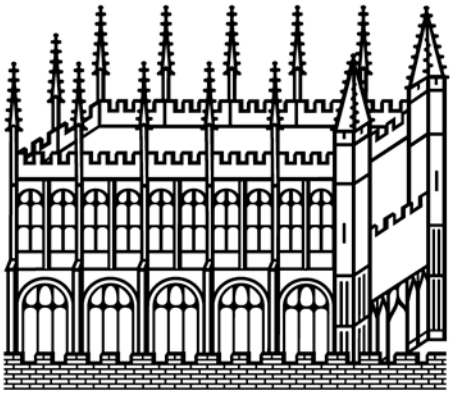
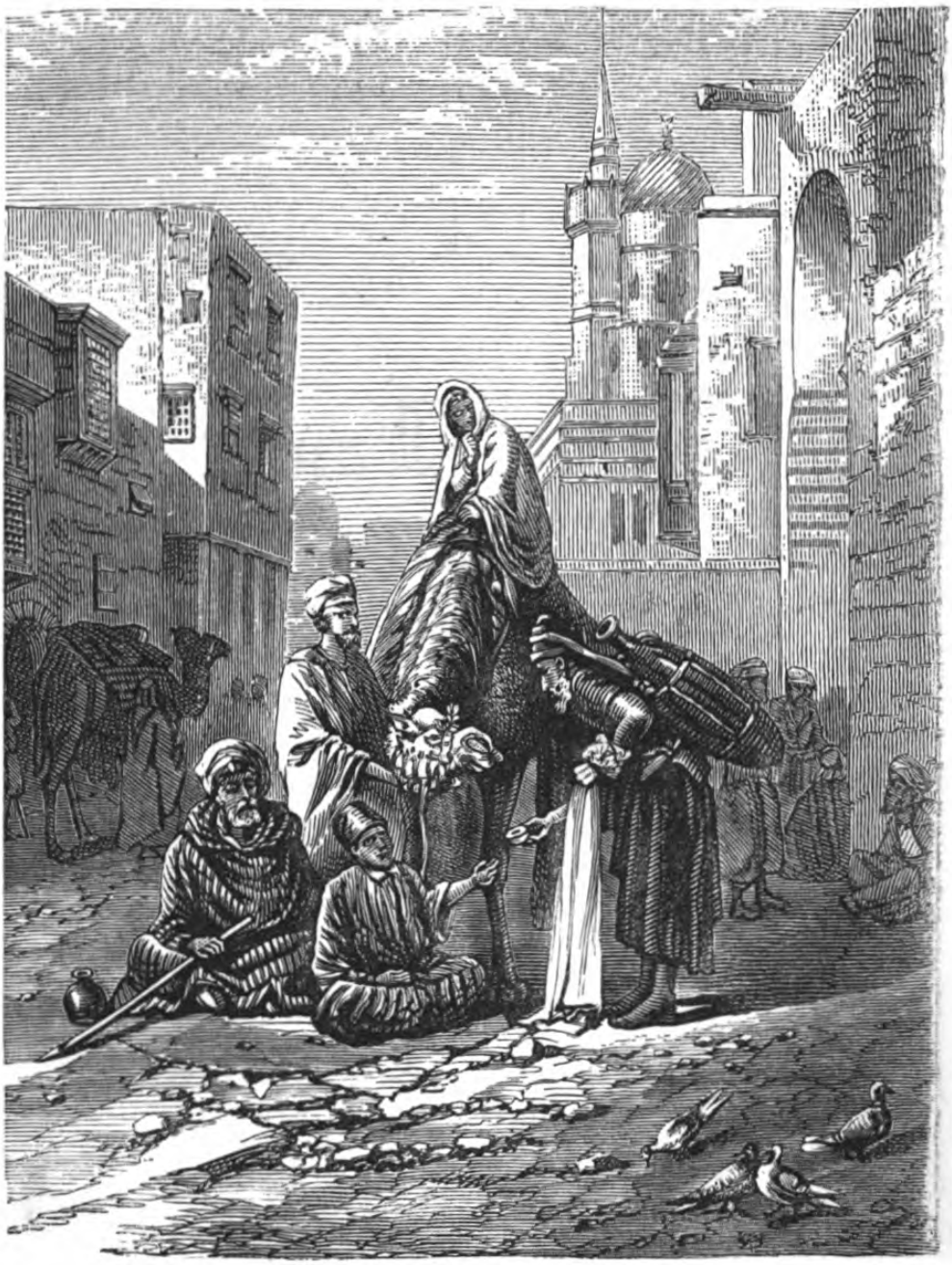


HOMES AND HOME-LIFE IN BIBLE LANDS

J. R. S. CLIFFORD.



A STREET SCENE IN AN EASTERN CITY.

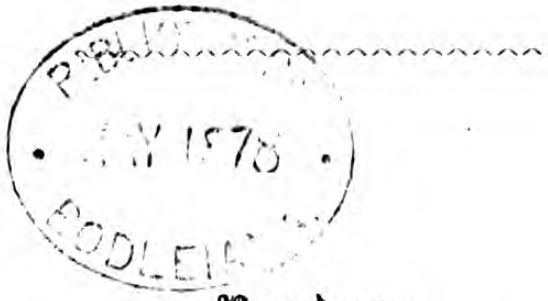
HOMES AND HOME-LIFE

IN

Bible Lands.

BY

J. R. S. CLIFFORD.



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INTRODUCTORY.

IT is a very remarkable thing, a thing true of no other book except the Bible, that its pages are understood, believed, and loved by people of every land, though millions of its readers know nothing of the lands with which all its various books are associated, beyond what the Bible itself tells them. This is one of the many proofs that it has a Divine Author, who has given us with the Bible all the information we need to make its history and its biographies interesting to us. Did you ever think of this fact, that, go where the Bible may, in any region of earth that is inhabited by men, it narrates with those truths so important for all to know, so much of incident that belongs to those particular countries where all its books were written? By the Bible, facts about Eastern life and Eastern habits are carried to countries which would otherwise never have heard of them. We might say, that the fountain of living water, rising in the gorgeous East, as it flows forth to enrich all lands, carries with it traces of the soil where it first bubbled up.

Now the Bible is a book full of light, and yet we come to understand it all the better by the help of what have been called 'side-lights.' For the lack of such aids, both young and old have been perplexed

by some seeming difficulties, or they have fallen into some mistakes. We are far better off in this matter than our ancestors of two or three hundred years ago, not to look further back. They had very few side-lights, and these were rather dim and uncertain. Our side-lights, at this day, gained from the visits of many travellers to the East, and from various sources, are so numerous and helpful, that to no part of the Bible can it be said they do not bring something we may regard as valuable, as aiding to the right understanding of Scripture. So that we who are now Bible readers, are actually in some respects brought nearer to Eastern men and women of two or three thousand years ago, than those were who lived long before us in these Western lands. Books about Egypt, about Palestine, Syria, and other Asiatic countries abound, having descriptions of places, of people, of customs, which, amongst nations so little given to change, enable us to read the past in the light of the present. The artist and the photographer have also been busy, depicting much that pleases and instructs us, showing us nature and human life as these exist under Eastern suns. And the circumstance should be mentioned, that between the East and the West there is this great difference: in one, habits and customs are frequently changing; in the other, they are nearly changeless. *Nearly*, but not quite so; for though it has been said that Eastern manners are just the same now, as in the time of our Lord, or even in the time of Moses or Abraham, this is hardly correct. Changes have been brought about, more particularly through intercourse with European nations, and greater changes may come. A leaven seems to be working slowly, but surely, towards a revolution in the East, where steam, telegraphy, the printing-press, and science generally, are

making the nineteenth century unlike all those that have gone before.

We will not attempt, in this small volume, to go over the whole subject of Eastern antiquities, so-called, nor in touching upon manners and customs give any account here of out-door business and public life in the East, either past or present. Our subject is the Home-life of Orientals; and we shall, in company with the reader, enter tents, houses, and other dwellings, examine the furniture, look at the domestic utensils, and notice household arrangements generally. We may divide our topic thus: We have first to consider houses, with the various substitutes for a settled dwelling-place. Secondly, we have the furniture of these habitations to inspect, also such useful and smaller articles as are there found; and under this head we shall consider the means by which water, light, and fuel are obtained. Thirdly, we will notice some domestic customs, such as the preparation of food, the arrangements at meals, indoor amusements and pursuits. A word must be said about gardens, in so far as those serve for the pleasure or benefit of the dwellers at home.

CONTENTS.

Homes and Home-Life in Bible Lands.

CHAPTER I.

BOWERS, CAVES, HUTS AND TENTS.

GOD has given us many enjoyments and luxuries, but the real needs of man are few ; indeed, they might be comprised in two words, 'food and raiment ;' and possessing these, we are told to be 'therewith content.' (1 Timothy vi. 8.) And though a habitation is not named as a necessary of life, which it generally is, we may regard a house or other dwelling-place as a kind of outer clothing, giving protection from the weather. A house, or some substitute for it, must have been one of the earliest wants of our race. In fact we find now that, among some savage nations, the use of habitations of a rude kind has preceded the adoption of garments for covering the person. It has long been the poet's dream, that there was under the southern sun some happy clime, where it was always spring, and the inhabitants spent their lives without any habitations save what nature provides in the shadowing tree, or the bower formed by luxuriant creepers. But in the fairest islands of the Polynesian group, it is only occasionally that the people can pass days and nights under the open sky. 'Tis true, as a lover of nature writes, that God made the first garden, and man the first town ; and a poet in depicting the life

of Adam and Eve, draws a picture of a leafy bower to which they resorted for meals or repose :

'The roof
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of fern and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses and jessamine,
Reared high their flourished heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the violet,
Crocus and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground.'

How suitable are the plants Milton selects for the natural carpetry—the violet, crocus, and hyacinth, flowers of the spring-time, images of hope and peace! Of Adam's life in Eden, we have only an outline in Genesis ; we may suppose, however, that under a screen of that kind some of the sinless hours in Paradise were passed.

The gourd of Jonah affords a curious instance in Jewish history of a living bower, given by God for the benefit of the complaining prophet. Some think the plant was one specially created ; but we read that there is a species of gourd, commonly selected for trailing over harbours, which grows with astonishing rapidity, and forms a screen an eastern sun does not pierce through. It thrives best in very hot weather, and if cut, droops and dies speedily.

When the sin of the two inhabitants of Eden sent them to the world beyond its borders, one of their early quests must have been a habitation. Since in the most favourable spots in Asia a bower or arbour would not afford comfort or security, Du Bartas may be right in assuming that,

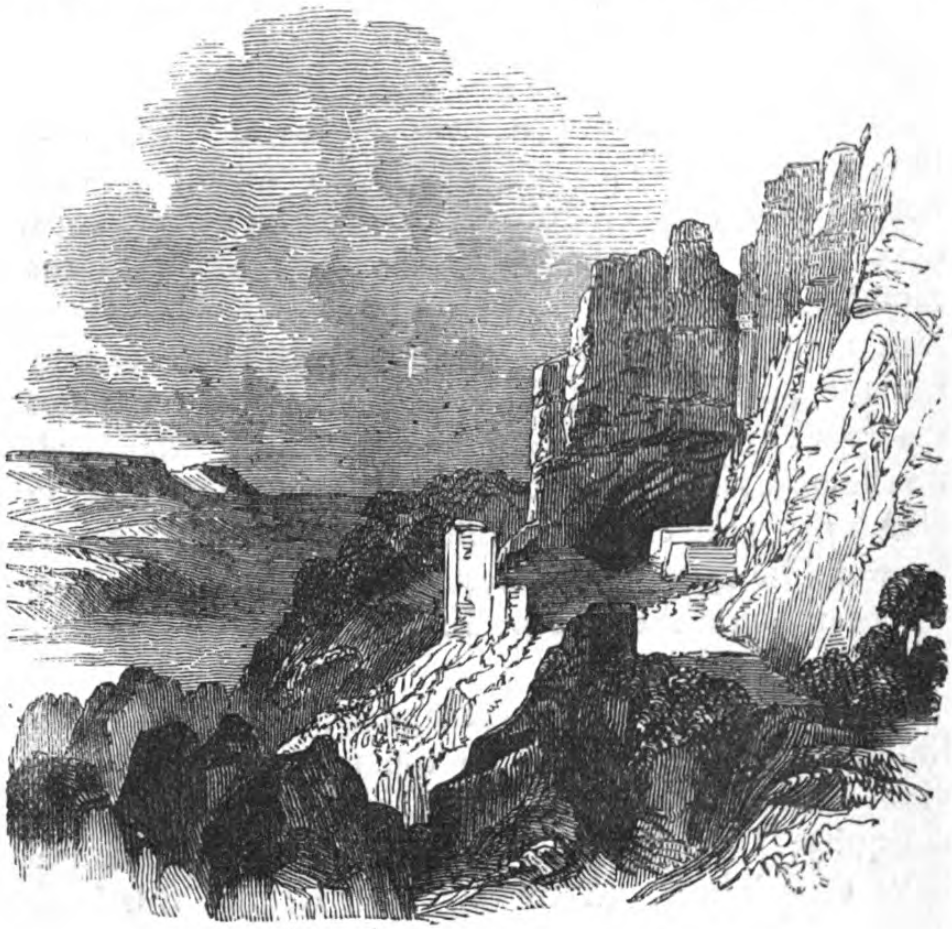
'A vaulted rock, a hollow tree, a cave,
Were the first buildings that them shelter gave.'

Though, properly speaking, these are not buildings. And Kitto observes that the early abodes of the human race would vary according to the locality. If the district was hilly, men would seek out caverns; if a bare plain, tents of the skins of animals would be contrived; a woody region would suggest the experiment of making booths or huts. It is not unlikely that hills surrounded the garden of Eden, and in some natural hollows amongst these Adam and Eve may have found a resting-place for awhile. Such places are not all damp, for on the sides of hills in certain soils, caves exist which are often as comfortable as the rooms in a house. Both before and after the Flood, men made their abodes, natural or artificial, ere they became partly skilled in the arts. Near the place where we are now writing, is a patch of woodland, a relic of a large Kentish forest of the olden time, in which there are chambers into which you may descend by well-like openings. These are supposed to indicate the position of the ancient British village of Caerberlarber.

Syria has numerous caverns, some very large, in the limestone and basalt, and to the travellers who have visited them they have the appearance of a high antiquity. One of great interest is considered to be the Cave of Adullam. (1 Samuel xxii. 1.) To this, and similar places, David and his band of warriors retreated from time to time, to avoid Saul's pursuit. No doubt he became acquainted with several of these during the shepherd-life of his youth. The Cave of Adullam is described as an immense natural cavern, the mouth of which can only be approached on foot along the side of the cliff: 'A long winding narrow passage, with

small chamber-like cavities on either side, conducts to a large chamber, with natural arches of great height, and from which there are numerous passages in all directions, so as to form a perfect labyrinth.' A place, this, where pursuing enemies might easily be baffled.

Long before the time of David, however, Lot lodged in a cave; and we also read in Joshua x. 16,



CAVES IN THE MOUNTAINS.

that some of the Canaanite leaders fled to a cave in Makkedah, hoping thus to escape from the Israelites. Balaam, in his prophecy (Numbers xxiv. 21), spoke of the Kenites as a cave-dwelling race, and some of their Arab successors have the same habit. Stephens, when in Palestine, came among the Bedouins at Hebron;

seeing an old man one day upon a rock at prayer, he advanced towards him, and discovered that he was worshipping upon his house-top, for his abode was beneath him. He, and those of his tribe living there, had formed a primitive village, taking advantage of natural caverns, some of which they had enlarged, to suit the families occupying them. Extending for miles around, there were meadows on which grazed the large flocks owned by these people.

Long after the land of Canaan was besprinkled with towns and villages, alarms of war and inroad would drive timid or cautious inhabitants to places of concealment in the caverns. So we read in Judges vi. 2; that 'because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which were in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds.' See also 1 Samuel xiii. 6; Isaiah ii. 19; Jeremiah xvi. 16; Ezekiel xxxiii. 27; all conveying the same idea of seeking rocks or caves for security.

Millions have visited, with earnest eyes, if not always with believing hearts, the Cave of the Nativity, in which tradition says our Saviour was born. Dr. Thomson, who well deserves to be heard, remarks that there is little to support this notion, though in the East, after houses were built, natural holes near them were sometimes utilized, and it is possible that in a stable thus constructed, and attached to the caravansera or inn, the Messiah appeared. St. Matthew's account, however, Dr. Thomson adds, does not favour the idea that a cave or grotto contained the manger.

Booths, formed of cut boughs of trees, and adapted for temporary shelter, claim a passing word. Such may probably have been constructed by men at a very early period wherever trees were plentiful; but the heat of the Eastern sun, by its parching effect upon

the leaves, and even upon the branches, would expose dwellers in booths to some annoyance, and oblige them to make frequent changes in their frail habitations. These are connected with the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles; for the Israelites were directed to take 'on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees,

KHAN, OR CARAVANSERA.

and willows of the brook.' (Leviticus xxiii. 40.) The citron was used for the purpose, and also the olive, hence the Mount of Olives was resorted to by the Jerusalem residents. The time appointed was seven days, quite long enough, perhaps, to the older folk, though it would be a gladsome season to the younger. The booths were put up in a variety of places, even on the roofs of houses, most were in the streets, or on

some plot of ground near the town or village. And Jews engaged in tilling the soil would doubtless often make for themselves temporary abodes of boughs and sticks, such as are to be seen in gipsy encampments. Of this nature was the 'lodge in a garden of cucumbers,' named in Isaiah i. 8. So in Job xxvii. 18, we have mentioned the 'booth that the keeper maketh,'—a shade for the watchman in an orchard or vineyard.

When Cain withdrew from all association with the other descendants of his father Adam, we read that he built a city (Genesis iv. 17), but we must not think of anything resembling a modern city. We may consider, with Kitto and others, that the primitive town was an assemblage of huts,—huts of some sort being man's first effort at building. It is supposed that thirteen centuries elapsed before Jabal became the father (or instructor) of those who dwell in tents; and these, not so much in their construction, as in the preparation of the materials, really require more art than do huts. Yet the tent is more suited to a wandering life, and therefore indicates, as a rule, a lower civilisation; for huts keep the dwellers in them fixed to one spot for a time, as they cannot be carried about. Now the plan of the early huts was probably as follows: The builders took branches, loose pieces of bark, or strips of skin, and formed these into a structure, driving the ends of the branches into the earth: over them was smeared mud, moist clay, or loam. Kitto gives his notion of the hut, as it may have been made before the Flood, in these words: 'Young trees or large branches cut to equal lengths were first planted firmly in the ground at short distances, fixing thereby the extent and shape of the habitation. The top would be covered in by other branches, secured so as not to be liable to displacement. The walls would then be

formed of "wattlework" by interlacing between the uprights green or dry twigs. But as the wind would blow terribly through this affair, the next step would be to close up all the gaps with mud.'

We are not so told in Scripture, but the Antediluvians, in all probability, learned at last to build themselves substantial houses, far superior to the primitive hut. The full directions given by God as to the size and make of the Ark, include the formation of three storeys (Genesis vi. 16); suggesting that to Noah, and others of his day, *storeys* or floors, and therefore staircases, with other arrangements of modern houses, were not unknown. The sons of Noah would carry across the Flood their recollections of the cities they had seen or lived in, and in several things the civilization of the New World would be helped on by that of the Old. The enterprise of the tower of Babel, connected with which there was doubtless a sinful arrogance, shows that mankind had then skill not only in building, but also in preparing the materials.

Huts, it should be added, are not now common as dwellings in Palestine; though in various parts of China and India it is not difficult to find specimens of these, as also in South Africa. The extreme west of Britain gives us huts built with what are called 'cob-walls,' the making of which the Phœnicians taught our ancestors many centuries ago. A step in advance beyond the huts with wooden skeletons, over which was plastered layer after layer of clay, was the previous preparation of clay blocks or cakes, dried in the sun. The next step onward would arise through the discovery that the addition of straw to the mass would much improve such bricks. (Exodus v. 7—12.) At length, bricks, duly prepared and kiln-dried, came into use.

Tenements of mud and clay, were, in the time of our Lord, to be seen in various parts of Palestine. It was of these, rather than edifices formed of brick and stone, that He spoke, when, in illustration of the dangers we incur if we neglect the Gospel, He gave the description of two houses, in Matthew vii. 24—27. And in several passages of Scripture, we should understand by 'house,' a 'hut,' a tenement of

HOUSE OF UNTEMPERED MORTAR, OR HUT OF CLAY.

earth or clay, not a substantial structure. This explains an allusion seemingly difficult, where thieves are spoken of as digging through walls; scarcely likely to happen in the case of an ordinary wall, because it would require time. But this could easily be done (and is done in India) where an abode is only made of clay. The prophet Ezekiel was told to 'dig through the wall' of his house (Ezekiel xii. 5); and

we may compare chapter xiii. 10—15 in that book, with Matthew vi. 20; Job iv. 19; and xxiv. 16. A resident near Cairo tells us that all through the valley of the Nile, the hovels of the poor are formed of mud, mixed with straw and refuse. The roof, however, is either coarse matting, or withered palm branches, but this also is bedaubed with mud or slime. There are neither windows nor chimneys, and therefore the natives do no cooking in their huts, and when the weather is mild they sleep outside on mats. It is hardly necessary to say, these huts are usually filthy, while a heavy rain will bring them to ruin. And leaving these, before we look at the house proper, we must next notice the Eastern tents of various kinds.

The preference some Orientals give to tent life arises partly from the feeling that, living thus, they can at any time move off with surprising quickness. Life, too, so some assert, appears to be lengthened—possibly it is actually lengthened—by these wanderings from one place to another. We are all aware of the fact that time seems to pass much more rapidly among familiar objects than it does among varying scenes. And, again, tent life in the East is enjoyable through most of the year. In houses, a very unpleasant effect is produced by the exclusion of fresh air; ventilation without 'draughts' not falling within the scope of Oriental contrivance. During warm weather, all that is needed is shelter from the sun's rays, and therefore, in some Eastern towns, many persons leave their houses in the summer, betaking themselves to tents. Dr. Thomson, writing of the advantages of a tent, calls it a 'very luxury of travel,' and this praise has been echoed by others. Yet, travelling about with a tent must be less agreeable where one has, with one's own hands, to pitch or remove the tent; and such draw-

backs must be mentioned as the capsizing of a tent by a sudden gust, followed by the scattering of its contents, or its liability to the intrusion of *uninvited*, and by no means *welcome* guests. In winter, unless in very sheltered spots, tents are cheerless habitations to all but Bedouins.

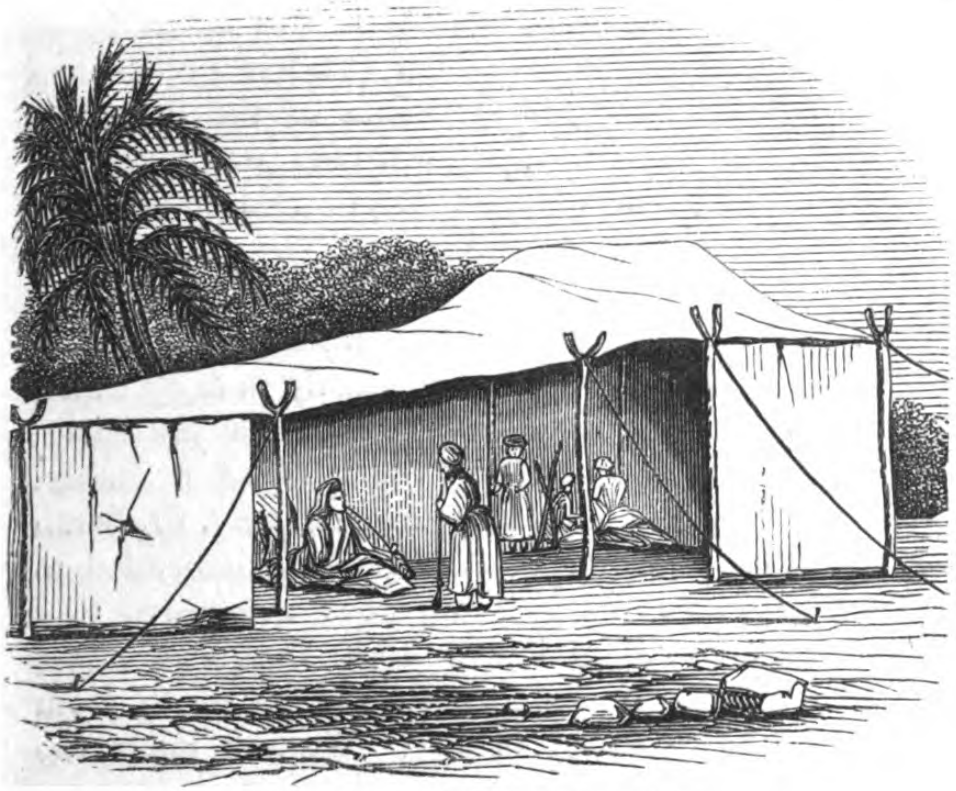
THIEVES BREAKING INTO A MUD HOUSE.

We may be almost sure that some of the varied styles of tents to be seen now-a-days in Arabia and Palestine, have come down from patriarchal times. The common Arab tent, of a nearly oblong figure, and which has been compared to the hull of a ship reversed, is very ancient. Differing slightly from this is a form noticeable in the Sinaitic peninsula,—also oblong, but with the roof flat, or slightly rounded. The latter is supposed to have furnished a model for the Tabernacle,

or Tent-Temple, the abode of the Shekinah. The sides of the sacred tent were strengthened with boards,—an unusual thing. Poles and cloth make up the Arab tent. Of the poles there are from six to nine, an elevation being given to the middle poles, to throw off the rain. The cloth is composed of goats' or camels' hair, closely felted. The curtains, or side pieces, are often of a woollen material of coarse texture. Though both Dr. Kitto and Dr. Thomson refer to the ordinary colour of Bedouin tents as black, quoting Canticles i. 5 as an illustrative text, there is evidence, from the accounts of numerous tourists, that many of the Arab tribes have tents that are gaudily striped, of a variety of colours. Dust, and the effects of the sun and weather probably bring these, by degrees, to a uniform brown. Dr. Thomson tells us he was much amused at the abuse hurled by a Bedouin at some neighbours, whom he denounced on account of their dirty habits, yet he himself was not a whit better; for when the Doctor was keeping him company one night, there were cows on two sides of him, goats and sheep around, and fowls overhead; yet he gravely remarked: 'Those beasts of Arabs don't know anything about cleanliness.' Evidently his ideas about cleanliness were not such as we Western folk generally have; for, in the interior of some of the tents that travellers come across, the calls of hunger must be pressing indeed if an ordinary Englishman can sit down and take a meal; so much offends eyes, ears, and nose. Besides, the insect occupants of these tents are pertinacious in their attacks, much preferring visitors whose skins are not begrimed with dirt and grease.

And here is a suitable place for us to remember, that the statement made in several works that

Abraham and the patriarchs were scarcely better than wandering Bedouins, is incorrect. Tent life did not, of necessity, mean constant migration ; nor should we think the dwellings of the patriarchs were poor and despicable. Some of the Orientals spent much money on the decoration of their tents. Monarchs had them covered with silk and embroidered work, and hung about with gold ornaments or precious stones, the



INTERIOR OF ARAB DWELLING.

supports being sometimes of marble and perfumed woods. Certainly, Abraham and his descendants had tents, which, if not magnificent, were, at least, comfortable and commodious. The life led by the patriarchs, in tents or 'tabernacles,' had a special significance, which must not be overlooked (see Hebrews xi. 9) ; and the same frail abodes, in other verses of the

Bible, serve as symbols of the passing character of man's life upon earth; as in Isaiah xxxviii. 12, 2 Corinthians v. 1. And we may also note that too much stress has been laid on the fact that the tent was associated with pastoral life, since many of the Arab dwellers in tents are not only pastoral, but agricultural. It is probable that, hundreds of years after the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, a great number of the people spent their lives in tent dwellings. The cry, 'To your tents, O Israel!' was taken up so readily as to show that it was a familiar phrase, and had a present meaning to thousands of the Israelites. Jonadab commanded his descendants to 'dwell in tents,' to show thereby that they claimed to hold no property in the land. (Jeremiah xxxv.)

Customs, pretty general in the East, regarding the separation of women from men,—which customs, it is observable, did not prevail so markedly in early times,—have led to the use of distinct tents for the sexes, where they can be afforded by the head of a family. 'Tis true that, as we read in Genesis xxiv. 67, Sarah had a tent of her own, which afterwards descended to her daughter-in-law; but this does not prove that Oriental exclusiveness has a high antiquity, since, though early Asian customs differed so much from those seen at this day, in these Western lands, the Bible shows us that there was free intercourse between men and women. Now, Arabs who are not fortunate enough to have more than one tent, confine the women to the inner apartment, as it is very usual for tents to have two apartments; some have three, one being, mostly, larger than the others. The curtain, which divides the inner from the outer apartment is, in Eastern tents, often of an ornamental character; but we do not find anything very agreeable behind it, as the

inner, or women's apartment, is made the receptacle of the lumber, and is often in sad confusion and untidiness. An attempt at order is made in the outer part of tents, which is covered with coarse mats and carpets. Against the partition, camels' bags and corn-sacks are piled up, so as to afford a support against which

OPEN TENT.

persons can lean when seated on the ground. The tent-door is open, unless the weather is unfavourable, and the air, frequently much needed, thus gains admission, while the opening is a good position for the indolent or the watchful; and, 'sitting at the tent-

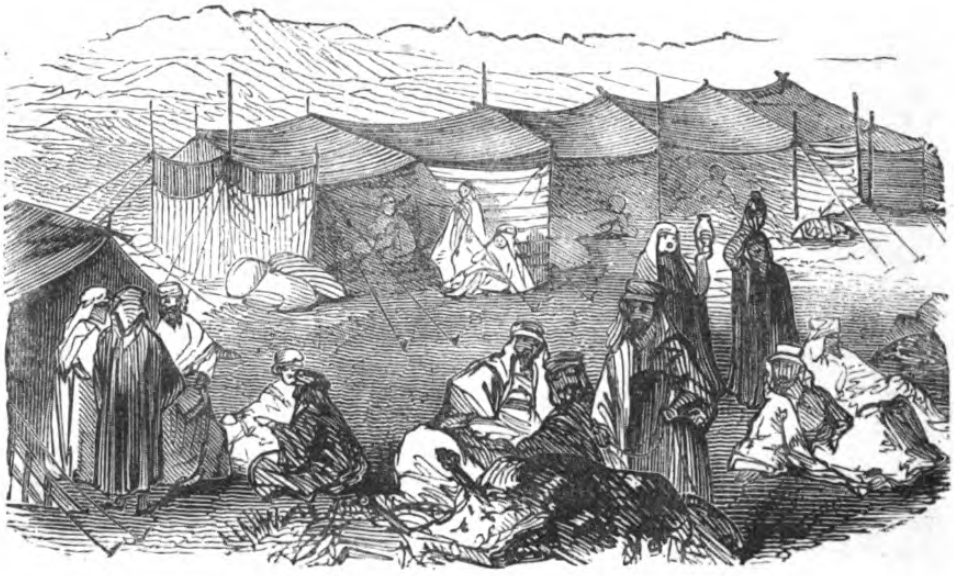
door,' is still a common practice. So Abraham sat when angel-guests visited him (Genesis xviii. 1); and the Israelites in the wilderness worshipped each in his tent-door. It was at the door of the tent that the vanquished Sisera asked Jael to stand, and prevent, by a falsehood, the entrance of any foe. (Judges iv. 20.) Dr. Thomson supposes the friendly relations once subsisting between Jabin and the Kenites to have been at an end; and he suggests that Jael knew her husband and the tribe would approve of the deed. He also tells us he saw, in that district where it is thought the event took place, hordes of wandering Arabs, possibly lineal descendants of these Kenites, who looked quite capable of driving a nail into the temple of a real or fancied enemy. The nail used by Jael was what is now called *wated*,—a wooden tent-pin, and the hammer was the mallet by which these pins were driven into the ground. This traveller saw these Arabs busily at work, lengthening their cords, and tightening the pins; reminding him of Isaiah liv. 2.

When tents are grouped together, the arrangements vary much, according to the habits of the tribe. Even the black and dingy tents have, at times, a picturesque appearance, contrasting with the grey rocks or the sparkling sand. Something in the aspect of the camp of Israel so moved the unfriendly Balaam, that the exclamation in Numbers xxiv. 5 burst from his lips. Purotte states that, in the ordinary Arabian encampment, when a halt has been called, no sentries are posted: the dogs are supposed to be a sufficient guard. Should there be an alarm, the chief gives the signal. If there is need that the party should push forward, each family packs up its own chattels, and all move off in order, with horsemen in front, and on each flank. In the ordinary way, when everything is quiet, the

SITTING AT THE TENT DOOR.

PITCHING A TENT.

camels and horses are tethered to the tent-pegs, while the flocks and herds graze beyond by day, though at night they are driven into the encampment. Before the tent of the sheikh an upright spear is generally erected as a token of authority. (1 Samuel xxvi. 7.) Spears serve also to mark out divisions in the encampment, when the number of tents is large.



BLACK TENTS OF KEDAR (ENCAMPMENT OF TENTS).

CHAPTER II.

TOWNS AND CITIES.

