their own prefects of police, who stand either directly under the Mudir or under the heads of the districts. The communes likewise have their own petty magistrates. These are chosen from among the inhabitants of the several communes which they preside over. Their dignity, according to the old patriarchal system, is mostly hereditary, but also depends upon property; for they are bound to answer for their charge with their life and their whole estate. In the towns, where there are royal officers, the local mayor, if there is one at all, has hardly any voice in the management of affairs. In the communes the local magistrates are the only persons with official authority. Trade and industry have their guild-masters, with whom alone the government has any dealings. In the towns where trade is active it

is usually the merchant's sheikh who plays the part of mayor.

All the more important officers of government, who have any administrative duties, have the right of "sealing." They are always Turks, or at least 'abdelâui, that is, natives of the country with Turkish blood in their veins. This rule, however, does not apply to the more innocent departments of government, especially those for which some little scientific knowledge is requisite, such as medicine, architecture, and engineering. These Turks thus form a privileged aristocracy. A large proportion of the higher officials consist of liberated white, mostly Circassian, slaves (Mamelukes). But the Coptic scribes, the living law-books of the province, the masters of the "uzûl" (tradition), constitute, although not possessing the right of the seal, the soul of official life. For those Turks and descendants of Turks and slaves have passed through no school of law, and being mostly taken from the army or the fleet, and from the higher circles of society generally, they have little inclination and little leisure to occupy themselves in their new position with deep studies. They acquire a certain knowledge of their duties by practice, and get along as best they can, trusting either to their own unlearned instinct or to the counsel of their omniscient scribes. There are many advantages but far more disadvantages connected with this state of matters, and hence, in quite recent times, there has been a steady endeavour on the part of the supreme government to have a regular system of official training introduced. The progress of business, where the affair takes its regular course, and is not settled by some arbitrary and, so to speak, instinctive declaration of Turkish law, is very slow, and in modern as was the case in ancient Egypt there is a great, a very great, expenditure of ink.

Some years ago an attempt was even made to replace the Turkish officials from the Mudir down to the gendarmerie by native Egyptians. But the experiment did not succeed. The new officials displayed no energy, and showed themselves accessible to all sorts of private influences. The administration of justice and the maintenance of order

suffered. The natives of the country were soon indeed the loudest in their complaints. They had no respect for one of their own sort, a "Fellah;" and a return was therefore speedily made to the old system of Turkish governors. Even the native soldier is unable to secure respect for his authority in the same degree as the violent Turk, and is not adapted for his most important duty, that of enforcing the payment of taxes.

## TAXES AND OTHER BURDENS.

The Fellah has been habituated from the earliest times to the bearing of all sorts of burdens. The load of taxation increases from year to year. The old taxes are retained and sometimes increased, and new ones are devised under the most various shapes and designations. The nineteenth century is in this respect also, and not in Egypt only, the age of inventions. Years ago it was thought that the milk must soon dry up, but the Fellah is an inexhaustible milch-cow. As in every country, there is in the first place a *land tax*, here amounting to from 70 to 100 Egyptian piastres on the acre of farm-land (100 government piastres are equal to about 22 shillings, and one piastre accordingly to something more than 2½*d.*). This tax is leviable on a larger or smaller area, according to the extent of the inundations of the river. Further, there is a pretty moderate *trade* or *income tax*, which is fixed for each individual by a council of government officers and natives having the necessary experience; for no reliance can be placed upon the declaration of the person taxed. The large number of palms in the Nile valley makes the *palm-tax* of 20 piastres for every fruit-bearing date-palm a very productive one. Boats employed on the Nile pay from 100 to 700 piastres. Everything brought to market is liable to a duty of from 2 to 9 per cent. of its value, in addition to which weighing dues of from 1 to 2 piastres per cwt. have to be paid, whether the article be capable of being weighed or not. Even firewood and cattle are subject to these dues. In the case of cattle

there are likewise slaughter-house dues of from 4 to 10 piastres per head, even when there is no slaughter-house. Among the ancient Egyptians also the same practice was in vogue of weighing everything in public, and there were special clerks whose duty was to mark down the particulars. Cattle-owners pay  $3\frac{1}{2}$  piastres for small cattle, and from 10 to 20 for large, among which asses have latterly been reckoned. Fisheries are in some cases leased out, in other cases the fishermen have to hand over at least a fourth of the proceeds to the government. Salt also is leased out; but as the lessees found that it did not pay, since the people found that they could procure salt cheaper from the desert and the sea, this article is now distributed among the inhabitants at a fixed price per head. Tobacco, which a short time ago was duty free, is now highly taxed. The plaintiff in an action has to pay a few piastres before being allowed to state his case; and 20 piastres must be paid before a petition in writing is received. The house-owner contributes to the government a month's rent annually. Quite recently the burden of taxation has been increased to the general consternation by the imposition of a poll-tax of 45, 30, or 15 piastres, according to the supposed means of the tax-payer. In answer to our inquiries the scribe estimated (in 1868) that his province, which has about 200,000 inhabitants, yields annually from 67,000 to 83,000 purses (a purse is 500 piastres, or about five guineas), from which about 10,000 purses have to be deducted on account of the cost of collection. The palm-tax yields 7000, the land-tax 40,000 to 50,000, the trade and income tax 4000, the fisheries' tax 250, the market-tax 500, and the tax on the Nile boats 12,000 purses. The figures may now indeed be very different, since, as already mentioned, many new taxes have been imposed since that date, while on the other hand the steadily increasing stagnation of trade may have had the effect of bringing about a reduction in the yield of each tax.

Still more oppressive than the number and amount of the taxes, is the irregular manner in which they are levied. As a rule indeed they are collected gradually, and every month a

steamer appears to convey the sums raised, less the amount required to defray the provincial expenditure, to the central treasury; but this treasury is subject to frequent and sudden ebbs, and in such cases has to be replenished in a few days. The governors of the provinces then receive the command to pay into the treasury within so many days a certain and often a pretty large sum of money; and if any of the governors or mudirs is thought to be of too mild a temper to take steps of the necessary severity a successor is often sent along with the order for the special purpose of carrying it into force. This new governor then makes a tour through the province with his scribes and other officers, and with the utmost politeness "requests" the richer citizens to make advances, which they are obliged to do even if they should have to borrow the money at high interest from Greek usurers, while the poorer tax-payers are compelled to pay at once the sums due for the whole year; and whoever is in arrears, and is still not ready to pay, is treated to the lash. This instrument, although abolished by law, is on such occasions rigorously wielded till late in the night. The grain that the farmer is now obliged to sell to pay his taxes in these circumstances sinks for some days considerably in price, greatly to the advantage of the corn-buyers. The truth is that even in ordinary times the balance of state revenue and expenditure could not be maintained without the aid of the *kurbâg* or scourge of hippopotamus hide. The Fellah (and it was the same among the ancient Egyptians, at least in later times) will rather be beaten till the blood flows than voluntarily pay the detested taxes to the government; and he boasts of this as an act of heroism. Not unfrequently, after getting all the flesh of his body made tender by repeated scourging, he slowly drops the money demanded of him out of his mouth, where he had concealed it. An extortionate system of taxation has been the order of the day in the land of the Nile from the earliest times; but while formerly the sums extorted only went to benefit the rulers, now it must be confessed a large share of them is expended for the good of the country. The peasant, to be sure, is unable to see of what use the schools are, and scarcely appre-

ciates the value of the new canals, bridges, and railways. His children and children's children will get the benefit of them; he knows only the suffering that he has to undergo to meet the demands of the government.

*Forced labour*, people in Egypt say, is quite as indispensable as the *kurbâg*. It also is formally abolished, but is nevertheless maintained even more actively than ever. To be sure the services exacted by the government ought by law to be paid for by the government officials. For carrying goods through the desert, for example, the camel-driver receives the medium pay current at the time. But the country people, who are from time to time levied *en masse* and forced to labour on public works, assert that they receive either none at all or very little of the pay due them, which passes through the hands of the government officers and the village mayors. Without resorting to compulsion, or paying excessively high wages, the government could not get labourers for public works, for the peasant and the labourer carefully avoid as much as they can all connection with the government. Those who can read and write are declared to be exempt from liability to forced labour, at least in their own persons.

