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THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

VILLAGE LIFE IN THE HOLY LAND

BY JOHN D. WHITING

A description of the life of the present-day inhabitants of Palestine, showing how, in many cases, their customs are the same as in Bible times. Illustrated by photographs by the American Colony Photographers, Jerusalem.

PALESTINE, often called the Holy Land, is in a general way familiar to all of us from our study of the Bible. Few, however, realize that the manners and customs which prevailed there in Biblical days are still unchanged, even after an interval of 3,000 years. The land today is inhabited by three distinct classes: the *Bedouin,* or nomads, a wandering, war-loving race; the *Fellaheen,* who are the agriculturists, shepherds, and village dwellers, and the *Madaniyeh,* who live in the towns and cities and are artisans.

With the advent of civilization the townspeople are fast losing their ancient customs and quaint costumes, but the villagers adhere to both far more tenaciously. Still, no one knowing the country can fail to see that a time is not far distant when many of their interesting and long-lived habits of life will be things of the past.

THE VILLAGE HOME

The present-day villages are located, as a rule, either on the tops of hills, originally for protection, or near some spring or source of water. Many are built upon the foundations of dwellings whose origin dates back thousands of years. There does not exist a single example of a peasant village that has been founded in modern times.

With almost every village or district there are, to a greater or lesser extent, variations in the dialect of the Arabic they speak, their style of dress, and the homes they live in.

On the Plain of Sharon, where stone is rare or non-existent, the houses are made of sun-dried brick, the roofs thatched and covered with clay to shed the rain, while in the mountains they are built of stone, since of that material there is an inexhaustible supply.

Many have pictured in their minds Mary and Joseph, after arriving at the "inn" at Bethlehem and finding no room, being forced to turn into some barn built of timber, with lofty roof, hay mows, wooden mangers, and stalls for cattle and sheep. Such a stable has been the subject of many medieval and modern artists, but it does not present a really true picture. Let us consider the old-style village home that is most common in the districts around Jerusalem and Bethlehem, for that will give us a better idea of what happened on that first Christmas day.

The village streets are crooked, narrow, and unpaved. As in many of the countries of the Orient, farmers live close together for protection, and not on their lands; therefore in the villages there are no open fields or gardens, but house is next to house, except for the small walled-

MIXING THE MORTAR FOR THE ROOF

When a house is ready to roof over, all the villagers, both men and women, lend a helping hand. In this picture we see the men mixing the mortar and placing it on boards, which are passed along by the women to the men working on the roof.

in inclosures or sheepfolds through which one generally passes when going into the dwelling.

The house itself consists of one large room, usually square. The walls, from 3 to 4 feet thick, are built of blocks of stone roughly dressed and laid in mortar, roofed over with a dome, also of stone. The outside of this roof is covered with a coating of mortar made of clay, which, on being pressed with a small stone roller or pounded with a board, becomes hard and compact enough to shed the rain (see page 252).

A steep outside staircase, unprotected by any railing, is built up to the roof, for the surface must be repaired at times. The flat, open space of the roof also forms a handy place on which to dry figs and raisins, and during the hot weather the family may sleep there at night.

THE UPPER ROOM OF THE HOUSE

Entering the door, we find that about two-thirds of the space is devoted to a raised masonry platform, some 8 to 10 feet above the ground and supported by low-domed arches. This raised space, called *el mastaby*, is the part occupied by the family, while the lower part is used for the cattle and flocks (see page 310). A few narrow stone steps lead up to the *mastaby*, and a couple of small windows pierce the wall, high up from the ground. These, as a rule, are the only means of admitting light and furnishing ventilation to the entire house. Until about half a century ago it was thought unsafe to build even medium-sized windows and any man presuming to do so would have been considered as challenging the rest of the community.

On one side is an open fireplace, with a chimney running through the wall and terminating on the roof often in an old water jar whose bottom has been knocked out, and so becomes a sort of smokestack. Many houses have no chimney at all; small holes through the wall, or the windows, furnish the only exit for the smoke, which on winter days fairly fills the house.

The furniture is very simple and, as a rule, consists of a crudely decorated bridal chest in which the mother of the family has brought her trousseau; a straw mat or heavy woven woolen rug which covers part of the floor, and mattresses, with thick quilts and hard pillows, which at night are spread on the floor.