DR. KITTO has pointed out that the difference between an Eastern and a Western climate requires a difference in the style of house-building between Asia and Western Europe. We find warmth very desirable, hence our houses are seldom built in the way Orientals think most agreeable and convenient, that is, with a central court, into which doors, apartments, and galleries open. English folks frequently surround houses and mansions with courts and gardens, but the main structure of a residence is mostly solid. As to the general arrangement of houses, it is only within the last two hundred years that what is called 'spacing out' buildings has been attended to amongst us. Not until after the times of the Stuarts, when the possibility of civil war had diminished, did our forefathers scatter their houses about the suburbs of towns and villages. Before that, they packed their dwellings together, for the advantages of mutual defence, though this plan was unhealthy in many ways. Neighbourhoods about London and elsewhere still unfortunately give proof of this fact. More from accident than from any idea of sanitary advantage, the Asiatics liked to have open spaces in their cities, though the actual thoroughfares were often narrow and inconvenient. Modern Eastern towns have an unenviable notoriety in this respect; and it has been taken for granted, with reason, that whatever change has occurred has been for the worse; that is, the towns in

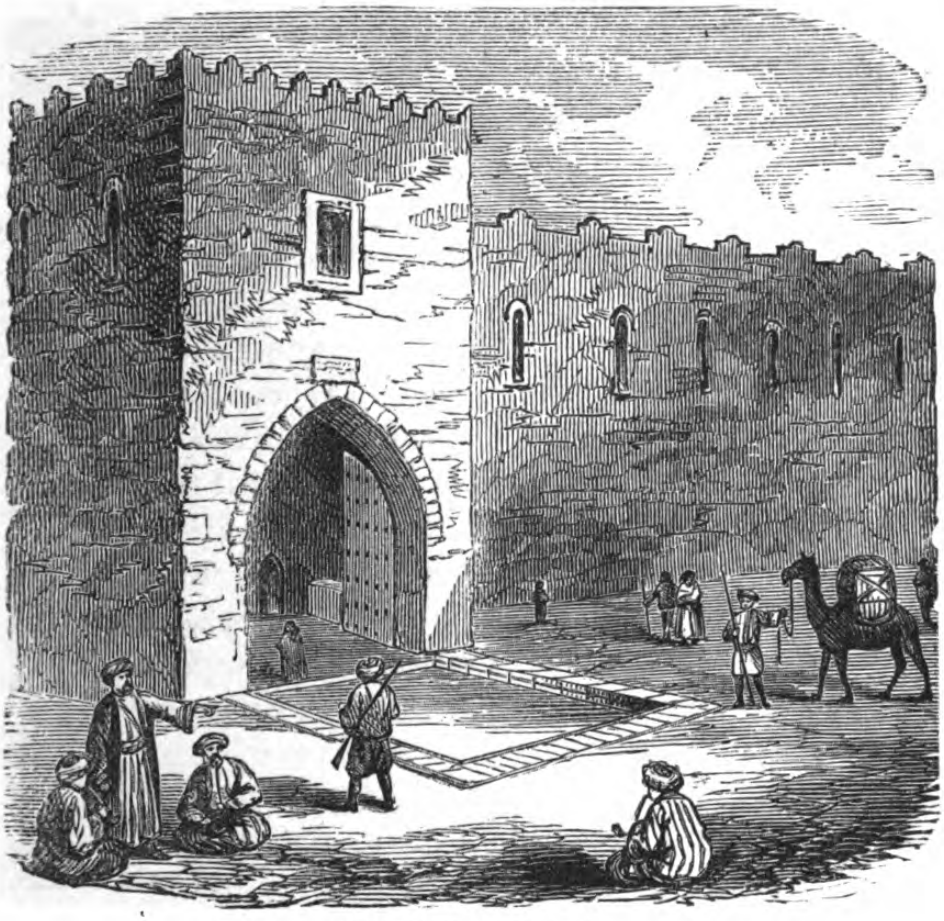
Syria and Palestine, as we now see them, are more close and dirty than in the times of the Romans, or even of the Hebrew kings. Of recent years, however, the visits of the Franks have done something towards the improvement of some places where many travellers come and go; still it will be long before an

EASTERN HOUSE, WITH GALLERY AND COURT.

alteration sufficiently marked comes about, to lead us to think the axiom 'Cleanliness is next to godliness' has found acceptance with the Orientals. Dirt may well associate itself with religions of heartless formalism, and we cheerfully accept the truth that

cleanliness in person and garb is at least helpful towards purity of mind.

As out-door life is not our present subject, we will only notice briefly that the gate of a city in early times was a meeting-place, and served the purpose of an 'exchange' or a town-hall. From it



ANCIENT CITY GATE.

ran the principal, or what we should in our day call the 'High' street, sometimes passing across a city or town from gate to gate. An American author, writing on Eastern streets, observes that in some instances they were lined with trees, and believes that the imagery in Revelation xxii. 1, 2, was suggested by this

circumstance. The introduction of avenues of trees must, however, only be regarded as exceptional.

The Jews and other nations of Syria obtained shade in their streets by making them narrow; when groves were formed, as for the purpose of idol-worship, they were usually a little way from the city. These streets were not only narrow, but also unpaved, and a peculiarity was the absence of the array of windows which in our streets look down upon the roadway. In the East, along most thoroughfares there is only a line of wall, with a low door here and there. A slight break in the monotony is made occasionally by latticed windows, if the dwellings are of a superior cast. These are almost always placed over the door, sometimes high above it, and may take the form of the bay window rather in repute in England; or perhaps there may be a kiosk, or enclosed balcony. The lattice work is so contrived as to admit the air, and it affords those within the house a good view of what is going on in the street, though they themselves are either invisible or indistinctly seen. Wearied with the monotony of a life that is a species of imprisonment, Eastern women are glad of an opportunity to peep out at these latticed windows, though they are seldom suffered to show themselves, and, should they come out into a balcony, Oriental decorum demands that they should be veiled. From such a window the mother of Sisera, with eager eyes, watched for the return of her son (Judges v. 28), and the unhappy and wicked Jezebel looked out in the foolish hope that she might awe or captivate the victorious Jehu, and was hurled thence to the street below. (2 Kings ix. 30—33.) Ahaziah met his death through a fall from a latticed window (2 Kings i. 2) in some lofty chamber of his palace. These latticed windows were, also, in houses close to the

city walls so contrived as to afford a view of the country around. From a window of the kind Joshua's spies escaped from the city of Jericho, by the aid of Rahab. (Joshua ii. 15.) In like manner David fled from his angry father-in-law, by the aid

LETTING DOWN FROM A WINDOW IN A BASKET.

of Michal (1 Samuel xix. 12), and the Apostle Paul, about eleven hundred years after, was let down by his Christian brethren outside the wall of Damascus, through some such window. (Acts ix. 25 ; 2 Corinthians xi. 33.) And we read in the same chapter, that when

that same Apostle after his conversion was in need of a disciple's help, Ananias was sent to him by our Lord Himself, who directed His servant to seek the humbled and penitent 'Saul of Tarsus' in the street called Straight (Acts ix. 11), from which it is clear that then, and probably long before, streets had names attached to them.

Dr. Thomson writes playfully in 'The Land and the Book:' '"Seeing is believing," according to a proverb; it is *understanding* also. I have read all my life about crooked narrow streets, with gutters in the middle, and no side-walks, but I never understood until now. How are we to get past this line of loaded camels? Well, by bowing the head, creeping under, and dodging from side to side, we have accomplished the feat; but here is a string of donkeys carrying brushwood and water, their bundles actually sweep both sides of the street, and the ground too; there can be no creeping *under* this time! True, yet there is a recess in the wall into which we can step until they have passed by.' This does not sound very pleasant, because a recess might not always be handy in such an emergency, but the drivers of loaded animals give warning of their approach by uttering loud and rather unmelodious cries. Still, few persons would pass along even the main streets of an Eastern city unless obliged, and by-lanes or side turnings would be more uninviting, if less dangerous. At night every traveller must provide himself with a light, or wander along exposed to various risks. Local government now-a-days is too often a mockery in Oriental towns, and the firm belief in 'kismet' or fate leads men to a reckless disregard of precautions that would benefit themselves and others. In some cities of Syria it seems that after nightfall

the guard of the place proceed up and down the streets in small parties, apprehending *all* persons found unprovided with lanterns, who are, by that very circumstance, held to be suspicious individuals. Before leaving Eastern streets, Zechariah viii. 5 may be quoted, in which verse we have a prophetic description of a time of prosperity, one particular of which is that the streets should be full of boys and girls at play; an incident so familiar to all of us that it appeals to our feelings even more than it would to those of an Oriental. Our Lord makes allusion to the early attempts of children to dramatize, or imitate the actions of their elders, in Matthew xi. 16, 17, associating these sports with the market-place.

After the Flood, the descendants of Noah increased rapidly, and Genesis x. 10—12 gives us the names of no fewer than eight cities or towns, two of them, Nineveh and Babylon, afterwards of high renown, and connected with the great kingdoms of Assyria and Chaldea. The beginnings of these towns must have been small, and the tenements first raised such as were not likely from their materials to resist the weather for any length of time. It is not until we arrive at the history of Sodom that we read of a house as the abode of Lot in that city; and from the circumstance that Lot, after having put his visitors into a place of safety, stepped outside and closed the door in order to speak to the mob that had gathered, it would seem that his house had no window looking into the street. And that the blindness sent upon the men effectually stopped them from making farther attempts, may lead us to think the door of Lot's house was as small and as level with the wall as in modern times the entrances to houses often are in Eastern towns. (Genesis xix. 6—11). In the interesting

story of the visit made by Abraham's servant (Eliezer of Damascus?) to the city of Padan-aram, in search of a wife for Isaac, the details given concerning the house of Bethuel show, as Mr. Finn remarks, that it was a building of some size, and of convenient arrangement. (Genesis xxiv.) In the large courtyards the camels of a visitor could be accommodated with perfect ease, and there were doubtless store-rooms on the ground-floor, in which, according to common Eastern practice, wheat and barley were kept, and also a stock of butter, oil, and wine, with dried fruits. Straw would be kept in readiness, brought hither from the threshing-floor; we do not read at an early period of the preservation of dried grass or hay. This is plain: Rebekah had been so accustomed to see hospitality exercised, that she knew no difficulty would arise in the matter of the reception of Abraham's servant. And Mr. Finn points out that 'house' in verse 32 probably means 'room,' as in some other passages of Scripture, the allusion here being to the chamber into which guests were usually shown.

Though it is said that Rebekah, wishing to deceive her husband, put upon her son Jacob garments belonging to Esau that were 'in the house,' we can hardly be positive from this that the patriarch Isaac was then occupying some permanent abode (Genesis xxvii. 15), though there may have been seasons in the lives of all the patriarchs when the tent life for awhile gave place to a short residence in a town. Isaac appears to have died in the city of Arbah, or Hebron, Genesis xxxv. 27; and Jacob, after all his wanderings and trials, may have relinquished a tent, and occupied a house, surrounded by the rapidly increasing abodes of his children, after he took possession of the land of Goshen. Having said this

much about the earliest notices of houses in Scripture, we will proceed with the subject generally.

We should be under a mistake if we were to suppose that houses which, in appearance and general plan, resembled those we read of in the Bible, are to be sought in Syria only. The Eastern type of house, says Kitto, prevails over a great extent of country, and is not even confined to Asia. Dr. Shaw finds similar houses along the northern edge of Africa, and west of the Euphrates; for example, in Persia, with some slight variations, houses are built in the same manner, and have been subject to few alterations in design for many centuries. Though every Eastern city has, and, probably, always had, some houses so mean as to deserve to be classed with huts, and so closely approaching each other that light and air are sadly deficient, those who can afford the means construct their houses on a principle which long usage has approved; though in size, height, and number of courts, differences may subsist. As, except in some country residences, outer spaces are not desired, it is arranged that these courts should be surrounded by the various rooms, and hidden from the gaze of the curious or the idle in the streets. Several reasons might be given for this arrangement, which, indeed, favours also the construction of the entire house, with little outlook upon the public way near or beside it. One of these is a tolerably common feeling among the Orientals, leading them to seclude all females from the public gaze, and keep all domestic affairs as private as possible. Another reason, one often powerful in the unsettled condition of Eastern kingdoms, is the danger likely to arise, should it be known that the dwellers are the possessors of valuables. These being seen by the needy or the avaricious, would prove an encourage-

ment to roguery or violence. Hence, even the door is often not conspicuous. A man of wealth and power might, perhaps, have a house with stately portals; but such would be only an exception.

There has been some discussion as to whether the words of Moses (Deuteronomy vi. 9), having reference to the precepts he was giving to the Israelites, conveyed a positive command: 'Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates;' but the Jews took this literally, and used to inscribe passages from the law either above or beside the entrances to their houses. A custom similar to this had prevailed among the Egyptians at an early period, and during the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt they must have seen what were called 'lucky sentences,' or words of good omen, placed outside the mansions and houses. Sometimes, in the case of persons of rank, the name and titles of the occupier were added. A visitor to the Jews' quarter in modern Damascus saw, nailed to each door-post, a slender tin case, about six inches long and one wide, with a small opening in the middle, through which appeared the Hebrew word 'Shaddai.' This is commonly called Mezuzah, *i.e.*, 'door-post.' Within, two passages from the Bible are inscribed on parchment: Deuteronomy vi. 4—9, and xi. 13—21.

In addition to this, in all houses of a superior class occupied by Jews, texts are written, in gilt letters, on the panels of the walls or on the ceilings. Mohammedans, throughout the East, have frequently a scroll upon or above the door, containing a sentence or a few words from the Koran. A singular statement is made regarding David in 1 Samuel xxi. 13. Greatly alarmed lest the Philistines should revenge themselves upon him when they discovered who he was, he 'feigned himself mad, . . . and scrabbled

(*lit.* "made marks") on the doors of the gate.' Now-a-days, there are plenty of people who act similarly; and, as we look in public places at walls and benches scrawled over, we take it as an evidence of the folly

SPRINKLING BLOOD ON THE POSTS OF THE DOOR.

of the writers. But Achish, and the rest of the men of Gath, viewed the circumstance as a proof that David was out of his mind. Curious instances of such wall-scribbling have been unearthed from the ruins of Pompeii, the wonderful long-buried city.

By the command of Jehovah, the Israelites were directed to sprinkle the blood of the passover-lamb on the side-posts of their doors, and on the upper door-post or lintel (Exodus xii. 7); and we have, in Amos ix. 1, a reference to the effect that would be produced on the posts by a violent shock given to the lintel. The construction of doors among the ancients did not greatly differ from that now usually adopted; and though some of the outer as well as the inner doors of houses were made to push up and down, like a slide, they were generally provided with hinges. (Proverbs xxvi. 14.) Bolts and bars, as means of security, are several times alluded to in Scripture. (See 2 Samuel xiii. 17; Job xxxviii. 10; Nehemiah vii. 3.) Locks were also attached to doors; and being made of wood, they were, and still are, large. In the East, Dr. Thomson saw a servant carrying a key upon his shoulder, which, in its proportions, resembled a stout club, and brought to mind Isaiah xxii. 22: 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulders; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open.' According to the size of the building, so would be the dimensions of the key; that belonging to one old castle noticed by Thomson was so large that a theft of it could not have taken place unobserved; and its imitation was not likely to be attempted. And Solomon's Song, v. 4, in which a hand is described as being thrust through a door, is understandable when we are told that, in the doors of gardens, and even of some houses, a hole is cut, through which a person seeking to enter passes the key, and inserts it into the lock on the *inner* side of the door.

Those who have read about life among the Romans will remember that one part of the marriage

ceremonial consisted in the lifting of the bride over the threshold of the new abode she was to occupy as mistress. This implied a sacredness in that part of the house, as if it was not to be profaned by the touch of the foot; and travellers in the East repeatedly find to this hour, when they have crossed the threshold of a house, with the sanction of its master, they are placed in a new relationship towards him, and rarely will he venture to ignore the friendly obligation so incurred. Still, admittance within an Eastern house

EASTERN MODES OF REVERENCE.

does not make you free of the whole abode; and you soon perceive, if not already aware of the fact, that there are parts of the habitation you must no more think of entering than if you were a passing stranger in the street. Some believe that in Ezekiel xliii. 8, we have a reference to the Oriental reverence shown to the threshold, and especially to that of a palace or a place of religious observance. Persons desiring to obtain a favour will fall down at the threshold of a prince or great man, and kiss it, also touching it with their foreheads, in token of

reverence. Modern Persians, as we are told, make the threshold a special place for devotees to offer tokens of respect to the dead. There was, therefore, deep significance in the disaster that occurred on the threshold of Dagon's temple. (1 Samuel v. 4.)

The mention in Scripture of summer and winter houses has appeared perplexing to some, since travellers in the East report that this distinction is not noticeable, or is very unusual. Jehoiakim, it is said, 'sat in the winter house,' with a fire before him, at the time he committed an act of daring impiety (Jeremiah xxxvi. 22); and Amos connects both in chapter iii. 15 of his prophecy. The explanation is easy. Instead of 'house,' we should understand a suite of apartments. As Dr. Thomson states, the lower rooms, where the house is built of two storeys, are occupied in winter, and the upper ones more particularly in summer. Or, should the house be of but one storey, then, such rooms as, from their position, are less sheltered and more airy, are made use of in the summer. In some places along the valley of the Tigris houses are built upon vaults or cellars, to which the inhabitants retire, on hot days, for coolness. It is true that, in Syria, to some extent, household arrangements are not affected by the season. Store-rooms, and servants' apartments, are situate on the ground-floor mostly, and above these,—very often, with a range of galleries fronting them, and looking down into the court,—are better rooms, reserved for visitors, or occupied by the members of the family. Much depends upon the number of the courts ; for, in some houses, there are as many as three, though the majority of middle-class people have but one central court, which the pile of buildings shuts in all round.

We have already noticed that from early times Eastern houses had windows, though few of these

windows could be seen from the outside. But we must not think of them as being glazed. 'Glass' is made use of in the present day by the Orientals, however; and, sometimes, with a pleasing effect, when a variety of coloured glass is used. Ancient windows, —and for proof we need only to go back to Saxon times in our own land,—if filled up at all, were closed by thin sheets of some semi-transparent substance, such as talc or crystal, and only the wealthy were able to afford this expense. This explains the promise in Isaiah liv. 12: 'I will make thy windows of agates.' Sometimes windows were closed by a lattice-work of wood; but it is probable that most ordinary windows in the houses of the Israelites were simply fitted with a shutter of wood, which would be needed at night, or in 'rainy weather.' These windows would have to be entirely open, or else closed. (See 2 Kings xiii. 17; Isaiah xxiv. 18; Daniel vi. 10.) Lastly, before we enter the house, do not glance up, expecting to see a number. Remember, that even in a city like London it was not the fashion to number houses a century or so back.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERIORS OF HOUSES— ROOFS AND GARDENS.

YOU wish to enter an Eastern house? In vain, generally, you will seek knocker or bell, yet you must signify your presence somehow: many persons do it by calling instead of knocking with the hand. Within, in place of a hall more or less spacious, we see a passage or corridor, but with no door at the far end, because that would afford a view of the rooms beyond. The doors at the sides, do not all lead into rooms, for the visitor, to his surprise, may expect to be ushered along another short passage into the central court, or the outer, should there be more than one. Visitors are often received in the open air; and the court being planted with trees and flowers, having perhaps also a fountain in the centre, is an agreeable place in which to sit or lounge. Our Lord, as we learn from the narratives in the Gospels, when visiting the houses of His disciples, or others whom He honoured by becoming their Guest, was occasionally seated in the open court, rather than in one of the rooms leading off from it. The concourse of persons who came in might render this necessary; and to appearance, there was more freedom allowed in those times than is permitted in Syria now, and uninvited strangers entered a house without ceremony, in a way a modern Oriental of the average sort would hardly tolerate. We will here consider an occurrence of which we have the particulars in Mark ii. 1—12. This

has opened up a field for much discussion. It is not for a moment to be supposed that breaking up 'a roof,' like those which cover English houses, was the work the sick man's friends set about, in order to put him at the very feet of Christ. Such a demolition of a roof, made as we usually see roofs, would have been

ORIENTAL VERANDAH.

annoying, and possibly dangerous, to the people below, and certainly an awkward thing to do, with the sufferer waiting beside them. Dr. Shaw's idea is, that the group of people below were in the court of the house, and overhead was drawn a screen of cloth—a sort of awning, to keep off the sun's rays. Rolling this aside,

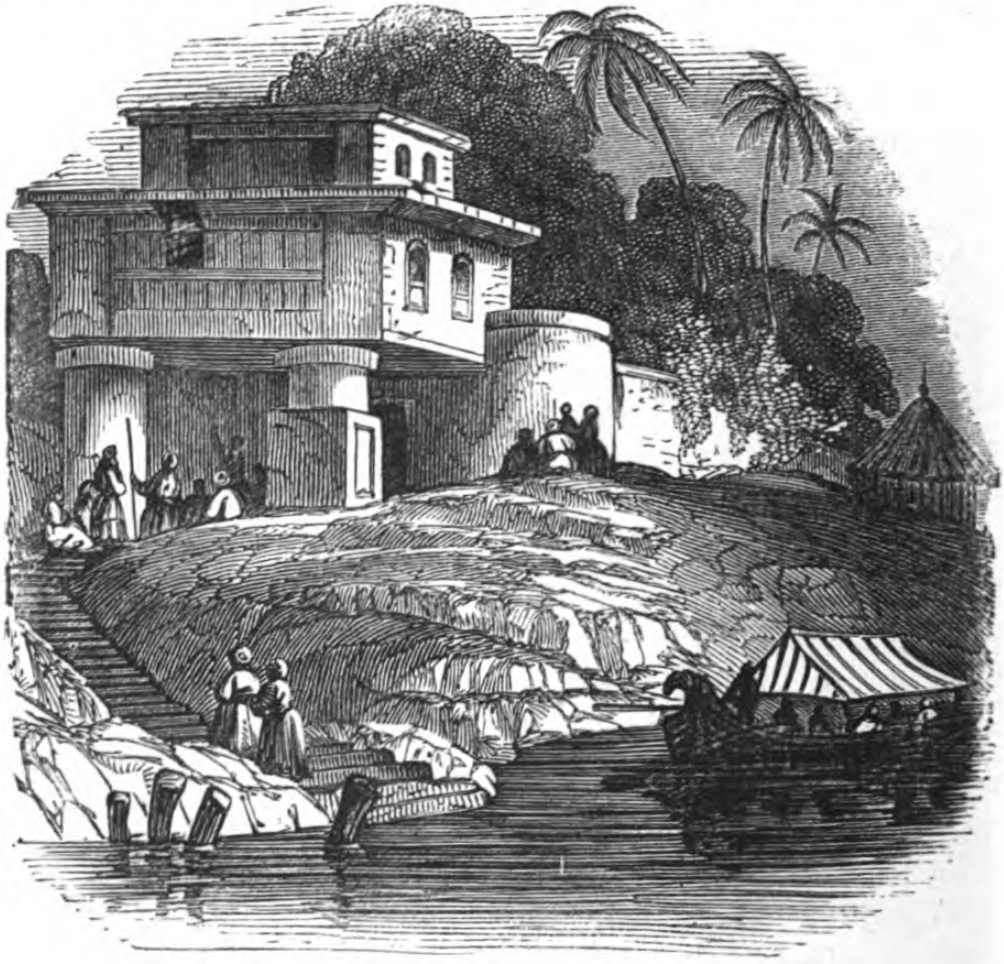
the men could then, from some part of the roof of the house overlooking the court, (they having reached the roof either by outside steps from the street, or else by crossing the parapet from an adjacent house,) manage to lower their friend to the desired spot. But Kitto's idea should be given; and that is, that the house in question was one of those having a gallery of some size above the court. In the gallery he thinks Jesus and some persons of importance were seated, and thence our Lord addressed the crowd below. A gallery of this kind, he says, would be sheltered from the sun by a few boards projecting from the roof of the house, and by pulling up these, the sufferer could be safely let down (a moderate distance only), and brought close to the Great Physician.

A reception-room for ordinary purposes is necessary, because there must be times when visitors cannot be introduced to the open court. The door to this apartment, in many Eastern houses, is at the farthest end of the passage by which persons reach the outer court from the street. Sometimes there are two rooms, situate on the right and left of the entrance to the court, one being intended for visitors or clients of special importance. It is quite usual to have this public room either open to the court on one side and screened only by a curtain that can be drawn back at pleasure, or else with that side closed in by lattice work, or sashes of coloured glass. Where there exists a second or inner court few, if any, of the apartments actually used by the family, and assuredly none of those occupied by the females, look into the outer court. 'The *guest-chamber*,' Kitto remarks, that is named in Luke xxii. 11, was the public apartment of a house, and so close upon the outer court. It is therefore possible that, as Jesus rose up with His

disciples, after He spoke the closing words of John xiv. 31, some vine, seen by the little group when they stepped from the room into the court, suggested the image in John xv. 1. 'A summer parlour' (Judges iii. 20) was some large room on the first floor of a house, which was and is usually contrived so as to receive a thorough current of air, both from the street and the court of the house. To such a room Orientals retire either to smoke, or to sleep during the noonday heat. Most of the 'upper rooms,' of which we read in Scripture, were, therefore, apartments of some size on the first floor of a house, (for buildings were then, and are still, seldom seen with two floors,) and with a view of an open court, rarely of the inner court, since rooms surrounding *that* enjoyed more privacy, and guests did not often make acquaintance with these.

Those who can afford the money are fond of adorning the courts and rooms of their houses in a very elegant style, the looking-glass being used to produce effect, and placed not only on flat surfaces, but round columns. The panel-work is often wrought out with much care, and in a variety of colours; yet it is considered by those who have made a study of Eastern modes and styles of decoration, that the general taste has not improved of late. The Jews expended some of their wealth in this way, as we find both from Scripture and the rabbis' narratives; and indeed, it was one of the sins which the messengers from God charged them with, that while they indulged in luxury they neglected to honour God's house, and broke the precepts of His law. (See Jeremiah xxii. 14; Amos vi. 1—8; Haggai i. 4.) Roofs or ceilings of cedar and other choice woods were employed in the chief apartments, and even the walls were studded

with precious stones. The 'pleasant pictures' (or literally 'pictures of desire') of Isaiah ii. 16 refers doubtless to a kind of ornamentation done in relief on stone, wood, or marble; though some think this was tapestry. Ivory, a much valued article in the East, was also brought into service, not only forming

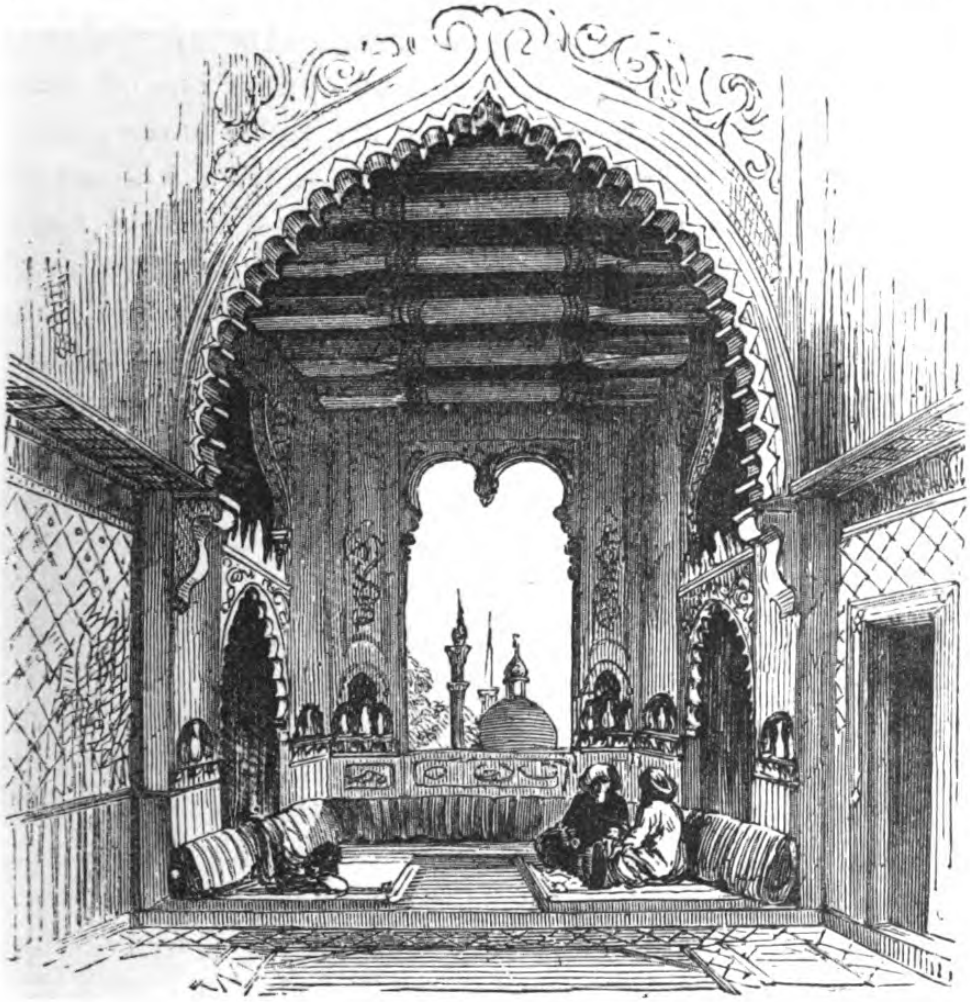


SUMMER-PARLOUR ON THE NILE.

part of mosaic work used to fill up panels, but so largely figuring in some houses that they received their names from the substance (Amos iii. 15). The 'ivory palaces,' however, in Psalm xlv. 8, is probably a mistaken rendering; if we read 'caskets' or 'cases,' we see the application to the spices enumerated in the

same verse, which were treasured up in these ivory receptacles.

But our survey of the Eastern house is not finished yet. Supposing that we have the *entrée* of one of some magnitude, having examined, as closely as politeness allows, the outer court, and the rooms



INTERIOR OF A PERSIAN HOUSE.

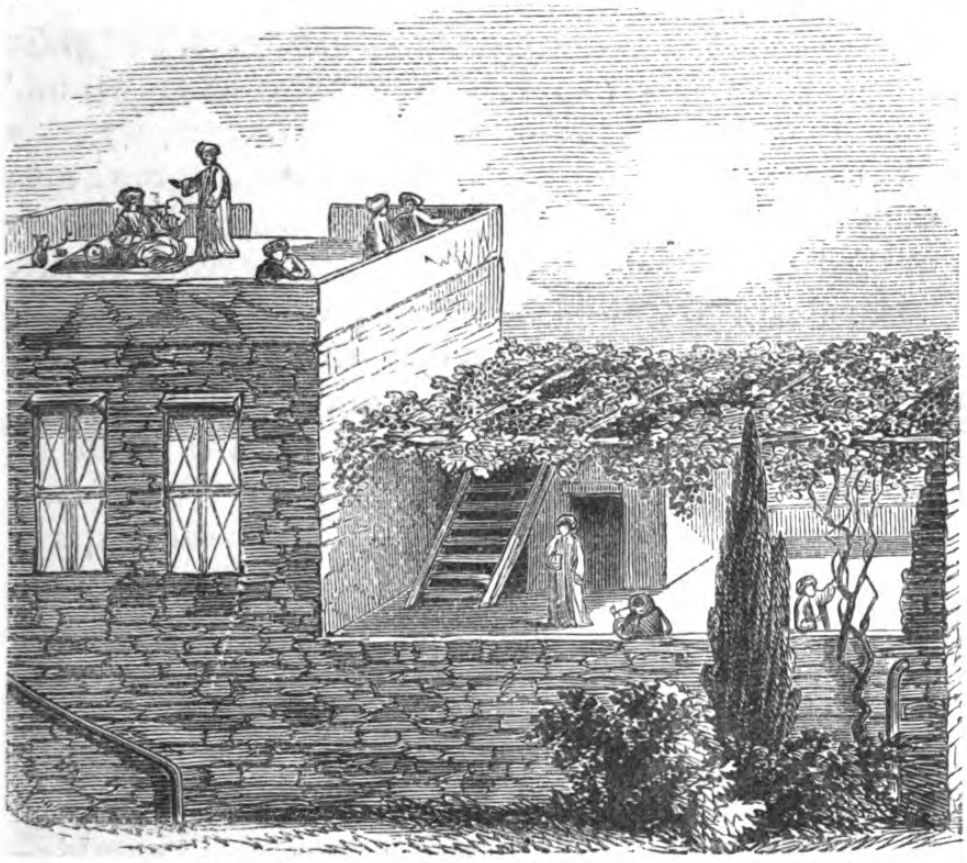
round about it on the upper and the ground floor, we naturally wish to see more. If a house has three courts, one of the two inner is devoted entirely to the women, and represents the 'harem,' the other is kept for the various uses of the male members of the family,

though it will be occasionally visited by some of the females. Frequently, in modern Eastern houses, the inner courts are more airy and larger than the outer, though also, like it, made cool and agreeable by the introduction of foliage and flowing water. The plan pursued in the arrangement of the rooms is much the same as already described, the basement has the servants' rooms, store-room for corn and other eatables, places for fuel and water, and of course one or two kitchens. For where there is an inner court, the kitchens are, to suit Oriental etiquette, always situated so as to look out upon it, since it is not desired that strangers should be able to see what is going on, and the work of cooking rests with the females of the household. As the ladies, in a house of importance, have sometimes parties of their own friends, we now and then find a residence having a separate way of entry to the inner court or harem.

But how are we to understand the 'chamber on the wall,' built for Elisha's benefit by a wealthy lady at Shunem? (2 Kings iv. 10.) The general opinion seems to be, that it was not built out of the wall, projecting as we not unfrequently see rooms built in our day, but rather a separate ante-room, placed near the outer wall of the house, and so situate that the prophet could enter it readily, and leave it whenever he wished, without interfering with other persons in the house. Beyond the fact, that in going to this room, the mistress of the house went *up*, nothing is stated regarding the position of it. There are at present a few houses in the East, and some such there may have been in Bible times, with a walled space around them, and an outer lodge or porch; to which this chamber might have been attached. It appears from Acts xii. 13, 14, that the house of Mary, mother

of the evangelist Mark, was thus shut off from the street.

People in these Western lands principally value the roof of a house as a valuable protection from the weather, and in country districts, where there are few streams, a roof is of service as affording a means of collecting a supply of soft or rain water. With the



SITTING ON THE HOUSE-TOP.

Orientals, from remote ages, the roofs of their abodes have always been favourite places of resort; and in building houses, it was borne in mind that the roof must be made suitable for walking upon, and therefore, as far as possible, it was constructed with a flat surface. Modern Eastern roofs made with a number of small domes, unavoidable in some places through

the lack of large timber, have the top levelled afterwards by the filling-up of the spaces with earth. Hence, of course, it will happen that a considerable variety of plants shoot up after a time, and attract flocks of birds. Now we read, which is illustrative of this, that the prophet Isaiah, speaking with regard to the success that Sennacherib had been permitted to have, until he came into direct opposition to Jehovah, says that this king's enemies were like 'corn,' or 'grass on the housetops, . . . blasted before it be grown up.' (Isaiah xxxvii. 27.) Several travellers have noticed this circumstance in dry seasons; and in Eastern towns, to save themselves the trouble of removing this growth of plants, the inhabitants will sometimes set it on fire, without a thought of the danger to the whole roof. We may note again, David's declaration that the haters of Zion should 'be as the grass upon the housetops,' which is unproductive, and so calls forth no utterance of praise from the passer-by. (See Psalm cxxix. 6—8.) And Dr. Thomson says that such expressions as the Psalmist here gives are most commonly heard in Arabia. Men, if they are going past a rich fruit-tree or a laden corn-field, exclaim, '*Barak Allah!*' that is, 'May God bless you!'