The officials also have to bear a large share of the burdens of the state. The pay of the lower grades is in itself very small, and is calculated according to the wants of a time that is now past. It is out of all proportion to the great increase in price of the necessaries of life since the introduction of the cotton cultivation, an increase so great that Egypt is now one of the dearest countries in the earth to live in. The happy times of Mohammed Ali, when one could get a whole handful of eggs and fowls for a few paras, are gone. To take a few examples of the rates of official pay, the keeper of a prison receives 75 piastres (that is, about 16s. 6d.) a month, an hospital attendant 100 piastres, an ordinary scribe 200 to 400 piastres, an officer of the rank of a lieutenant, for example an ordinary doctor, an architect, an assistant, 500 piastres (a purse), an officer of the rank of a captain (*yus bâscha*) a purse and a half, one of the rank of a chief captain (*sakolaghâsi*) three purses, a lieutenant-colonel

(*kaimakâm*) five purses. From this grade upwards salaries rapidly increase. An officer of the rank of a bey or colonel, for example the *mudir*, has from 8 to 10 purses, a *paşia* 15 to 20 purses monthly. While in other countries schemes were devised for increasing official salaries as the prices of necessaries became higher, in this country a resolution was suddenly come to a few years ago to reduce salaries by a fifth, a reduction still in force, so that a government servant who formerly received 1500 piastres now receives only 1200. This measure, however, does not apply to the lower grades of government servants receiving a salary of 500 piastres or less. The government officers are not even exempt from the poll-tax recently imposed. A day's salary is regularly deducted from their monthly pay. The copper-tax, which was levied for a considerable time, and which consisted in paying a tenth of their salary in almost worthless copper piastres, is now at last abolished.

From time to time an attempt is also made to reduce the number of the officials, especially the inferior ones; and when this is done those whose services the government thinks it can dispense with are simply discharged with nothing more than the hope of the next permanent appointment that may become vacant. Only the privileged Turks often receive in such cases compensation in the form of an allotment of lands. But these measures are in reality more impolitic than cruel; for, as a general rule, the official during his term of office lays past his salary to form a permanent capital, defraying his current expenses "from without."

## OFFICIAL PROCEDURE.

The head of the province is generally absent on a tour of inspection through his long district, or visiting the royal sugar-refineries and domains, and his deputy, the "*wakil*," despatches the ordinary business. We get ourselves introduced to him through a suitable medium. He receives us in a manner at once courtly and proud. His strongly marked features and the clear colour of his skin betray

the Turk; a certain want of polish in his behaviour and the fluency of his Arabic reveal a large admixture of native Egyptian blood. He is sitting in his official room or divan on the richly cushioned couch or sofa (divan in the narrower sense). He sips coffee, which is included in the charges of the court, takes a cigarette from his box, or has the gilded chibouk brought to him. Some privileged persons, among them several priests, have seated themselves on the divan at some distance from him; less highly honoured persons sit cross-legged on the carpets that are laid on the floor next the walls. No furniture enlivens the clean and well-kept hall. The windows are hung with costly curtains adorned with elegant tassels. On ledges all round the hall lie a few books, among which there is a book of laws of the time of the great Mohammed Ali, which perhaps has never been opened, and also without fail a copy of the Koran.

The chief of the scribes, the Bashkâtib, Master Hanna (John) enters, and brings under his arm a great heap of official documents just drawn up. With a frowning look the man of authority snatches the papers out of the hand of the accomplished scribe who stands before him with his head hanging down. He makes as if he were reading and could read the writing, which swims before his eyes, and dipping the tip of his finger in the ink-vessel which the chief scribe holds up before him he applies it to the surface of the silver seal on which his name is engraved, and stamps therewith all the documents in succession. Twenty documents are despatched in this way before the learned scribe could have read out five lines. He throws down one after the other before the author, who patiently picks them up, and retires with a profound and silent obeisance. In this way is shown before the public the mighty difference that there is between the exalted Turk and the Christian scribe. In private, however, there is a perfect understanding between the two.

There is always a great bustle in the court of the Mudirich, especially in the morning hours. Here the parties to a suit sit squatting on the ground awaiting the decision of the court. There a criminal is handed up in fetters, and is cast into the



dark dungeon. At another spot some who have to receive payments wait for days till the scribes find the necessary leisure for the purpose. In the same court, deeds of surrender and leases are prepared; and here also the mudir or wekil keeps a supply of camels.

Gradually the court becomes more and more crowded with brown-skinned and brown-mantled country people. The village mayors and village patriarchs (sheikhs) are summoned into the divan. With a deep obeisance they go through the usual form of lifting dust from the smooth marble floor and pressing it to their lips as a mark of respect. In these countries, however, the Mussulman never, except in extreme cases, prostrates himself before his ruler. That sign of reverence is reserved for the Almighty. A decree is read, and the people are required to signify their assent to it, and bind themselves to obey it. "Right willingly," answer the honourable village mayors with one voice, "as your excellency commands; we are thy slaves and the slaves of our sovereign; nothing but good comes from thee; thy opinion is our opinion." "Then seal the document," says the governor; and the heads of the communes, one after the other, give their brass seal to the scribe, who smears it with ink, and fills the sheet with their important names. When the sheikh has sealed, the villager does so likewise, although he has only a faint glimmering of what it is that he has pledged himself to. In the country, where very few can write, the seal takes the place of a signature. To lend a person a seal is a mark of the highest confidence. When an official has lost his seal and has to provide himself with another, the fact is made known by public notices. Official seals, properly so called, are not in use except for stamped paper, and where doors have to be sealed up on behalf of the government. For example, on the occasion of a death a large official seal made of clay and chopped straw is placed on the door of the house where the deceased person lived, and similar seals are placed on the doors of the government magazines every evening, as was customary also among the ancient Egyptians.

We are now about to quit the buildings in which the business of the state is carried on, but remain a little longer to

cast a glance at the ecclesiastical court, in which the *kadi*, the representative of the clergy, assisted by advisers well versed in the Mohammedan Scriptures (muftis or ulema), dissolves ill-made marriages, arranges the inheritance of deceased persons, administers oaths, and now and then in difficult cases gives the benefit of his opinion to the secular court. On the whole, however, all that he has saved from the ruins of his former splendour is a certain moral influence among his religious brethren, an influence that is daily declining. His rôle is in fact now almost confined to that of a notary. "Par ordre du moufti" is a phrase that has become of no effect, unless by mufti a pasha is understood:

By and by we see the government post darting past us, in the form of an express runner, with a little bell at his foot or on his stick, and a knapsack, which he carries to the next post-station; where he is relieved of it by another runner. Many a piece of intelligence is brought by these nimble-footed men, before the snail's post of the electric telegraph has worked its way through the intermediate stations filled with a set of young officials whose chief occupation is to dream and loiter away their time. The postal system is now organized on a European plan even in Upper Egypt. Where there are as yet no railways the functionaries are Arabs. Scrupulous punctuality has never been the leading virtue of the natives, and an Arab post-office of the kind we are now speaking of is not exactly a model institution. In recent years there has been much improvement, although even orders and decorations are occasionally lost. Ordinary people make but little use of the government postal service. They prefer to trust their letters, which are written on ribbon-shaped strips of paper and then rolled up, to some chance visitor to the place for which they are destined. In this way their transmission costs nothing. There is never any hurry, and the people are afraid the government might learn their secrets. On this account the Egyptian post-office always works at a loss.

A company of regular troops marches out at the gate of the seraglio, preceded by a band of fifers. The light, slim-built beardless youths, among whom many negro heads with

ivory teeth are conspicuous, are dressed in loose trousers, like those worn by the Zouaves, fastened high on the body, a short military coat made of ticking, and a red cap with a tassel to it, a uniform which suits them admirably. A squadron of irregular Turkish cavalry (Bashî Bazouks), ride into their barracks, headed by their aristocratic commander seated on the gold-fringed housing of his high-bred horse. Their wild countenances, their motley self-chosen dresses, their arms, bearing, and character—everything about them in short, betrays almost unbridled license. Their commander is their patriarch. He has himself raised them, and has to maintain them out of the funds placed at his disposal for the purpose. They lead a restless, wandering life.

## THE COUNTRY JUDGE.

Less important actions and cases arising out of trifling disorders in the town come before the police or town prefect's court, which lies in a different part of the town from that of the mudir. Nevertheless its proceedings are always influenced and restrained by the authority of this powerful functionary, and Turkish justice is not here to be seen in its peculiar and original features as it is in a small country town where the local judge is absolute. We will therefore travel in spirit for a few hours to the divan of such a local judge or hâkim. His portrait essentially resembles that which we have given of the wekil of the mudir. In his court we have the opportunity of witnessing the following scenes.

A loud wrangling is heard on the stairs. Two lads, with rolling eyes, and looking as if they would like to transfix each other, are dragged in by the police. One of them shows his torn shirt and bloody nose.

"What do you want, you fellows?" cries the tyrant on the divan.

The accuser all at once empties his overcharged heart before the assembled divan or judicial assembly. Nobody understands him. The accused interrupts him long before he has finished his little speech. A storm of abuse breaks out between the

disputing parties. The police and soldiers do their best to quiet them by advice as well as by blows; the judge commands, nobody hears; the air is rent with intermingled Arabic and Turkish phrases. Witnesses are called, and these make the chaos complete. At last quietness is obtained. The judge asks the accused:

"Did you strike anyone?"