The cooking utensils are few in number—one clay cooking pot, a couple of large wooden bowls in which to knead the dough, and a couple of smaller ones used to eat from. Wheat is ground in a hand-mill of black basalt, the lower stone being imbedded in a sort of sun-dried clay trough, shaped to receive the flour as it is ground. These, with a sieve or two, a large wooden cooking spoon, a small brass coffee-pot, a few tiny coffee-cups, and perhaps a clay dish in which to roast and grind the coffee beans, comprise the entire outfit.

Having inspected the dwelling portion, which at once is kitchen, store-room, bedroom, and living-room, let us descend the steps into what the natives call the stable.

Below the *mastaby*, or raised platform, just described, among arches so low that a man can scarcely walk erect, are the winter quarters of the goats and sheep. To shut the flocks in, these arched entrances are obstructed with bundles of brush used as firewood for the winter. The rest of the floor space, which is open to the ceiling, is devoted to the few work cattle and perhaps a donkey or camel. Around the walls are primitive mangers for the cattle, built of rough slabs of stone placed on edge and plastered up with mortar.

Often the owner makes a small raised place on which he sleeps at night to enable him to keep better watch over the newly born lambs, lest in the crowded quarters some get crushed or trodden down by the older ones. Here he often sleeps by preference on a cold night, for he says the breath of the animals keeps him warm.

THE LAND, NOT THE PEOPLE, CONSERVES THE OLD CUSTOMS

One cannot become even tolerably acquainted with Palestine without perceiving that it is the *land* that has preserved the ancient customs. Its present-day inhabitants, who have nothing in common with the modern Jews who crowd Jerusa-

ROOFING A VILLAGE HOME

"The outside of the roof is covered with a coating of mortar made of clay, which, on being pressed with a small stone roller or pounded with a board, becomes hard and compact enough to shed the rain" (see page 251).

lem, are still perpetuating the life of Abraham and the customs and ways of the people who lived here at the time of Christ.

To know the heart of the land, to have learned the hospitality of its people, which is always offered, no matter how primitive or simple, makes it easy to picture Mary and Joseph returning from the inn, already filled with guests, and turning aside into a home such as we have described, the regular dwelling portion of which may have been none too large for the family which occupied it. It may have been crowded with other guests, but they find a welcome and a resting place for the babe in a manger.

Such a use of the *rowyeh,* or stable portion of the house, by human beings is not the exception, but an every-day occurrence. You can occasionally find men working their primitive looms there or the mother preparing the food or doing her little sewing near the door, where there is more light on a dark winter's day.

We have all perhaps noticed that in the two Gospel narratives where the birth of Jesus is dwelt upon* neither of them mentions a stable, barn, or anything equivalent, while Matthew, speaking of the wise men, says: "And when they were come into the *house,* they saw the young child with Mary his mother."

Many of these dwellings, placed as they are on ancient sites, are built over old caves or caverns which are incorporated into the lower or stable portion. Today, in Bethlehem's church, such a cave is shown as the actual birthplace of Jesus. Its walls are covered with costly tapestries and paintings, and from its ceiling hang lamps of gold and silver (see page 304).

THE GUEST-CHAMBER OF THE VILLAGE

Each village has an upper room or guest-chamber (see page 254). During the summer the shade of some large tree is often substituted for this room. However, in either case this guest-chamber or tree is the social center for all the village men, where many spend the evening or the entire day when they have nothing with which to occupy themselves. Sociability is one of their characteristics; they love to gossip and chat about the local news. Of course, not a single newspaper is to be had; so all their information is derived from those who have been last to town.

A servant is hired to attend to this guest-chamber, and every day, by turn, one of the villagers furnishes the coffee beans and sugar for the coffee to be served to the men thus congregated; he, too, supplies the food and bedding if some ordinary guests come along.

They are, of course, great respecters of persons; so that if a common man happens in, a couple of fried eggs with bread and olives will do for him. If a more important personage arrives, a pair of roast chickens is provided for his supper; but if a still more honored one, a sheik of a village, or a large company of men appear, a lamb or kid is killed, and in all cases horses are furnished with nose-bags full of barley. The supplying of these more expensive meals is apportioned among the various men by turn, while they furnish barley according to the amount of land possessed.

In the possession of the man attending the guest-chamber are three small wooden bows, on the cord of which are strung slips of paper, each bearing the name of one of the men of the village. The slip first in order indicates the name of the person whose turn next comes to serve, and in this simple way the proper accounts are kept, since one of the bows represents chickens, the next lambs and kids, while the third is for the barley. As each one fulfills his obligation the paper representing it is torn off, and when all are gone, a new set is written and the turns begin again.

Let us now watch a company of distinguished visitors arrive at the village guest-chamber.