Farther, about the Eastern roof, we may state, that slates or tiles being seldom used, the gaps between the rafters are filled up with branches, or anything that may be at hand, while over all is spread a layer of compost. Oriental house builders are not more scrupulous than are some of their Western brethren in these days, and roofs that are badly or hastily constructed, suffer severely during heavy rains and high winds. To keep roofs level, as they are apt to 'settle' unequally from time to time, the inhabitants of cities may be seen rolling their roofs after bad weather, stone

rollers being kept upon roofs for the purpose. The sight of a slippered and scantily-clad individual thus busily engaged at early morn is rather a laughable one to a traveller. For the security of those walking or sitting on roofs, it is needful to edge them round with railings or parapets. The Divine command addressed to the Jews in Deuteronomy xxii. 8, made the construction of 'battlements' not a matter of choice, and it is a proof of God's merciful consideration, and that He would not have life needlessly endangered.

Indeed, to tell all that is done in modern times upon the roofs of houses in Syria, Palestine, and other Eastern lands, would be to narrate almost the whole life of the people. Especially are the roofs important to those who have houses too small to be built court-fashion. On these, if weather permits, the meals will probably be taken during a good part of the year, much of the household work will be done by those employed at home, and conversations carried on by those who have been engaged out-of-doors during the day, and afterwards are inclined to tell or hear the news. From roof to roof voices will be heard in the evening, in friendly dialogue, though it would be regarded as an offence if one person were to pry curiously over another person's roof. In very hot weather the members of a family, of all ages, will sleep on the roof, a plan that we should think not at all comfortable, and particularly as in many cases there is a staircase leading directly from the roof to the street. It is certainly convenient for rapid escape in the event of a sudden alarm from fire, or other cause. (See Luke xvii. 31.) It was on the roof of her house that Rahab concealed the men sent into Jericho by Joshua (Joshua ii. 6.) When Samuel wished to have a private talk with Saul, he took the future king to the roof.

(1 Samuel ix. 25.) In Isaiah xv. 3, and xxii. 1, we have allusions to the Eastern custom of using the housetop as a place of wailing or lamenting, still not at all uncommon. To the publicity that would be given to any intelligence, if it were announced from the roofs of houses, our Lord makes reference in Matthew x. 27, Luke xii. 3. The Apostle Peter went 'upon the housetop' to engage in prayer, and there saw a vision. (Acts x. 9.) These passages, beside others, show that the ancients used roofs in much the same way as the modern peoples of the East.

And here we may notice, though briefly, one of the most singular memorials of the early history of Syria. Much might be said concerning the giant cities of Bashan, whose history has been unfolded to us by Dr. Porter. Strange is it that houses, once the private abodes of the race of giant warriors who dwelt in Bashan when Abraham wandered over the plains of Palestine, have escaped the shocks and storms of thousands of years. In many, as we are told, the walls are sound, the roofs unbroken, the doors in their places, and the very window-shutters perfect. All are of stone, and most of close-grained basalt. Some of the doors are roughly formed, though others have fine work in relief, representing fruit and flowers. The very roofs are basalt, the blocks hewn like beams, and laid from wall to wall. As with our British cromlechs, one asks in astonishment, 'By what tools were these cut, and how were such masses laid in their places?' But, as Dr. Porter adds, 'though the houses belong to a period when architecture was in its infancy, giants were the builders.'

It can scarcely be asserted that a love for, or an admiration of, the objects of nature is at all common in the East. We should rather be justified in stating

that the bulk of the people regard the wonders of animal and vegetable life with indifference, nor do the

VINE-ARBOUR.

glories of the heavens awaken much emotion. In the mind of a pious Jew, however, who, under the Mosaic

dispensation, strove to obey Jehovah, and to realise His presence at all times, there would be a very different feeling towards all those things which God had created, from that pervading the mind of a formalist or a heathen. Still, speaking generally, in early times as now, few Orientals, cared to devote time to the observation of nature. Hence the case of Solomon was of an exceptional character, and but little of his knowledge made its way by tradition to after generations. (1 Kings iv. 33.) It follows from this, that though some cities and places, such as ancient Babylon, were famous for their gardens, an ordinary house in the East of two or three thousand years ago, would not be very likely to have near or around it pleasure grounds of the kind we in England are partial to. An allotment of land might be enclosed, and attached directly to a residence, but it was mostly devoted to the cultivation of culinary herbs, or to the supply of food for domestic cattle. For one thing, however, the Jews were indebted to their sojourn in Egypt, they acquired a liking for vine-arbours ; these, as we see from the delineations on early Egyptian monuments, were very favourite retreats in hot weather. When the grapes were ripe, there was both shade and refreshment. The vines were sometimes trained up other trees, or more frequently, brought up on trellises of wood or stout reeds. It was part of the blessing bestowed on Judah, that he should be settled in a land of vines (Gen. xlix. 11) ; and the phrase of sitting under the vine or the fig-tree became a common one to indicate a state of peace and prosperity. If we could get a view of a garden in Palestine, in the best days of the Jewish State, it would be almost sure to have its vine, except in a few districts where the soil was unfavourable. The

pomegranate, reaching sometimes to the height of twenty feet, was another favourite, admired for its deep green leaves, and bell-like scarlet flowers, and hence joined with the golden bells on the robes of the priest. (Exodus xxviii. 33, 34.) Olives, both for

AN EASTERN VINEYARD.

use and ornament, were cultivated near houses, even forming large groves in some instances. Palms of various species would probably be planted for the purpose of affording shade. One of the ancient cities most famous for its palm-trees was Jericho, where there once was, near the walls, a grove or forest said

to be three miles broad and eight miles long. The balm, or balsam, of Gilead was grown in gardens at Jericho. Philistia, so it is said, had many beautiful gardens, and recent visitors report that flowers are most plentiful in the Vale of Askelon. The city of Jaffa, or Joppa, has fine gardens around it, hedged in with the prickly pear, and abounding in figs, pomegranates, and water-melons. When an attempt is made at laying out a flower garden in an ornamental style, a favourite plan in the East is to divide the plot into square beds of small size. The production of silk has been taken up with great interest by the inhabitants of some parts of Syria, and mulberry orchards have been planted near houses for the purpose of supplying food to the caterpillars. If we are to read 2 Samuel v. 23 as it stands in our English version, this would show that the mulberry was a well-known tree in the reign of David, if not earlier. It may have been planted, with other trees, in orchards for the sake of its fruit.

The modern Syrian gentleman is fond of having at a convenient distance from his house, if he resides away from a town, orchards, in which the citron, orange, and olive are conspicuous. Some writers think that the citron is the apple of Scripture. The almond tree is also commonly seen, the 'first to meet the sun in the spring.'

CHAPTER IV.

MODES OF SITTING AND RECLINING.

THERE is only one room or apartment mentioned in Scripture of which all the furniture is described, and that is the chamber prepared for Elisha, at Shunem (2 Kings iv. 10). To render it complete for the prophet's use, after the builder had done his work, the mistress of the house proposed to her husband to place within it 'a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick.' The word 'stool' may be simply 'seat' according to the Hebrew, and 'candlestick' is not a suitable English word, since the modern candle, of some solid greasy substance, with a wick running through it, was, in all probability, unknown to the Jews of the olden time. This, therefore, must have been a lamp of some antique fashion. Some may remark that nothing is said about cooking utensils, or implements, or vessels of any kind that have to do with food; and yet it is not to be supposed the hospitality of these friends of the prophet stopped short at this point, and left him dinnerless, or supperless, on his occasional visits. No doubt a 'mess,' or dish, already prepared, was brought in for him from the family table; and the various articles which Western custom sets out upon the table at meal-times, are of little consequence in the East, where eating is, for the most part, a matter of great simplicity. Nor do the Eastern habits of either men or women require that a sleeping apartment should be furnished with

those appendages of the toilet which we deem necessary and agreeable. Elisha was, we think, quite at ease in his scantily-furnished chamber, in which he may, possibly, have placed for himself the materials for writing that he generally used, and a copy of the Book of the Law.

Few persons who have read the works of the poet Cowper, can have failed to be amused with the in-

EGYPTIAN FURNITURE.

teresting outline he gives at the commencement of the 'Task,' of the process by which mankind, after a number of experiments and gradual advances, at last contrived a seat, so elegant and luxurious as is the sofa, and so excelling the first rude seat devised by the early hunter or shepherd, to give rest to the weary back and limbs. And yet, as we ascertain from sculptures of high antiquity, especially those of Egypt, not very many centuries had passed, after the Flood,

before couches or sofas were introduced. That singular race of people, the Egyptians, displayed much skill in the invention of many things, helpful towards domestic enjoyment. Many of their arts, and their sciences also, were quite forgotten in later times, though their details were graven almost indelibly on stony memorials, where we can now examine them. Our poet is, no doubt, quite right in assuming that an uncivilized nation, if left to itself, would be a good while before it devised anything so conveniently pleasant as the couch. And, of course, there were ancient nations by whom an article that might be supposed to tend towards the encouragement of indolent or luxurious habits in the young, would be looked upon with dislike, and an inventor might prudently keep his discovery to himself, since, instead of a reward, death might be the result of its announcement.

There has, apparently, always been a difference between the nations of the East and those of the West, with regard to the general mode of sitting; and this is easily explainable, not only on the ground of a difference of climate, but because the races are so unlike each other in bodily peculiarities. The favourite mode of sitting in the East is more like what we should call sitting cross-legged; and a worthy class of workpeople with us, namely, journeymen tailors, are truly Oriental in the mode in which they sit at their employment. Much annoyance is occasioned to the inexperienced traveller in the East, if he goes out of the ordinary track of tourists, by the difficulty he has, when in any building, to obtain something upon which he can seat himself in the fashion he has been accustomed to from his childhood. He thinks it perfectly ridiculous to sit doubled up on the floor, or on a couch, and the natives he is amongst think it as odd that

their visitor should prefer a seat below which his legs have to dangle loosely. It would be a mistake to infer from the common Eastern mode of sitting, that less time is thus passed by the Orientals than with us; for such is not the case, most of them being much given to sedentary habits; indeed, as Kitto remarks, chairs are, naturally, more adapted to an active race of people, inclined to get up and down frequently, and also to move about from one part of a room or apartment to another. Eastern arrangements do not give persons much opportunity for doing that. And it might certainly be argued against the Eastern manner of seating oneself, that it requires a disposition of couches or cushions, not helpful towards coolness, however much the climate may lead people to wish for it. Any chair, or other seat, contrived, like our cane-bottomed chairs, to allow of ventilation, or the passage of air around and beneath the person seated, strikes one as being pleasanter than a surrounding of warm and, perhaps, not over clean pillows. And what nurseries must these be of divers insect pests, numerous and pertinacious.

There are two ways, we notice, in which the natives of Eastern lands usually seat themselves. The one to which reference has already been made, is with the legs crossed under the body; in which position no European could sit long and maintain his balance, as the body has a tendency to fall or lean backwards, and it is therefore necessary to bend forward a little, which requires an effort that is soon painful. Even those who have been taught from childhood to seat themselves in this posture, find it comfortable to be so placed that, behind them, there is something not *too* hard against which they can lean. Hence the ordinary arrangement of what is called 'the divan.' We can

hardly fancy it, yet it is said, that this mode of taking a seat is, to those accustomed to it, one that really rests the whole frame more than any position short of lying down entirely. Kitto, in his remarks upon it, observes that children would not sit doubled up by choice, an infant always, if in health, delighting to stretch out its limbs.

A visitor to Persia, some years ago, noticed, that on the occasion of some state audience, a chair was placed for the European ambassador, while the monarch sat in a crouching posture, and contrasted rather unfavourably with his visitor. Most probably, rather a decided change in this and other respects will be brought about by the intercourse now opened up between Persia and Europe. This position, however, in which persons may be seen seated in antique sculptures shown in the British Museum, is that called, 'sitting upon the heels.' One writer tells us that persons so sitting appear more gracefully 'posed,' as the artists say, than those seated in the cross-legged posture; about which opinions will differ. When used to it, you can, no doubt, keep up your balance better than in the other mode of sitting, and cushions at the back of the carpets placed for seats can be dispensed with. Kitto speaks of a friend of his, who had, by his sojourn in the East, got to enjoy the posture, and sat comfortably in his room, on his heels, for four or five hours, with his books and MSS. strewed about him on the floor. It can hardly be doubted that the Jews and their neighbours in Syria did, in early times, sit, if not habitually, at least, occasionally, in one or other of these modes, which render a raised seat unnecessary; and two passages have been quoted, from which it has been supposed that 'Sitting upon the heels' was sometimes a devotional attitude assumed by the Israelites. It has always

AN EASTERN CASEMENT. (SITTING UPON THE HEELS.)

been one of the Moslem positions in prayer, the hands being folded, or concealed in the garments. David is stated, in 1 Chronicles xvii. 16, to have entered the house of God (then the tabernacle, as the temple was not built), and 'sat' to offer his praise and prayer. And, if we understand that Elijah had so placed himself,

when, in the earnestness of his supplication, he 'put his face between his knees' (1 Kings xviii. 42), this would explain what is otherwise rather difficult.

It is recorded more than once of our Lord, that out of doors, and when engaged in the work of instruction, He sat, while the disciples or the people stood around. For, as we are told by several authors, the Jews considered it was proper that the Rabbi or teacher should sit, and the pupils or learners stand, but the usage of our churches and lecture-halls is just the

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

reverse. Are we to suppose, in the instance when His Sermon on the Mount was delivered, that He sat, in Oriental posture, upon some ridge which gave the hearers a view of the Great Teacher, the crowd being grouped on the slope below? This may have been the fact, or some seat could have been contrived by His disciples. Within doors, there can be scarcely a doubt that Christ sat, just in our Western mode, on some raised eat or couch, since that custom, if not prevalent

before, had been brought by the Romans into Palestine. Of course at meals the recumbent posture was assumed. And this leads on to a circumstance which is specially deserving of notice, that we have evidence tending to show the very general modes of sitting now to be seen throughout the East were not nearly so common before the Christian Era. Not only Egyptian, as we have seen, but Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Syrian evidence can be brought to show how prevalent, thousands of years ago, both couches and chairs were: these, which is quite remarkable, being equal or superior in execution to some of our modern work. Granted the existence of raised seats, we cannot err in assuming that they were intended for use, and not for ornament. And indeed, it may be shown from Scripture that seats, like or almost like ours, were known throughout Jewish history. Abraham may have sat on the ground in the door of his tent (Gen. xviii. 1), and the idolatrous Israelites may have so sat when feasting in the wilderness (Exodus xxxii. 6); but the manner of Eli's death hints that he sat on something in the form of a stool or chair (1 Samuel iv. 18); and Saul is said to have been 'upon a seat by the wall' in his palace when Jonathan remonstrated with him, and pleaded for David (1 Samuel xx. 25). The writer of the first Psalm alludes to the man who sits 'in the seat of the scornful,' and Solomon speaks of the foolish woman as sitting 'at the door of her house on a seat' (Proverbs ix. 14). Christ, when clearing the Temple and its courts of those who had unlawfully taken their stand there, overturned 'the seats of them that sold doves' (Matthew xxi. 12). And the observations made by the Apostle James, in his epistle (chapter ii. 1—3), imply the use of seats in the assemblies of Christians. But 'sitting at meat,' in the

New Testament narratives, was, we shall presently see, rather a reclining posture.

As all visitors on entering a tent or house in the East are asked to seat themselves, and since so much of the family life and social intercourse is also connected with that posture, we will now look at what further appliances for this end are to be found in an Eastern house, before examining other parts of the furniture. Beginning, not in the Cowperian way but the reverse, and proceeding from the most luxurious to the simplest kind of seat, the Oriental divan may be named first—giving, as it does, scope for much magnificence. This would not, of course, be found in a tent, or in the houses of the poor. 'It consists of 'an unbroken line of mattress, or wide sofa (without legs), extended upon the floor along the two sides and upper end, with bulky, hard-stuffed moveable cushions leaning against the wall, the coverings of which are often of very rich and costly materials.' It is rather odd that the place of honour on such a divan is, in many places, considered to be, not in the centre, but in the left-hand corner. These divans are largely patronised in Turkey, as well as in Asia; and no doubt they prove very agreeable places when persons wish to take a nap, and convenient at all times when moveable seats are not needed. Meals are not usually taken when seated on a divan. Instead of a divan, in Persia, and some other parts where the custom of sitting upon the heels is prevalent, a different arrangement is called for, and the suitableness of pieces of thick and soft felt, laid along the floor, perhaps in more than a single thickness, is very obvious. A back support is not needed, all that is required is something soft, and tolerably firm, for the feet to rest upon.

The couch or sofa, raised above the ground upon

legs, is not much indulged in by modern Orientals, though occasionally to be seen in an Eastern house, possibly introduced by some one who has visited Western lands. Amongst the Assyrian monuments we see representations of chairs of a sumptuous sort, which form a connecting link between the couch or sofa and the plain chair. The Assyrian chairs, apparently meant for royal use, have embroidered cushions, with carved heads of animals at the corners, and the feet are also made to represent the feet of lions or bulls. A very curious figure, in a series of Persian sculptures, has been noted by Dr. Kitto. This has a high seat and straight back, the frame is carved, and the outline altogether at once suggests a resemblance to the tall-backed chairs of oak, so familiar to the lovers of old English furniture. Most of the chairs, however, that are represented on Egyptian monuments and elsewhere, have not high seats, but are of or near the level of those most generally to be found in houses throughout Europe—a little below the knee of a person of ordinary stature, some few of them being much lower, and having the back curved. One chair, occurring in several sculptures, Kitto regards as an anticipation of what is familiarly designated, the 'kangaroo chair,' and which has been thought, till recently, quite a production of modern civilization. We also learn from some of the figures, that these early, but by no means barbarous, cabinet-makers had discovered a way of doing without the bars which in common chairs united the legs. Handsome chairs and couches had only the simple supports at the four corners, though these were often carved to resemble the limbs of animals, the feet being raised on metal pins, perhaps to allow of easy motion from place to place without lifting. Double chairs are shown, possibly in-

tended for the heads of the household, and a seat also, in which two persons would sit, back to back, not quite so sociable certainly. We find there is evidence that many chairs were in use in the palaces and residences of the wealthy throughout Asia, from a very early date, having the seats and arms inlaid with ivory, or gems of various kinds; while choice woods were employed in the manufacture of the frames. None perhaps of these have escaped the effects of time; yet there have been brought out, from chambers at Thebes, long closed from the visits of the curious, chairs of an inferior make, in some specimens with bottoms of wood, while some have the seats crossed by thongs of leather, or coarse string, somewhat after the fashion of our rush or cane-bottomed chairs.

The word 'chair' does not occur in our version of the Bible; nor is 'couch' frequently found, and in nearly all the verses where it occurs, a bed, or a place for lying down to sleep is probably meant by the writer. In Amos vi. 4, as 'beds' and 'couches' are named in the same verse, it may be thought that, in the time of luxury, condemned by the prophet, those 'at ease in Zion,' had imitated their heathen neighbours by filling their houses with the means of self-indulgence. As already remarked, a 'stool' was provided for the prophet Elisha by his hostess, and that primitive kind of seat, with either three or four legs, a top of some weight, and no adornment, may have been better known to the Jews during a great part of their history as occupants of Palestine, than chairs or couches. In but one verse of Scripture, besides that in 2 Kings iv. 10, have we the word 'stool' employed. Doubtless many of the Israelites sat on mats or carpets, just in the fashion of modern Orientals; though, as

contrasted with them, the Jews were an active people, and therefore more likely to have moveable seats. The ordinary bed with them, was, as we may be sure, quite portable. In old Greek authors, we discover several allusions to the stools which supported the weight of the warriors of the olden time, after the fatigues of battle, or the chase ; the ladies of the household had, it may be, seats of a softer kind. These stools were formidable weapons if hurled at an adversary's head, and we read of their being thus used in the sudden quarrels that arose, even at the dinner-table, in those uncivilized times. In our own time, it must be owned, chairs and benches have been turned into offensive weapons by men mad with drink or rage.

CHAPTER V.

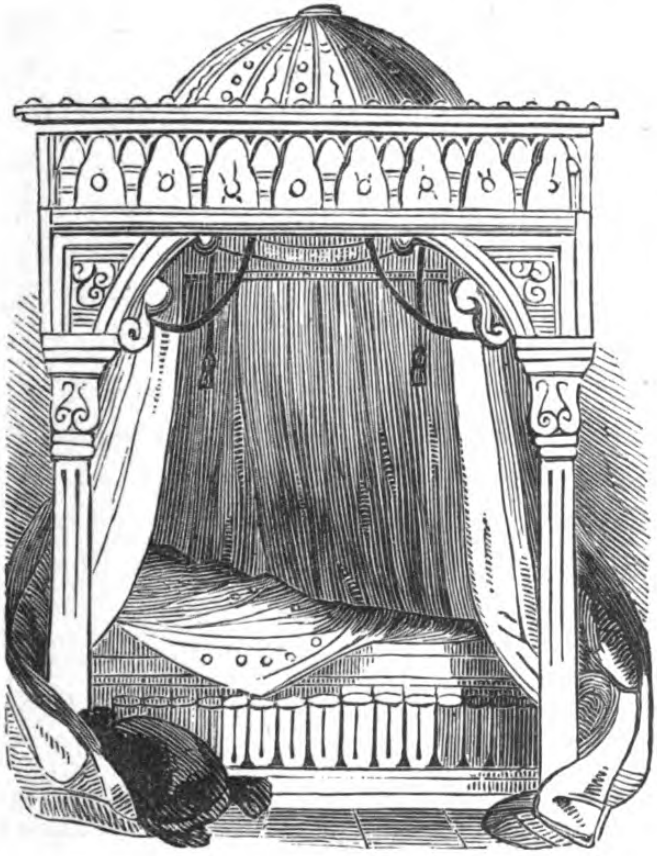
BEDS, TABLES AND UTENSILS.

GIANTS as well as dwarfs, must at night lie helpless and unconscious in sleep; and the Bible contains an account of the size of the bedstead on which Og, king of Bashan, laid his giant frame. This bedstead was nine cubits long, and four in breadth; and, even in that day, it seems to have been regarded as a wonder. (See Numbers xxi. 33 to end; also Deuteronomy iii. 11.) And though attempts have been made to prove that bedsteads were not known so early in man's history, the statement is very distinct here. We are reminded of a bed in this country,—the 'great bed of Ware,' on which it is said, traditionally, that Queen Elizabeth slept, and which was long preserved as a relic at the town in Hertfordshire whence it had its name. In the present day, Syrians do not set a high value on a bedstead; and the poorer classes cannot have them, unless they are formed of such simple materials as palm-sticks, the long mid-ribs of the palm leaf, which, twisted together in a dexterous manner, are found to give sufficient support to keep from the ground the slight bedding which the circumstances of these people allow them to get. And in fact, during great part of the year, there is not much laid upon the bedstead, for the sleeper throws off most of his day attire, and puts nothing extra over himself. Og's bedstead was not of this slight nature; yet such palm bedsteads or couches may have been contrived at an early period, and if the

patriarchs had bedsteads, these, which could soon be removed or replaced, would have suited their tent life. We read, towards the close of his life, about Jacob's bowing himself 'upon the bed's head' (Genesis xlvii. 31), which may imply a bedstead, or fixed bed of some kind, and not a mere pile of mattresses and pillows on the floor. But it might be that his sleeping couch was something like the Eastern divan, which, as we have seen, is suitable enough for a bed, with a little change in the arrangement of the cushions, etc. Still, it is clear that persons of distinction, if not the common people, had bedsteads, and those for kings and nobles were sometimes made of the precious metals, and not of iron, as was that of Og. State beds on the Continent were, about five hundred years ago, made lofty, so that there was some difficulty in mounting into them, and the design of these is thought to have been brought from the East, during the Crusades. A verse has been quoted from the Koran, in which it is announced as one of the future joys of the faithful that they should 'repose themselves on lofty beds;' showing what were the Arabian notions of the matter. The words of David, in Psalm cxxxii. 3, imply that he had a royal *bedstead*, as well as bedding, to which he went up; and some monarchs, as we read, had their couches placed in an alcove, raised by a flight of steps.

In the harem, where that exists as a distinct part of the house appropriated to the females, travellers in the East have noticed that bedsteads are not very often to be seen. Beds are made up on the floor, as needed, and the bed-clothes put away in the day-time; while the mattresses that form part of the divan, or which are laid on the couches used as seats, serve also for beds at night. It is a common plan to change

from room to room, according to the weather, as people in the East very sensibly prefer a large sleeping apartment in warm weather, and a small one when it is cold. At certain times, as has often been described, beds, bedding, and even bedsteads, are removed to the roof of the house, and the family retire there to sleep.



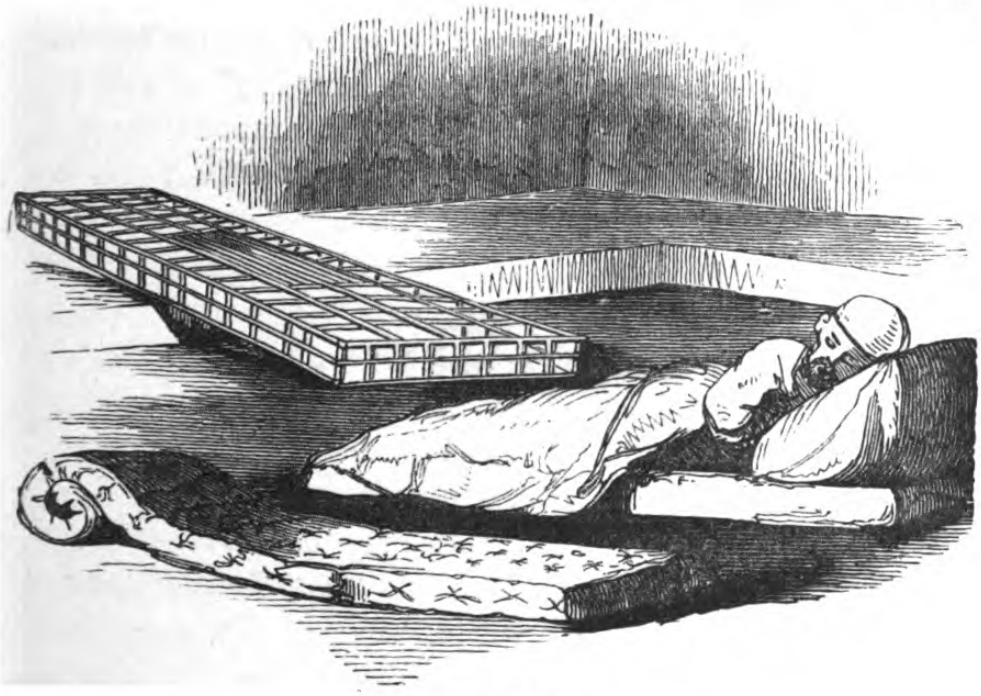
ROYAL BED (EASTERN).

Through a fear that the moon's beams are injurious, they are careful to hide their heads under the bedclothes, if the 'silvery orb' is shining; and thus, in avoiding one evil, fall into another, for it is injurious to check free breathing by muffling up the nose and mouth with any covering. Kitto denies that the least harm is occasioned by the moonbeams, though a well-

known verse in the Book of Psalms has been understood to refer to the possibility of such injury. Of course, in many houses, both in towns and villages, where the habitations are small, it is quite agreeable to Eastern ideas to sleep in the same room where the day has been spent, and a man of the middle rank, who has several male guests stopping with him, does not usually conduct them to other apartments; after the evening meal, they arrange themselves as best they can, in the public or reception room, and so pass the night. An Oriental has seldom much trouble in getting to sleep, though one tourist tells us, rather jocosely, that, as a rule, in those lands, people 'lie exceedingly hard.' This remark might, however, be taken in a different sense, were it not for its connection; as we find lying is of all vices the one, perhaps, most shockingly common amongst Orientals, and thought little of by many who pride themselves on their good qualities.

Feather beds are unknown in the East; nor would they, perhaps, be prized, were they known. Mattresses stuffed with wool or rag suffice even for the wealthy; and this has been the case from the earliest times. More than this, a great many persons do not care about a mattress at all, rolling themselves up for the night in a loose over-garment, or a thin blanket. A cloak or mantle may be spread over the blanket, though quilts, made of cotton, or of silk and cotton, are also used by some, especially in the winter. When Michal saved her husband's life by a singular contrivance, as is narrated in 1 Samuel xix. 12—17, it is said that she 'covered' the image (*teraphim*, literally) that she laid in David's bed with a 'cloth,' or rather a 'mantle,' or 'outer robe,' to keep up the deception. We perceive that in this account there is no mention of a

bedstead ; but it is stated twice that a pillow of goats' hair was put for a bolster, or rest for the head—the value of which is known in Eastern as well as in Western lands. The wandering Jacob, at Bethel, made a stone his pillow (Genesis xxviii. 11), and travellers in our day notice that Arabs and others, who from necessity or choice sleep on the ground in the open air, use a stone or fragment of rock in this way,



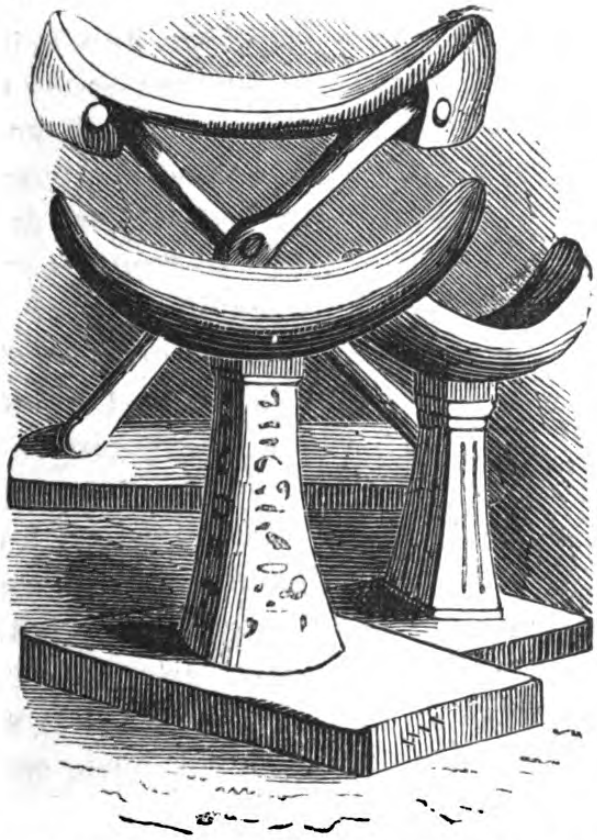
EASTERN BEDS.

wrapping some article of dress about it ; or a pillow may be contrived of a log of wood, where that is at hand. Stuffed pillows for bedrooms are, in the East, made of good size, and covered sometimes with rich embroidery. The most interesting mention of a pillow in Scripture is connected with the fact recorded in Mark iv. 38, where we find that Jesus, wearied with the labours of the day, slept calmly in the midst of His alarmed disciples on board their small vessel.

There may be seen, in a collection of pictures, one

illustrating a miracle performed by Christ, where an infirm man is represented as bearing off, after his restoration to health and strength, a very heavy load, consisting of not only bedding, but a *bedstead* of a portable kind, in obedience to the command of Him who had wrought the cure. This shows a strange misapprehension of Eastern habits. It is hardly likely that, in even such instances as that recorded in Matthew ix. 2, and the parallel passages, the sick man was carried upon a couch or bedstead of wood or metal, though he had four bearers. The Greek, rendered in one verse 'bed,' and in another 'couch,' means simply anything upon which a person lies down ; the term is quite a general one, and might be used in reference to a close mattress, as they are made in the East. In the case of infirm persons, doubtless straps were attached to the corners, by which it could be upheld. Some have thought that in this miracle the sufferer was borne in the arms of his friends, not on a mattress, but wrapped round in bed-clothes. Peter, on effecting, by Divine aid, the cure of Æneas, after an eight years' illness, directed him, not to carry, but to 'make' his bed. (Acts ix. 34.) God's merciful regard for the poor and distressed is shown in the prohibition given in Exodus xxii. 26, 27, and Deuteronomy xxiv. 13: a man's outer garment, which might be necessary for him as a night covering, though less important in the daytime, was not to be kept from him after sunset, if he had made it over as a security. And, closely connected, we have a striking caution given in the verses 10 and 11 of the chapter in Deuteronomy just quoted. If a man offered any domestic article as a pledge or security, his brother was not to go into his house, and fetch the thing ; he was to wait until the owner brought it out. Thus the feelings of the

latter were spared the intrusion of another man into his house under circumstances that might be painful. Lastly, in leaving this particular topic, it must be kept in mind that few Orientals remove all their day attire when lying down for the night. The garment next the person is nearly always retained; and, possibly, at a cold season, nearly the whole of the dress, the girdle being loosened.

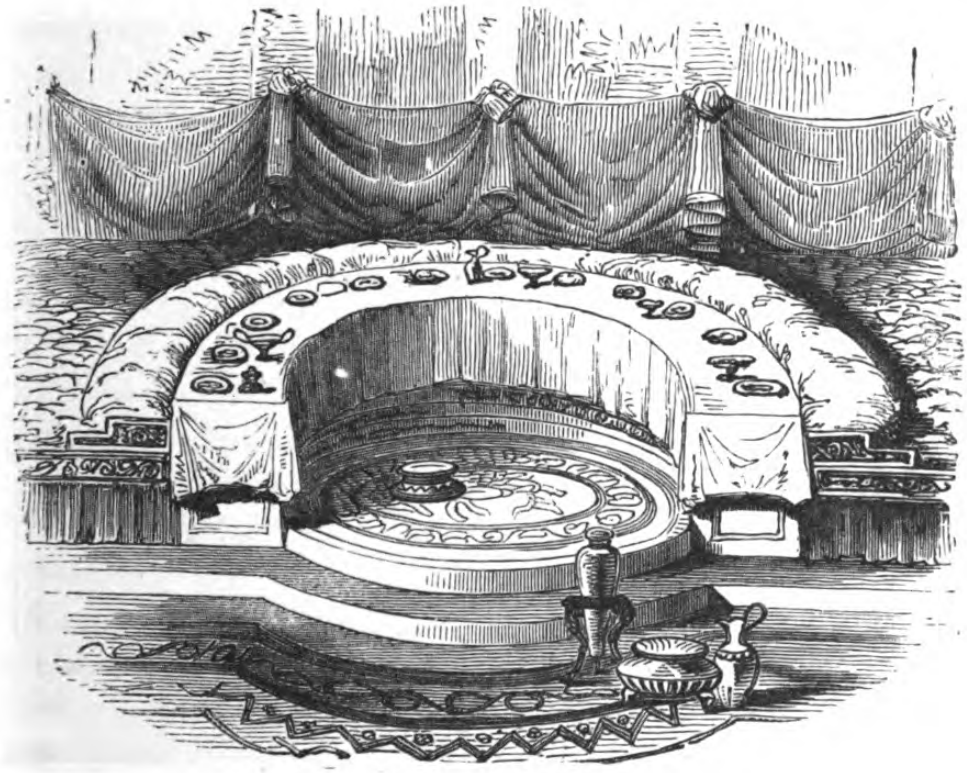


PILLOWS (OR STOOLS) OF WOOD AND STONE.