"No, I did nothing. Nothing has happened at all."

"And that nose?" asks the judge.

"God knows all," replies the accused.

"Bring the cord; bind him, the liar, the pimp!"

"Thus was it fore-ordained for me by Fate; I submit."

As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, the poor sinner lays himself flat on his face on the floor of the court. The police tie his legs with an apparatus which they have had in readiness. Two pieces of wood keep the ankles together, and two executioners armed with scourges of hippopotamus hide deal out terrible strokes on the uplifted soles of the prisoner's feet. An anxious stillness prevails in the room, interrupted by the regular smack of the whips, and by the tortured man's supplications, which become always more urgent and penitent. He appeals to the grace of the prophet, then to that of some saint, next to the heart of the judge's little son and the sweet mildness of his wife (*faardak, ya sitt el bey*). But there is no mercy, until at last a word from one of those present makes the rigorous judge aware that a severe enough punishment has been inflicted. The poor wretch is carried away like a corpse.

"The other now; that brawler, that dog!"

The accuser meets with the same fate at the hands of justice as the accused, but being of a stronger constitution shrinks away unassisted, resolved never again to go to law.

Not only the hippopotamus-hide scourge, but corporal punishment generally, has been legally abolished for a considerable time, though only upon paper. The ancient Egyptians likewise resorted freely to beating as the most effective means of carrying out the ends of justice. To judge

from the monuments they made use of a rod for the purpose, applying it to the hips, not to the soles of the feet. Even women were not spared the bastinado, but in their case the strokes were laid on the back, and they received them sitting. The practice of inflicting blows on the soles of the feet was probably brought by the Turks from Asia; and it is not so cruel as it looks; for the sole of the foot of a man belonging to the lower classes is almost as hard and thick as the sole of a shoe. It must be admitted, however, that a man occasionally dies while undergoing this punishment.

A case such as that above described, in which both accuser and accused are punished, does not indeed form the rule (for if it did no one would ever be an accuser); yet it is by no means rare. The very common practice of interceding for some offender with the words, *ma alesh* (do nothing), inattention to which is taken by the interceders as a personal insult, is one of the weak sides of justice, and often makes every law illusory.

Another accuser appears, his case being that some women of the neighbourhood have ill-treated his wife. The accused, namely, these women's husbands, who, while the female war had been raging, were quietly and peacefully attending to their work in the town or the fields, now warmly take the part of their wives, who remain at home anxiously awaiting the decision of the judge. For only in exceptionally grave cases are women required to appear personally in court. A hot wordy warfare arises between the accuser and the accused as champions of their respective wives, but is speedily and energetically stopped by the judge, who orders the husbands of the offenders, or it may be, as in the last case, both accusers and accused, to receive one after the other a sufficient number of strokes on the soles of the feet, and then dismisses them with the warning that for the future they keep their wives better in check. The private consequences of this procedure in the apartments of the harem may be left to the reader's imagination.

The parties that have thus far been dealt with are common peasants, who are only to be kept in order by the cudgel.

But now persons of position appear. The grown-up son of one of the leading merchants, and at the same time of a *sherif* or descendant of the prophet, has knocked out with his fist some of the teeth of a highly respected citizen of the town, who appears as accuser. The man in power listens to the important case with severe gravity. He scratches himself behind the ears, strokes his whiskers and beard, invests his figure in impenetrable clouds of tobacco-smoke, and calls for his scribe. What's to be done? According to law or tradition (*uzûl*) a record of the case must be taken. Dozens of messengers and police-officers traverse the town in all directions. The court is gradually filled with the venerable and patriarchal forms of the muftis, the oldest of the citizens, the leading traders, the native or foreign representatives of other powers or consular agents, the dignitaries of the bureaucracy, the commanders of the armed forces. Silently the exalted assembly hears the accusation. The accused denies the charge, or stammers out a few words in defence. (Advocates there are none.) The father of the youth represents to his petulant son the whole extent of his manifest guilt, and taking hold of his own silvered beard asks him how he could bring such sorrow upon his old father. The son remains dutifully silent, and looks shamefaced upon the ground. Nevertheless, the father attempts the defence of his son with all the animation and dexterity he is capable of. The party of the accused make some remarks. The persons present sometimes give tokens of their approval of what the speakers say. The record becomes rather lengthy. A physician is called and gives his opinion on so serious a case.

"To prison with the offender!" is the decision of the judge, which resounds through the hall.

"My son sent to prison, the son of a *sherif*? I will become surety for my son."

An anxious silence follows. The judge hesitates. Civil justice demands the punishment of the wrong-doer without respect of persons. Personal and religious considerations and patriarchal laws do not allow of any disrespect to an

honourable descendant of the Prophet. A pause occurs. Those present sip a little coffee out of small cups, and make a few observations for the general good about the weather and the time of day. Some go out and in, and occasionally the clink of coins is heard. The kadi, the ecclesiastical judge, who in truth has no say in the matter, now puts in his word:

“First of all a fatiha!”

All those present thereupon; with uplifted hands, solemnly utter the prayer of prayers, ending with an earnest Amen. Then the kadi goes on to say:

“Serious things have taken place; but God is the all-pardoning, the all-merciful. The prosecution of the action would lead to incalculable consequences. Accusers and accused will become reconciled; I pledge myself to that. For your part, your grace, desist now; God will reward you.”

But the civil judge will not yet yield, and hurls reproaches and accusations against the unapproachable sheriff. He, for his part, throws in a number of taunting observations. Little is wanting to make the parties begin fighting again. The kadi now stands up with all the dignity of his person and office and requests the civil judge for his sake at least to grant pardon to the offender. To this solicitation the pious judge, the strength of whose moral resistance has already been broken at anyrate, at length yields. The parties, who are already prepared for this, become reconciled. The record of the case, along with the opinion of the physician, is solemnly torn in pieces, and the scene closes with a round of embraces, a cup of sweet coffee specially prepared and flavoured with cloves, and a fatiha.

Many civil judges, it is true, use much less ceremony with a sheriff or a kadi, and decide strictly without respect of persons; but with all their uprightness these are precisely the judges who are most unpopular. To show partiality and indulgence in particular cases is a practice which has passed into the flesh and blood of the people to such an extent that the inexorably just judge passes for a tyrant, a

"bad man," while the epithet of "good" (*ragel theyib*) is applied to one of more yielding nature, even when his indulgence may be purchased with gold. Among the ancient Egyptians rectitude and deep seriousness characterized the administration of justice, and that was the firmest support of their long-lived empire.

#### THE HAKİM PASHA.

We now pay a visit to the Hakim pasha, or, if you like, the chief official doctor, who has to look after the physical well-being of the province. We find him in the hospital in the midst of his medical duties with his sleeves turned up and wearing an apron. By his dress he seems a Turkish effendi, but otherwise he is body and soul a true son of Egypt. The year or two's training he has had under European teachers, or even perhaps in some famous *alma mater* of Europe, has caused many a seed of medical science to germinate greatly to the benefit of the suffering in his fatherland, but has not shaken the foundation of the character he has inherited from his ancestors or influenced his most deeply rooted ideas. The endeavours of the government of Mohammed Ali and of the present government to fit the youth for their callings by the institution of a superior class of schools cannot be too highly appreciated. But the way in which these efforts are carried out must be pronounced a failure, for all that these schools supply is a slight professional training. The minds of the learners are not prepared by a course of study in literature and philosophy, and hence they do not possess any genuine cultivation or tendency towards independent thinking. After being received by the doctor with the most engaging affability we accompany him through the airy rooms, where the patients, almost exclusively soldiers and prisoners, lie on their tolerably clean and tidy iron beds. A numerous body of attendants, all native soldiers who have served their time, wearing white or blue blouses, such as are worn by the people generally, follow his steps. The chief attendant, with a club-shaped ink-vessel like that already spoken of under his arm, stands



ready to commit to writing the instructions of the physician as soon as they are uttered, holding his reed-pen always wet with ink above the prescription paper, and making movements with his hand as if he were writing. Another attendant carries the metal boxes with the ointments used in bandaging, and a casket containing the plasters, lint, spatulas, and scissors. The junior surgeon and the apothecary catch up every word and observe every gesture of their chief. The Arab *Æsculapius* goes round the beds of his charges, now all gravity and solemnity, now overflowing with humour, and always spicing his remarks with a plentiful dose of sparkling expletives (in which, however, there is not, as among Europeans, any profane mention of sacred things). The knife is swiftly passed through bleeding human flesh, and no such costly anæsthetic as chloroform is employed to relieve the pain. Inflammatory swellings are never soothed by the application of leeches, but streams of venous blood save the life of the inhabitants of the south. The denunciations of certain pathologists against the *medicina crudelis* find no echo on the hot soil of Africa.

While the doctor retires to his private room to write out for some court of justice the opinion that he is officially required to give on some case, we accompany the apothecary into a small room, which contains the principal collection of drugs and medicines in the province, whence all the state-appointed physicians, male as well as female, in the sub-districts receive their supplies. For as male physicians are not readily permitted to attend on women and children, there are some women who pass through a course of medicine and midwifery (though not a very extensive one) at the medical school at Cairo, and are then distributed through the provinces to treat those whom men are not allowed to visit. In this sort of emancipation, therefore, Egypt is already in advance of most western countries. By these arrangements those who are afflicted with diseases have always medical aid within their reach, and that free of cost. Even medicines are supplied by the government gratis, the doctors merely having to keep a register of what

they give out.<sup>1</sup> Truly a humane idea worthy of "the great pasha"<sup>2</sup> who conceived it. Yet the peasant flies with horror from the offered hand and throws himself into the arms of the amulet writers, dealers in charms, soothsayers, saints, fumigators, spice-mongers, and stroking-women. The fatalist does nothing but quietly awaits the result. Those who have some glimmering of intelligence do indeed go to the doctor, but ask from him by name the medicine they want, for they know all about medicine themselves. They are already acquainted, for example, with carbonate of soda and *yodur el potassa* (iodide of potassium). And when they do leave it to the doctor to prescribe they will never take any medicine unless they are first satisfied as to the names and proportionate weights of the ingredients of which the mixture is composed, and so suspicious are they that they often insist upon the doctor himself trying it first. A patient of this description is standing at this very moment at the apothecary's counter. He stirs the witches' broth round and round, murmuring the while a *bismillah er-rahmán er-rahím* ("in the name of God"), and at last with a look of valiant resolution empties it at a single draught down his throat. The native prefers, however, to get the separate ingredients of a mixture from the apothecary and mix them for himself at home. Purgatives are very commonly used among the people, emetics and clysters very little. In their own native trained doctors they have very little confidence. But a Frank travelling through the country, whether he be a medical man or not, is always a wonder-worker in the medical art, and is asked to cure the blind, lame, impotent, and all sorts of incurable—though seldom curable—persons. In pathology those of the common people who interest themselves at all in medicine render homage, like the old Arab physicians, to vague theories such as those of Galen. Thus peas are said to be "hot," coffee dries up the brain, a pain proceeds either from the blood or from cold (in which latter case it is to be quite differently treated), &c.

<sup>1</sup> This last provision has, however, recently been abolished.

<sup>2</sup> So Mohammed Ali is generally called.

The fact that these humane efforts of civilization in medicine do not succeed is not entirely the fault of the dark superstition in which the people are buried. The central repository of drugs, and still more the supplies that are drawn therefrom by the district physicians, are very deficient both in quantity and quality. The doctor must select for his patients medicines that he happens to have. When the rhubarb is done the patients' bowels are always loosened with Epsom salts. Many doctors, too, have no conception of the humanity naturally belonging to their profession. Their whole aim is to make money. They are ill-paid, and cannot make money in the honourable practice of their profession, since they are required by law to give their services free, and in fact no one will consent to pay them. They accordingly abuse their official authority, which is by no means limited. The doctor has to watch over the sanitation of his districts, and to see to the condition of all articles of food; on his decision often depends that of the judge; and the unprofessional man, however high he may be above the doctor in rank, in many cases cannot interfere. This powerful official has the key of the people's treasury, and he will use it unless he has the necessary moral restraint, whose place no babbling of prayers, washings, and prostrations before the Deity will supply. Thus it happens, that, although they are not wanting in outward marks of respect to a hakim pasha, the medical profession is utterly detested by the people, and the provisions made for the maintenance of public health, by which their old habits are interfered with, are regarded by them merely as a mode of extortion devised by the Franks. They fear the hospital almost more than death; and hence its inmates, as already said, consist only of those who are there under compulsion—soldiers, prisoners, and pilgrims found half dead on the roads.

## A COPTIC MEAL DURING A FAST.

We spend the evening in the house of a Coptic scribe, with whom we have made acquaintance in the morning in the

mudirîeh. He invited us to become his guest, but gave the invitation in a very hesitating manner; for it happens to be a period of fasting, which it is during nearly half the year. Before every one of the greater festivals (Christmas, Easter, the feast of the apostles, the assumption of the Virgin) there is a fast of several weeks, in addition to which every Wednesday and Friday is a fast-day. On our entering the house the females are warned and got out of sight as in the house of the Moslems. We must seat ourselves either in the reception-room or on the terrace or verandah on a carpet on the floor, where some guests of the same race and religion as our host have already settled themselves. The proceedings are pretty much the same as those we formerly witnessed in the house of the Moslem; but the stomach is not immediately satisfied, being treated for several hours with date-spirit, which we get to drink in small bottles like medicine bottles. Our thirst is kept alive by all sorts of provocatives, such as roasted chick-peas or maize, salted *tirmis* (or lupines), hazel-nuts, and sweetmeats, while we smoke and talk. The conversation turns chiefly on religion, which in the East takes the place of politics.

The preparation of the liquor just mentioned, to which one must be accustomed before one can like it, may be taken as a characteristic example of Arab industry, and we shall therefore stop to give an account of it. After the dates have lain in a suitable quantity of water for weeks, during which period they have been stirred several times every day, and have thus undergone the process of fermentation, the resulting liquor is distilled. An ordinary copper caldron with a narrow mouth forms the retort, which stands on a few stones placed round the fire. The head of the still is formed by a large earthenware jar, such as is used for carrying water, a so-called *balâs*, the handles of which have been sawn off, and which has been cut away at the mouth so as to fit that of the caldron exactly. Towards the top a round hole has been pierced in the side of the jar, and in this hole a straight hollow piece of dry sugar-cane is inserted horizontally instead of the ordinary worm. Near the extremity this horizontal

piece is intersected by a similar vertical piece, the lower end of which enters the receiver, which is a copper vessel of moderate height closed at the top by a pad. The receiver is kept cool by being placed in a wide vessel sunk in the earth and filled with cold water which is constantly renewed. The gaps and joints are stopped with rags and dough. The pieces of cane especially are wound round with rags several times. A great deal of the spirit of course escapes. The joints cannot be often enough cemented. There is always some new hole out of which the spirit bursts, not unfrequently taking fire in so doing.

At last, when the guests have imbibed a sufficient quantity of the spirit, and feel themselves in the happy state of mind and body which they call *kef*, the catables are served. They consist of steamed marsh-beans, lentils, preserved olives, a syrup of sesamum, fish, and several sweetmeats, fruits, and vegetables, such as radishes (the leaves of which are preferred to the rather insipid root), raw purple-red carrots, and whatever other green vegetables the season produces. But all animal food except fish, and even such animal products as butter, milk, and eggs, are rigorously eschewed. Soon after the meal is over the party breaks up, having consumed a great part of the evening with gossiping and disputing, in the course of which the standpoint of most of those who took part in the discussion had become far from clear. We return to our abode in the opposite condition to that in which we had left the Moslem's feast the evening before—with empty stomach but overburdened brain.

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#### FOURTH DAY.

##### THE COPTIC CHURCH AND THE COPTS.

Sunday morning has just dawned. A number of men exactly resembling the now familiar scribes, being dressed in dark-coloured clothes, and mostly wearing a black turban

on their head, and also a considerable number of closely-veiled women as well as children, are streaming into a narrow lane. In that lane stands a plain building in Gothic or Byzantine style, not with a lofty tower but with a modest ridgeturret. We follow. No one hinders the Frank, the fellow-Christian, from entering; indeed, the entrance is not closed even against a Mussulman, although it is closed against a Jew. We are in the Coptic church. The interior is simple, not in any respect overloaded with ornament. In the choir, within an area which the congregation is forbidden to encroach on, stands the high altar with the image of the Virgin, and some tapers and missals. The aisles each terminate in a smaller altar consecrated to some saint, and are adorned with a few oil-paintings brought from Europe. The congregation occupy the nave and the forepart of the choir, which is separated from the other part by a latticed partition. They sit cross-legged man to man on straw mats laid on the floor. Some are in Sunday dress, some not. All keep their heads covered, and most of them take off their shoes. From the gallery over the door of entrance we hear women's voices, and the still shriller voices of little children. In front of the gallery is a lattice to prevent the occupants of it from being seen, as the devotions of those below might thereby be disturbed.