Though, in this present century, the natives of Syria and other countries of the East make small account of tables, these were formerly, in some shape, a general, though not an indispensable, article of furniture throughout Asia; certainly so until the time our Lord appeared upon earth, since such verses as Matthew xv. 27; Mark vii. 4; Luke xxii. 21; Romans

xi. 9, are positive on the subject. Beside other reasons, the prevalence of the custom of eating at meals in the reclining posture on couches, made tables necessary to receive the provisions. The first mention of a table in Scripture is in the Book of Exodus: a table of Shittim wood being part of the furniture of the tabernacle. This was to be overlaid with the choicest of the metals, and also ornamented with a golden crown on the border, probably at each corner. It may not have resembled any tables the Israelites had seen; yet we may venture to think that a table was not an unfamiliar object to the people. The ancient Egyptians had tables before the date of the Exodus. Some, so Wilkinson tells us, had only a central leg or support; others, had three or four legs. In form, as wall-figures show, these were round, or square; and it is evident that the Egyptians knew how to make them of different materials, such as wood, metal, and stone. At all events, the precept given to Moses proves a Jewish acquaintance with the table as an article of furniture about fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. On Assyrian monuments tables are easily recognisable; and one or two have been described by Kitto, which, though heavier than those of ancient Egypt, were finished off in an elegant style. A table is also represented the use of which is not quite certain: the surface of the table is seen to be depressed or hollowed in the centre. Some who have examined this form, have supposed it was a kind of altar, the offering being consumed, or, at least, placed in the middle; but the discovery of a drawing, in which the same kind of table has a place in a domestic group, shows that, if employed for sacred uses, that was not the only purpose. And there was also a table which, from its outline, suggests, to an observer, the

idea that it was made to shut up, like a camp stool. If so, Elisha's table may have been of that kind. It may be remarked here, that 'table,' in the olden time, had a wide meaning, as with us, and the word is sometimes applied to any flat surface. The tables of the law were, of course, slabs of stone. (Exod. xxxii. 15.) Figuratively, 'table' occurs in a number of passages: 'eating at the table,' of any one, was a



ANCIENT TABLE.

phrase denoting familiarity with him. The 'writing-table' of Luke i. 63 was evidently a tablet, with a surface suitable for writing upon. Another allusion to tablets of this kind is unmistakably made in Proverbs iii. 3, and in Jeremiah xvii. 1.

And here we may pause to notice that many people, in forming their ideas of the patriarchal life in tents, and that of their descendants during the

journey in the wilderness, are apt to fall into the mistake of thinking that tents must, of necessity, be very bare of furniture, and uncomfortable in accommodation. Yet, of Abraham, it is said, in Genesis xiii. 2, that he was not only 'rich in cattle,' but 'in silver, and in gold,' and the possession of these implies that he could and would obtain such articles of furniture as were then to be seen in habitations. Having many beasts of burden, there would be no difficulty in removing various articles suitable to a tent. The patriarch's refusal of any portion of the goods of Sodom (not garments only, but also other objects of value) arose from a special reason, and from carelessness about those things which minister to human comfort. So, again, we may judge regarding the Israelites, though Scripture informs us that they took their 'kneading-troughs' or 'dough-bags' upon 'their shoulders,' that was not all they marched out with, beside the clothes they wore. Jewels and raiment they got, as parting gifts from the Egyptians; and those of the Israelites, who had lived in settled habitations, and had therefore accumulated furniture, though of a humble kind, would carry off with them all that was portable. They had oxen, which would be yoked to wagons,—and, perhaps, camels as well. The forty years of wilderness life destroyed some of their goods; still, at the close, they became possessors of the wealth of the conquered Canaanites that was not defiled by their idolatry. And that the tents of modern wanderers in Palestine, such as those of the Bedouin race, are not badly furnished, is evident from Purotti's account of what he saw. But we miss the chairs and tables so familiar to our eyes, and which, in their varieties of shape and size, make a large part of our furniture. Arms are prominent in the Arab tent, as we should suppose from the habits

of the people ; lances and sabres, pistols and match-locks, sometimes fire-arms of a more modern stamp, and, of course, long knives or yataghans, employed for various purposes, besides weapons for close combat. Then come mats and carpets, sheep-skins and goat-skins ; some of these sewed up so as to serve for bottles. There may also be some bottles of leather regularly prepared. Cups, and vessels of earthenware, far from being a 'set,' are ranged together in some corner out of the way, flanked by large earthenware jars for holding water, and some plates of metal ; also one or more coffee-pots. The culinary apparatus may also include a wooden hand-mill, for grinding corn or dried locusts ; two flat stones for crushing salt ; a mortar, for pounding coffee, and, perhaps, a sauce-pan. Whatever treasures the owner of the tent possesses will be carefully rolled up in rags and old garments, to keep them from the view of chance visitors. Arab women, however, are fond of making a display of jewels or gaudy articles, and their conduct must be, at times, displeasing to their lords and masters.

Not merely in modern Eastern tents, we may say, but in the houses also, is the absence of our usual furniture a notable fact ; yet, we are told by those well acquainted with the East, that the rooms do not present a naked or uncomfortable aspect, as care is taken, in all good houses, to adorn the walls and ceilings so as to please the eye. Thus, there are panels, 'picked out' in gay, if not always harmonious, colours, carved wood and mirrors of different sizes, and also, in the homes of the wealthy, richly-worked curtains and mosaic designs in marble and other stones, are added to complete the furnishing. Growing flowers, in boxes, are also placed in convenient positions. Though

the early residents in Palestine were not, as we suppose, so scantily supplied with chairs, tables, and couches as are their successors of this period, and had, on that account, less need to resort to wall-decoration, it is certain that some of the peoples of Syria, as well as of Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia, well understood this art. Those who are not acquainted with the change our language has undergone, are surprised to read, in early Jewish history, of 'pictures.' A command was given

EGYPTIAN BASKETS (SILVER BASKETS FOR FRUIT).

to the Israelites, that they should destroy the 'pictures' of the Canaanites. (Numbers xxxiii. 52.) Here, and in another verse, a picture merely means anything that is painted or represented on a flat surface, as opposed to statuary, or raised figures. As the heathen nations had such delineations, with or without colour, in their temples, they, doubtless, introduced them also into their private houses. Imitating their idolatrous neigh-

bours, the Israelites had, in the days of Isaiah, 'pleasant pictures;' that is, wall-adornments of some kind; and the prophet was ordered to declare that, in the time of chastisement that was approaching, these should perish, with other things in which the people gloried. (Isaiah ii. 12—17.) The 'apples of gold in pictures of silver,' an apt symbol of wise thoughts clothed in suitable language, is to be explained in another way. The royal author of the Book of Proverbs had, in the palace, no lack of silver vessels; and some of these were of open work, like baskets, and elegantly chased. Apples, or, perhaps, as some say, citrons, in their golden ripeness, laid in these baskets, and placed on the banqueting table, would be suggestive to the observant and thoughtful king.

CHAPTER VI.

CANDLES AND LAMPS, WATER JARS AND BOTTLES.

ONE of the peculiarities of the Orientals is, a decided aversion to being in the dark; and yet they do not particularly care for a strong light indoors after the sun has set, though they might think such a light of some value when they are obliged to walk in the streets or open country at night when the moon is not shining. So far do they carry their dislike to darkness, thinking it exposes them to the attacks of evil spirits, that, whenever they can afford one, persons in Eastern lands suspend a light in the bed-chamber. There are drawings of such rooms, made by travellers in Asia, and in one of these a lantern is represented as suspended behind the sleeper, fastened to the bed-post. It could thus be readily laid hold of by the person on the bed, in case of need. To this Job may refer when he exclaims: 'O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness. (Job xxix. 2, 3.) David, too, gives utterance to his trust in God by saying: 'Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.' (Psalm xviii. 28.) But the indifference manifested by the Orientals generally as to the amount of illumination shed over their apartments, is shown by the frequency with which a large room may be noticed, lit up at eventide by only one or

two flickering lamps. Kitto's explanation is, that reading, an occupation often filling up the evening hours with young and old in England, is not a favourite pursuit with Eastern folks, nor do they follow their various employments after sunset. They incline, whenever they can, to discontinue work after the sun has gone down. Special commendation is given to the virtuous woman, because she worked at night (Proverbs xxxi. 18) ; or, is she praised because her lamps were so well trimmed and fed with oil, that they did not suddenly fail ?

Orientals do not care about seeing each other's faces as they sit and converse, nor is much light requisite to enable them to smoke and sip coffee—nor even to take a meal. We read with interest the fact told us in Acts xx. 8, that 'there were *many lights*' in the chamber at Troas, when Paul was preaching there. The statement is emphatic, perhaps, because it might be considered to explain the heavy slumber into which Eutychus sank, since the air may have been rendered impure by the lights, in spite of the windows being open. He being seated in one of these open windows, overbalancing, fell from a considerable height,—from the third storey, indeed,—the house being loftier than most we read of in Scripture, probably built by a European. Also, we notice that it is recorded of the party of Christians, after this incident, that they sat up all night in converse ; this would be nothing unusual in an Eastern land, where the climate often tempts people to engage in long debates after the heat of the day is over ; and St. Paul's brethren were anxious to have all they could of his society and teaching. A venerable commentator of other days, writing upon the word 'candle,' as used in Scripture, explains it by saying that 'a candle is a long roll or cylinder of tallow or wax

for giving light.' Candles of this description are both made and used in the East at this time: when wax is employed it is sometimes scented with some aromatic oil to give forth a fragrant scent at the burning of the candle. But it is hardly likely that candles formed of solid fat or wax with a central wick were known to the Jews, and the inhabitants of the lands surrounding Palestine, at an early period of history. The word 'candlestick' in the Bible means rather a lamp-stand, or what is otherwise called, a candelabrum. There were one or more oil holders in it, and a varying number of branches, each of which would be provided with a wick of cotton. In the design of the tabernacle furniture, directions were given to Moses for the construction of a six-branched candlestick (Exodus xxv. 31—40), and ten such were introduced into Solomon's Temple. Seven candlesticks appear in the vision which was granted to the beloved disciple in Patmos; but it is not certain whether these were on a common frame or central pillar, or all distinct. As forming the fittings of the candlestick, tongs and snuff-dishes are mentioned; tongs to remove the burnt part of the wick, and to raise it if that was needful; snuff-dishes to receive the snuff for a time; these were not *snuffers*.

Besides these large articles suitable for guest-chambers and rooms of some size, the Jews had smaller lamps, of which we have various illustrations in ancient figures. These were generally shallow, and made with two orifices, one to receive the wick, and the other to allow of more oil being added. Instead of placing the wick in the centre, according to our usual fashion in hand-lamps, it was formerly made to issue from a hole near the outer edge of the lamp. The parable of the Ten Virgins turns on the necessity there was, when a lamp was needed to be alight for

some time, of having a vessel to contain an extra quantity of oil to recruit the lamp as the stock was exhausted. Sometimes, it appears that instead of using vegetable oil, such as that of the olive, for instance, the ancients fed their lamps with animal oil or fat. At present, in some towns and villages in the East, the traveller on arriving at even, and entering a dwelling, sees on a stool a metal dish, in which is a lump of tallow, with a wick inserted in the middle. This rude sort of light will of course last for a good while. Floating wicks are also occasionally found in use. The torch or flambeaux, adapted for carrying a long distance in the open air, was, it may be, known as far back as the times of the Judges, unless we take for granted that Gideon's warriors carried lamps giving light by means of oil and a wick. (Judges vii. 16.) There are those, however, who assert that what the soldiers carried on this occasion were firebrands ; and at a very early period of history men must, no doubt, have become acquainted with the properties of some woods that contain oily and resinous matter. Strips of some of these would, when suitably shaped and dried, prove serviceable as portable lights. The marginal reading to Judges xv. 4 tells us that Samson fastened 'torches' to the tails of the jackals he sent into the corn-fields of the Philistines ; it is probable that he secured to the animals pieces of wood of a nature to smoulder away slowly when set fire to.

Few tales are more extraordinary than those which have been told concerning the lamps said to have been found in some tombs—'everlasting lamps,' as they are called ; and the name, though not exactly appropriate, does certainly seem to have some application to a lamp that could burn thousands of years without being extinguished—in fact, granted a lamp that could

keep alight untouched for a thousand years, and we do not see why it should not remain in that state ten thousand. Not by one only, but by several authors, has the statement been made, that persons, on breaking open ancient tombs, found therein funereal lamps, burning, if not brightly, at least steadily, such tombs having been undisturbed for many hundreds of years. The story generally has this finish,—that these lamps went out directly any one approached to handle them, or, indeed, in a few moments after the vault was entered. Such tales will, by many, be at once put aside as of the same nature as the wonderful narratives about toads and frogs immured in stone or marble; but still there seems a mystery about the matter that cannot as yet be unravelled.

The very draughty houses of Eastern lands are not at all favourable to the steady burning of lamps or other lights that are without a screen. Hence lanterns have been contrived of different styles; and we may suppose something of the kind must have been common in Palestine, even in the days of the Jewish kings. In the case of tent-life, an uncovered light would be, in some states of the weather, quite useless, since so many of the slighter tents were liable to be entered by sudden gusts of wind. Glass lanterns are rare. We now usually find the screening material to be white cloth, though paper is also employed. There is a round top and bottom, both of metal, usually of copper; on the bottom a lamp may rest, or a candle may be fixed in a socket. Rings of wire connect the two, these being covered with the cloth or paper; and when the lantern is not in use, it is so constructed as to shut up in small space. As Kitto tells us, a stranger is surprised, on taking up one of them from the ground, to find a large lantern, perhaps three feet

long, expanding in his grasp. Though not so portable as the bull's-eye lantern of our guardian, the policeman, this Oriental lantern, from its huge white surface, diffuses a tolerably good amount of light. It is, as you perceive, a near relative of the familiar Chinese lantern, so admirable for decorative effects at night.

As compared with other needs, in most Eastern climates, the need of artificial warmth is of small importance, because the heat, through a large part of the year, is above what is agreeable. Still, there is cold, even sharp cold (more in some years than in others), in Syria and throughout those districts of Asia we read of in Bible history. With many inhabitants of the East, it is the fashion to meet this cold rather by additional clothing than by warming the apartments; and Kitto says that he has passed a winter more than once in an Eastern abode without fire, and felt no discomfort. The two things are nearly equal: for, by fires, we add a supply of warmth to the body to compensate for what has been carried off by the air; and in the other, by extra garments, we keep the air from reaching the body, and withdrawing its warmth. Chimneys being uncommon, the smoke produced by the burning of wood or charcoal (certainly the only kinds of fuel made use of in primitive times, and general in the East now) has to get out of the rooms, as best it can, by the doors and windows. Orientals are not sensitive to smoke, and they can breathe in a good deal of it without seeming at all uncomfortable; sitting on the ground, as they frequently do, some of it rises above them; and in those houses where there is no other apartment above the room in which a fire is burnt, a hole is made just over the fireplace, which is usually in the centre. In rooms situate on the ground floor, this

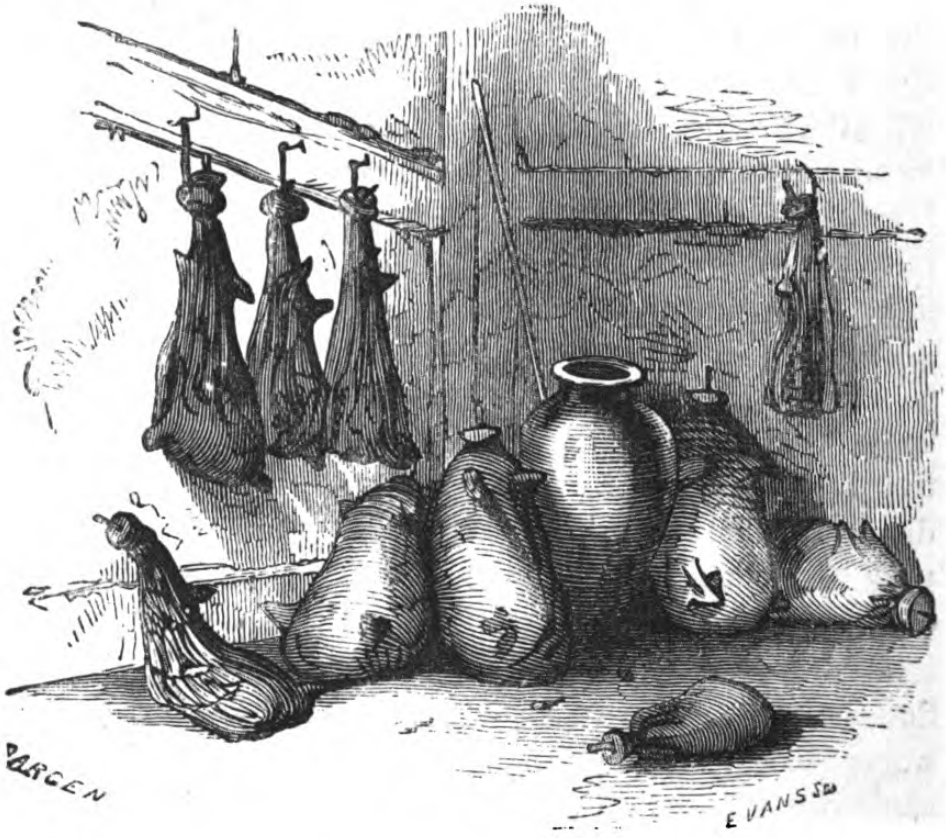
fireplace is simply a hole or cavity in the earth, lined with clay or cement. And the earliest fire lit by men in the rude hut, or cave, must have been thus managed: a hastily-scraped hollow in the earth, into which chips of wood and branches of trees were cast, and kindled by sparks obtained through friction. The fire burning before king Jehoiakim in his winter palace or chamber was, no doubt, in the centre, 'the hearth' being the name here given to the hollowed-out fireplace. (Jeremiah xxxvi. 22, 23). A fire so placed has its advantages, and diffuses warmth more equally over an apartment than the fire in grates, as usually situated in the walls of our houses.

Where the cold is but moderate, braziers of charcoal are found serviceable in Eastern habitations. These are brought into the rooms when the charcoal is at a red heat, so that there is the less vapour given off from it, yet sufficient to make the air impure, especially when a number of persons are gathered in a small room. For it is the custom in some families, to put the brazier of charcoal under a table, and persons sit round this, spreading rugs about their feet and legs so as to keep off the cool air from without. A group of relatives or friends will not only sit, but sleep in a circle about the fire, on a cold night; though, as a traveller tells us, those not accustomed to this peculiar 'family circle,' are likely to get more warmth than sleep. What would be particularly unfavourable to light sleepers, and nearly as trying as the various insects that are apt to be unwelcome visitors after nightfall, is the too audible snoring, which is an accomplishment with some Orientals. In Luke xxii. 55 we read that the Roman soldiers, being chilly on that early morning of spring, so eventful in the history of our Lord, 'kindled a fire in the midst of the hall,' and

sat or crouched down around it, Peter joining the party, with an air of ill-assumed indifference. If it was required to remove a portion of a fire, in order to kindle one in a different place, a fragment of a broken pot or a tile would serve as a shovel. (Isaiah xxx. 14.)

Water, for many purposes, is indispensable to an Eastern family, whatever be their dwelling, whether tent or house, and wherever this may be situate, in the crowded city, or on the lonely wild, or under the shady grove. A regular supply of water, distributed from house to house by pipes, is so common an arrangement in towns of importance with us, that we may think little of its advantages. Those who live in country districts where the inhabitants have to depend chiefly upon wells for their daily supply of water, can better comprehend the position of Orientals, to whom a water service by means of pipes is unknown. And what is worse, the water thus got in the East from wells has often to be carried long distances, and then, also, when obtained, it may be very far from being pure or agreeable to drink. Customs vary. In certain districts, it is not at all unusual to see men going about, and calling at the houses in towns, it being their employment to fetch water for a small money payment, or a meal. A skin, generally the skin of a goat, is a usual receptacle, seldom over clean inside or outside, the neck of the animal being often made the mouth or tap, though it is sometimes one of the legs. Straps are attached to these bottles, so that they may be slung. It is not, indeed, very many years ago since skin bottles, or, at any rate, bottles made of coarse leather, were used by country people in some parts of Britain; and the 'Leather-bottle Inn' is a familiar tavern sign. So, when travelling, water would of course be taken by

the party in these skins. Such a bottle it must have been that Abraham gave to Hagar (Genesis xxi. 14); and to a skin-bottle of some sort the Psalmist alludes, when he says, 'I am become like a bottle in the smoke.' (Psalm cxix. 83.) These skin-bottles, when empty, are hung up, as Kitto noticed, to the roofs of the dwellings of the poorer class, and become shrivelled and



LEATHERN BOTTLES.

sooty. But we have more frequent mention in Scripture of skins in relation to their use for containing wine than for holding water, jars and pitchers being most frequently named as water vessels, though skins were evidently also employed. In the present day, as Paxton and others have told us, the Arabs, whenever they are on a journey, enclose their water-bottles in

outer coverings of wood, and then, if put on the backs of some of the beasts of carriage, should the animals fall, yet the water would be preserved. The skin-bottles have an advantage over the earthen vessels for water, as, when properly managed, they exclude dust and insects.

Notwithstanding this, however, water pitchers and jars are, and have been through past ages, much used throughout the East. In the pleasing story of the

WATER JARS.

way in which Rebekah became the wife of Isaac, the first interview between the maiden and Abraham's servant is said to have taken place at a well to which she had come with her pitcher to draw water ; and we read also that it was visited by other maidens of the town. (Genesis xxiv. 11—20.) It was as common then, nearly nineteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, for the women and girls to go out to draw

water, as it is now. Groups of females may be *seen* so employed, and, as we are told, *heard* also; this opportunity of getting a talk with neighbours being eagerly taken advantage of in lands where women are under so many restrictions. Few of the Eastern wells have tanks attached to them, so that on each visit the water has to be drawn or dipped out by lowering the vessel with a rope; but they are not usually of much depth. The woman of Samaria laid stress on the fact that the well of Sychar was 'deep.' (John iv. 11.) Many of the jars and pitchers were of coarse ware, and deemed of little value; so that it is an emphatic figure Jeremiah employs when he laments how the 'precious sons of Zion' had fallen, so that they were only 'esteemed as earthen pitchers.' (Lamentations iv. 2.) Hence careless persons of either sex would trouble themselves little if one was broken; an accident that might easily happen at a well or fountain set round with stonework, as some were. (Ecclesiastes xii. 6.) The streets of many towns, says one traveller, are strewn with potsherds, and these mark the sites of ruined cities, surviving even after wood has perished or metal has rusted and disappeared. Roberts, in his *Oriental Illustrations*, says that it is a type of the greatest poverty not to have a fragment of a potsherd. Mr. Finn has seen, at and near Jerusalem, the women poise the empty pitchers on their heads, not upright, but slanting, in a dexterous way.

To some houses, rain-water cisterns are built, and cisterns also serve to store up water that has been fetched from wells. In Upper Galilee to this day there are thousands of ancient cisterns, partly or wholly choked up, and surrounded with grass and weeds, as seen by Dr. Thomson. An inspection of those cisterns that are not thus dilapidated, and are

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

still employed to contain water for the inhabitants, does not fail, says the doctor, to remind one of Jeremiah ii. 12, 13. 'The best of them, even in solid rock, are strangely liable to crack, and are a most unreliable source of supply of that indispensable article, water; and if, by constant care, they are made to hold, yet the water, collected from clay roofs or from marshy soil, has the colour of weak soap-suds, the taste of the earth or the stable, is full of worms, and in the hour of greatest need it utterly fails.' The city of Jerusalem, however, is still famous for its good cisterns; and to drink water from one's 'own cistern' seems to have been a well-known figure for a state of domestic prosperity. (See 2 Kings xviii. 31; Proverbs v. 15; Nehemiah ix. 25, *margin*).

CHAPTER VII.

ARMOUR, ORNAMENTS AND COINS.

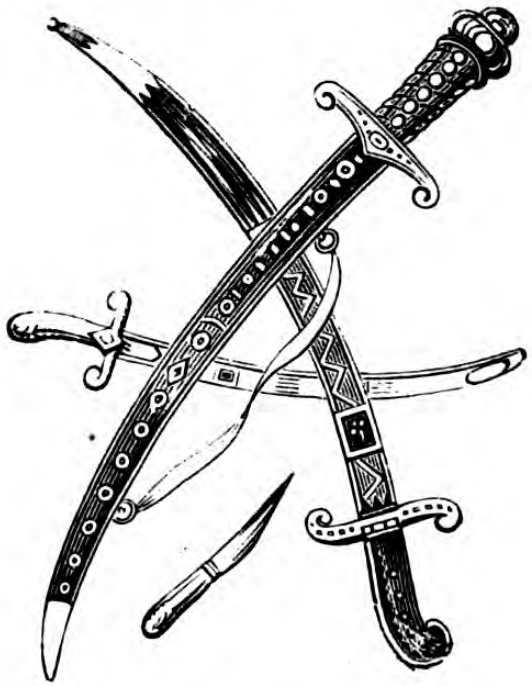
MODERN dwellers in tents in Arabia and Syria are pretty sure to have weapons as part of their tent furniture. In villages and towns many also keep arms in their houses. The feebleness of most Oriental governments compels the master of each household to provide for the security of his dependents, and in thinly-peopled districts flocks and herds, even the produce of the garden, must be guarded from robbers or the attacks of wild animals. Now when we look back over the pages of Jewish history, from the entry of the Israelites into the land of Canaan until they ceased to be a nation, we are impressed with the fact that they were a warlike, though not a war-loving people. Not being skilled in all the arts of industry, the Israelites apparently obtained some of their weapons from their neighbours; and as a precaution their enemies took away by force, more than once, 'the craftsmen and smiths.' (1 Samuel xiii. 19—22; 2 Kings xxiv. 14.) Therefore, it must have unavoidably happened that on some of the battle-fields where the Israelites were engaged, the arms wielded were of the rudest sort: such as clubs and goads for close combat, and from a distance stones and fragments of rock might be hurled by the hand and by slings, in the wielding of which certain of the Israelites had remarkable skill. The story of David and Goliath, so familiar to us, need only be named; other references to the

employment of the sling in early warfare occur in Judges xx. 16; 1 Chronicles xii. 2; 2 Kings iii. 25. And even when a variety of weapons was provided by Uzziah for his army, the sling was not overlooked. (2 Chronicles xxvi. 14.) Of the sling, as it is now used in Palestine, Dr. Thomson gives several anecdotes, and he observes that the mountainous district which David frequently traversed with his flocks supplies an abundance of suitable stones, and fine opportunities for practice. Near mount Hermon, when there is an ill-feeling between parties in the district, the boys fight desperate battles with their slings, ranging themselves along the edges of the cliffs. The conflicts last until so many are disabled on one side or the other, that a retreat is made by the losing party. Sufficient force is given to the stones by the slings to cause them to inflict wounds that are serious, or even fatal.

As public armouries were not common, though there may have been a few in the cities of Palestine under the kings, the Israelites would generally keep their arms in their own dwellings. There would be the more reason for that, as some implements of war were also put to uses of a peaceful sort. The dagger, like the dirk of the Highlandman of two centuries ago, would serve as a knife; and a special edge was sometimes put upon a dagger or short sword, to render it available as a cutting instrument, the point being relied upon as a weapon. An axe might be very handy to fell trees, though also constructed so as to strike down an enemy. Even the spear, if made as some were, with a point slightly bent, could be used by those who had to make their way through forests to enable them to pull aside the bushes and branches. Valuable weapons would no doubt be handed down in a family,

from generation to generation, with many a story or tradition attached to them. The sword of Goliath would long be regarded with interest by the royal family of David ; and, though conscious of Peter's fault, none of his Christian brethren could have looked without emotion upon the sword which, in Gethsemane's garden, smote off the ear of Malchus.

Amongst the little recorded concerning men before the flood, we read that in those days 'the earth was

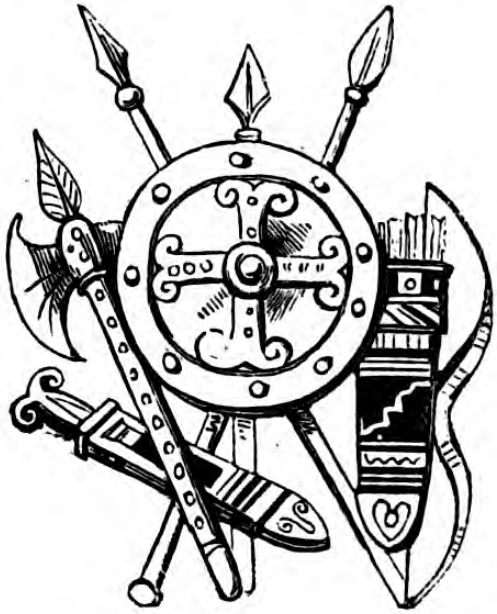


filled with violence' (Genesis vi. 11); therefore, we may suppose, that men must have had weapons of some kind. As Tubal-cain (Genesis iv. 22) taught others to work in brass and iron, they unquestionably made arms, and, it may be, armour also. We are not told by what means Cain deprived his brother Abel of life: some have asserted that the shocking act was committed with a sharp stone. More probably Cain's weapon was a club or spar of wood, hastily clutched

from some tree, or one that had been fashioned for the purpose of driving off prowling enemies from the flocks. When, long after, the Bible gives the story of Abraham's achievement, resulting in the rescue of the captives taken from the cities of the plain, it is not stated with what weapons his servants were armed. But Abraham's son Ishmael, as he grew to manhood, 'dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.' (Genesis xxi. 20). It was to be expected that one of whom God had foretold that he should be 'a wild man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him,' would need weapons; though the first use of arrows may have been in hunting. Esau went forth with bow and arrows, to kill deer or wild goats. Primitive arrows were perhaps made of reeds; the bow would be wood, and the string a thong of skin, or else a tendon of some animal. There were both barbed and poisoned arrows known in ancient times. (Psalm xxxviii. 2; Job vi. 4.) As the sword is mentioned by Isaac in the blessing he pronounced upon Esau, it was then known, and already served as a figure of violence.

The early swords were, most likely, in the fashion and of the length of daggers of later times, broad and short. Ehud's sword or dagger was, according to the ordinary reckoning of the cubit, about eighteen inches long—just the size of the sword common among the Roman soldiery; it is particularly noted that this weapon had a double edge. (Judges iii. 16.) From the mention of the act of drawing or unsheathing the sword, it is evident that a sheath or scabbard was soon after the introduction of the weapon found necessary for its protection: this might be made at first of leather. No weapon is so frequently named in the Bible as is the sword, and it plays an

important part in the figurative language of the prophets. There are those who think the club or mace, as already hinted, was really the first offensive weapon: it is shown in monuments of great antiquity. The staff, also of wood, served several purposes: it would support the holder on rough or slippery ground; serve to control or guide domestic animals; while in lack of another weapon, like the old English quarter-staff, it might make an enemy bite the dust. At the apprehension of Christ, though some bore 'swords,'

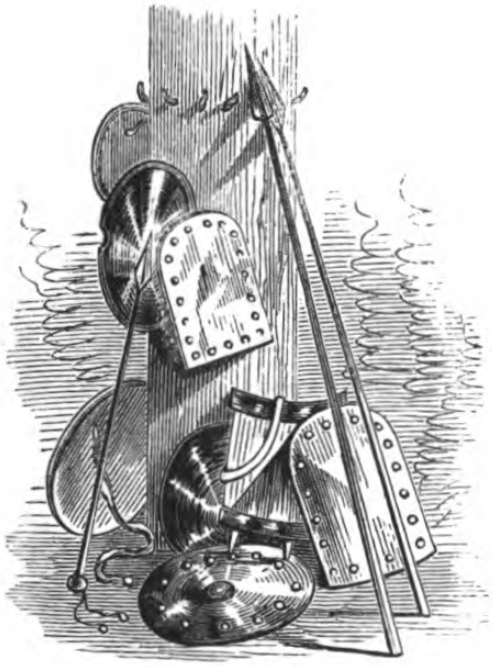


others had 'staves,' these being probably officials in the employ of the priests and elders. (Mark xiv. 43.) References to the 'staff' as a weapon occur in these verses, among others: Isaiah x. 5; xiv. 5; Jeremiah xlviii. 17; Habakkuk iii. 14.

A dart or javelin was nothing but the staff with a metal head. Saul held a javelin in his hand as he sat listening to David's music, and at last flung it at the youth he regarded as his rival. (1 Samuel xviii. 10, 11.) The dart was, as it is thought, rather shorter than the

javelin ; therefore suitable to fit in the bow, or available as a hand missile. The spear was longer than either of these, and of stouter wood. Modern Arab spears are sometimes of the extraordinary length of eighteen feet. To steady the spear when it was thrust into the earth, the butt end had occasionally a piece of sharp metal, like a spike, and with this it was that Abner struck Asahel. (2 Samuel ii. 22, 23.)

Armour for protecting the body was used by the



ANCIENT SHIELDS AND SPEARS.

Israelites, though it did not exactly resemble that which was worn by Greek and Roman warriors. We may, however, consider that wearing armour was never a common practice among the Jews, though many of their Canaanitish foes were heavily accoutred ; the Philistines, for instance, were evidently skilled in all the arts of war. The modern population of the district of Philistia is quite military ; for a traveller says that, on the least alarm, 'they make a savage

display of guns, pistols, spears, crooked swords, and long knives. Those who can get nothing else carry tremendous clubs.' It is evident that in some verses of the Bible, as in Luke xi. 22, 'armour' is used to express all a soldier's equipment for the battle, whether it be in the way of offence or of defence. And we see from this verse, that not only when on the field those who had armour at hand put it on for their own protection ; for, in the parable, the owner of the house is supposed to defend his property.