The mass has begun. Among the congregation in the forepart of the choir are some of the inferior clergy dressed like the rest of the people. These stand at a reading-desk, and with furious rapidity read the gospels of the day in a sort of chanting style, first in the old Coptic language, which is still kept up for that purpose, and then in Arabic with a commentary for the edification of the people. Meanwhile a man goes round the congregation and distributes the host in the form of small loaves of white unleavened bread stamped with a cross, each person receiving one. A priest of very reverend aspect with a long silvery beard, which suits a priest so well, and wearing an embroidered white chasuble, now rises and goes through some operations in the most holy place beside the high altar, and then reads something to the people. The boys of the choir strike large metal disks or cymbals together,

making a great noise, which has, however, a very solemn effect. At the same time they as well as the congregation sing a psalm in a subdued tone and in rather quick time. The priest arrayed in a long gown raises the crucifix or pyx in sight of the people, and every one bows and crosses himself to the beat of the cymbals. Towards the close of the mass, the symbolism of which we must admit that we did not understand, the congregation rise up and crowd round the priest, who lays his hands with a blessing on the head of every one, not excepting us strangers. The Christian brethren give their hands to one another, and after having lasted about an hour and a half the service is over.

The Coptic Church, a heretical offshoot, as is well known, of the Greek, formed in the fifth century under the emperor Marcianus after the Council of Chalcedon, also called the Monophysite or Jacobite Church, is found only in Egypt, Abyssinia, and to a smaller extent in Syria. It has preserved many echoes or relics of ancient Christianity, perhaps more than other churches. It has maintained itself to the present day in spite of the most bitter persecutions carried on through many centuries. Millions of Copts have indeed gradually passed over to Islam; but those who have remained faithful compel our esteem by the firmness of their faith and by their endurance. The church is entirely independent of the state, and is subject to a patriarch, who is likewise head of the Abyssinian Church. Formerly the Mohammedan rulers attempted to force their submission by oppression; but they never made any direct efforts to convert them. But now there is no greater example of toleration to be seen anywhere than that which is exhibited at least on the part of the government in all these lands as far as the Nile reaches. And even the individual Mussulman is at least outwardly remarkably tolerant, and never carries on religious conversations with a proselytizing tendency. As long as an unbeliever keeps himself on a proper social footing with a Moslem, he is his friend and fellow-citizen. In daily intercourse the religious distinction is hardly noticeable. If, however, the unbeliever renders himself guilty of any offence he incurs a double disgrace.

The poison of slumbering fanaticism breaks out, and the offender is not only called a scoundrel, but also has the name of unbeliever thrown at him in contumely; precisely as among Christians and Jews in the civilized West. In disputes among native Christians of a purely ecclesiastical nature, for example those connected with marriage, priest, kadi, and governor may be seen sitting amicably together on the judicial bench. The kadi gives the benefit of his wisdom and experience towards the settlement of the question, the priest pronounces the decision of the court, and the governor executes it.

The Coptic priests, whose dress does not differ from that of the laymen, but is always, including the turban, of a dark colour, actually live in apostolic poverty, having no regular salary, and being entirely dependent for support upon their congregation. Articles of food are sent to their house, and they get a little money on occasion of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Like the Moslem kadi, they have various judicial functions to discharge, especially in connection with marriages and inheritances. The want of money makes them very ready to accept equivocal presents, and they are easily induced by such a gift to remit a few penances, which usually consist in prayer and fasting. In Cairo, so at least it is generally asserted, many of them act the part of match-makers, betrothing Coptic girls, though not without the consent of their parents, after the manner of the Moslems, by proclamation, which is totally contrary to their laws. The Copts show great respect to their priests, outwardly at any rate. They kiss their hands to them; but at bottom they seem to hold many of the priests in very little esteem, no doubt on account of such malpractices as that above mentioned. There is a seminary for Christian priests, but of the higher theological knowledge, or even of general culture, there is no trace, hardly even among the bishops. Intending priests may be married before they are consecrated; but after their consecration, if their first wife dies, they are not allowed to marry again. The higher clergy are required to remain unmarried.

The Copts read the gospels, which, like the Mussulmans with the Koran, they also outwardly hold in great reverence, and by



which they swear. They baptize children by immersion, have monasteries, and practise auricular confession and worship of the Virgin. The chief expression of their Christianity consists in fasting. The pope is their detestation. Besides a faint resemblance in feature, and many customs still prevalent among the Egyptians generally, the Copt, the true descendant of the great nation of the Retu, has inherited little from his remote forefathers. In fact he turns yellow when we tell him about the splendour and magnificence of the land of Kemi, of the quadriune God Amun, and the deeds wrought by the son of the sun. He knows the idolatrous and accursed race of the children of Pharaoh only from the opprobrious epithets which his enemies the Moslems bestow upon him, and from the representations inspired by national hatred given of them by the lawgiver of the Jews. The bad repute in which the excellent and high-minded Retu stand among the Moslems can be explained only by the degenerate effeminacy of their descendants at the time of Mohammed. Even the reproach of idolatry is at bottom not altogether justified; for there is no doubt that we must distinguish between the deep philosophic religion of the initiated and the symbolical idol and animal worship, which barbarous form of religion was inculcated by the hierarchy on the common people. In the ancient Egyptian religion there was in fact only *one* God; the others were merely attributes or energies of the one, though each had his own emblems.

As for the modern Copt, he has become from head to foot, in manners, language, and spirit, a Moslem, however unwilling he may be to recognize the fact. His dress is like that of the rest of the people, except that he prefers darker materials. The black turban, formerly the brand of the Christians (who were obliged to wear a black or blue turban to distinguish them from the Moslems), is now voluntarily and gladly worn by them, and especially by the Coptic scribes as a badge of honour. The Copt smiles at the Moslem, who, in going through his prayers, turns his face towards Mecca, while he himself with his face turned to Jerusalem mumbles out psalms by the yard in a regular paternoster gallop.

Unabashed he pollutes the virgin air of the Mohammedan great month of Ramadan with clouds of smoke from his pipe, but crucifies his own flesh during three quarters of the year with the scanty juices of vegetable, fluvial, and marine aliments. Like the Moslem and the Jew, he has a horror of blood and swine's flesh,<sup>1</sup> but in addition has an equal abhorrence of camel's flesh, which the Bedouin Mohammed permitted. He clings with excessive tenacity to the privileges he enjoys in the case of his favourite spirit. He never tastes his evening meal until his mind is clouded by the vapours of this water of life, which he prepares for himself from dates. To this spirit alone he owes the rotundity of his body, and perhaps the existence of his race, which would otherwise have died out long ago under the regimen of pease, beans, and fish without fat or butter, which form almost his whole diet during the seasons of fasting. For the noble juice of the grape the descendant of the ancient Egyptians has no taste. The vine is much cultivated in Egypt, and the grapes are excellent, but are only used for eating. All the wine used in the country is imported, and the quantity consumed by the natives is very insignificant. The drinking of spirits is a characteristic sign of the degradation of the descendants of the wine-loving Retu.

The Kopt as a good Christian must live till his death a strict monogamist, but, like the Moslem, is allowed to taste the joys of married life in early youth. His spouse is generally chosen for him by his father from among his own near relations, and when he has married her he closely secludes her from the male world without. Like the early Christians, he loves to pray in domestic association with his fellow-Christians, and seals the prayer with a fraternal pressure of

<sup>1</sup> By one religion or another pretty nearly all domestic animals are forbidden; thus the cow is forbidden by the Hindus, and was so by the ancient Egyptians, who also apparently interdicted the sheep; the Abyssinians interdict the goose. Among the ancient Egyptians the swine was entirely forbidden as an article of food only to the priests; the other orders ate it, at least occasionally, as at the sacrifice of Typho. This animal was, however, thoroughly despised. Swineherds were not permitted to enter a temple, and no one having a different employment would marry one of their daughters.

the hand. He does not readily allow his Christian brethren, to whatever confession they may belong, to suffer want; but his love for his neighbour is generally confined to those who own the name of Christian. In proof of his Christianity he will often turn up his sleeves, and show a blue cross indelibly tattooed upon his arm. The Kopt is fanatical, servile, and avaricious, but more accessible to enlightenment than the Koran-bound Moslem.

As the missionaries scattered over Egypt accomplish virtually nothing with the Moslems, who are too firm in their faith to yield to such efforts, they have long turned their eyes on the wandering Koptic sheep, and Catholics and Protestants vie with one another in attempts to gain them over. The former had at one time some success, since the adoption of the Catholic faith brought them at least the moral support of a Catholic foreign power, namely Austria. In quite recent times, however, the Protestants have been making a great stir, and they have many avowed and still more secret adherents. The remission of fasting, a practice which causes so many Kopts to suffer from stomach complaints, may have not a little to do with this success. The Protestant mission is an organization of the American Methodists; but the work is chiefly carried on by a native converted Kopt (belonging to Kus), who is a successful reformer, and knows how to convince his fellow-countrymen and inspire them with enthusiasm. The sect which calls itself Protestant spread so rapidly, that the Koptic patriarch was compelled to interfere, and the Protestant agitator was condemned with the help of the government to be deported to Fazogl, the Egyptian Cayenne, and would actually have been sent there had not the American consul exerted himself in his favour. In some districts the Protestant zeal that fired a portion of the people led them even to plunder the ancient Coptic mother church, and the Moslem government had to restore order.

## THE BATH.

After hearing the Sunday morning mass in the Coptic Church we determine to have a bath. We walk through a

few lanes and stop at a door, surmounted by a projecting pediment, painted in rather childish style in a variety of colours. We pass from the street into a large hall, where the proprietor of the bath receives us sitting upon his divan. The hall serves as the office of the bath, for drying linen, and for dressing and undressing in. The master of the bath points us to a platform at the side, covered with straw mats, where we exchange our clothes for a bathing costume, which consists in a cloth put round the loins, with the addition perhaps of a bathing turban. An attendant similarly attired gives us his hand to lead us through a dark passage, along whose wet polished marble floor, smooth and slippery as ice, we have no little difficulty in tottering with our naked feet. This passage conducts us to the steaming-room, where the sultry vapour, that rises from a hot fountain bubbling up in the middle of a large marble octagon, condenses on the cooler dome-shaped roof of the hall, and descends in drops. Light is admitted by a number of small openings in the roof closed with glass. We seat ourselves on the octagon, and observe the bathers who pass in succession. We have already had sufficient opportunity on the public streets of noticing the great breadth of the upper part of their bodies, and the slenderness of their limbs, but we have never had the chance of seeing them without a head-covering of some sort. The men who are now moving about in the bathing establishment, however, are mostly bare-headed. A bald head has been an object of timid reverence on our part ever since the prophet Elisha caused the children who reviled him to be consumed by bears, and we accordingly pay due respect to the old bald-headed bathers. But most of these bald heads seem to possess abundance of vital force, and have a youthful often child-like appearance. Here comes one whose head is crowned by a luxuriant tuft of hair on the summit; here is another from the upper part of whose brow spring two long horns like those of the lawgiver of the Jews; this one wears a tuft of hair in front like Peter, that one has only the back part of his head overgrown with a shaggy covering; in short, locks of hair may be allowed to grow at any point

of the skull that the wearer pleases, but never over the whole skull, for that would stamp a man as an unbeliever. All this is the result of the tonsure, recommended by the forethought of the prophet for the sake of cleanliness, but not invented by him, since the original inhabitants of the land of Kemi always had their heads shayed smooth. In modern Egypt the men shave the hair off their whole body except the face, which is seldom shaved at all even by the peasants. The women keep their hair. In a room adjoining there is a small pond where one can stand breast-deep in water and parboil his limbs in company with the lame, the leprous, and the syphilitic. We, however, are led by another attendant into a dark ante-chamber and subjected to a tedious purifying process. One attendant first pulls at our limbs as if he wished to tear them off. We hear with alarm all our joints crack, yet we feel the operation so pleasant that we calmly let him proceed. Our flesh is then firmly stroked, kneaded, and worked. A douche of hot water now wets the whole surface of our body, and with such suddenness that the heart and breathing are checked. Thereupon the attendant, enveloping his hand in a sort of bag-shaped glove made of coarse cloth, begins to stroke us all over, thoroughly cleansing the pores of impurities, which become rolled up into spindle-shaped and cylindrical masses and fall down to the floor. We look with astonishment upon the heaps of refuse with which our skin was loaded. After the body has been soaped from head to foot, and played upon by streams of hot water, the shampooer leaves us to our fate, and we quit the scouring-room cleaner than marble. The steaming-room, on first entering which we were like to suffocate, now seems to us like an ice-cellar, and after getting a short dry cloak thrown round us by the attendant who conducted us into this room, we hurry, shivering and with chattering teeth, into the still colder outer room. A young man receives us in the dressing-room, and rubs us for a considerable time with dry warm cloths, an operation which we find very agreeable. Meanwhile we enjoy our pipe and sip a small cup of coffee. Finally we dress, pay the master

of the bath his fee, and give a trifle to every one who has rendered any services to our body.

#### THE DOGS.

After our bath we make the best of our way into the fresh air, and ascend one of the many eminences outside the town which have been formed by the gradual accumulation of the refuse carried thither. In Upper Egypt those eminences near the towns are the homes of the dogs, which seldom venture into the streets except by night, while they remain both night and day in the larger towns of Lower Egypt, the members of each family strictly confining themselves to their own locality, and clearing the streets from filth. These dirty jackal-like and mostly ugly red-haired animals, which have neither property nor master to guard, evidently look upon our appearance, which is very unexpected, as boding no good to them. Their first feeling is one of cowardly fear, manifested by the way in which their tails curl down between their legs, and then by the manner in which they sneak round about us in an arc of a circle, while they steadily eye us with a look of distrust. When they are beyond the reach of any immediate danger they set up a hoarse yelping and a most disagreeable barking. These sounds communicate themselves to the families of dogs on the next eminences of the same kind, and spread in ever widening circles, proclaiming to the whole town that something extraordinary must have taken place, and the din returns to our suffering ears like a hundred-voiced echo. The dog, the faithful friend of man, has degenerated in the towns of the East to a cowardly misanthrope, and we cannot blame him for it when we consider the numerous little attentions that the Mohammedan in his zeal against uncleanness has bestowed on him, and which have resulted in the limping legs, the broken ribs, and ulcerated skins to be seen everywhere. A few bitten noses and torn ears must be laid to the account of the exclusiveness which these creatures exhibit among themselves. Woe to the dog which a roving spirit,

hunger, or any other impulse has brought among the inhospitable members of a neighbouring pack. Among the ancient Egyptians the dog met with an entirely opposite treatment. In those times he was highly esteemed, and in some places was worshipped. Mummies of dogs have been found at Lycopolis, near Siout. Cats enjoy a certain consideration even at the present day.

In our peregrination we pass a place where building is going on. A large number of people, mostly quite naked boys and half-naked girls, but also men and poor women pretty well advanced in years, are engaged in carrying earth and stones from one place to another. An overseer is set over each division of these labourers, and goes about with an uplifted rod in his hand keeping his gang diligently at work by word and deed. But that is hardly necessary, for the loud never-ending song which old and young sing to their work, a song embracing a comparatively small number of notes, with a regularly recurring refrain, and accompanied by clapping of the hands, is in itself sufficient to maintain their activity. Every division sings in its own way, and so they go on humming and bustling like a swarm of bees. Loads are carried in baskets on the head or shoulders, often also upon a sort of tray which they hold in front pretty high on the body grasping the outer edge with their hands which are bent well back. Similar scenes down to the minutest details are represented on the pictures of the ancient Egyptians.

#### BOYS AND GIRLS AT PLAY.

At a little open space near by we hear the confused shouts and cries of boys at play. Some bold warriors, holding up one foot and hopping on the other, try to knock each other down, and in order to play at this game they have taken off their only garment, a blue shirt, and bound it round their loins. Before long a weakling is thrown down, and kissing the ground, raises a frightful cry and begins to abuse his conqueror worse than Thersites. The latter in retaliation makes

violent clutches at the only tuft of hair that has been left on the boy's shaved head, from which his cap has fallen during the scuffle. At last the boy gets free and runs off, casting all sorts of opprobrious epithets, among which that of "bastard" is never wanting, at his antagonist, and his father and forefathers.

Here also some boys have laid themselves down on the dusty ground, on which they have improvised a draught-board by drawing lines at right angles to one another, and are playing a game like draughts with stones picked up from the street for men. The men are called Moslim and Nusrani (Christian), and these names are always cried aloud. Others drive a ball by means of a club, or mounted on each other's backs play the ball-game of which the ancient Egyptians, and especially the Egyptian women, were so fond. Some are chasing a humble bee, setting off crackers, or firing small pocket-pistols. Some animal just caught, for example, a prickly fish, or, it may be a dog, is dragged along the ground with some life still in it, and is beaten to death amid loud cries of *yistâhel!* (it deserves it). The same cry is heard on the evening before the slaughter of any large animal, such as a camel or a buffalo, which is always an event in small places. The seller or slaughterer marches with his beast through the whole village followed by a band of boys, sometimes paid for the purpose, sometimes not, crying out incessantly *yistâhel!* which in this case is equivalent to: "it is good value." The buyers can thus see with their own eyes, while the animal is still alive, whether its flesh is sound and fat.