To protect the head, men devised the helmet, the first idea of which might only be that of a cap of very tough or thick skin. Afterwards helmets were made of metal. We can hardly be certain whether the Jews surmounted the helmet with a crest or plume, as did the Greeks and Romans. Nor does it appear that the Jews were acquainted with the *vizor*, contrived so as to protect the face. That the shield was at least as old as the helmet, is evident from God's words to Abraham—'I am thy shield'—recorded in Genesis xv. 1. Though made of a variety of sizes, shields might be divided into two classes. There was the small round or oval shield, borne on the left arm ; and also that, much larger, which covered almost the whole of the body, and when not in immediate requisition was hung over the back, reaching perhaps from neck to heel, or it was carried for the warrior by an attendant. (1 Samuel xvii. 7.) Probably the only shields the Israelites were acquainted with, until the time of Solomon, were those made of a wooden frame, with several thicknesses of hide stretched over. That king made shields of gold, rather for ornament than for use, we may presume ; and, in the history of the later kings, we read of brazen shields. By the translators of our English Bible,

the words 'shield' and 'buckler' are sometimes employed in the same sense. In close contact with the body was worn the breast-plate (also a back-plate),

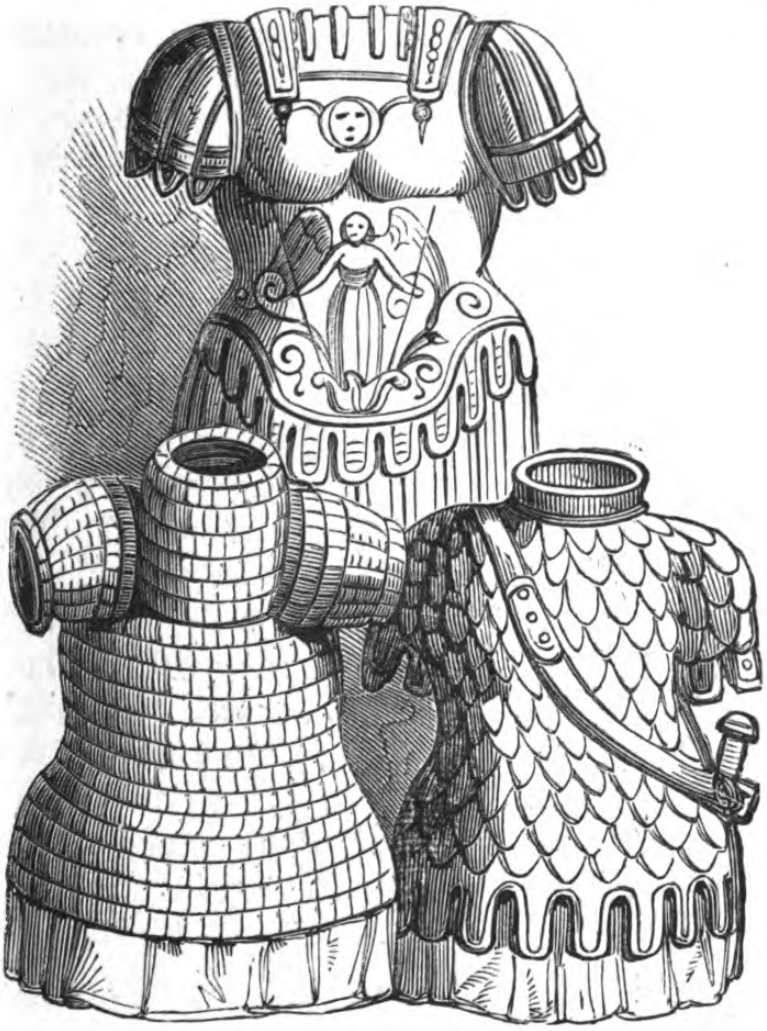
HELMETS.

or a coat of mail, of metal or leather, faced with small metal scales. The legs and feet were guarded by greaves. The 'panoply,' of which we have so graphic a description in Ephesians vi., agrees in all its

details with the equipment of the Roman soldier of that period, a sight familiar no doubt to the imprisoned apostle at Rome.

As our European system of holding property by securities which cannot be easily stolen, or transferred unlawfully, was not known in the ages when the Bible was written, it is evident that the Oriental mode of laying up riches, was in several respects unlike ours. Houses, lands, cattle and farm produce are a kind of real property quite appreciated in Britain; but they are deemed of still more importance in the East, where paper securities are lightly esteemed. Orientals are fond of laying up treasure in and about their houses; these valuables being, some bulky, some easily portable. Hence one reason why weapons should be always ready for use; and we see that in times of social tumult or foreign invasion there must have been little peace for those who had wealth in the form of precious metals, or in other things men greedily seek after. The cautious removed their treasure from the house, and deposited it in the ground; often never to be recovered, through the death or captivity of those who had concealed it. And there must also have been instances where persons who believed they had carefully marked the spots where their wealth was hidden afterwards, through some accident, failed to bring it to light again. Palestine is supposed to be the resting-place of much buried wealth; and to this hour, there are hundreds, if not thousands of treasure-seekers in Syria, who pursue the self-imposed task with desperate energy. Many have, as Dr. Thomson tells us, spent their fortunes in vain efforts to discover the hoards that have laid undisturbed for centuries. Underground chambers and secret caverns have been often dis-

covered by diggers, yet these have rarely contained any objects of value; while, whenever a treasure has been turned up, it has nearly always been by seeming chance, as in ploughing a field, or digging the foundation of a house. At Sidon, about twenty years



COATS OF MAIL.

ago, some labourers who were employed in digging a garden unearthed some copper pots full of gold coin. The governor of the city compelled them to give up a quantity; but he could not ascertain positively how many were in their possession. It was conjectured

there were about eight thousand, all of Greek coinage, bearing the impress of Alexander and Philip of Macedon. Some interesting references to the practice of burying or hiding treasure occur in Scripture; Job iii. 21 is especially noteworthy from its early date. And many verses expose the foolish avarice of those who devoted themselves to the accumulation of such hoards, so liable to theft and disaster. (See Psalm xvii. 14; Proverbs ii. 4; x. 2; Isaiah ii. 7; Jeremiah l. 37; Micah vi. 10; Matthew vi. 19; xiii. 44; Luke xii. 21.)

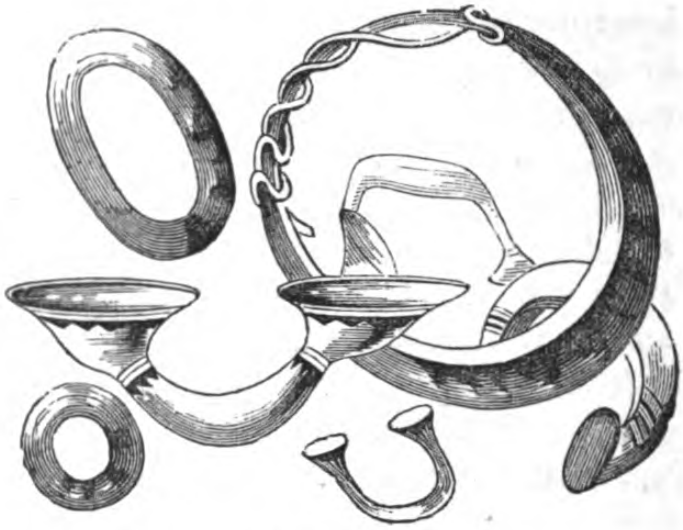
Roberts' illustrations of Scripture, drawn from Indian manners and habits, contain evidence which confirms what has been stated about the commonness of having treasure laid up in houses or gardens, and the anxiety the rich have to endure on account of the perils to which their property is exposed. Often will they sit up all night keeping careful watch, Roberts' says: 'I knew a man who had nearly all his wealth in gold pagodas, which he kept in a large chest in his bedroom. Neither in body nor in mind did he ever wander far from the precious treasure: his abundance hindered him from sleeping; and, for a time, it seemed as if it would hinder him from dying; for when that fatal moment came, he several times, when apparently gone, again opened his eyes, and again gave another look at the chest; and one of the last offices of his hands was to attempt to feel for the key under his pillow!'

Modern inhabitants of the East are not much given to display their riches in the form of plate. If they have vessels of silver and gold, they do not often exhibit them, lest they should set thieves to work, the 'light-fingered gentry' being numerous and dexterous in many districts. Much of the treasure accumulated

by Orientals is still of rather a bulky and inconvenient sort, and travellers find that in many houses the lower rooms are filled with corn or other grain, and jars of wine and oil.

Besides these substantial commodities, many Eastern folks like to have a great supply of garments laid by, since there is no fear of fashions materially altering; and with these choice perfumes of various kinds are sometimes placed to keep off insect enemies, and to impart an agreeable scent. In Psalm xlv. 8, we have probably an allusion to the ivory caskets in which sweet spices were enclosed, to be kept with rich apparel. The preparation of these is still a matter of importance; and in those climates, they are most refreshing. But as it has been remarked that, in the olden times, the Jews, and nations like them in custom, had often treasures of the precious metals in their houses, the question is natural, 'How did they keep their gold and silver? Was it mostly in coin?' As early as Genesis xiii. the fact is stated that Abraham was rich in silver and gold; and a little further on, in Genesis xxiii. 16, we read of his paying down 'four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.' And there is a ridiculous story in the Talmud about the coins of Abraham, which are said to have figures of an old man and woman on one side and a youth and maiden on the other! Abraham's money was certainly uncoined; though, if his gold and silver was not in rings, like the early specimens of Egyptian money, it was shaped into bars, or pieces of some convenient size. Here it is called *current*, because the metal had either a particular standard of purity, or else because the pieces had a size and shape that was recognized. It is said that Abraham *weighed* the silver he paid to Ephron; and the early allusions

to the shekel in the Bible apply to a shekel representing a weight, by which silver was valued, and also gold



RING COINS.

WEIGHING MONEY.

sometimes, as we conclude from 2 Kings v. 5, where 'pieces' means 'shekels.' The coined shekel came in

at a later date—in the seventh or eighth century before Christ. A great many of the shekels sold in this country, and in Judæa also, at the present time are only forgeries. Mr. Madden is doubtless right in judging that there was a fixed weight assigned to certain pieces, so that, as they passed to and fro in trade, persons took them without troubling to weigh them; though in a transaction where a number were handed over, the receiver would weigh the bag or bags, as the priests most likely did in the reign of Joash, when they took up the silver offered for the service of the Temple. (2 Kings xii. 9—11.) We have references to 'bundles of money' in Genesis xlii. 35 and Deuteronomy xiv. 24, 25; the expression applying either to pieces of metal with a hole through the centre, so that they could be strung together, or else to the ringed money, of which mention has been made.

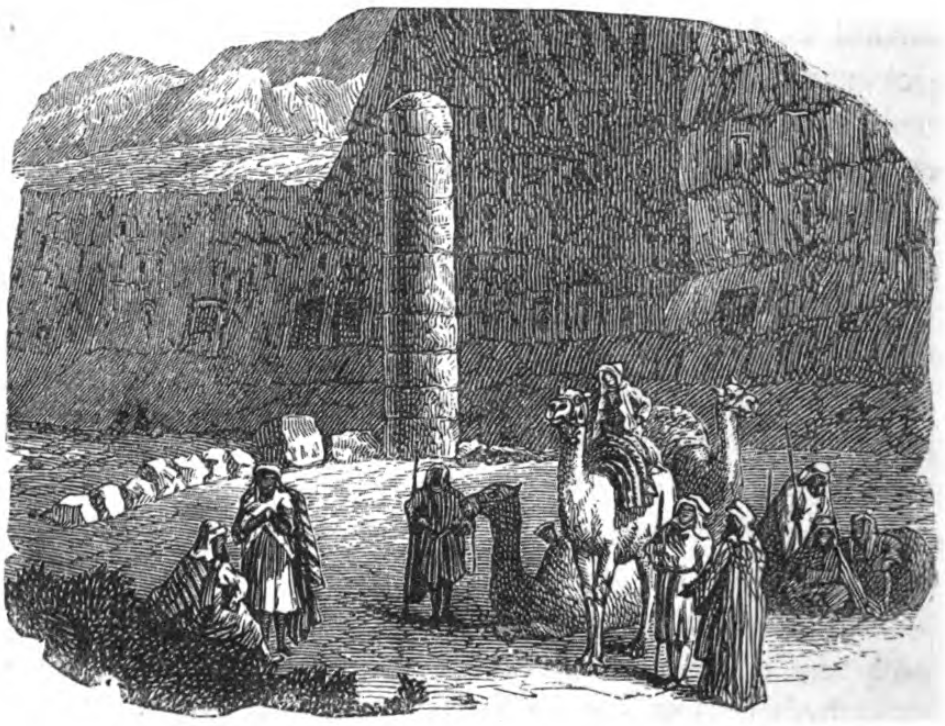
When the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon, about 536 B.C., they brought to their own land quantities of a Persian gold coin called the 'Daric,' which is considered to be what is meant by the Hebrew word rendered in our version 'drams' (Ezra ii. 69, and Nehemiah vii. 70, etc). And from that date onwards, until we come to the reign of Alexander, Persian money would be common in Palestine. Afterwards the Jews had, as it appears from history, an abundance of coins struck by the kings of the Syrian dynasty (Seleucidæ) in Tyre, Joppa, Askelon, and other towns. These were of gold, silver and copper. Simon the first chief of the Maccabees, whose leadership in the Jewish nation was acknowledged by the monarchs around, had the right conceded to him of striking coins. He was, without doubt, the first Jewish prince who issued coined money, though his coins did not bear his head, but a chalice

ANCIENT COINS.

on one side, and a flower on the other. Later Maccabæan rulers also struck coins, though none of them represented the person in whose reign they were produced, yet they had his name in Hebrew or Greek. And then we come to the Idumæan period, so interesting from its connection with the Advent of Christ. As money had in those days less wear and tear than it has now with us, there were plenty of the shekels coined under the Maccabees to be had in Palestine during the early years of the Christian Era; and these, as also the half and quarter shekel, were alone deemed by the Jews to be fitting as offerings for the Temple service. Hence the demand for change in the very precincts of the Holy Place. (John ii. 14.) The *stater* (Matthew xvii. 27) was taken as the equivalent of the shekel in Roman coinage, which, under the Herodian government, began to supplant the native coinage. The universal *denarius* was a silver coin of the Emperors; and brass coins, Græco-Roman, became general also; as the farthing, the fourth of the *as*, and the mite its eighth. A few gold coins may have been brought into Palestine by strangers; but they must have evidently been scarce there until long after the overthrow of Jerusalem. 'Talent' and 'pound' in the New Testament represent a weight of money, coined or uncoined, and the exact value is somewhat doubtful; and the same thing must be said of the talent where it occurs in the Old Testament.

As Eastern houses are not built with cupboards, and the cumbrous pieces of furniture that we call 'wardrobes' are not ordinarily, manufactured by the cabinet-makers in Eastern lands, there is great need of nails or pegs of a variety of sizes to hang articles upon. The very soft and unreliable materials of which the walls of some houses are formed render it impor-

tant to fix these nails in as firmly as possible; and those who have beheld the sudden downfalls of suspended articles, catastrophes not unfrequent, especially when the heat dries and loosens the plaster or clay of the walls, see the force of the similes in Isaiah xxii. 23, 25. Most of these nails or pegs in the rooms of Orientals are far from being like the 'nail in a sure place;' as Dr. Thomson tells us there is not one in a score that does not bend or get loose.

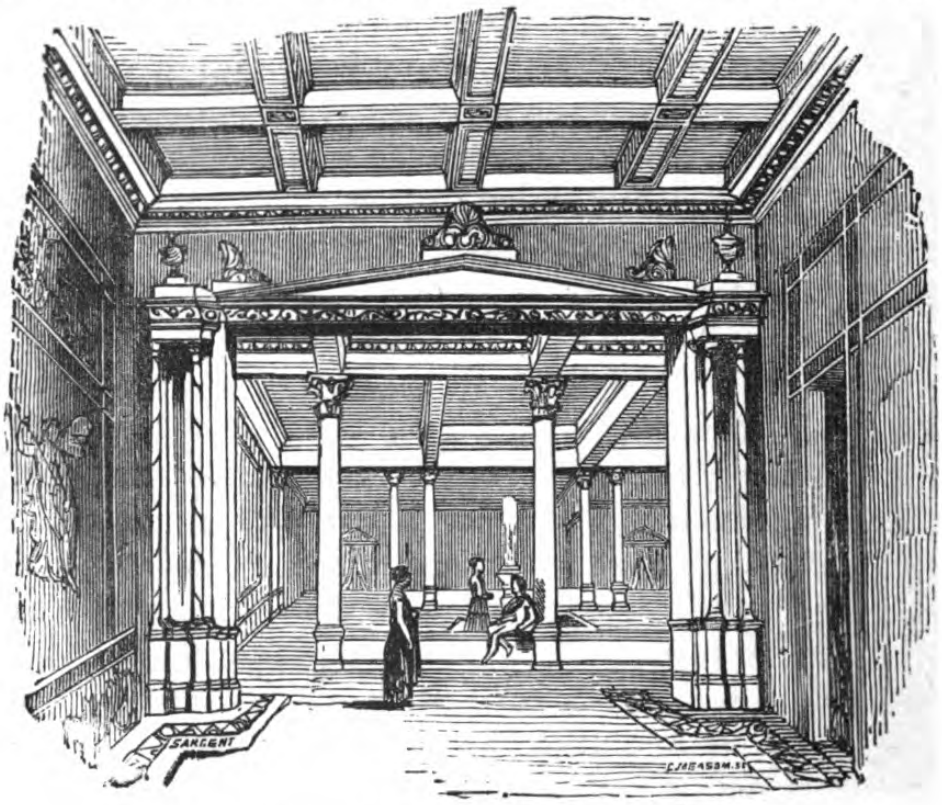


CHAPTER VIII.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, SUN DIALS AND WRITING MATERIALS.

COULD we conjure up a view of the interior of a house in Jerusalem many centuries ago—say the abode of one of the principal citizens in the time of David ; or the residence of some Sadducee, with Greek or Roman tastes during the apostolic period, we should, in all probability, see musical instruments lying about or hung on the walls. Some of these would seem to us singularly like instruments we are now acquainted with, just as others would be as strangely unlike, and set us wondering how they were played upon, and what sound they would produce. Music, we are told, tames even the savage ; and the Oriental, who is not, with all his peculiarities and apparent indifference, wanting in feeling, is nearly as much under the influence, of music as the dwellers in Western lands. It is a little surprising, though, to find that people in the East listen composedly to, or actually admire, sounds which to us are almost unendurable. One traveller is severe on Eastern tastes in vocal music. He calls what he listened to in a Jewish synagogue, and which he says was understood to be singing, 'a most outrageous concert of nasal sounds.' Also he declares that the Orientals know nothing of harmony and cannot appreciate it when heard ; but they are often spell-bound, or wrought up to transports of ecstasy, by the very music which has tortured English nerves.

The oldest musical instrument in the world, and one capable of various forms, is the one known to the reader of antique lore as the Pandean pipe, traceable back to the history of man before the Flood ; and still by a country roadside, one may see a lad with twig and knife in hand fashioning such a pipe for himself, quite ignorant that he is repeating an experiment made more than four thousand years ago. Many instru-

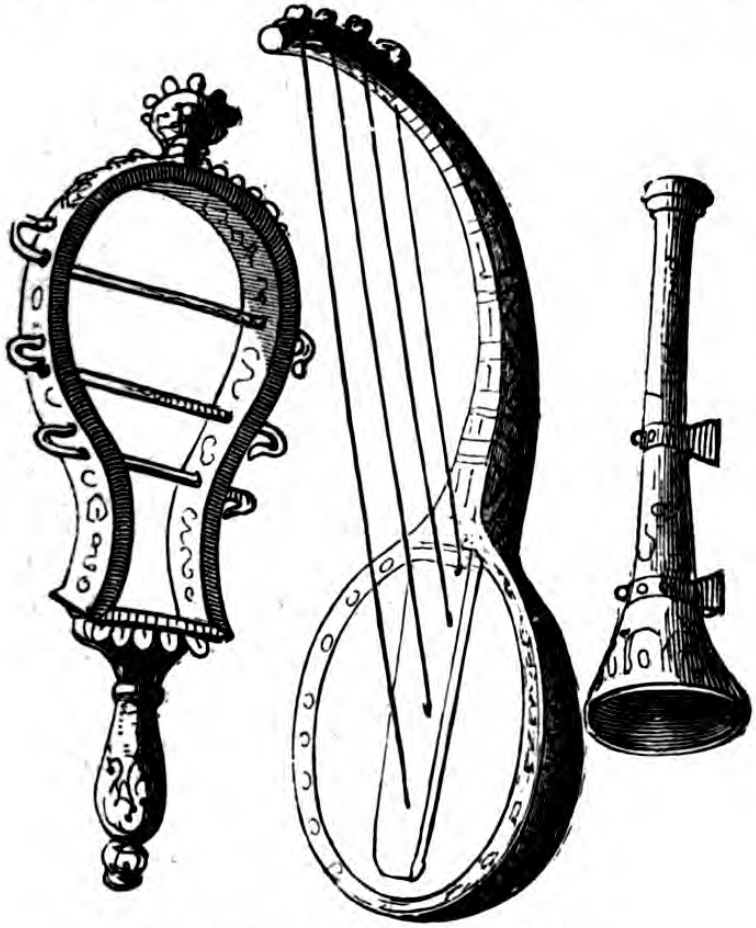


INTERIOR OF A GREEK HOUSE.

ments will at once occur to the reader, as descended from the primitive pipe. Some years ago, a man used to perambulate the streets of London who played very dexterously several tunes from a rudely shaped green flageolet. And wooden pipes are still commonly sold to enable boys to imitate the call-notes of birds. Such a pipe was Jubal's organ. (Genesis iv. 21.)

Mr. Sachs, in his excellent papers on Ancient

Musical Instruments, published in the *Sunday at Home* for 1872, and which those desiring more information can advantageously read, classes instruments thus: First, Instruments of Percussion; Secondly, Wind Instruments; Thirdly, Stringed Instruments. Of the first, the Indian tom-tom, played to the annoyance of sensitive persons in the streets by wandering Lascars,



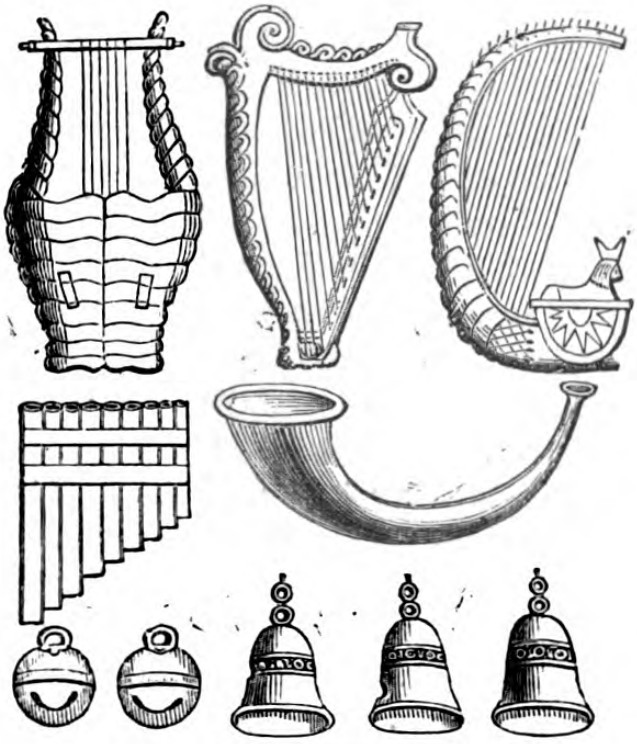
EGYPTIAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

is represented on monuments of early date in Egypt; it is in fact the parent of the modern drum, and may have been used by the Jews. They were much more familiar with the tambourine or timbrel (Psalm cl. 4), also Egyptian, but known in the later centuries before Christ, both in Europe and Asia. In these, as there

were 'tinkling cymbals' or small bells placed along the edges, there was the same variety of sound as in the common modern tambourine. The cymbal, to give a loud metallic clash, was made in two forms at least, and employed on ordinary occasions, as well as in sacred services. Then, among the instruments sounded by the human breath, forming the second division, we have the primitive pipe or flute already named, which we deem was the 'organ' of Jubal; though Mr. Sachs inclines to the view that his organ was a nearer approach to the modern instrument, being made up of a number of reeds into which the first form of Pandean pipe developed itself with advancing civilization. This reed-pipe may be what is called an 'organ' in Job xxi. 12; xxx. 31; several reeds being placed together, and the lower ends stopped up; represented pretty nearly by a modern instrument, blown in the streets by itinerant exhibitors of 'Punch and Judy.' Other Bible references to the organ can only be explained in the same way; for the true organ belongs to a much later age, several centuries after the birth of Christ.

Rather doubtfully, the sackbut has been placed among stringed instruments; the form of it is now unknown, yet there is some reason to think it was a drawn out or twisted trumpet, perhaps resembling the trombone. Of unquestionable antiquity are the 'harp' and the 'psaltery.' Jubal's name is connected with the first, existing in some rude form (Genesis iv. 21); and the two are associated as instruments used by the prophets to accompany the singing of psalms or sacred songs. (1 Samuel x. 5.) For the wooden portion of the instruments, that of the 'fir' or pine, and that of the 'algum' tree was employed. (2 Samuel vi. 5; and 1 Kings x. 12.) The harp was, it is thought, a larger

instrument than the psaltery or lyre ; for though we do not discover the word 'lyre' in the Bible, there cannot be a doubt that the lyre, another form of the harp, was an instrument the Israelites were acquainted with. It was common enough among the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and Persians. Besides its use in worship, several passages of Scripture show that the lyre or small harp was played upon at festive or friendly gatherings, both in-doors and without. (See Job xxi. 12 ; Isaiah v. 12 ; xxiv. 8 ; Ezek. xxvi. 13.)



MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

The true psaltery, however, as ancient monuments show, was in one respect different from the harp and lyre, it had a box or sounding-board at the back. Of this we read in Psalm xxxiii. 2, where the writer says, 'Sing unto Him with the psaltery and [or, *even*] an instrument of ten strings ;' thus stating exactly the number of sounds it would yield. This

and the dulcimer were similar, and made in several shapes, and from the dulcimer came the virginal, which was much larger and not played with the fingers but with small hammers. The Jews do not seem to have been acquainted with the three-stringed guitar or lute. In the opinion of some the viol is the same instrument as the harp; the references to it in the Bible, however, join it generally with ordinary and not sacred uses, and Mr. Sachs believes it may have somewhat resembled our violin, being played with a bow. Such an instrument can be identified at an early period of Chinese and Indian history, though we do not discover it on the ancient monuments which have yielded so much information regarding other instruments. Our British ancestors had a rude violin, which was called the *crwth*.

Dr. Thomson, when in Jerusalem, was taken by a guide to a room attached to a coffee-shop, and there heard a concert: the half-dozen performers played and sang at intervals, the melodies being often harsh and disconnected. One man had a large harp, called the *kânun*, and another had a violin, a third a tambourine, and the rest flutes of different shapes. He also heard the *kânun* played by itself in the streets, and he admits that a skilled performer would bring very good music from it. An instrument called the *ood* came under his notice: this was made in two sizes, and had a resemblance to the guitar. But the modern occupants of Syria like best the clashing noise of such instruments as the tambourine, the kettle-drum, and the cymbal, stringed instruments being too soft for them. They will listen to the louder ones, unweariedly, for hours.

Job, in his sore trouble, compared himself to a servant, 'earnestly desiring the shadow.' (Job vii. 2.)

In the opinion of some, his allusion is not to the descent of the sun at eventide, but to the indication of the hours afforded by some early sun-dial. Probably, sun-dials were among the first, if not the very first contrivances for measuring time ; though water-clocks are supposed to have been invented by certain of the sages among the Chaldeans. Sun-dials could form no part of the interior fittings of an Eastern house

THE HARP OF 'SOLEMN SOUND.'

though they might be placed against the outer walls. There was a sun-dial called 'the dial of Ahaz ;' yet it does not follow that this monarch had invented the instrument called by his name. To Solomon, with his

large knowledge, the idea of measuring the hours by the sun's position or shadow must have been a familiar one, and he may possibly have devised hour glasses or water-clocks for the convenience of his palace. A water-clock of an antique character is used at this day in India. A thin brass cup, with a small hole in the bottom, is placed afloat in a vessel of water, and it is allowed to fill itself and sink. Being usually adjusted so as to fall in an hour, the services of an attendant are required to watch it regularly. In some families of rank, a servant is kept, who strikes bells with variations of sound to announce the hour, sometimes even the half-hours and quarters. This may be done both by day and by night, and is perhaps alluded to in Isaiah xxi. 11. The Jews reckoned their day not from twelve o'clock to twelve again, but from six to six ; thus the third hour would be nine o'clock.

In our country few houses are to be found without writing materials; but in a great part of the East that useful art is lightly esteemed. Some of the races of Arabia and Syria regard with as much suspicion or open dislike those who are skilled in the 'clerkly arts' as did not a few of the gaunt Crusaders, whose hands were dexterous with the sword or lance, yet who could only inscribe a cross, and not a signature, at the foot of a document. Happily the tide is turning now, and the Eastern folk are awakening to the truth of the saying that 'knowledge is power.' There has arisen a demand for schools in these lands, and even adults are eager to enter, in order to get instruction in various subjects. Mohammedanism, it is noticeable, does not everywhere set itself in opposition to the acquisition of knowledge.

The first mention of writing in Scripture occurs in Exodus xvii. 14, when Moses was told to record in a book

the defeat of Amalek, and the sentence upon that people; and soon after, in Exodus xxxi. 18, the historian tells us the law was written on 'tables of stone.' This engraving was one of the earliest methods of making a permanent record of any circumstance. The Israelites would learn the art of writing from the Egyptians; and the 'written rocks of Sinai,' with their rude designs, and scarcely legible words, have been thought to bear the

SINGING MEN.

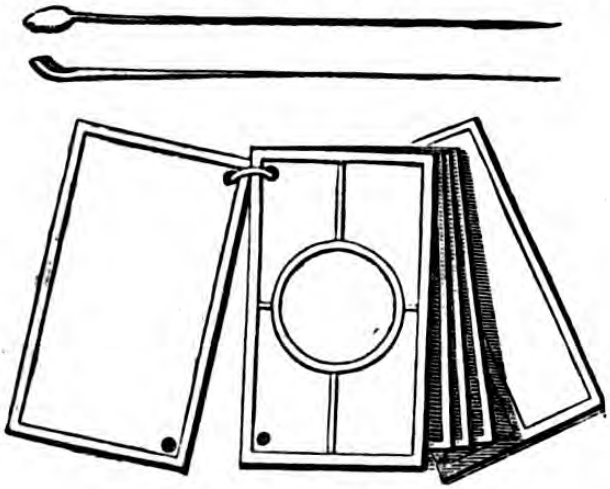
traces of the work of the wilderness wanderers, in their moments of leisure. Job, speaking it may be at a time still earlier, has a reference to the mode of writing on stone with an iron instrument; and it is supposed, by the verse now to be cited, that he was acquainted with the practice of using sheets of lead to receive inscriptions. See chapter xix. 23, 24, which has been poetically rendered as follows:

'O that now my words were written!
O that in a book they were inscribed!
That with an iron stylus and lead
They were furrowed upon the rock for ever.'

This translation explains the statement as to 'printing,' which, in the English Bible, might appear to mislead; the art being, of course, unknown until comparatively recent times. Still the word 'book' remains, and we must not associate this word with the modern paper volume and cover. Though there is an uncertainty, yet it is likely that the books of Job and Moses were either tablets of wood, several of them being fastened together by a hole and cord through each, or else smooth strips of the bark of a tree. In Numbers xvii. 2, we have mention made of writing upon wood, though in a different connection; also in Ezekiel xxxvii. 20; and the fact is well known, that in the north of Europe, many centuries ago, books were made of thin slices of beech-wood. Both the Greek *biblos* and the Latin *liber*, apply to the bark of trees, as prepared and used for writing by those ancient nations; and it is singular that the Greek *biblos* has been taken into our language as a name for the Book of books, and *liber*, the Latin, has produced our word 'library,' applied to a collection of books. Simple leaves of various trees, such as those of some of the palms, are employed by the natives of India and Ceylon: divided into strips, and sewn together they form books, literally composed of leaves. An instrument like a bodkin serves the writer in place of a pen. But on the still older tablets of wood, the words or signs must have been cut with an implement rather more resembling a knife, and having an edge of some length, and not a point merely. Writing tables or tablets were also made of

wood, and covered with wax. These are very commonly referred to in Roman history; and persons carried in their girdles the style, or iron pen, if we may so term it, which, in a sudden quarrel, was almost as effective, or as dangerous, as a dagger.

The skins of animals, prepared in two or three different ways, produced a material like the parchment which has not yet gone out of date. The very name is supposed to have been derived from Pergamos, in Asia Minor, where there was a manufactory, or more than one; and the parchment from that town was



WRITING TABLETS.

highly esteemed some time before the Christian Era. The Jews would consider it a matter of importance that the skins of none but those animals that were clean in the eye of the law should be used for parchment. The Law itself was written upon this substance, which formed the 'roll' or 'book of the Law.' (Deuteronomy xvii. 18; 2 Kings xxii. 11.) Some of these ancient rolls were of large size, their length being often twenty or even forty feet; but then they were more generally only written upon the smooth side, the other being left rough. The roll written by Jeremiah was similar to the rolls described by many authors,

the words being arranged in columns, which are called 'leaves' in Jeremiah xxxvi. 23 ; a roll of this kind was rolled up at both ends, these having (not invariably, however) slender rods secured to them so as to give support. The phrase 'opened the book,' therefore, in Luke iv. 17 should rather be, 'Unrolled the scroll,' and a similar alteration is required in verse 20.

The number of these rolls increased very slowly in the early periods of Jewish history, though we read of some volumes, or collections of prophecies and historical facts, besides the Books of the Old Testament, in the days of the kings. The traditions of the Rabbis began to be inscribed on rolls after the Babylonish captivity. And, moreover, as the Jews in later days came into free communication with the Greeks and Romans, some of them began to have an acquaintance with the great authors of those nations, and they would obtain copies of their writings. It is very likely that in the days of the Herods, and down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, we should have seen in many Jewish houses, rolls of varying age, and as varying a value in respect to the writing upon them ; these rolls, however, would not all have been of parchment or skin. Paul, in addressing Timothy, tells him to bring with him to Rome certain books, and particularly those of parchment (2 Timothy iv. 13) ; showing the existence of other books or rolls that were *not* of parchment, and we may presume made of the leaves of the papyrus, which had been brought largely into use under the Roman Empire, and had not entirely been given up as a material for writing on as late as the tenth century. The stalk of this paper-reed, a bulrush of the Nile, was split with a fine instrument into thin plates or layers and put through successive processes of sizing, drying, smearing with a gummy substance, and

lastly hammering. This vegetable material was made ready for being formed into rolls, and twenty or thirty of the pieces were joined.

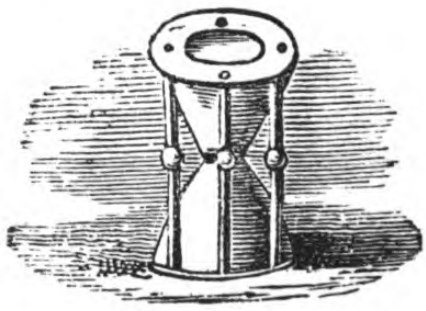
Parchment and papyrus alike required to be written upon with ink. The liquid used by the ancient nations was something like modern inks, perhaps most re-

WRITING MATERIALS.

sembling printer's ink, as it was frequently compounded of lampblack or some sooty substance, and vegetable juices were added. They were not ignorant, though, of metallic inks, and in some countries the liquor obtained from a fish was used. Out-of-doors,

those who had much to do in the way of writing wore an ink-horn fastened to the girdle. (Ezekiel ix. 2). In Eastern lands, at this time, Dr. Thomson says that the travelling or street scribes carry a long metal or ebony tube, in which the pens are kept, and the top or cap, being in the form of a cup, serves to contain the ink. The reed-pen is many centuries older than the quill, and such a pen is still common in the East. It requires occasional mending.