Another group of boys are engaged in the imitation of those well-known religious gymnastic exercises, called *Zikr*. A choir of little songsters, who are not yet fully able to speak their words correctly, sing with a loud voice and rapt expression in honour of the Prophet, repeating the phrase: "*la illah ill allah, Mohammed U(r)asul allah.*" A diminutive pair of human beings still at the very entrance of life, and wearing the innocent and simple dress of paradise, where man and beast still lived a quiet life at peace with one another, roll themselves on their mother earth in silent enjoyment; for



numberless flies have found an undisturbed resting-place on their oily countenances and little watery eyes. The little children are playing with a "bride," that is, a doll scarcely bearing any resemblance to the human form, with shells, a clay camel, and the like. But there are not many kinds of toys in the children's hands, for they are considered as articles of luxury, and as such indeed toys are pretty good standards of civilization.

As soon as we are observed by the boys, they begin chirping in our ears *Bakshish yâ chauagel*. In vain we try not to hear them. The further off we remove, the more the little fellows feel themselves out of our reach, all the louder and more general do their demands become, and they now also bestow upon us the title of "*Nusrani*" (Christian), and every epithet that rhymes with that appellative.

## SCHOOL.

We continue our wanderings through the streets and lanes of the town, expecting to fall in with other interesting scenes characteristic of the East, and before long a horrible confused noise arising from boys' voices and proceeding from a small house like a chapel forces itself on our ears. We put our head in at the open door, and see a worthy schoolmaster sitting with a cane in his hand in the midst of his scholars on the floor of the school-room, which is bare of furniture. All stages of boyhood are represented, from that at which the lisp and stammer of childhood are scarcely given up to that at which the youth becomes a man. One of the crowd, holding up a wooden or metal tablet close in front of him, is practising himself in reading aloud the venerable basis of all science, the alphabet, which the master has written out for him with large strokes; another makes his first attempts in writing; a third, more advanced, is reading or rather singing from the "pre-eminent book," the Koran, and accompanies his reading with an energetic oscillation of the upper part of the body. The master assists the efforts of every individual scholar with his superior knowledge, and not rarely also with the weight of his cane.

Nor does he lose sight of the general body of scholars, for his cane comes down with the speed of lightning on the knuckles of some inattentive boys, who were carrying on all sorts of games behind his back. An assistant, chosen from among his best pupils, aids him to the best of his ability in the practice of his pedagogic calling, instructs the younger ones with a manifest consciousness of his own importance, and makes no scruples about letting those who have been placed under his charge feel the weight of the cane intrusted to him. In the case of one of the learners the customary blows on the various members of the body have no effect, and, like the offender in the court of justice, he is stretched out upon the floor by his fellow-pupils, who act with great readiness the part of officers to their master, and is treated to the bastinado.

From sunrise till the evening call the schoolmaster is required to keep his pupils employed, allowing, however, a suitable period for relaxation at the time of the morning and mid-day meals. Every Thursday morning there is a public examination, during which the teacher remains a passive observer, and leaves the entire management of the school to his youthful assistant. The teacher receives a weekly fee of one piastre for every pupil. Friday is always a holiday. If the pupil after several years' schooling is able to drone off a few chapters of the Koran, the happy father is satisfied, the skilful teacher receives from him a few crowns as an honorary recompense for his labours, and the learned son leaves the school for ever. The high fees obtained by the numerous professional scribes shows how far from general, and how imperfect is the education of the people. It hardly needs to be mentioned that the teachers cannot live on the insignificant fee that they get from their pupils. They accordingly take upon themselves various other functions, such as those of text-writers, public readers of the Koran, hymn-singers, and attendants at the shrines of the saints.

#### A MOSQUE.

High in air above us there sounds a wonderful melody. It is the call to prayer, an institution peculiar to Mohammedan

countries. On the parapet of a tower which rises like a pillar from the midst of the dense mass of houses, we see the *Muezzin*, the functionary who warns believers to bow themselves in adoration before the "highest and only God, and Mohammed is his prophet." We allow ourselves to be carried along by the streams of people who are now proceeding from all quarters in the direction in which the cry was heard, and we soon find ourselves before the temple.

Although we cannot here expect the majestic splendour of one of the mosques of the caliphs in the capital, yet we feel attracted by the peculiar taste of the modern Arabic architect. On the simple basis of a wall built with square-cut stones, he has employed all those artistic devices on which his religion, prohibiting the imitation of anything having life,<sup>1</sup> permits him to exercise his creative ideas; namely, mosaics, arabesques, geometrical figures, and alphabetical writing. All these modes of decoration are lavishly employed, sometimes with elegance sometimes altogether tastelessly, on every part of the walls, but more especially on the portals and windows, which here, where there is no harem to hide, can be made more numerous. In making these openings the builder is not content with carrying out a single system, but forms a new style by the simultaneous use of all figures in which a wall can be imagined to be regularly pierced. The curve of the ass's back is seen in familiar juxtaposition with the camel's hump; the horse-shoe of the Moor appears in amicable alliance with the round arch of the Byzantine; the pointed arch soars aloft alongside of prosaic rectilinears. Points, lines, triangles, rhombuses, polygons, circles, arcs, undulations, and zigzags in all colours are chaotically distributed over the walls. The natural freedom of the Arabic writing has furnished the means of producing true works of art in the form of inscriptions, which are scattered over every part of the edifice.

<sup>1</sup> A rigid Mussulman cannot easily be induced to have his portrait painted, or to get himself photographed; it is only those who have come in contact with Europeans who have no scruples on that score. The view of the Prophet is that in painting anything having life something is abstracted from the soul of the object portrayed.

High above on the flat roof numerous generations of cupolas sprout round the great mother dome.

However marvellous and fantastic the outside shell of the temple may be, the interior is just as simple and puritanically devoid of ornament. In its essential features it differs so little from that of a Christian basilica that one is led to ask whether the founders of Islam, who displayed as little original genius for art as the Vandals, did not get their mosques built by conquered renegades. The high altar, where the Mohammedan lay-priest celebrates mass on Fridays, has become a wooden table supported by a few pillars. The pulpit has been retained. Instead of the blasphemous crucifix the eyes of the congregation are diverted to the niche in the wall, behind which lies Mecca. Besides these furnishings and a few framed inscriptions on the walls the interior spaces contain nothing but the invisible spirit of God. The old Arabic style of building has nothing in common with the ancient Egyptian. At the most a few columns of ancient temples are occasionally inserted in the more modern structures. According to some art critics the fundamental idea of the mosque is the Bédouin tent, and that of the arabesques the texture of a carpet.

We have the audacity to slink into the interior and place ourselves behind a pillar, and this we have accomplished by slipping a piece of silver into the hand of the door-keeper, who wished to preserve the sanctuary from being trodden by the unclean Frank. On another occasion we obtain entrance through meeting with a friend who closes the eyes of his fanatical fellow-believers by observing that at the bottom of our heart we are a Moslem. In any case we have, in common with the Moslems themselves, to take off our shoes.

Before prayer the Moslem must always carefully wash with running water all those parts of his body liable to become polluted by contact with the outer world; though it may be that he does not always at the same time purify his heart, which the washing symbolically represents. The priests of the ancient Egyptians were almost as particular in this

respect, being likewise accustomed to perform religious ablutions several times a day.

By the time the last notes of the chant of the crier on the minaret have died away the whole congregation has arranged itself in rows before the Lord of hosts, with naked feet but covered heads. Each one visibly fills his soul with a purpose of devotion, energetically throwing aside for this solemn moment all joys and sorrows, all the hate and love belonging to earthly life. Under the guidance of an imān they then go through a series of observances, consisting in bending the body, falling on the knees, kissing the ground, turning the head, and performing a number of movements with their arms, hands, and fingers with all the precision of soldiers exercising, and all according to fixed regulations, in which the ambassador of God has been able to declare with accuracy what movements of the foot and hand, and what particular arrangement of the fingers, are most pleasing to God in any operation that has to be performed. As in the Christian Church the boys in the choir heighten the solemnity of the chief ceremonies of the mass by the sounding of cymbals; in the Mohammedan service the minaret-crier, who has by this time descended from his elevated station, sings out the exalted names of God and the Prophet, which from time to time are uttered, in a loud voice by the otherwise silent worshippers. At the conclusion of the fatha, the Mohammedan paternoster, the whole congregation join in a prolonged Amen, which is pronounced in a low tone, and has a very impressive effect. Finally, after the worshipper has discharged the devotional duties common to all, he kneels upon the ground and lays the wants of his own heart before his creator, his mediator Mohammed, and Mohammed's holy family, and as he does this he holds his hands outstretched as if on them he had written his wants and were thence reading them off. All these ceremonies are performed without the assistance of any priest. Even the sermon on Fridays is delivered by a layman, it may be an artisan. In the Christian sense of the word Islam has no clergy, unless this name is given to the ulema and the kadis or ecclesiastical

judges, who have studied theology. It is in fact the grandest thing in Islam, that its strength lies not in the hierarchy but in the people.