Before leaving the subject of books and writing materials, two observations may be added. First, that we are not to think those who possessed rolls or other articles bearing writing upon them would allow these things to lie about their houses, as do books and pamphlets with us. Oriental usage would lead persons to put such rolls aside in some secret place, and guard them as carefully as they would treasures, or articles of jewellery. There were other species of reed, nearly allied to the papyrus, the pith of which was eaten; it is possible the papyrus itself, at times, in its green state. Also, by the testimony of modern travellers, we have proof that it is still a common Eastern usage to speak of eating things which have nothing to do with the sense of taste. It is a peculiar and emphatic way of expressing 'assimilation,' or the full possession of an object.



CHAPTER IX.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS, FOOD AND COOKING.

WE now arrive at that part of our subject which has to do with the domestic life and household doings of the people of Eastern lands, especially in so far as they illustrate times that are familiar to Bible readers. The visitor, we may remark, who in our times seeks the shores of Syria and the adjacent countries, to become for awhile an inmate of an Eastern house, witnesses much that throws light upon Scripture history; yet he misses the activity and variety of our out-door and domestic life in these Western lands. The customs and routine of the home 'under the Orient sun' appear tame and even wearisome to many, after the novelty has worn off. The passiveness of Orientals to us resembles laziness, or want of feeling; their occasional fits of excitement are not more pleasing. But a change is coming about, family life in the East is becoming less dull, owing to there being no longer so great a lack of materials for thought and conversation; the minds of the people are stirred up, and even in slow-moving Asia,

'The thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.'

Fancy yourself, dear reader, just coming off a long journey upon a camel's back, with parched mouth, tingling skin, and eyes dimmed with the glare of the sun's rays, and about to enter the acceptable shelter of some house or tent. With your desire for rest and food, there would possibly mingle a feeling of doubt

(supposing you were till then a stranger to the East) as to the kind of reception you are to meet with, despite all that you may have read, or heard, regarding Oriental hospitality. The manner in which the Eastern folks receive visitors may well claim our consideration here, ere we look at other matters that have to do with their home-life. Allusion has been made, in a previous page, to the habits of some of the heads

ON A JOURNEY.

of Arab families, who are resident in tents; these worthy and rather sluggish individuals taking pleasure in sitting under a tree near the tent door, or in the door itself, if there is no tree at hand, watching what may pass, and prepared to salute a traveller with tolerable courtesy, or even invite him to enter.

A similar custom prevails in most of the cities: the gates furnish a place of resort to the wealthy inhabi-

tants as well as to some of the poorer class. They can there inhale the breezes from the hills or plains, acceptable enough at some seasons of the year, and notice who enters the town, and who departs. A grave head of a family will advance to some traveller, and with an appropriate form of words, according as he thinks he is addressing a 'believer' or an 'infidel,'—supposing he is himself a Mohammedan,—he will ask the stranger to become his guest, taking him into his house; or, should the weather be fine, to the terraced roof, where the meal may be served up. A rich man will give quite as cordial a welcome to a poor man as to

EASTERN MODE OF PROSTRATION.

one in a position like himself. If a man of the poorer class, however, asks any one to partake of his hospitality, he generally selects an individual of the humbler sort, with a natural feeling that those whose outward appearance indicates that they are well-to-do ought to be entertained by some wealthier neighbour.

As to salutations, and the ordinary greeting addressed to friends or to strangers, it should be observed that the expressive phrase, 'Peace be unto you,' *Salaam Alikum* (John xx. 19), is still in frequent

use: and the person answers usually by saying, *Alikum Salaam*, reversing the words, equivalent to 'Unto you be peace,' or, 'Let the peace you give be returned to you.' Should persons meet each other who are something more than chance acquaintances they do not shake hands, but strike the tips of the fingers together. To this practice the words of Solomon may point, in Proverbs xxii. 26: 'Be not thou one of them that strike hands;' that is, 'Do not be hasty or sudden in making friendships.' The inferior approaching the superior, frequently bends and kisses the back of his hand, or taking the hand of the person to whom he desires to show respect, he places it upon his own forehead. Any one who is of very low rank, as compared with him whose house he is about to enter, will bow low at its threshold, or even bend and touch it with his forehead. The reverse mode would be pursued under opposite circumstances, thus Lot bent 'toward the ground' when he saw two individuals of dignified appearance coming towards him, although far from being aware of their angelic nature. (Genesis xix. 1.) Friends and relatives that have been separated from each other meet with an embrace, and salute by kissing; to which Scripture has many references: a like custom prevails among some European nations, though not now followed in Britain. The kiss is given on the cheek, and the shoulders are also kissed.

Not without wise reason was it said by our Lord to His disciples, as they went forth to evangelize: 'Salute no man by the way;' no discourtesy being meant, but an avoidance of those idle and formal salutations which, in those times, just as in the modern East, were an evil both in the house and street. The method, now only too common among all ranks of men, is, as Dr. Thomson states, 'to manufacture compli-

ments as fast as possible, and utter them with grace and gravity to friend and foe alike.' Arabs are, for the most part, notorious for their falsity in this way; the excuse being that these phrases are understood to be valueless, by the listener as well as the speaker.

EASTERN SALUTATIONS.

Of the customs prevalent near Beth-horon, Mr. Hopley has given some account, illustrative of the internal arrangements of some Arab homes, and also the treatment of strangers among that singular race of people. The dwellings he visited there were only

mud-huts, looking rather like ant-hills, 'each with a very small courtyard in front, adapted to maintain a select society of domestic animals.' The house of the Sheikh was distinguished by having two storeys. Entering he saw scarcely any furniture, except in one corner a sort of wicker-bed, covered with camel-hair cloths or mats. Other mats spread on the floor served as seats for visitors; a rough cupboard had an odd intermingling within it of sundry garments, bread, salt and tobacco. 'Consider,' says the writer, 'the nameless terrors that await a fresh and plump Englishman admitted into the bosom of an Eastern family! After a pause, the head of the family gave a signal, and girls brought in a jar of water, and a piece of bread, with some lumps of a glutinous substance, not knowing the nature of which the Englishman avoided them, contenting himself with the bread, which he ate, dipping it in salt. Afterwards pipes were brought in by the Sheikh's daughter, who wore a very short frock, with a blue scarf twisted round the waist. Her necklace of beads was of a coarse make, and on her head she wore a kind of cap with frills of piastres. This was her dowry.'

Dr. Thomson many times partook of Arab entertainments of an offhand sort, and these were wonderfully like the description in Genesis xviii. 1—8. One feature, however, namely coffee, was certainly no part of the Abrahamic feast prepared for his angelic visitors; but this is highly prized by modern wanderers. Some animal, usually a sheep, is at once brought from the flock, killed, cut up, and cooked. Very often a somewhat unsavoury stew is prepared, which needs a good deal of hunger to render it palatable. But before the business of eating is commenced the host rarely forgets to offer to his visitors the

refreshment of washing. At the time sandals were universally worn, except in times of war, and when some, in certain seasons of the year, would travel barefoot, it was deemed inhospitable to omit to provide guests with water to cleanse the feet; and, if the host valued his handsome carpets or couches, supposing he possessed them, it would be to his advantage that no needless dust or dirt should be brought into his house. Abraham began with this offer, after he had asked the three men to pause at his tent; and the neglect of this attention on the part of Simon the Pharisee drew upon him our Lord's emphatic rebuke (Luke vii. 44); and He adds, 'My head with oil thou didst not anoint;' this being done by those who received distinguished personages into their houses. The oil was richly perfumed, so as to have a reviving effect on the spirits, serving likewise to soften the skin, and remove the harshness of the hair caused by the dust and wind. (See Psalm xxiii. 5; cxli. 5.)

We may note the significance of eating and drinking with a man, which with the Bedouins, and with some other Oriental races, is equivalent to the establishment of friendship between the parties. In Genesis we have several instances where a meal, apparently at least, is served as a pledge of an agreement or ratified a covenant; and in those Asiatic countries from very remote antiquity, this usage has prevailed, especially as associated with *bread and salt.* The phrase, however, is used rather vaguely, and the actual salt is not indispensable, so long as the parties, with a clear understanding as to what they are about, take some meal together. Thus, Dr. Thomson describes as follows the manner in which he obtained the protection of the Sheikh of the *Diab*, near Tiberias: 'He came out of the harem, or female department, with some fresh-baked

bread, and some *dibs* (a sort of grape molasses), and taking his seat by my side, he broke off a bit of bread, dipped it in the *dibs*, and gave it to me to eat; and, in like manner, he required all my companions to partake, and even had the muleteers called in to eat of it. This was the ceremony, and he explained its significance somewhat in this fashion: "We are now brethren. There is bread and salt between us; we are brothers and allies. You are at liberty to travel among us wherever you please, and so far as my power extends, I am to aid, befriend and succour you, *even to the loss of my own life.*"' With us, in the lands of the West, public breakfasts, banquets and dinners, often serve as a means of establishing friendly relations among large or small bodies of men: as a great English author observes, 'Men who cannot be amicable otherwise, can rise to some feeling of brotherhood when taking a meal in common.'

A lady long resident in Egypt informs us that to every respectable establishment there belongs a *bowak*, or door-keeper, whose business it is to admit and announce company. This man is scarcely ever away from his post, he eats, drinks and sleeps close to the entrance-gate; and though, in some particulars, a good deal of trust has to be reposed in him, yet he is regarded as the most inferior servant in the household. A visitor on first making acquaintance with an Eastern house, as soon as the strangeness of the scene permits him to observe a little of what is passing, will notice the fact that the heads of the family issue few commands; a motion of the eye, or, at the most, a signal with the hand is sufficient, the servant standing intently on the watch; reminding one of Psalm cxxiii. 2; Ephesians vi. 6: a promptitude of obedience that, for a moment, may seem to us superior to that

which is obtainable in more civilized lands at this day ; but it is only in seeming. The Oriental servant seldom feels affection for his master : his obedience comes from fear, secured by methods which we should not think of adopting ; and, behind his master's back, he is capable of treating his master's interest with utter neglect. Of course there are some pleasing and honourable exceptions.

We must next briefly notice a much discussed

POSTURE OF HUMILIATION BEFORE A SUPERIOR.

subject, the position of servants among the Jews. Some have asserted that *all* servants were slaves ; and others again declare that slaves were, in effect, forbidden to the Hebrews. An explanation accepting both views may be adopted : we think that slaves as well as servants were known in the Israelitish commonwealth. By an express command, Jews were forbidden to make slaves of each other ; under certain circumstances a man might become the bondman of another

Israelite, yet then he became free in the Sabbatic year (Exodus xxi. 2); and he could not be transferred against his will; also he might be redeemed. (Leviticus xxv. 48, 49.)

The description given in the Bible of the year of jubilee, and the widespread freedom it brought, is proof that the Jews had slaves, and that, under the Mosaic dispensation, this fact was provided for; though it would be ridiculous to attempt a defence of slavery in these times upon that ground. Slaves, that is, servants who were owned by their masters as part of their chattels, were known at least as early as Abraham's time (Genesis xiv. 14); and his honoured steward, and once the prospective inheritor of his estate, Eliezer of Damascus, was probably a slave, and not a hired servant. In Genesis xvii. 13 we have a reference to the procuring of slaves by purchase; war was a very abundant source of supply in ancient times. Thus the whole race of the Gibeonites were doomed to a servitude approaching slavery, on account of the deception they had practised upon Joshua and the host. (Joshua ix.)

But the law of God guarded the rights of those who became captives to the Israelites, and it would appear these and their families were to receive freedom in the year of jubilee. Whether there were slaves in Palestine when our Saviour was upon earth is uncertain; that there were many then in Asia Minor, and throughout the surrounding nations is stated by old authors. In the opinion of nearly all the best Greek scholars, *doulos*, so often occurring in the writings of the Apostles, should be translated 'slave' and not 'servant.' Like many other words, it had several meanings: in its original sense, it signified a person who was the servant of another, and *not* free to quit; as Aristotle puts it, *doulos* meant 'a living possession.' Paul speaks

of himself as the 'servant' or 'slave' of Christ, an expression curiously rendered in one of our old versions as, 'Paul the knave of Christ;' the word 'knave' having at that time no bad sense, but meaning a personal attendant—one always at hand if his master required his service. And it is in writing of a runaway slave, Onesimus, that Paul uses a play on a word, which we miss in the translation: the meaning of the Greek name Onesimus is 'profitable.' (See Philemon 11.) Paul, so some say, sent this fugitive back to his master, and so countenanced slavery. He did desire Onesimus to return to Philemon; but he told the latter to receive him, 'not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved.' And to the remark that the Apostle did not plainly denounce slavery, no better answer can be given than in the words of Dr. Eadie, who says: 'If he did not at once, and in every case, openly condemn the iniquitous system; if he did not needlessly speak against it in places where he had no civil rights, no voice in the community, and where his word could have no weight, but might rather place himself and his cause in jeopardy; yet in such passages as 1 Corinthians vii. 21; Colossians iv. 1; 1 Timothy i. 10, both by implication and in express terms, he condemns it, and says more than enough to show it is incompatible with the genius and precepts of Christianity.'

Then again, on the other hand, attempts have been made to draw an unfavourable contrast between the treatment of slaves in Eastern and Western lands, especially in the case of the unhappy Africans who were once subjected to bondage in America and the West Indies. But human nature is much the same in every country, and history gives us many instances of the hardships inflicted on slaves among the Greeks and

Romans. The Jews would have thought little of beating their slaves, perhaps even their 'hired servants,' if they were provoked, and forgetful of the Divine law enjoining forbearance. We know that rebellious children were chastised with a stick or rod ; to which the Book of Proverbs contains numerous allusions. In Exodus xxi. 20, 21, 26, 27, we find several commands, bearing upon the possibility of a master's injuring or killing his man or maid-servant.

Yet, servants and slaves alike, in early times, had a large amount of freedom ; they could get and retain property of their own, they were allowed to take long journeys, in charge of their master's goods. In all family rejoicings and celebrations they took part, and they could often converse, unrebuked, with the members of the family to which they belonged. Their holidays were so numerous, under the Hebrew economy, that one writer reckons they had to their own use nearly twenty-three years out of fifty ; every seventh year was a holiday year, and then there were the sabbaths, and numerous festivals. Also servants of all ranks were rarely required to work after sunset. And we observe here that the word 'steward' is applied in Scripture to upper servants whose duties were rather various. In some verses, it is possible our 'butler' is nearer to the original ; in others, the servant acted like a farm bailiff with us. Herod's steward was, perhaps, the master of the household. (Luke viii. 3.) And in illustration of Luke xvi. 1—8, Roberts tells us that now in most families in the East there is a steward, sometimes a relative of the family. 'His pay is often a mere trifle, but he derives perquisities according to the extent of his master's dealings. Is the produce of the lands to be disposed of ? he again squeezes some-

thing out of the purchaser, and, if possible, out of his master also. Has he anything to buy for the house? he grinds the face of the dealer, and demands a handsome present for the custom. Does he pay the servants or labourers? they must each dole out a trifle from their monthly or weekly stipend.'

Proceeding from this to our next subject, it should be remembered, that what is so important a daily matter in domestic economy with us, namely, the sending of orders to tradesmen, and receiving the eatables and so forth which they supply, is not in the East regularly attended to, where it is much the fashion to store up provisions on the premises. Indeed, away from the large towns, shops are few, though there may be a market, or bazaar, as it is called, at an attainable distance. With a great number of Orientals, it is noticeable that trading is conducted on the principle of barter or exchange. In primitive or patriarchal times, all the articles of food or drink required for a household would be grown or otherwise produced by that household, though the beginning of commerce would arise in the sending to and fro choice products which one country might yield, and which another did not possess. So it happened that the Ishmaelites travelled with their 'spicery and balm and myrrh' into Egypt. (Genesis xxxvii. 25.)

Distinguished for his abilities in trade as the Jew has been for centuries, it does not appear that, save at occasional times, as in the era of David and Solomon, the Israelites busied themselves, to any extent, in home or foreign commerce. We read in Nehemiah iii. the story of the work of repairing that went on at Jerusalem under the encouragement of that governor, and in that chapter we read

of 'goldsmiths,' 'apothecaries' and 'merchants'—possibly general dealers. And the 'fish-gate' is mentioned, by which fish for sale were brought into the city, while the proceedings taken by Nehemiah against Sabbath-breakers show that the 'sellers of all kind of ware' were very anxious to do business without regard to principle. (Nehemiah xiii. 15—21.) We may suppose that in Maccabæan times, and still more when Judæa became a Roman province, intercourse with foreigners brought about various changes. There was evidently an increase in the number of towns, and the Jews ceased to give as much attention to pastoral pursuits and agriculture as they did formerly. The ordinary Oriental is often tardy in his trading, and we miss the old Jewish energy in modern dwellers in Palestine, though if once fairly roused, the Eastern merchant is vehement in his gesticulations.

Bread, the 'staff of life,' has no less value in Asia than with us; but there barley is largely used as well as wheat for its manufacture. Barley bread being cheaper, is to be found generally in the abodes of the poor, so that a haughty Arab, wishing to offend some one whom he affects to despise, will call him an 'eater of barley bread.' Though the work of bread-making has always belonged to the females of an Eastern household, from various circumstances, all are not able to prepare their own bread, and as a rule, those who do are glad sometimes to purchase an extra supply. That there was a 'bakers' street' in Palestine at least as far back as the days of the prophet Jeremiah, we find from the statement in Jeremiah xxxvii. 21; a daily portion of bread was from that source to be given to the prophet as long as any remained. The fact that, in one of our Lord's parables, a man is represented as hurrying off at night

to a friend to borrow loaves on an emergency, would not imply that there were no regular vendors of bread, though there might be none near at hand. Or if there were, a person might naturally think that some friend aware, of course, of the laws of Eastern hospitality,

AN EASTERN BAKERY.

would be glad thus to oblige him, even at the midnight hour.

Grain is not used in England for food unless it is finely or coarsely ground ; in Eastern lands, parched or roasted corn is greatly liked at the harvest season.

That which is most approved is made by gathering the stalks, not fully ripe; and then these being tied in bundles, they are roasted over a fire of weeds in the open air. Such 'parched corn' is eaten by travellers, and also brought into houses. (See Leviticus xxiii. 14; Ruth ii. 14; 1 Samuel xxv. 18.)

Those who have not visited Eastern lands can scarcely realize the force of the illustration employed by Jeremiah to convey an idea of the approaching desolation in Palestine, that 'the sound of the mill-stones' would not be heard. (Jeremiah xxv. 10.) And in Solomon's description of old age, he employs the same figure (Ecclesiastes xii. 4): after the representation of the darkening of the windows, and the closing of the doors, it is added that 'the sound of the grinding is low.' Morning and evening throughout Syria, in villages and encampments, the whirr or hum of the hand-mill is incessant, and soon becomes not an unpleasant, though monotonous sound. Two females work at it in company. (Luke xvii. 35.) Both take hold of the handle, one keeping her right hand disengaged, so that from time to time she may throw in fresh grain. The ordinary account of the mode of working this mill is, that one takes hold of the handle of the upper millstone, and pushes it half round, when the other seizes it, and completes the revolution of the upper upon the lower or nether millstone. The correctness of this is denied by Dr. Thomson, who states that both keep firm hold of the handle as it revolves, and pull or push as is required. Sometimes the lower millstone is made of a denser or harder stone than the upper, so that the words in Job xli. 24 are expressive. Wheat is also pounded by the Orientals as well as ground, the fact furnishing Solomon with this figure: 'Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a

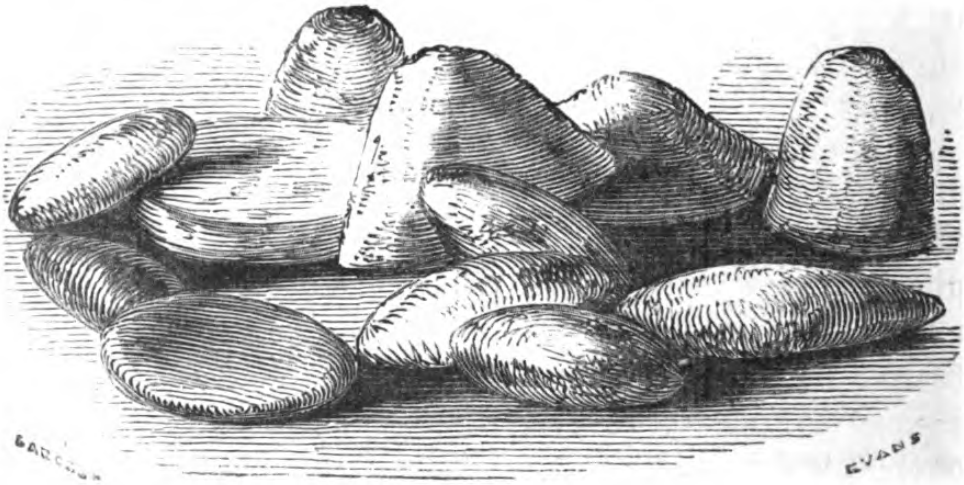
mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.' (Proverbs xxvii. 22.)

EASTERN HAND-MILL.

The braying is a less agreeable sound than the grinding; the operation is performed in large stone mortars, usually for the preparation of a favourite Arab dish, called *kibby*. This consists of meat mixed with wheat; a fat piece of mutton is often chosen, and the product is then baked in an oven. Occasionally, when flesh meat is scarce, fish is beaten up with the grain in this manner.

The ordinary oven now noticeable in the East is a simple hole in the ground lined with clay, 'stoves' and 'kitcheners' having yet to acquire their reputation there. The dough is dexterously clapped upon the hot sides of an oven of this sort, and as dexterously withdrawn when baked, or, otherwise, it would fall among the fuel or ashes below. A similar plan was pursued in ancient times, though probably bread or cakes were also baked upon the flat hearth by surrounding them with hot cinders; this may have been Sarah's plan. (Genesis xviii. 6.) We find in Scripture both bread and cakes mentioned. In the

East the cake is even yet made not much thicker than the pancakes we associate with Shrovetide; and such thin bread has its special use, as we shall see presently, when we look at an Eastern entertainment. Tamar is said to have made for her brother Amnon cakes in a pan; and this method is still pursued, a pan or iron plate being placed above a fire. This is found to be a handy plan by travellers. The vessel is propped up by stones placed in a circle, and a fire of brushwood is kindled beneath. Meat might on occasion be baked also in this way. And the mention of



EASTERN LOAVES AND CAKES.

meat' suggests that it is well to bear in mind the fact that this word in our version of the Bible is not limited, as in modern speech, to animal food of some sort. 'Meat' was a general term once applied to all food that was eaten; it has still that acceptation in some northern districts of Britain. Indeed, the meat-offering of the Book of Leviticus is just the opposite of the animal sacrifice, being composed of flour and vegetable oil.

Oils and fats, of a vegetable or animal nature, are

regarded by Orientals as a necessary part of the daily fare. Indulged in too freely, these things are, in a hot climate, exceedingly unwholesome; perhaps, a judge of cookery coming from the West would assert that they are made so, in a measure, by the way in which they are prepared for table use or else stored up. Olive oil is particularly esteemed by Asiatics; but its extraction from the berries is rarely done in-doors, presses being used for this purpose, which are worked by hand in some districts, and in others, driven like a mill. Formerly, like grapes, these berries were trodden out (Micah vi. 15); at present, no traces of this custom are to be found in Syria. The oil is not clarified, but brought into the house in large jars, and allowed to settle ere it is poured off. Some folks tell us that the olive is almost as valuable to the inhabitants of those districts of Asia as the bamboo and the cocoa-nut are to the natives of other countries. Several of the purposes to which the oil of the olive was applied are named in Scripture; besides its use in sacrifice, it gave the best light attainable in early times, and served as a seasoning, as well as an actual article of food. Moreover, it was highly esteemed as a softener of the skin and as a medicament, while the embalmers could not proceed in their mournful task without its aid. The list of its uses is long, but only two others shall be added, which Scripture does not give us: now-a-days the berries are pickled, and then they form one of the most convenient and agreeable relishes eaten with bread by the day labourer; and from the olive oil is prepared nearly all the soap used in the East. The poor are allowed, in many places, to glean the olives as they do the corn; and by this means they obtain the oil, without which they would very likely be in darkness throughout the winter nights; and by

the help of the same lamp that is thus fed the coffee can also be prepared for the evening's meal. Isaiah alludes to such a gleaning in chapter xvii. 6; and the prophet's utterance in Habakkuk iii. 17 adds another proof of what was thought of the olive in those times.

Butter and cheese are both named in Scripture; and one part of the daily duty of an Eastern household, especially if there be a farm attached to the habitation, is the preparation of the various articles for the table which milk can be made to yield. In several verses where 'butter' is referred to, as for instance in Deuteronomy xxxii. 14; Judges v. 25, a natural conclusion would be that it was something in a fluid state; and it is most probable that soured or thickened milk is what is meant, and not the firm substance which we call 'butter.' This sour milk, commonly called 'leben' in those countries, is a very cooling and pleasant drink during hot weather. Still, they do prepare a sort of butter, by filling the skin of a goat or antelope with milk, and then securing this to a tripod, or three-legged support. A woman kneads or shakes this about in a thoroughly Oriental style, quite different from our English process of churning, and the butter also is put into skins. In winter it may be about as firm as honey, but in summer it is more like oil. At no time of the year does it suit a Western palate, and it is seldom eaten by the natives on bread as we spread butter; its chief use is as an ingredient in made dishes. And a sight of the Syrian or Arabian woman trying to produce butter explains what seems an obscure proverb: 'Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood.' (Proverbs xxx. 33.) 'Churning' and 'wringing' are expressed by the same

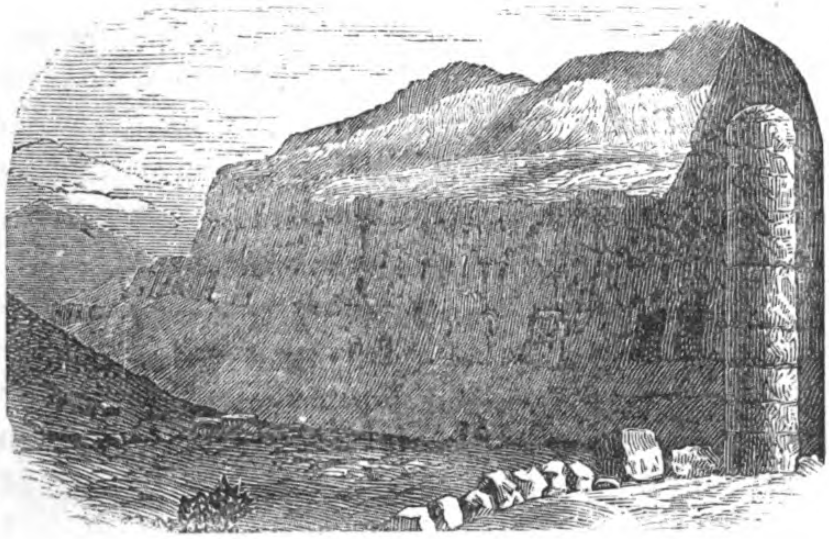
word in the Hebrew; and it is by a kind of wringing that butter is got, which might be said to resemble the wringing or pulling of a man's nose, which is not at all like the motion of our churn. Cheese is mentioned thrice in the Bible. The Jews were acquainted, there is no doubt, with plants the juice of which would produce a curd, which was pressed, or slightly dried. Cheeses in the East are generally like what we know as 'new' or 'cream-cheese,' rather than the solid and coloured cheeses coated with a hard rind.

Milk enters into the composition of some of those dishes the Arabs serve up so readily to travellers. Dr. Thomson confesses that though the command of Moses, 'Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk,' rang in his ears, he could not say that the flavour of a fat and tender kid, dressed in milk, with onions and spice, was at all objectionable. Jews in Asia still resolutely refuse to touch a dish of this kind; and they hold that the precept is directed, not simply against those who would serve up a kid in the milk of its parent, but against cooking any young creature in the substance which was its food while it was living. Also with regard to the eating of blood, as is well known even in this country, the modern Jew is scrupulous, as was his ancestor; and in this nearly all Eastern sects and peoples agree. Animals that have been strangled or smothered are deemed unsuitable for food; and in killing those intended for the table great care is taken to remove all blood from the carcase. A sportsman who has shot down a small bird will always 'pour out the blood thereof.' The flesh of swine is held in utter abomination by Mohammedans as well as Jews; and so strong is the feeling among many of the Mohammedans, that their Christian neigh-

bours, though not themselves under the influence of this scrupulosity, think it advisable to avoid pork and bacon in the usual way. Some persons argue, and with a show of reason, that the flesh of pigs is not wholesome in hot climates. It must be remembered, however, that they are not fed in the same way in Asia as in England, and the meat has therefore a different flavour.

To some extent Oriental cookery resembles that which is familiar to travellers on the continent, and which contrasts so markedly with the thorough English style of preparing meat for the table. In the East, people delight in ragoûts, fricassees, and stews, flavoured in various ways, though joints, or even entire animals, are occasionally cooked whole. The 'savoury meat' of which we read in Genesis xxvii. has been supposed to be similar to an Arab dish called *yackney*, made from the flesh of deer or goats, cut up, fried in butter, and then stewed in a gravy, containing olives, tomatoes and onions; this dish one traveller declares is worthy of a prince's table. Some of the made dishes are brought to table surrounded by 'hills' of boiled rice. When meat is not to be had, Orientals serve up stewed vegetables, or else honey, or it may be vinegar, is put on the table for persons to dip their bread into. Joseph 'sent messes' to his brethren (Genesis xliii. 34); these being probably dishes of stewed meat. And Samuel's direction to his cook, in 1 Samuel ix. 23, 24, shows that it was sometimes the practice then to cook joints, for the shoulder was laid by for Saul. David, at the rejoicings when he ascended the throne, served out to the people 'bread, . . . wine,' and, a 'piece of flesh,' seemingly a slice or lump of cooked meat. (2 Samuel vi. 19.) Moses, we read, gave special directions that the paschal lamb should be

roasted and not stewed. Fish was not boiled by the Jews, but fried or baked in an oven, or laid simply on hot coals. (John xxi. 9.)



CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

THE thought has possibly occurred to some Bible-readers, that people in the East—at all events in bygone times—were more moderate in eating and drinking than those who live in these Western lands. We do not find it recorded, or even hinted, of the persons mentioned in the Bible, that they took three or four meals daily, as is a common plan with us. Now, something might be said upon the difference of climate, which has much to do with the appetite for food ; and it should also be noted that Orientals, when they sit down to a meal, eat a large quantity. We find in the Bible only two meals are mentioned by name : dinner and supper. For many centuries it has been the custom nearly throughout the East to take two, and only two, substantial meals each day. That hardy, self-denying race the Romans, though a Western people, did, at one time, allow themselves but one hearty meal, which they called 'supper.'

Now, breakfast, which we look upon as a necessary preparation for the day's duties, is not regarded as important in Asia. *Dinner*, it has been thought, to which we have references in Scripture,—as in Genesis xliii. 16 ; Luke xi. 38 ; John xxi. 15,—and the time which was about noon, was, in reality, the *breakfast*, the first meal of the day. Thirst, we are told, and not hunger, is the first sensation generally felt on rising in the morning in an Eastern climate. Moreover, as most people have experienced at some time or another,

the effect of a hearty meal late in the evening is quite to dull the appetite for an early morning repast. The supper among the Romans, especially under the Empire, was an astonishing meal; perhaps, from its courses and intervals, it might be described as a

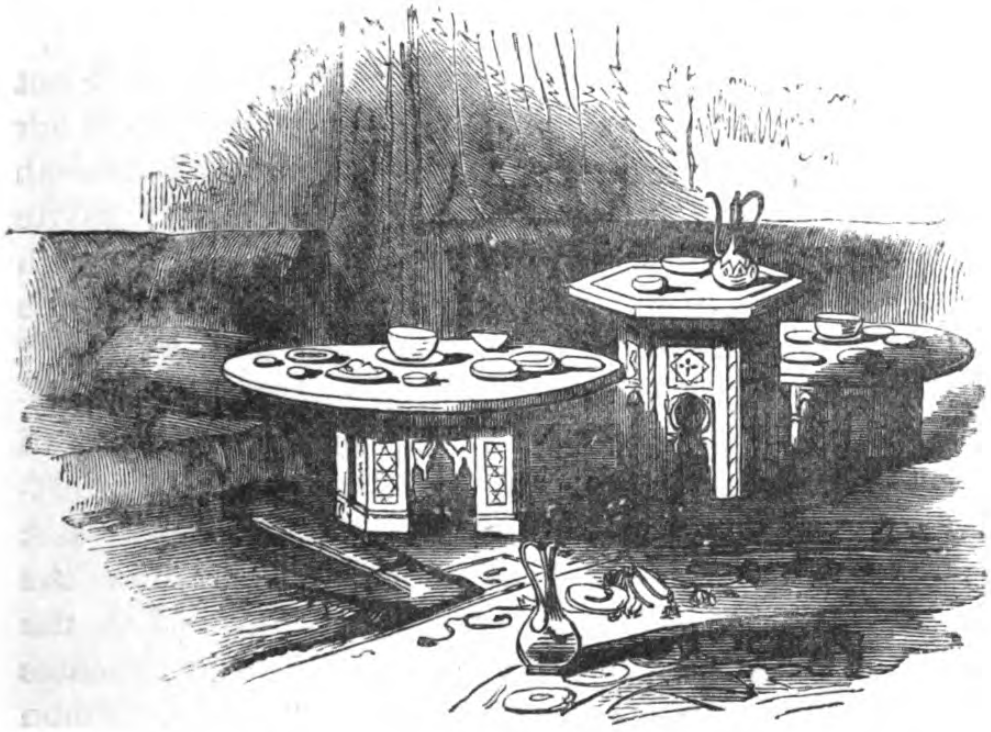
EGYPTIAN COOKING VESSELS.

succession of meals. And though the Israelites were not so luxurious, yet, as this meal was taken after the greater part, or even the whole of the day's toil was got through, more food was consumed at it than at the dinner. Probably, the hour would be five or six,

as the heat of the day declined. A curious question has been asked: 'Had not the family of Bethany been guilty of some neglect to have occasioned Jesus to suffer hunger on the road from that village to Jerusalem, as recorded in Matthew xxi. 18?' We think not, judging from other circumstances in their behaviour to their divine Guest. His departure for the city took place, it may be, at an early hour, and when, according to custom, no meal would be spread on the table.