As if awakening from a long and beautiful dream, in which he believed himself to have seen the face of God, the Moslem at the end of the hour of prayer takes leave of the spiritual world and the angels who stood at his side, wipes his face with his hands, and steps out into the world of every-day life, proud to be adorned with the dust of the mosque which has stuck to his moist brow as he kissed the earth. Those who cannot so easily set their minds at rest find their way out of their difficulties by means of their rosary, as Theseus made his escape from the labyrinth with the help of a clue of thread. They mutter some unintelligible verses, and counting off one knot after another they pour out their feelings thirty-three times in honour of the glory of God (*subhan allah*), thirty-three times they render to him praise and thanks (*el hamdu lillah*), thirty-three times they acknowledge his supreme greatness (*allahu akbar*), and with the ninety-ninth knot they have once more happily arrived on this side of existence, and pursue their good or evil ways exactly according to their old proclivities.

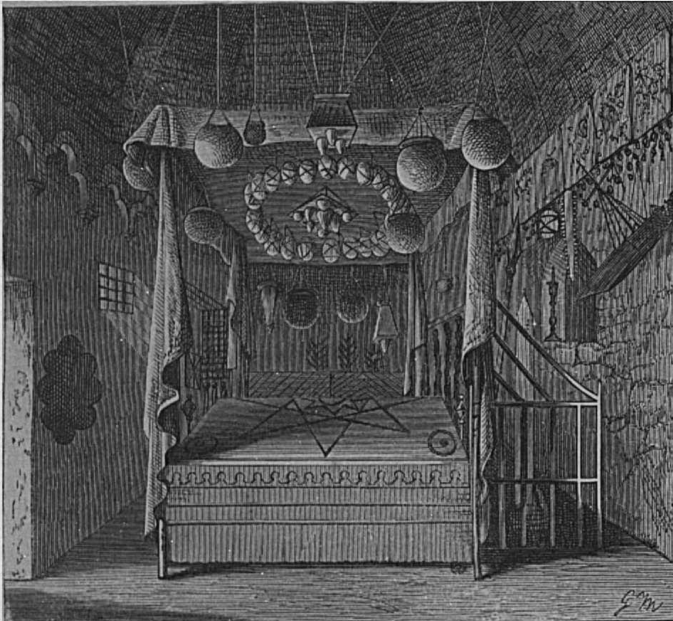
But scarcely has the sun begun to descend in the heavens when the crier again ascends the minaret, and everything follows in the same order as in the morning; and the same is the case also when the last streak of day has disappeared and the vault of heaven is sprinkled over with stars. The Moslem thus prays at the first dawning of the day, as soon as a white thread can be distinguished from a black, again at mid-day when the sun has reached the culmination of his daily course, and again at evening when the length of a man's shadow is equal to the height of his body. It is no slight labour that Islam exacts of her followers. Their prayers may, however, be performed in their own houses, on the street, or wherever the worshippers may be, for God is everywhere. It is also free to the Moslem to give himself up to prayer at any time in the interval between one hour of prayer and another. The Moslem does not care to pray in the stillness of his chamber.

He prefers publicity and the companionship of his brethren at these exercises. In this way he gains not a little as a pious man in the esteem of his fellow citizens.

## A SAINT'S MAUSOLEUM.

We again seek the open air, and are met by a band of men, who hurry past us laughing, disputing, and singing. Suddenly one cries out: "A Fatha to our lord Abdallah," and all stop before the lattice-window of a chapel. The noisy band is converted into a group of pious worshippers holding their hands before their faces. After a minute's pause they proceed on their way with the same boisterous noise as before. The sacred edifice, resembling in its fundamental conception the mausoleum of Hadrian, is built of stone or clay, and is in the form of a cube surmounted by an octagon terminating in a cupola. On each of the four corners of the cubical portion is erected a small tower or minaret, and the finial of the dome is crowned by a crescent moon, lying so that the points are turned upwards. The half-moon is never used, for it has lost interest for the adherents of Islam, and there is not even a name for it in the language. Nor is it the imaginary new moon of the calendar, but the newly risen narrow sickle-shaped strip as it first shows itself after the beginning of each lunar month, which is the symbol of Islam and the badge of its rulers. The appearance of this on the western horizon every believer watches month by month like his Sabæan forefathers in order to obtain from it, or at least by means of that sign, prosperity and bliss. The buildings already mentioned form the whole of the sanctuary, unless perhaps there is an open court adjoining with a number of outbuildings, and surrounded by a quadrangular wall. On the flat roof of these outbuildings we observe a frame made up of wooden bars, which, on the annual festival of the saintly patron of the mausoleum is carried in procession splendidly arrayed, and is called a *mâhmel*. We boldly enter in at the gate. A few nods suffice to dispel the scruples of the guardian of the sacred spot; and in a short time, in con-

sequence of the singular indulgence displayed to us, even the mysterious domed hall is trodden by our Christian feet after they have been deprived of their unclean covering. A large stone carved in the form of a sarcophagus takes up the greater part of the narrow space. The stone is covered with a bright-



Mausoleum of a Saint.

green or red cloth with inscriptions embroidered on it in gold and silver, and with banners of a similar colour and similarly inscribed stuck round it. The walls are filled with pictorial representations of the holy places of Islam, including the city of David. In this picture-gallery red, green, and yellow are the most prominent colours. There is also no want of silver leaf and Dutch gold. Mount Sinai and other sacred mountains as depicted resemble a mound erected by white ants. The minarets make one think of gibbets. The sacred temples appear like tables, and their domes like balls rolling on the upper edges of the tables. The palms are like



branched candlesticks; hell, paradise, and the river of life like the card of a compass.

In the corner of the sanctuary stands a wax candle as long and thick as an elephant's tusk. Beside it gapes a crocodile's mouth, while the rib of a gigantic fish menaces visitors like a drawn sword. Attached to the roof are a number of interlacing cords, and from these as from the branches of a Christmas-tree are suspended various glass lamps, little ships, ostrich eggs (which were also hung up in their temples and sanctuaries by the ancient Egyptians), but above all numberless little bundles of sacred earth from Mecca carefully wrapped up in sugar-loaf form.

We quit the most holy place, and take a look at the court and all that belongs to it, the niches for prayer, and the graves of the favoured dead, who must sleep in this consecrated earth a more blessed sleep than the common herd who people the graveyard without; and in passing out we cast a parting glance at the little room, from which we hear the sound of the strokes of a schoolmaster's cane and the cries of his young pupils. For schools and other foundations are often connected with these spots. But who was the great man to whom such a mausoleum has been built, and such reverence is paid? He was, according to Mohammedan ideas, a saint, who was endowed by God during his life (or perhaps only after his death) with miraculous powers as a compensation for his weak intellect, and who is accordingly regarded as a "favourite of God." In godless Europe, except in some districts such as Switzerland, where the idiots enjoy a high degree of respect, individuals of this class are called fools and imbeciles.

## A BURIAL-PLACE.

Not far from this sanctuary, on the border of the desert, on the dividing line between living nature and dead, is the place allotted to those who have passed from life to death. No wall incloses the wide field, which is rather to be called a city of the dead than a graveyard. For, beside the mounds

of earth and low flat gravestones, many considerable structures rise into the air; mausoleums, chapels, and mosques for the numerous miracle-working saints and other estimable God-favoured men, and in addition to these buildings a number of dwelling-houses where mourning families spend some days and nights, especially at the time of the great feasts beside the resting-place of their beloved dead. No living green thing, no fragrant flower, adorns the grave in the desert. Instead of a wreath a palm branch stuck in the grave in those days of mourning bespeaks a pure love and faith unconquered by death itself.

The army of the dead of all times and of all countries in which the language of the Koran is heard, is marshalled by the Prophet in orderly array, ready to stand armed in the faith before the Judge of the other world. The dead champion of Islam always lies with his head inclined to the right in such a manner that his face looks towards Mecca, the town which stands at the centre of the earth, and of all earths, that is, of all the heavenly bodies. The Egyptian, Turk, and Moghrebin look to the south-east; the Tartar looks to the south; the Indian to the west; the inhabitant of Sudan to the east. All grave-stones are laid in the same direction, and to show that the corpse has had the proper position given to it, the spot beneath which the head lies is marked by some external sign, for example, a turban carved in stone, an upright stone, slab, or merely a heap of stones, some wands stuck in the ground, and so forth, and often the place of the feet is correspondingly indicated. As if to make up for the want of a coffin,<sup>1</sup> the grave-stone is made in the form of one. It is oblong in form, and has a rounded or sharp-edged longitudinal ridge for men, and a longitudinal depression for women. The inscription, which gives some details regarding the person lying beneath, concludes with an invitation to pray a fatha over him:

*For his sake a Fatha!*

<sup>1</sup> The corpse is not inclosed in a coffin, but is placed in a kind of vault cut in the side of the grave at bottom.