'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours,' said Jesus to his Pharisean host, showing that it was the practice to invite strangers to partake of both of these meals; though a set entertainment was more frequently fixed for the afternoon hour, because that was the leisure time of the day. Now, a very old delineation of a dinner-party is to be seen on an Egyptian monument, and there, in quite a modern style, the guests sit comfortably upon their chairs around a central table. But these were grand people; other designs show the Egyptians in the act of eating on the ground, in the mode which doubtless prevailed among the Israelites for many centuries, and which is still common throughout the East. Two plans are pursued in setting out a meal, according to the taste of the master of the house, or the number of the guests. In Persia, and in some other places where there is a divan or fixed carpet along the sides of the room, a piece of chintz or cotton is spread out in front of this divan, and a number of separate trays are brought in, each being intended for two or three persons. In this way the inconvenience is avoided of a number of persons having to crowd round one tray. But some follow

another fashion. Even where there is a party of a dozen, the table, which is not much above a foot high, is brought into the room, having on it a tray of light metal, on which the dishes are crowded together. Bread cut up in portions is placed on the mat beside, and also a vessel of water, intended for general use among those who are about to eat. Sometimes, however, instead of several dishes being set upon the tray



EASTERN TABLE PREPARED WITH DISHES—MODERN.

at once, only one is brought in upon it, and after each person has taken a few mouthfuls of each, it is removed by a servant, and another is introduced, and then another, until the close of the meal or entertainment. In any of these cases, the guests seat themselves on the floor or on the divan. If they have to crowd round a small tray, they have no space to spare, and they find it necessary to tuck up their loose robes.

The right sleeve is also turned back, so as to give more freedom to the arm. In some such manner meals were probably taken from patriarchal times, until the Maccabæan period in Judæa.

Afterwards, as we learn by several descriptions given us of meals in the Gospels, the Roman mode of reclining at meals had then become the usual practice with all the well-to-do among the Jews; and our Lord, when invited to the houses of the Pharisees, or to those among His friends who set out their meals in this way, complied with the custom, as one not in itself evil. Some objection might be raised against it, on the score of its being an unhealthy posture for the taking of food; nor can it be said that a number of persons thus reclining to eat present a graceful appearance. With the poorer classes in Palestine, no doubt, the old plan of crouching on the floor at meals was still continued, for their homes would not allow the space requisite for the setting out of an entertainment in the Roman fashion. Though, it should be observed, some think, from a verse in Amos vi. 4, the practice of lying down at table upon couches was introduced soon after the Captivity; but the opinion of those who fix the commencement of it in later days, and attribute it to Greek or Roman influence, has more weight. The tables and couches were, of course, proportioned to the number of guests, and where there was a long series of tables, those nearest to the seat of the master of the entertainment would be deemed the tables at which it was more honourable to be seated. Hence Christ declared it marked the character of a certain class of men that they loved 'the uppermost rooms [*i.e.*, the highest places] at feasts.' (Matthew xxiii. 6; Luke xiv. 7—11.) This habit served as an important illustration in His teach-

ing, the very opposite conduct being enjoined as the true means of attaining to honour. The couches used at the meals laid out on these tables were, as is believed, contrived so that each held three persons. The posture was a peculiar one. 'The back,' says Dr. Eadie, 'was supported by a cushion, and the face so turned towards the table, that the head was held up with the left hand upon another cushion. The right hand was thus free to reach the food. The second person lay with the back part of his head towards the breast of the former; and the third, in like manner, with the back part of his head towards the second. In one sense, therefore, one person might be said to lean or lie upon the breast of another, when those about to take the meal had thus arranged themselves; and it gave a good opportunity for private communication. (John xiii. 23—25.) We see, thus, that as the feet of each individual were away from the table, the woman who had been 'a sinner' (Luke vii. 37, 38), and also Mary, the sister of Lazarus (John xii. 3), could approach Christ easily, without interfering with the arrangements of the table. Under this mode of eating, just as in other Oriental modes, several persons would eat together from the same dish: it might be presumed that the servants usually set on a dish for each three.

In Matthew xxvi. 23 we have it in the words of Christ Himself that His betrayer ate from the same dish with his Lord; and as we know from the statement of John that he reclined next to his loved Master, it may be inferred that Jesus, John and Judas occupied the same couch at the farewell meal. Some have discussed the question as to whether women reclined at meals. It has been supposed that they did not; and even in those times, when the female sex mingled more freely with the male than is now allowed

in the East, under ordinary circumstances, the women did not sit down with the men at the principal meals. On the general testimony of modern travellers, we have it for a fact, that the old custom of reclining at meals has almost, or perhaps now quite, dropped out of use; though Orientals are beginning to find the advantages of our mode of sitting at table.

But before a meal can be commenced, there are certain observances to be gone through. Visitors to the East have noticed the huge stone jars that stand about the houses; a few may contain oil and wine, more frequently they are full of water. Some of them are brought into the room on the occasion of a party, to afford the needful supply for drinking and washing. (John ii. 6.) The Jews in the olden time were most particular in keeping to the custom that the hands should be washed before meals; or if not washed, at least a little water must be poured over the right hand. Dr. Thomson expresses his regret that this is not more commonly followed in our day, since the method of eating requires men to dip the thumb and one or two fingers into some of the dishes. The Pharisees exalted this kind of washing into a kind of religious ceremony. (Matthew xv. 2; Mark vii. 3, 4; Luke xi. 38, 39.) And Christ spoke, in the verse last quoted, not as disapproving of purity in the body, but as condemning a ritualism which led to the neglect of many duties positively enjoined by God. If modern Syrians do not wash before meals, they rarely fail to comply with the practice of so doing after the repast is over. The common method has been thus described: 'A round vessel of brass or tinned copper, called a *tisht*, is brought to each guest by a servant. It has a cover fitting to about half the depth, with a raised receptacle in the middle for the soap. The water is

poured slowly over the hands by another attendant from the *ebreik* or ewer; it passes through the cover

ABLUTIONS.

into the space below, and is not seen when the *tisht* is passed on. Washing being a symbol of purification,

it is considered unclean to wash after our fashion, returning the soiled water over the hands, and dipping them again into the basin.' Where there are no servants in attendance, friends do this office to each other, and sometimes the master of a house approaches a favoured guest for this purpose. A disciple might in this way show his regard for his teacher. Elisha did this to the prophet Elijah. (2 Kings iii. 11.) With the *tisht* and the *ebreik*, or something resembling these, it must have been that Christ washed the feet of His apostles, after, or rather, in all probability, *before* supper (John xiii. 4—12); and gave to all His followers in the future a lesson in humility never to be forgotten.

The arrangements of the table are, therefore, in Eastern countries exceedingly simple. The guest from a Western land must not be surprised at the absence of plates, knives and forks. A spoon indeed he may get, either of metal or wood, since without such an article, in respect to some of the dishes, he would be like the fox in the fable, though dexterous Orientals show great skill in dipping up, by the help of their bread, soups and stews. They assert that a compound eaten at once from the dish is hotter and more agreeable to the palate than when turned out into a plate. Since their meat is nearly always 'done to rags,' as the saying is, knives are not needed. Kitto, Thomson and many others who have visited the East, tell us that this practice of eating with the fingers is not so disgusting as might be supposed. Persons of good breeding keep the thumb and fingers as much out of the dish as possible, and lift up fragments of meat by the help of bread; that article, as already remarked, being made in thin, flat cakes, morsels of which may be bent into a spoonlike form. If a bit of meat is

fished up from the dish too large to put into the mouth at once, the person lays it upon his bread, and then divides it with the fingers. No doubt it must be disagreeable to see the way in which ravenous or dirty

ORIENTAL MANNER OF EATING.

Orientals will take their meals, but the same thing may be said of some persons nearer home. Nor is it quite in accordance with our ideas of politeness for a person to dip into a dish, and, selecting some choice

morsel, insist upon putting it in a guest's mouth. Yet this is often done, and it is considered a mark of regard. (John xiii. 26.)

Now-a-days, they have in some Eastern cities occasional friendly gatherings which are neither dinners nor suppers; in English phrase, they would be termed 'soirées,' or 'conversaziones,' for there is an abundance of talking. And an American visitor to Sidon, being invited to these parties, was greatly struck by the manner in which Orientals vociferate, when fairly roused, and the noise seems increased by the peculiarities of the language, while not only does the tongue wag, but the limbs and body are also agitated. Making some comment on this style of conversation, the visitor received this reply: 'You Americans talk as if you were afraid to be heard, and we as if we feared we should not be.' One rather annoying thing attendant upon these gatherings is, that on the arrival of each fresh visitor, all in the room stand up, and at a signal from the host all unite in a profound bow or salaam, so that should there be fifty guests or more, it is rather fatiguing for those who come in early. Coffee is passed round, of very deep colour, in small and elegant cups. But what is an addition quite unknown to Eastern sages of the earlier periods of history is the pipe in various forms. The *arjileh* has a long, flexible tube, and a bottle is attached to it, through which the smoke is drawn to purify it, the ornamentation of which is sometimes elaborate. Dr. Thomson tried to use this, but found that it was beyond his ability, and he declares that it needs a chest deep as a whale, and powers of suction like a maelström! The fact cannot be denied that many Eastern ladies are much addicted to smoking.

Those acquainted with domestic life among the

Orientals in Syria and many other Eastern lands, draw no pleasing picture of it, and we may fairly conclude that an alteration for the worse has taken place since those times when the Bible was written. There are no females to be seen at evening parties; if they go abroad, it is generally alone and veiled. They must not walk arm-in-arm with their husbands, brothers, or parents; indeed, in some places, they must not go abroad except at night, and then closely veiled. If a doctor is called in to attend upon a woman in the

VEILS.

harem, unless it is unavoidable, he is not allowed to look at her face. The majority of men will scarcely name any one of their female relatives, if they can help it, and then it will be in terms rather contemptuous. The birth of a daughter is regarded very nearly as much a reason for vexation among the people of Syria in these days, as it is with the natives of India and China. Even the boys, as soon as they reach a certain age, are encouraged to treat their mothers and sisters with rudeness and unkindness. At the bottom of it lies, deeply rooted in the Eastern disposition, a

mistrust and dislike of her who ought to be man's joy and solace, for which it is not easy to find a thoroughly satisfactory explanation. In one of the latest published letters from the pen of the late Dr. Livingstone, is an account of a dialogue between the doctor and an Arab chief on this subject, the chief maintaining, very obstinately, that all women were utterly and irretrievably bad. He insisted that the reason the English allow their wives so much liberty is because they do not know them as well as the Arabs do. That many women in the East are both wicked and foolish, in the latter respect little better than children, is not to be wondered at, under the treatment they have to endure, and with their utter blankness in the matter of education. And another evil is the idle life which a great number of women have to lead, especially in the upper classes of society. Nor does this unhappy state of things prevail only in Mohammedan circles, where we should naturally expect to meet with it. Christian families display a social condition very, very far away from Christian principles, though there are increasing signs of a general change among the enlightened and the better educated. In that quarter one looks hopefully; in the Mohammedan direction, however, one sees that religion, as well as long-established usage, is strong against any improvement, and a great upheaving and shaking must come about ere the East and the West can bear any resemblance to each other.

Quotations from Scripture could be made to show that, from Genesis to Revelation, there is nothing in its teaching that affords any countenance to the Eastern modes of treating females of all ages, and Bible history proves also that, though it was reserved for Christianity to place her who was 'last at the cross and first at the sepulchre' in full social

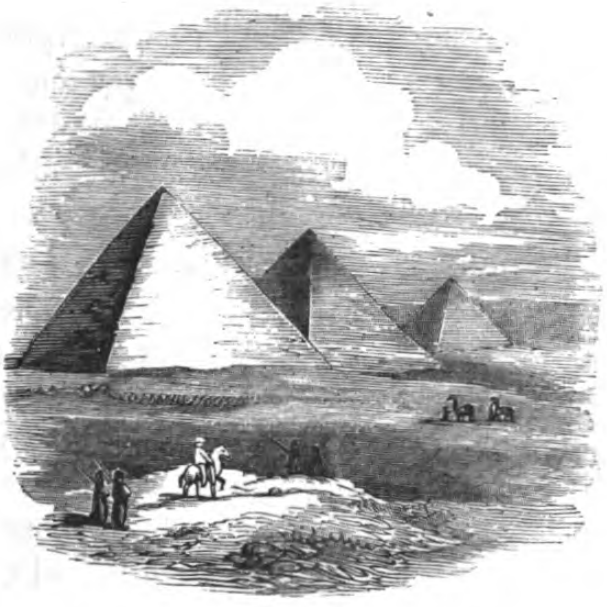
equality with man, there was nothing in the customs prevalent during a long period of history in the Asiatic regions so familiar to Bible-readers to prevent women mixing freely in society, and receiving the same educational and other privileges that men possessed. To go no further back than the New Testament times, a multitude of passages might be cited in proof of the assertion that during our Lord's ministry women in Palestine had not to submit to a harem life. (See particularly Matthew xiv. 21 ; xx. 20 ; xxvii. 55 ; Luke i. viii. 2, 3 ; xi. 27 ; John ii. 1—12 ; iv. 39—42.)

It is told us in Exodus xxxv. 25, 26, that the women who were 'wise-hearted,' or, literally, 'ingenious,' and those also 'whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun' and wrought a variety of materials for the service of the tabernacle. Further on in Jewish history, a hearty commendation is bestowed by King Lemuel's mother on the 'virtuous woman,' who worked willingly with her hands, and of whom it is also said, that 'she layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.' Such employments, next to cooking, have always been woman's chief occupations in the East, though some few engaged in trade (Lydia was 'a seller of purple,' Acts xvi. 14) ; and in Palestine, where at one period so much of the land was occupied by gardens and vineyards, women doubtless assisted, at some seasons of the year, in gathering the crops, and in the lighter kinds of out-door work. This pattern lady of the Book of Proverbs is said to have planted 'a vineyard,' though this she may not have done unaided. But she was evidently most at home in the work of the needle or the spindle, handling the wool and flax. In Syria, to this hour, many of the women prepare garments of various styles and textures from wool, and also from goats' and camels' hair. Flax is spoken of

in the Bible as early as in Exodus ix. 31, and the manufacture of linen from this substance was a branch of industry known to the Egyptians. There is doubt as to whether either cotton or silk were materials introduced into Palestine during Old Testament times, though some would translate the Hebrew word *butz* as cotton, the down of that plant being used in India at a very early period. Whether 'silk,' in our English Bible, represents what we know as silk we can hardly be sure; but at the present time there are large 'gardens of silk' about Jaffa and near Lebanon, and the silk industry occupies a great many of the women at Sidon and in some other towns. At a hut on the side of Mount Zion, Dr. Thomson saw two females, one spinning yarn, while her companion twirled busily the ancient distaff, and near Beth-horon Mr. Hopley noticed several spinning goats' and camels' hair in small spindles turned with the thumb and finger. People in those lands, of both sexes, often accompany their work with a low, monotonous song or chant, a sort of 'crooning,' as they say in the north; this is not, however, to be taken as a proof of the existence of either cheerfulness or contentment.

Some persons, fond of domestic animals, have asked, 'Did the Jews in former times keep any of these as pets in their houses?' In the dwellings of the Arabs and other dwellers in Syria, at the present time, various animals walk in and out of the houses and tents, not encouraged or fondled certainly, but still they are not excluded. The modern Oriental is not particularly remarkable for treating animals kindly, and yet he cannot, as a rule, be said to be wilfully cruel. A partiality for natural history does not, moreover, seem to have been at all a feature in the Jewish character. The dog was too much disliked in the East ever to be

made the friend and companion of man, though this animal was used as a guard. It may be thought a little singular that the Bible contains no reference to the domestic cat, though fine specimens of this animal are to be seen on Egyptian monuments, and they were thought worthy of being embalmed as mummies; so that cats must have been known to the Israelites during their stay in Egypt. From Nathan's parable it would appear that lambs were sometimes brought up indoors, and treated as if they belonged to the family. (2 Samuel xii. 3.) And that birds were caged and kept in the houses or gardens of the Israelites under the Kings may be inferred from the words in Jeremiah v. 27.



CHAPTER XI.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

LOOKING at Oriental fashions with regard to clothes, we first observe that dress with them has escaped, to a great extent, the numerous, and too often ridiculous, changes it has passed through in these Western countries. Still, however, on the other hand, the inhabitants of the East can hardly pride themselves on the appropriateness of their usual garb to their climate and manner of life. They may argue in its favour on account of the freedom given, dresses for both sexes being so contrived as to give no unpleasant pressure on any part of the body, which is certainly to be avoided in a warm climate. Yet, flowing garments have many inconveniences, and prove impediments to active movements; hence the necessity for girdles of various styles, and the casting off, under some circumstances, of the outer robes by those who have to make violent exertion or to run with speed.

The sedateness or sluggishness of the Orientals has been attributed to the character of the Eastern garb. In certain particulars, too, Eastern practice goes quite contrary to rules that have been regarded as of value. 'Keep the feet warm and the head cool,' may, perhaps, be thought of no worth save in temperate climates. At least, Orientals are apt to go bare-footed, or with only slight protection; while they will load their heads with a heavy turban, or expose it uncovered to the sun's rays, which is a decided infraction of the physician's rule. From the fact that clothes do not, as they are usually made and worn in the East, afford

much opportunity of personal display, vanity finds an outlet in a show of jewellery and trinkets, which thus assume a greater importance than they would otherwise have.

COMMON EASTERN DRESS, WITH AND WITHOUT THE OUTER ROBE.

But let us proceed to detail. We cannot but be struck with the little knowledge we have regarding dress in the period of man's history preceding the Flood—more than a fourth, probably, of the whole

history of our race. The poor attempt at clothing made by the fallen pair in Eden's garden was superseded by God, who, in His mercy, instructed Adam and his wife how to prepare for themselves 'coats,' or garments of some kind, from the skins of beasts, most likely offered in sacrifice. The fig-tree, the banyan, and others yielding leaves two or three feet across, still supply to some tribes a substitute for the clothing, which really affords a protection; but such a leafy garb is only adapted for a warm climate.

In Genesis iv. 21, 22, we have some information as to antediluvian arts and manufactures, yet nothing is told us concerning the art of dress. We pass on to a reference in Genesis xiv. 23. Abraham and his friends had just returned victorious, after the rescue of the people of Sodom and their goods from the invaders under Chedorlaomer; these goods consisting in part of wearing apparel. Rejecting the king of Sodom's offer, Abraham emphatically declared he would not receive 'from a thread even to a shoe-latchet;' which is the first allusion in the Bible to any of the minutiæ of clothes. We may judge from a thread being named, that garments were then in use which were sewn together. And one of the earliest products of Egypt was linen made from the flax which was grown so abundantly in that land, and for which it was celebrated down to the time of Solomon (1 Kings x. 28), and later. Such cloth, having much the appearance of coarse sheeting of modern manufacture, is found wrapped round mummies of great antiquity. The shoe-latchet points us back to the primitive sandal, formed of a flat piece of wood or leather, and secured to the foot by a thong or strap.

There is little noticeable, as bearing on the subject of dress, until we come to the history of the Israelites,

and in the Book of Exodus directions are given as to the materials to be employed in the construction of the tabernacle, with its varied draperies. Of linen there were fabrics of several textures and colours. Wool was also 'spun,' and articles were thus made of sheep and 'goats' hair' (Exodus xxxv. 25, 26), by the women; and the tabernacle was also covered with prepared skins of rams, and of a species of badger. The account of the garments to be worn by the priests affords us some hints as to the style of dressing then prevalent; and we discover that modern Eastern clothes, more than three thousand years later, are fashioned very much after the same model.

The garments of the high-priest were rather exceptional, though, in the description of these, we have some curious particulars given us as to the shaping of the ephod. This robe, all blue (that colour was long especially esteemed, and worn by kings and priests), was to have a hole for the neck, and 'a band round about the hole, that it should not rend.' Apparently, it was a loose garment without sleeves. Coming, however, to the attire of the ordinary priests (Exodus xxxix. 27—29), we notice, first, the coat, evidently an under-garment worn next the skin, and representing the shirt which is so familiar to us. They were also to wear 'linen breeches' or drawers; and from the way in which these are mentioned, it may be conjectured that they did not form part of the ordinary male attire. Then there must have been an outer robe or loose dress, though this is not specified in the case of the ordinary priests; yet it is named in the account of the garb of the high-priest. (Exodus xxxix. 22.) The girdle securing the dress was to be of various colours. Two kinds of head-coverings are mentioned: a mitre, and bonnets, or rather *turbans*. These were also to be

of linen. Sandals are not named; but there is no reason to suppose that it was intended the priests should habitually go bare-footed, though they are so represented in pictures. Thus we have set before us, in the second Book of the Bible, Oriental attire in its simplicity, consisting of an outer and an inner garment, a girdle—for convenience as much as for ornament,—sandals, and a turban (that, however, being frequently dispensed with); and down to the present time Asiatic garb has undergone little change.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

The Book of Job, which carries us back to patriarchal times, somewhere between the days of Abraham and the Exodus, contains some interesting particulars bearing on our subject. In chapter vii. 6, the afflicted patriarch cries: 'My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle;' from which reference we gather three things: that there were persons even then whose employment it was to make garments, or, at any rate, prepare the materials; that the implement used was a shuttle; and that this was plied with rapidity, as it symbolized,

in Job's estimation, the rapid passing of his life. Again, in chapter xiv. 17, Job says to God, 'Thou sewest up mine iniquity.' It is enclosed and kept securely (as appears to be his meaning from the connection), much as any object would be that is not merely *tied* up in a cloth, but *sewn* up in it. In chapter xvi. 15, to show the intensity of his grief, he says: 'I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin;' seeming to imply that he had not only thrown about him robes of sackcloth, but secured these to his person, to show the continuity of his sorrow. Job also speaks, in chapter xxvii. 16, of those who, in accumulating riches, had stores of garments as well as heaps of silver; showing that already men had begun to treasure up a variety of robes, though not, perhaps, embroidered, or of rich colours, as in later days. And yet that some show was attempted by persons of dignity is proved by his declaration that his judgment was 'as a robe and a diadem.' (Chapter xxix. 14.) The complaint, too, he utters in chapter xxx. 18 has an expressive reference to his malady. Job's body was so swelled, that what was intended to be a loose robe pressed upon him in a painful way, and became as tight 'as the collar' of his 'coat' or inner garment. Part of Job's protestation of his innocence is his assertion that he had not neglected his duty as a wealthy emir, but had liberally bestowed upon the poor and the fatherless clothing as well as food. (Chapter xxxi. 19, 20.)

Clothing with many Eastern tribes leaves the head and limbs almost or entirely free. The under garment, with some of the modern Arabs, is little more than a strip of linen extending from the waist to the knees, and with very little shape about it. This, of course, is in the general way covered by an outer robe, which is cast off at times; and the person then is spoken of as

'naked,' though not literally so. It is evident that in some verses of Scripture, where an individual is said to be naked, nothing more is meant than a stripping to the inner garment. We understand such to have been the case with Isaiah the prophet (chapter xx. 2), and the Apostle Peter. (John xxi. 7.)

Without exception, where we have the word 'coat' used in Scripture as an appellation for a garment, it is the garment worn next the skin that is intended; and

EASTERN COSTUMES.

the circumstance is expressly stated, that the coat or vesture worn by our Saviour, and taken from Him by the soldiers at His crucifixion, was 'woven' and 'without seam.' (John xix. 23.) Therefore, although His outer clothes were divided into four parts, a share for each of the four men charged with this particular duty, the coat was not torn, but given to one by 'lot,' in fulfilment of the prophecy in Psalm xxii. 18. This under

garment, as it is ordinarily shaped in the East, allows much freedom of motion. Notwithstanding this, however, those at hard work find it needful to roll back the sleeve, and strip the arm entirely bare.

The outer or upper garment bears various Bible names. Sometimes it appears to be simply designated 'garment,' as in Acts ix. 39. It was their outer or loose robes that the eager multitude spread before Jesus, so that He might ride over them into the royal city. (Matthew xxi. 8.) This was the article of clothing upon which a man would borrow money on an emergency (Exodus xxii. 26, 27) ; and which, as already hinted, served the poor instead of bedding. The cloak of Matthew v. 40 was this upper garment, which had often little skill expended upon the fashioning of it, and was really not unlike cloaks or 'wrappers' as these are sometimes made with us. In fact, without the girdle it is evident the upper garment was inconvenient, nor would it afford much warmth, when that was wanted, unless it was tightened about the body of the wearer. In the loose folds of such garments modern Arabs carry a variety of commodities, for Eastern fashion does not allow of pockets ; we have an account, in 2 Kings iv. 39, of one who 'went out' to gather herbs, . . . and brought them home in the 'lap' or skirt of his dress. It is possible that Christ was referring to the practice of carrying articles in the folds of the garment when He gave the promise in Luke vi. 38. The 'robe' or *mantle* was still the same outer garment. (2 Kings ii. 8 ; Jonah iii. 6.) No doubt, monarchs and persons of wealth were in the habit of wearing several of these upper garments one upon the other. Christ in His denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees censures them for enlarging or widening 'the borders of their garments' (Matt. xxiii. 5 ;) the fact being, that the Jews

wore on the edge of the outer garment what we should call 'national insignia,' to distinguish them from other nations. These are supposed to be the 'fringes' and the 'ribband of blue' referred to in Numbers xv. 38; and the leading men in the time of our Saviour made an extra display, out of pride and ostentation.

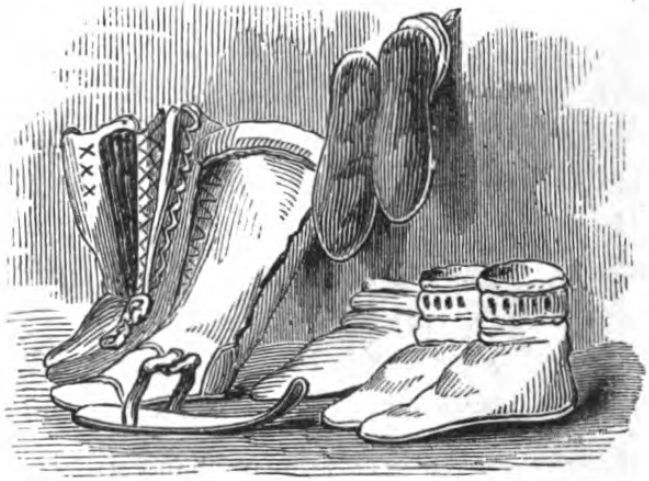
Girdles were occasionally made of linen, and similar in texture to the garment they encircled; more frequently, they were of a stouter substance, of strong cloth or leather, and provided with a buckle. Now-a-days, Orientals often have them of some breadth, so that they give much more support than the waist-belts occasionally worn in our country. In the New Testament, girding the loins implies watchfulness, as in Luke xii. 35; 1 Peter i. 13. Among the pagans, to loose the girdle was a familiar expression, significant of an unguarded or indolent posture, or it might imply an attitude of fear. Scripture references to ungirt 'loins' occur in Isaiah v. 27; xxiii. 10 (margin); Daniel v. 6. The Jews, in the olden time, carried money, weapons, (2 Samuel xx. 8), and a variety of articles in the girdle; and in Syria, tourists have noticed that the pipe, the handkerchief, tools, etc., are thus stowed away for convenience. Dr. Eadie remarks on this subject: 'The girdle not only protected the body, but braced it with strength and firmness.' By a figure, 'righteousness' and 'faithfulness' are called by the prophet 'the girdle' of the promised Messiah. (Isaiah xi. 5.)

The handkerchief has been alluded to. This article is much used by Orientals; Harmer tells us that the maidens work them with care and elegance, and give them as presents to fathers, brothers, husbands, or lovers. The copious perspiration often induced by the heat of the sun renders a handkerchief, if not absolutely necessary, at least agreeable. In Acts xix. 12, 'aprons'

are associated with 'handkerchiefs,' obviously from both being articles easily portable. We are informed that their use in the East is similar to that noticeable in this country.

By the translators of the English Bible, 'bonnet was applied to a head-covering for men as well as women. But we have the word 'hat' in Daniel iii. 21; where it is told us that the three Jewish youths were cast into the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's order, 'in their coats, their hosen, and their hats;' these hats were doubtless tiaras or turbans. 'Hosen,' in the same verse, is rather obscure, and while 'mantles' has been suggested as giving the sense of the Chaldee, it is more probable that we should understand some kind of under-clothing of linen, which the young men wore because they were of royal descent. Women's 'bonnets' are mentioned in Isaiah iii. 20, but we have no hint as to their shape or material. Hats and caps of Western styles are regarded by Orientals, not without reason, as highly objectionable; and there have been instances of Europeans getting a serious illness through wearing a tight-fitting, hard beaver in the sunshine. Eastern head-coverings are soft, though we may think them too warm and too heavy, and some adorn their turbans with choice gems and dangling chains of gold. We apply greasy compounds to the *hair* mostly, Orientals lubricate the *head* with unguents so freely that the grease flows down the face, and literally makes the countenance to shine. By some this operation is performed daily, and Scripture has various allusions to the custom. But on the other hand, it is odd to find, as Roberts points out in his *Oriental Illustrations*, that the head is selected as a spot for receiving chastisement; slaves, school-boys, and alas! wives, being beaten on the crown with the fist or a stick.

'Shoe,' in several passages of Scripture, means simply 'sandal,' though it is true that under certain circumstances the Jews, like other ancient nations, wore a more effective protection for the foot, partly covering the leg also. The Hebrew of Isaiah ix. 5 is thought to contain a reference to such a boot, as worn by the warrior on the battle-field, made of stout leather, and possibly in addition studded with iron points. The earliest form of sandal would be made of hide, perhaps several thicknesses of skin placed one upon another. Not until later times was the sole made of



SHOES AND SANDALS.

skin prepared in the form of leather. Modern sandals are often made of the skin from the neck of a camel. Wooden sandals are also used, with a raised toe and heel, but it is not certain that these were known to the Jews. The arrangement of the straps in the ancient sandals was sometimes very complicated : the Orientals now generally fasten them by two straps ; one passing between the great toe and its neighbour, the other going round the heel, and over the instep. The Gibeonites, when intent upon deceiving Joshua, added to the equipment of their messengers shoes or sandals that

were 'clouted,' that is, patched with pieces sewn on, to make good rents or cuts. (Joshua ix. 5.)

Into the details of female dress we can hardly venture to enter minutely. The dress that was visible consisted of a loose outer garment, usually of good length, a girdle or belt for a similar purpose to that worn by men, but different in make or pattern, and over all the veil. And what we thus describe is just the garb in which the Eastern women appear in the streets or roads at the present time; none who value

their reputation would think of showing themselves in public unveiled. Where it so happens that the veil worn is of particularly thick texture, holes are cut in it, so that the wearer may not have to go along as if blind. Sometimes the large upper garment or robe is so contrived that part of it can be turned over the head, and afford a shelter or conceal the features. Ruth's veil is supposed to have been the hood or loose fold of her garment, which held 'six measures of barley.' (Ruth iii. 15.) We have a veil mentioned in the

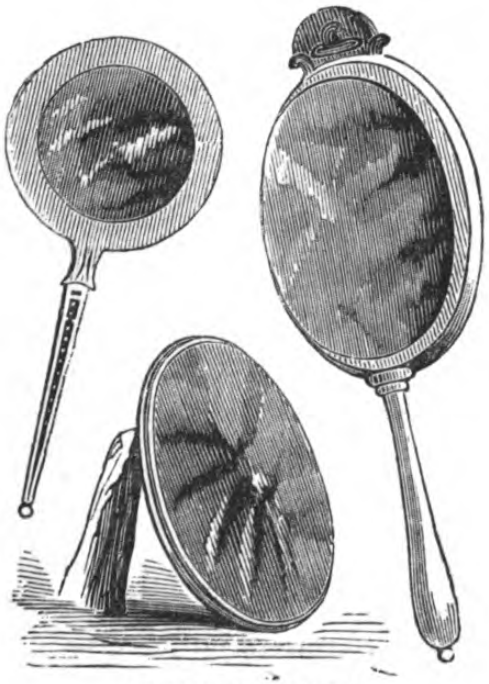
story of Isaac and Rebekah. The maiden, when near the end of her long journey from Padan-aram to her new home, saw her future husband in the distance, and immediately veiled herself. (Genesis xxiv. 65.) This would tend to show that out-of-doors, at that period, the veil was not habitually worn. In the opinion of some, only the maidens among the Jews put on the veil, which was discarded by the married dames. We find it is now worn by women of all ages and positions in society, except when they are in the house, and surrounded by near relatives. It is not the only out-door head-dress in Syria, as, in addition, most women wear a turban of cloth ; and the Arab ladies, who are wives of chiefs, have on special occasions rows of coins twisted round the turban, or circlets of gems.

As the majority of ladies are very poor walkers, it is not important that they should be well shod, and they put on slippers of slight texture ; in doors, they may often be seen going about with bare feet. Our Lord, when sending out the twelve apostles, directs them to put on 'sandals.' (Mark vi. 9.) In their ordinary life, those especially who were fishermen may have been in the habit of going barefoot. Some women and girls in the Arab tribes, though without shoes or sandals, are particular to adorn their feet and legs by putting bracelets round the ankle, or rings of different sizes on the toes and the calf of the leg, and to some of these bells are attached, which make a tinkling noise as the individual moves along. (Isaiah iii. 16.)

Hand-mirrors were known to the Israelites at the time of the Exodus (Exodus xxxviii. 8) ; and the women offered them for the service of the tabernacle. They are still worn by some Orientals, either fastened to the girdle, or suspended by a neckchain.

During the era of luxury in the Roman empire both sexes were accustomed to go out, carrying mirrors in their hands.

A reference has just been made to the third chapter of Isaiah, and we have there a description of the attire and ornaments of the Jerusalem dames towards the close of the kingdom of Judah. Though perfectly intelligible to those the prophet addressed, it is scarcely to be expected that we should, at a period



ANCIENT MIRRORS.

so long subsequent, catch the exact meaning of each allusion. A few notes may be taken in this place from the *Exposition of Isaiah*, by Alexander. And we observe first, that though there may be apparently a repetition of the same object, there must be really shades of difference. In the Hebrew, the word translated 'chains' in our version is literally 'pendants' (verse 19), evidently earrings, which are also named in the next verse. But several good authorities

incline to think that a particular kind of earrings is meant in verse 20, those that were of the nature of charms or amulets ; the idea of these being doubtless borrowed by the Jews from the idolatrous nations of Canaan. 'Cauls' should probably be 'caps,' contrived of fine net-work, so as to exhibit the hair through them, while small crescents of silver, fastened here and there among the tresses ('the round tires like the moon'), would attract the attention also ; though it is the opinion of Henderson that the word is only applied by the prophet to those braided tresses of hair which Eastern ladies tend so carefully, and rarely cut. Some of the modern Orientals indeed have hair of such a length that when shaken out it reaches to the feet. In Europe, as we learn from pagan authors, the Greek and Roman ladies took delight in flowing locks. Although Paul commended women who had long hair, regarding it as a 'veil' or 'covering' suitable for the sex (1 Corinthians xi. 15), yet he most assuredly disapproved of the elaborate manner in which the hair was dressed by some. (1 Timothy ii. 9.) 'Mufflers,' in verse 19, is thought to mean veils which did not cover the head and shoulders, but were of smaller dimensions than the usual female veil, and made of two pieces, hooked together below the eyes. Such veils are very commonly seen in the East. 'Headbands,' in verse 20, is said to be an erroneous rendering, and 'girdles' is substituted by Alexander. 'Bonnets,' is either turbans, or, as Ewald and others think, an ornamental head-dress or a circlet of gold or silver. For 'tablets,' the marginal rendering given in our Bibles is 'houses of the soul,' or, properly, 'houses,' or 'receptacles,' of breath ; an expressive figure, which in Oriental language may be taken to denote perfume-boxes or smelling-bottles worn in the

girdles by these dames, and the odours of which were drawn up in the act of breathing. 'Rings and nose-jewels' explain themselves, the latter ornaments, singular and even disagreeable as they may appear to us, are still patronised by Eastern women. The 'changeable suits of apparel,' in verse 22, is thought to mean holiday suits of clothes, what a person would wear only on special days or times of rejoicing. The two words following, namely, 'mantles' and 'wimples,' both, by their derivation, apply to loose and upper garments. Instead of 'wimples,' it has been suggested that we should read *shawls*. 'Crisping-pins,' in our English version, is possibly a mistake, and we should rather follow the Arabic Bible, which gives 'purses.' The 'fine linen,' of verse 23, is expressive of the material of the tunics or under garments; and 'hoods,' rendered 'turbans' by some, Henderson considers is used to denote ribbands or streamers fastened round the head-dress or tiara.

Some Arab women of the present day dress themselves outrageously, and much as the husbands affect to despise their wives, they are anxious that they should not be outdone by others. In one of the last letters penned by the lamented Dr. Livingstone, he gave some account of the splendid garb of a lady that was introduced to him. There was a considerable amount of the precious metals upon her person, for her drawers were heavy with silver bangles, and her red jacket profusely decked with gold lace. About her neck were several long chains of gold and silver, while she had earrings, not only in the lobes of the ears, but also in holes made all round the rims. On her arms were gold and silver bracelets and other rings; and upon her hands rings set with stones, placed on each finger and on the thumbs.

Mr. W. R. Cooper has furnished to the *Biblical Treasury* some valuable papers on 'Ancient Regalia and Jewellery.' It is evident there was a wide-spread liking for chains and necklaces among the nations of antiquity. The Egyptians led the way, but the Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, and others followed in the

EGYPTIAN ADORNMENTS.

same track. 'The children of Pharaoh,' writes Mr. Cooper, 'the babies of the slave, the attendants of the priest and the herdmen of the noble, were all equally loaded with strings of beads and gems. The destitute and naked fellah would then, as now, prefer to endure

the hardships of agricultural life under the desiccating sun of Egypt, rather than, by parting with a few of his treasured jewels, procure both food and covering.' Joseph is the first who is recorded in the Bible as having worn a 'chain' (Genesis xli. 42); this being received by him as a token of the dignity to which he was advanced by Pharaoh. Nearly all the antique chains of which we have figures, contain symbolic devices in some way connected with idolatrous worship. Hence a liking for articles of this sort, under the Mosaic dispensation, could not be regarded in any other light than as a tendency towards the worship of false gods. Egyptian chains were frequently made with carved scarabæi, or sacred beetles, or with rows of flat bangles, which had figures of divinities stamped on them, or of objects sacred to these. Some chains had even the words of prayers inscribed on them. The Israelites had a hankering after necklaces and chains, which, especially when the worship of Jehovah was neglected, they would get by money payment or barter from their heathen neighbours. But it is supposed that, after the time of Solomon, the Jews began to manufacture these and other personal adornments. Of course the unlawfulness of trinkets of this sort consisted not mainly in the things themselves, as in the uses to which they were put and their symbolic association with idol worship.

Of all articles of jewellery, however, we must assign the greatest age to the ring, an object found associated with the arrows and knives made in those very early periods, about which the historical records of mankind can tell us so little. Mr. W. R. Cooper assigns the invention of the ring and also of the bracelet to the Chaldeans; but the specimens of oldest date are to be found in Egypt, where we have them displayed on wall paintings, and the actual rings on

the fingers of mummies. Signet rings, for stamping an impress on moist clay or other material, were well known there before the time of Moses. The earliest specimens are made of the softer stones ; the later rings of jasper, amethyst, and substances less easily worked, showing that there was an improvement in tools.

The rings worn by the Canaanitish nations were, it may be supposed, formed rather on the Egyp-

EGYPTIAN SEAL RINGS.

tian than on the Assyrian model ; but in the era of the Jewish kings, especially towards the close, rings of the latter nation would become known in Syria. These are largely made of a kind of glass enamel, and some of them show floral groups beautifully executed. The ring representing a serpent with its tail in its mouth belongs to a very early period. This was symbolic of eternity. Rings, also, composed

of several thin metallic wires twisted together, rings studded with beads or with pendants, are as old as the time of David and Solomon, or older.

In the history of ring-wearing we read the fact that the Greeks had a fondness for putting these ornaments on the fourth finger of the left hand, from a belief that a nerve went directly to the heart from that finger. Afterwards, the second finger of the right hand was specially chosen. When the Romans first began to wear rings, these were made simply of iron, and for a long time the gold ring was only permitted to senators. At the commencement of the Empire, rings of silver and gold were becoming common, and the Romans at last became as effeminate and fanciful as the Greeks, who, in the period of luxury, had different rings for summer and winter; and some of the exquisites even introduced the custom of wearing *weekly* rings. The history of the wedding-ring can be carried back to ancient Egypt and Etruria, although the Alexandrian Christians are thought to have been the first to connect this with the rite of marriage, as performed in the Christian Church.

We read in the Bible of a variety of rings, as we have above mentioned, not only finger rings, but also bracelets (which one might call 'wrist rings), and the nose-rings or nose-jewels. In addition to these, the rings that were worn on the arms and legs are referred to, as has been already pointed out. The earring appears in the Sacred Text during early patriarchal history, though it is maintained by some, that an earring was not offered by Abraham's servant to Rebekah, but a nose-jewel. (Genesis xxiv. 22.) With regard to Jacob's household, however, it is expressly said that they who were with him, at the patriarch's request, offered to him the 'earrings that

were in their ears ;' and, from the general character of the statement, it is evident that both men and women wore them. The Midianites, at the time they resisted the Israelites, in the last year of their journeyings, were rich in golden and in silver ornaments.

ANCIENT ARMLETS.

In Numbers xxxi. 50 there are enumerated 'jewels of gold, chains, bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets.' All these were to be purified by fire and water before they were to be used by the Israelites. And Gideon asked from the soldiers, who had fought under him, the 'earrings' they had taken from the Ishmaelites. (Judges

viii. 24.) The quantity specified in these instances shows that, among the people of those nations, at least, earrings were male ornaments. The words spoken by Aaron to the transgressing Israelites, in

EARRINGS OF MEN.

Exodus xxxii. 2, when he asked them to produce gold for the purpose of forming an image, give us the idea that earrings were then principally worn by women and children. The gifts presented to Job by his friends

and acquaintances after his 'captivity' had ceased, through Jehovah's mercy, were 'a piece of money' and 'an earring of gold.' (Job xlii. 11.) The offerings possibly implied willingness to make any sacrifice to promote Job's happiness. Earrings are now a very favourite decoration throughout the greater part of Asia and Africa; and in north-eastern Palestine they are worn peculiarly large; in fact, so bulky as to be injurious. When they reach the weight of half-a-pound, or perhaps more, it is found requisite to give them support by a broad strap or band passed round the head. Examples of earrings of modern make brought from Damascus and Cairo wonderfully resemble those of the ancient Egyptians, consisting of a ring or hoop of thick wire, with pendants resembling flowers, or sometimes animals.

The nose-ring is rapidly becoming unfashionable in the East, owing to Western influence and example. Many women, and also men, still wear them in Syria; and some who cannot afford to purchase a ring of value thrust one of ivory through the nose. During a late famine, it was found that some of the fellahs would part with anything they possessed rather than relinquish the disfiguring nose-jewel, to procure bread! In Syria, the anklets at present worn are large and set with uncut carbuncles or turquoises, while, in a hollow space within, some pebbles are inclosed, which make a tinkling as the wearer moves along. The older anklets were made with bells (Isaiah iii. 16), and generally thin. Not being contrived so as to be taken on and off, they must have been irksome. Brooches, in several forms, are of high antiquity, though these are not apparently referred to in Scripture. A brooch, closely resembling what we designate a stud, but larger, is of early Egyptian and Assyrian date.

CHAPTER XII.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

THE arrival of a 'little stranger' in a household is with us a matter of rejoicing, except, indeed, when the parents are so poor that the thought of the added burden of another child to be fed thereafter nips their joy in the bud. Somewhat of the same feeling is manifested in the East, only there is a marked difference made between the welcome given to a baby boy and that granted to a girl. The strong Hindu antipathy to female children displays itself also in Syria and Asia Minor, though not resulting in open infanticide. But the lives of many young children are sacrificed in those countries by carelessness and that Oriental fatalism which quietly endures evils which might be averted or promptly remedied. In Eastern families, the girls in various ways fare worse than the boys; owing to the very low place in society assigned to women.

Orientals, for the most part, view the possession of a large family of children as giving good cause for satisfaction; and Psalms cxxvii. and cxxviii., and other passages of Scripture, show that such was the feeling under the Jewish dispensation. When Boaz was united to Ruth, his friends could not join in any better wish for him than that he might have a family like Jacob's. (Ruth iv. 11.) At the present time, the Orientals act cruelly towards the wife who has no children, and her neighbours insult her with jeers and taunts. So much of a reproach is it deemed to be

entirely without a family, that many couples adopt the child of some relative, or obtain one by purchase.

From Genesis xxi. 8, it would seem that in very early times it was usual to have a special celebration when an infant was 'weaned.' Such a custom is still observed in Eastern lands, the rejoicings lasting several days if it should be a first-born son. Among the patriarchs, as we may infer from the honourable mention that is made of 'Deborah, Rebekah's nurse,' in Genesis xxxv. 8, a nurse or foster-mother remained in a family a long period, and received affectionate treatment. The nurse who had charge of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel iv. 4) was anxious to save the life of one of the royal family, when perhaps his own relatives had deserted him; nor is it to be supposed that she was to blame for the injury that the child met with, except in so far as it arose through over-haste. In some instances one of the grandmothers would act as nurse. (Ruth iv. 16.) And the Apostle Paul refers to the gentle ministrations of a nurse, as representing the care and tenderness he had shown towards the believers in Thessalonica. (1 Thessalonians ii. 7.)

Naming a child was an important affair among the Jews, and there are very few of the Hebrew proper names that have not some special significance. Several instances will at once occur to the reader, where names were given to Scripture characters to keep in remembrance some memorable circumstance. At the beginning of Genesis, Adam is called the 'Red,' from his being formed of the red earth by the divine Word; and his partner Eve receives her name, 'Life' or 'Living,' because she was to be the mother of all the human race. Again, when the time appointed had arrived for the appearance of the 'greater Man,' by an angelic messenger it was declared that He was to receive, as

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

expressive of His high office, the name of 'JESUS.' (Matthew i. 21.) The account of the circumcision of John the Baptist, in Luke i. 59—63, shows that the Jews occasionally named children after their parents. At an early period of human history, it was most unusual for persons to receive more than one name, or if they had a second appellation, it was one they took from their native town or district. Or a man might bear, in addition to his own name, that of his father, very much in the way a group of names have risen among ourselves ; such as, 'Wilson,' 'Jackson,' 'Thomson,' and the like. Oddly opposed to this, is the custom prevalent in some places of calling parents after their children,—the child's name, with the Arabic for 'father' or 'mother,' making the name of the parent. In the list of the Apostles we have in Matthew x. 1—4, there are sons called after their fathers, and Peter besides that Greek name bore the Hebrew name 'Simon.' The writer of the second Gospel, who was one of the numerous 'Johns,' had also the surname of Mark. (Acts xii. 25.) Concerning the celebration of birthdays, we read in Scripture of the observance of two royal anniversaries of this nature, in Genesis xl. 20 and Matthew xiv. 6. It was, and still is, usual for persons in Syria and Palestine, who were in a position to do so, to keep birthdays with merry-making and music, while the friends present gifts as with us. A man of wealth and rank will give to various persons objects of value, in remembrance of his birthday.

The power of parents over their children has always been considerable in the East, and as long as they remained single they were expected to yield full obedience, even though grown-up. Fathers often chastised their sons very severely, and do so to this day ; nor is it wonderful that the conduct of children

towards their parents is, throughout the East, marked by much inconsistency. While they yield them submission in some things, even after they have reached manhood and womanhood, they yet too often act towards them in a manner which awakens the indignation of an Englishman. Still, men and women resent warmly affronts or injuries done to their parents by other persons; and in those wordy disputes that are too common in the East, the enraged arguers will utter curses on the ancestors of those who are in opposition to them, sure that by so doing they shall wound their enemies to the quick. So keenly is this felt, that an individual may be heard to say: 'Strike me, but do not curse my grandfather;' Oriental superstition attaching an importance to such abuse that it is utterly undeserving of. The proverb familiar to us, that 'Curses like chickens always come home to roost,' may be known in Eastern lands; but if so, it is not sufficiently believed and acted on. General respect to age is seldom taught the young, and the conduct of lads or young men who, like those whose punishment is recorded in 2 Kings ii. 23, 24, wantonly insult the aged or infirm, meets with only slight rebuke.

Modern Oriental practice in the matter of marriage is a sad proof that it is not regarded by Eastern folk in the light of a union of hearts as well as hands, destined to last for life, and to be sanctified by the blessing of God. Among Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians also, it has hitherto been an arrangement of convenience, or worse, a bargain for money. The Jews have, in various places, a person who acts as a sort of matrimonial agent, called *shadchan;* and not only in Syria, at the present time, but elsewhere, individuals are found who make these arrangements for families. Throughout the East, it is not usual to grant the young people

much choice in what has so important an influence on the future history of each couple; indeed, in many instances, they have not an opportunity of talking together until after the engagement has been made. A young man who has been deprived of his parents by death is not set free to make his own choice, he must yield to the authority of those who are nearest of kin to him. One reason why the parents have taken upon themselves the business of marriage arrangements for their children, is the indiscreetly early age at which betrothals usually take place—at the age of ten or twelve, or sooner. The friends of the young man (or boy) are expected to state how much dowry he will bestow on the bride expectant, and those who have charge of the maiden will bid for more—from pound to pound, should it be money—with a truly Oriental eagerness. In some cases it will happen that the expected dowry or gift is not in money, but in substantial property of another kind—articles of dress, trinkets, cattle, or perhaps land. To further their cause, the relatives of the future bridegroom give presents, privately, to some of the bride's friends; and, should the negotiation fall through, they will intrigue to get such gifts back again; and hence unpleasantness may arise between the two families. But if, as occasionally happens, the man has already been married, and wishes to add another wife to his harem, he conducts the matter himself, and if he is prepared to make a liberal offer, the girl's parents care very little should he happen to be twice or thrice her age.

After the betrothal is concluded, there must be a variable interval before the actual marriage takes place, possibly several years pass; it is hardly ever sooner than a twelvemonth. Custom, which has raised up such iron barriers in the East, does not allow the betrothed

couple to write to each other, to take an evening or even a daylight stroll together, or to hold private converse. Interviews will be arranged for them, but these will, as a rule, take place in the presence of other persons, and they can get no knowledge of each other's disposition and character; nor, in one sense, would such knowledge be of much use to them, as their parents and friends will rarely suffer a match to be broken off on the plea that the parties do not care for each other, or that the youth or maiden has seen some one else that is preferred. Some sort of agreement, or written memorandum, is generally kept as a proof of the betrothal, or presents of a valuable nature are interchanged before witnesses.

Glancing over those Scripture narratives which tell us of marriages and their arrangements, we are soon convinced that, though early usages and those prevalent in later Jewish times were rather different from those which, with us, are regarded as desirable or proper, they are also quite in contrast with the Eastern fashions we have now been describing. Abraham, seeking a wife for his son, sent his head-servant to the city of Nahor, to seek out a maiden descended from the parent stock of Terah; and he says, with emphasis, 'If the *woman* will not be *willing* to follow thee,' suggesting a right of refusal on her part. (Genesis xxiv. 6—8.) By the servant's appeal to Laban and Bethuel, it is implied that Rebekah's consent to the marriage was needful as well as theirs; and when the question was raised of a speedy departure, Rebekah was referred to in the matter, and her decision settled the point. (See Genesis xxiv. 32—60.) As one of the parties was not present, there was no marriage ceremonial; but Rebekah's relatives gave her a parting benediction, and Isaac, on her arrival, placed his wife in his deceased

mother's tent. It is not at all unfrequent, in the present day, when the mother of the bridegroom is living, for the newly-wedded pair to reside under her guardianship for a time. But that a marriage in patriarchal days was attended with feasting and festivity, appears from the statement that Laban made a feast when his daughter Leah was wedded to Jacob. Laban was evidently a grasping, somewhat unfeeling man, for his own daughters could say: 'He hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.' (Genesis xxxi. 15.) At first sight the offer of Caleb in Joshua xv. 16, does not show much kind feeling towards his daughter Achsah; but her first cousin was the conqueror of Kirjath-sepher, one perhaps already loved by the maiden. Caleb had conferred upon his daughter a plot of land; and to enrich this, she begged that her father would also give her the springs that were near to it.

Samson, we read, chose a wife for himself of Philistine descent; yet, though a man grown, he requested his parents to undertake the settlement of the affair. And all the incidents of this singular marriage (Judges xiv.) deserve attention. The wedding feast was naturally held at Timnath, where the bride had till then lived, but it was at the expense of Samson. There seems a special significance in the words, 'When they saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.' They either resolved to take advantage of Samson because he was a foreigner, or else there was something in his face so expressive of generosity that they introduced to the feast a number of 'companions' (corresponding, we may presume, to 'the children of the bride-chamber' spoken of in the New Testament), whose entertainment added to the expense considerably, for the feast lasted seven days. Persons in the East are

fond of riddles, or 'hard sayings;' and, at marriage feasts, all the time is not devoted to music and the like festivities; the narration of marvellous tales and the solution of puzzling questions occupy some of the hours during which the usual routine of the household stands still.

The easy character of Samson led him to the forced disclosure of his secret, and having kept his word to his guests, he departed in anger. We have in this chapter (Judges xiv. 20) the first mention in Scripture of the 'friend' of the bridegroom; the man who acted, in the modern phrase, as 'best man.' In this instance, he was no Israelite, but one of the thirty brought to the marriage by the Philistines. Falling, probably, at a rather earlier period of Jewish history, there is, in the Book of Ruth, the story of a courtship, where the two were united by affection, as we may fairly conclude, though Boaz was older than Ruth. But what can be imagined more beautiful and expressive than the prayer of Naomi for her daughters-in-law, that they might 'find rest, each in the house of her husband'? And the negotiation that was carried on in the gate of the city before Boaz could obtain his bride (Ruth iv. 1—10), shows how careful the Israelites were to secure to each family its proper inheritance, and preserve the 'name of the dead.'

Though a precept does not exist, conveying, in so many words, a Divine command, we cannot but feel convinced that, according to God's law, parents did wrong to force their children to agree to a marriage not based upon affection. In regard to this, as in the lack of the express prohibition of a plurality of wives, we infer from the whole tenour of God's revealed will, what is the true position of matters. The gracious permission given to the newly-married

man to take a year's holiday, at least to the extent of an exemption from military service and official business, if not more than that, so that he might 'cheer up his wife' (Deuteronomy xxiv. 5), takes for granted that love subsists, or should subsist, between the parties. Solomon calls upon the young man to 'rejoice with the wife of' his 'youth.' Our Lord, after referring to the primeval declaration relating to the matrimonial state,

EASTERN BRIDE'S DRESS AND HIGH SHOES.

superadds an emphatic figure that the husband and wife should be so united as to become, as it were, one flesh. Hence, in many passages, the marriage union serves to symbolize the bond between Christ and His Church. A totally different aspect this to the light in which marriage is almost invariably viewed throughout Asia, due greatly to the influence of Mahomet.

Among some tribes, it appears to be the custom to make a grand display on the occasion of a betrothal,

if the persons are well-to-do, a procession, perhaps, forming a part of the ceremonial; and the accounts published by some travellers in the East have led to mistakes, since they have described as a marriage what was, in reality, only a betrothal. It does not seem quite settled whether, in the event of such formalities being gone through when the couple are betrothed, there is always a repetition of them at the marriage. Dr. Wilson has given a copy of a lengthy document, drawn up at a betrothal in Samaria about forty years ago, and some such formality has been prevalent among the Jews in several countries; but, it appears, the festive observances at betrothals have rather a pagan than a Jewish origin.

It is particularly to be noticed that John, the beloved disciple, was the only evangelist commissioned to put upon the Divine record an account of the first miracle performed by Jesus; and this, too, when He was present at a marriage-feast. (John ii. 1—11.) There was a want of wine, and this was supplied, not only sufficiently for the actual need, but beyond, by the simple word of Christ. We may infer that this feast, in its full extent, had more than a day's duration, lasting, perhaps, a week; nor does it follow from the sudden lack of refreshment for the guests that there had been at first a short supply; the number of visitors and droppers-in had, it is likely, been beyond what was expected,—induced to come, it may be, by the presence of Christ. There was a governor or ruler of the feast, some one acting similarly to the chairman of a public banquet in England. Probably, this office was given to some old friend of the family. His remarks, in this instance, to the bridegroom, imply familiarity, but hardly relationship. It is also plain that the work of providing rested with the bridegroom.

The wine, thus produced by miracle, was scarcely given, we may suppose, to be expended at the feast. Our Lord may have intended that a good portion of it should either be sold for the benefit of the young couple, or stored for after use. The parable of the marriage-feast in Matthew xxii. 1—13, shows, again, that the expenses of the entertainment were, by Eastern usage, borne by the connections of the bridegroom; and we learn also that royal or wealthy persons provided fitting robes for some if not all of the visitors. Travellers have asserted that no vestiges of such a custom are now traceable; but the evidence of the parable is sufficient to lead us to the belief that such a provision was, at least sometimes, made for needy persons invited to a wedding. Another parable, regarded by some as the most important of the parables next to that of the Prodigal Son, brings before us the marriage procession, and the attendant maidens. (Matthew xxv. 1.) The lesson of the parable is quite obvious, since it is intended to urge us to diligence and sincerity in the Christian life, and to an earnest seeking for the light-sustaining influence of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Porter, who was once resident in Syria, describes the marriage ceremonials he witnessed, and remarks upon the wonderful way in which they confirm Scripture, not only in the incidents of the parable just cited, but in such passages as Isaiah lxi. 10, Jeremiah vii. 34, Revelation xxi. 2. The day being fixed, preparations are made on both sides, and so eager are they to do, as they think honour to themselves and their family by a display of wealth, that those who can scarcely afford to do this without suffering afterwards act, regardless of what they may have to give up, so that they may appear as grand as others during a few days. When the time arrives, the bride is carefully dressed in

MARRIAGE PROCESSION.

the richest garments she has (occasionally, so it is said, in garments borrowed or hired for the ceremonial), and she is loaded with trinkets and jewels. Over all there is then thrown a veil of tissue. She sits in the house, expecting the approach of the bridegroom and his party, which, it is generally managed, shall take place in the evening. Her maidens, and the members of her parents' household, with friends, group themselves at the entrance of the house and along the approach to it. At such a time sleep might easily overpower some of the party; for it is well known that mental excitement will not always withstand the approach of sleep when the body is wearied.

The bridegroom's party, as numerous as possible, and gaily attired, starts for the home of the bride, with attendants carrying torches, and often with musicians or hired vocalists also accompanying, and, in these days, even jugglers and buffoons. As they near the house, a cry is raised by the bridegroom's party, and speedily responded to with that shrillness of tone and prolonged utterance which sound so strangely in the ears of visitors from Western lands. Then both parties unite, and crowd into the various apartments that have been prepared for the entertainment; when refreshments are freely taken, and music, with dancing, frequently follows. A missionary in India, who had witnessed marriages among Hindoos, gives an account of one, which shows a similarity in practice in that Asiatic land. The bridegroom was approaching by water, and the time of his arrival was uncertain. On his coming near, the cry was raised, nearly in the very words of Matthew xxv. 6, and a number of persons bearing lights ran forward to meet him. These advanced in his company to the abode of the bride's parents, into which the bridegroom was literally carried by his

friends, and placed on a superb seat in a prominent position. The entrance gate was closed directly after, and guarded by a picquet appointed for the purpose. Several, who from having lost their lights, had not fallen into the procession when they should, afterwards approached the door, and held a vain parley with those who had finally closed it, as in Matthew xxv. 10—12.

Now this celebration at the bride's house, held, as would appear, ere the young couple departed either to their new abode or the former home of the bridegroom, was not certainly in Bible times *the* wedding feast, which was prolonged through several days, and the cost of which fell on the bridegroom and his relatives. This second feast, or entertainment, if not entirely discarded, has very much fallen out of fashion in the East. In the return procession, when the bride is borne off from her friends, the dowry is often conspicuously displayed ; much of it, indeed, may be actually upon the person of the bride. According to Arab usage this dowry is absolutely the bride's, and at the death of the wife she can leave it to whom she will. A wife has been known when her husband is in difficulty to lend him gold coins off her head-dress, and loans of this kind are scrupulously repaid. It is notable, and illustrative of a peculiar sentiment prevalent among these tribes, that even where they are most thievishly inclined, hardly an individual will be found who would steal from a woman. An interesting narrative of a Jewish wedding, as now generally observed, has been written by Mr. Finn, in the *Sunday at Home* of August, 1874. We quote a passage or two. The display of dresses, many of them of delicate colours and fine textures, contrasting with the meanness of the furniture and the aspect of the house, suggested that some of these robes must have been

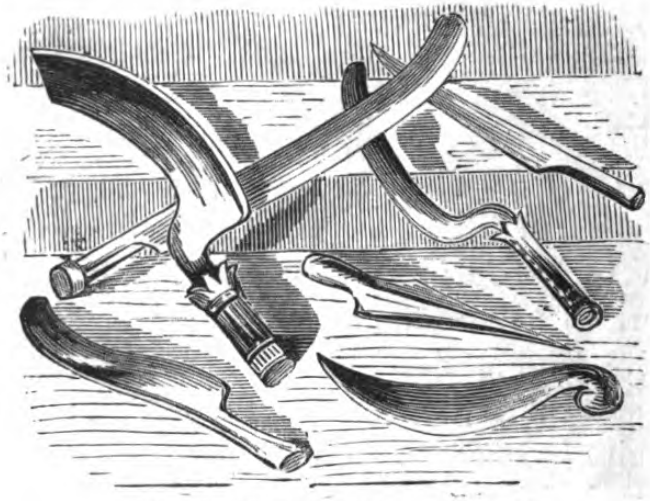
borrowed or hired. Money was collected from the guests, at a certain period in the entertainment, at the bride's house; and when the move was made, the bridegroom went first to his parents' house, and the bride followed with her women, the parties keeping separate. The females, at intervals, raised their cry of 'El-el-el-el-loo,' the bride being *pushed* along, as according to the etiquette of the occasion she is not to go voluntarily to the house of her husband. Her feet moved therefore only by inches at a time; and, coming to a muddy place, there was a pause, and one person in front pulled, while another behind pushed her, and those beside her lifted the ermine robe and skirts of amber silk. The father of the bridegroom met his new daughter at the door, and broke over her head a cake in the form of a ring, when there issued from it a shower of comfits and small coins.

Ere quitting this subject, there is another text which may be thought to need an explanatory word, for, in reading John iii. 29, we might ask: 'Why should the "friend of the bridegroom" rejoice to hear "the bridegroom's voice"?' This implies an approach in the dark, otherwise, he would rejoice in *seeing*, rather than in *hearing* the bridegroom; and the explanation is, that this 'friend,' or head attendant upon the bridegroom, chosen from among his associates, after the ceremonies at the bride's house are gone through, and before the bridegroom has commenced his journey homewards, proceeds back first, to see that all is prepared and in readiness for the arrival of the nuptial party. Then, when the night stillness is broken by the clash of music, the female chorus, and, above all, by the voice of the loved bridegroom, announcing that he is close at hand with his bride, his friend's joy is excited in the highest degree. John the Baptist,

according to the figure, had, like this friend, been waiting in the dark; Jesus was near, but he 'knew Him not;' suddenly, however, the living Truth was revealed to him.

Mourning for the dead is nearly universal. It is only among those nations sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism, or whose circumstances are so wretched that there is a general indifference to life, that we find no expression of grief, either when the body ceases to be the tenement of the soul, or when it is borne away for burial. The natural emotion of humanity that is called forth by death is sorrow, which Christianity chastens and modifies, but does not call us entirely to suppress. For when we have no reason to lament the condition of the departed, still there remains our own personal grief at the separation, which must cast a shade over the brightest anticipations we have of a re-union in the future. We should expect that, just in proportion to the uncertainty of belief with regard to the life beyond death, would be the extravagance of lamentation indulged in by a nation; and this is very much the case, though Eastern nations, through their peculiarities, make their grief more visible and vocal than, with an exception or two, do those of Western lands. Those who have seen a thoroughly Irish wake, with its frantic demonstrations of sorrow, can form some idea of an Eastern mourning. But we do not find amongst Orientals the propensity to lull the sorrow that has been roused by resorting to intoxicating liquors. With them, there is an inclination to work off the grief; or, so to speak, to give it full play, by various outward means in addition to tears and lamentations. This has been usual in the East from the very earliest period of history, and hence the Mosaic law takes note of some of these modes of mourning,

in order to interpose a prohibition. It is written in Leviticus xix. 28: 'Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you.' The last clause is of much interest, as affording proof of the antiquity of tattooing; and this was done, as it would appear in some instances, as a token of remembrance when a relative or friend died; serving the double purpose of inflicting pain at the time, and stamping on the flesh a permanent memorial. A similar prohibition was repeated in Deuteronomy xiv. 1.



ANCIENT KNIVES AND LANCETS.

Upon the first receipt of the intelligence, it was customary, and is yet so in those places where Eastern modes have undergone least change, to indulge in practices which might lead an on-looker to question the sanity of the individuals. The nearest relatives of the deceased would tear their hair and their garments, dash themselves upon the earth, and wound their flesh with their nails, or with cutting instruments. Even those remotely connected with the family beat their breasts and utter dismal cries. Job's friends, as they approached the bereaved sufferer, rent their clothes and threw dust into the air. We also read that

'they sat down upon the ground' and said nothing. (Job ii. 12, 13.) This is quite in accordance with Oriental etiquette as it now prevails; for though it is considered a good work to go and comfort mourners, and the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes vii. 2 find

MOURNING IN SACKCLOTH.

general belief in the East, yet the friends of the afflicted wait until those they are sympathizing with are disposed to speak, before they utter words of consolation. It was not until Job opened his mouth that his three friends, who were doubtless eager to speak, began to

give him the counsel and reproof they thought he needed. All, or nearly all, the ordinary routine of domestic life was interrupted during the time set apart for mourning. The usual apparel was thrown off, and sackcloth, that is, cloth of the coarsest kind, or skins with the hair of the animal unremoved from it, was judged the fittest clothing. This was generally chosen of a brown or black colour; white being especially regarded as a sign of joy. (Ecclesiastes ix. 8; Revelation iii. 4, 5.) (The Chinaman, however, adopts white as his mourning colour.) The mourners sat, after the first paroxysms of grief had exhausted themselves, in an attitude of dejection, taking no notice of surrounding objects or persons. If food was taken, it was in small quantity, and of a kind least agreeable. From Hosea ix. 4, it would seem that not merely the food, but the actual persons of the mourners were deemed impure. Jeremiah, describing the miseries that were to come upon the transgressing Israelites, prophesies that they should not have offered them 'the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother;' thus pointing to a practice known in that day, and yet continued in the East, of bringing to the principal mourners, with expressions of tenderness, either food or drink, and urging them to take it. According to later Jewish custom, as appears from John xi., though near relatives, if at hand, came at once after a death, friends waited until a day or two after the interment before they approached. It was commanded to Ezekiel, chapter xxiv. 16, as a sign which he was to perform in the sight of the Jews, upon the death of his wife, that he should refrain from all the signs of grief, even to the shedding of a tear.

The 'days of mourning,' with the Eastern races, do not come to a close with the interment of the body, for that, in those climates, must take place speedily; not

unfrequently the funeral is within twenty-four hours after death.

Lane, in his account of modern Egyptian life, illustrates some Scripture allusions to funeral customs by stating what he witnessed. 'Generally,' says he, 'the family of the deceased send for two or more public wailing-women, called "nedda'behs." Each

MUMMY CASES AND MARBLE SARCOPHAGI.

brings with her a tambourine, without the tinkling plates of metal which are usually attached to the hoop. The nedda'behs, beating their tambourines, exclaim, "Alas, for him!" and praise his turban, his person, etc.; and the female domestics, relations, and friends of the deceased, with their tresses dishevelled, and sometimes with rent clothes, beating their faces, cry, in like manner, "Alas, for him!"'

Immediately a person died, the body was carefully 'washed' (Acts ix. 37), and before interment it was rolled in wrappers of linen or cloth, prepared for this purpose, and the head concealed from view by a napkin bound about it. (See John xi. 44; xx. 6, 7.) Some writers state that every limb had its separate wrapper. We know that in the instance of the Egyptian mummies, hundreds of yards have been unrolled from one body. The head was, no doubt, covered, that no painful distortion of the features should be seen, as the body was borne along on the bier, closed coffins not being employed in ancient times. The Jews did not imitate the practice of the Egyptians in the matter of embalming, yet they used to wrap spices about the body, sometimes in very large quantity, when the individual was of high rank or wealthy. We read that these things were expended in abundance at the funeral of King Asa (2 Chronicles xvi. 14); and the women, on the resurrection morning, approached the tomb of our Lord with the intent of performing what had been unavoidably left undone on the eve of the Sabbath, and had to return with the spices and ointments, then for ever needless. And no less than the love of her, who in the Pharisee's house so tenderly showed her loving honour of her Master, must we esteem the love of those, who, in the grey dawn of the cold spring morning, unaware of His joyful resurrection, hastened to His tomb, fearless of danger, that they might complete what had been hurried over on that sad Friday evening.

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