The young men run to help the guests dismount, and, leading the animals away, tie them in the courtyard or in the stable, which is below the "upper room." Others hasten to spread rugs and mats on the floor and mattresses around the wall, furnished with cushions, for on them the guests sit cross-legged or recline. Many of the men of the village now join the

* Matt. 2: 1-12; Luke 2: 1-20.

THE VILLAGE GUEST-CHAMBER

"Each village has an upper room, or guest-chamber. During the summer the villagers often substitute the shade of some large tree for this room. This guest-chamber or tree is the gathering place for all the village men, where many spend the evening or the entire day when they have nothing with which to occupy themselves, for sociability is one of their characteristics" (see page 253).

THERE ARE NO SUFFRAGETTES HERE

The proper etiquette of the Holy Land bids the wife follow meekly on foot while her husband rides majestically in front. In the good old days the gentle sex never was seen riding, but the modern spirit is creeping in, and "today it is a common sight to find a woman astride of a donkey" (see text, page 261).

WOMEN OF SAMARIA

The Samaritan woman wears the bloomers of the North under the loose long robe, or *tobe*, of the South, her costume emphasizing her geographical position. The graceful carriage of the Syrian woman is due to her custom of bearing heavy loads upon her head

guests, and for a while there are long exchanges of salutations, while tiny cups of coffee are sipped, and the more they enjoy it, the louder they smack their lips.

Bitter coffee is generally offered and is served with only a sip at the bottom of a very small cup, while when sweet coffee is made, the cups are filled to overflowing. This, as will be readily seen, has a symbolical meaning—"May bitterness be little and sweetness abundant."

AN INGENIOUS INSULT

Traveling with a friend some years ago, we were thus entertained. Entering the guest-chamber, we noticed that the occupants were unusually quiet and that one man had no turban on. It was whispered to us that this man, who was a stranger, had been robbed the night before by one of the men of the village who had a notoriously bad reputation, even among his own people. The victim had appealed to the elders of the town. Without a word, coffee was prepared.

As we were foreigners, they made sweet coffee for us, thinking we would not like the bitter, and filled our cups full, while the bitter kind was passed to all the rest in little doles; but to the man suspected of robbery a full cup was served. This was such an insult that he flew out of the room; a fight ensued, his house was searched and the goods recovered, and the stranger again donned his headgear, which was among the things that had been stolen.

As they thus sit chatting and drinking coffee they also smoke. Each man carries a leathern pouch of tobacco from which he rolls his own cigarettes or fills a long-tubed water-pipe or nargheli.

Little preparation is made for the midday meal. Some hot bread, a plate of fried eggs, another of curdled milk, or a dish of fresh butter with a pile of fine sugar on top, suffices. This meal is for the guests alone.

A FEAST FOR THE STRANGER

The person whose turn it is to give the supper does not start preparations till the flocks come home in the evening, when a fatling is slain, cut into pieces, and boiled as a stew in a great kettle. Another large pot of rice is cooked.

All the men of the village now slowly congregate at the guest-chamber, each throwing down on the coat, spread for this purpose, a couple of thin loaves of bread that he has brought with him.

When all are assembled, the pile of bread is torn up into small pieces and placed in large wooden bowls. Over this, in each bowl, a large pile of rice is put and the meat on top, while a liberal supply of the gravy is added.

Sitting on the floor, first the guests, with the older and more important men, fall into circles around the bowls, and before partaking each one says *Bismallah* (in the name of Allah), to drive away the genii. With the aid of the thumb and first two fingers, great balls of rice and soaked bread are made, which are dexterously popped into the mouth.

The food is eaten very hot, and it is surprising how much one man can consume when at such a feast and how little it takes to sustain him ordinarily.

As each set finishes eating they wash their hands, water being poured on them by a servant, as we read of in Old Testament times.* Then they drink coffee and smoke until time to retire, when beds are spread on the floor for the guests, some of the villagers remaining with them, sleeping in their coats. The party usually leaves the village early the next morning.

The guest-chambers are not for women; so, if a man is traveling with his family, he does not go to this regular reception place, but waits about the village until some one passing invites him into his house. This happens today just as in the case of the Levite of old who was traveling with his concubine and servant from Bethlehem-judah, and was entertained at Gibeah by the old man from Mount Ephraim who found them waiting in the street of the city.†

CONCERNING FAMILY LIFE

Children in the peasant family are always welcome, girl babies sometimes excepted. The father prides himself on his boys, and even the mother prefers them, and, when questioned as to the number of her offspring, she will invariably say

* 2 Kings 3: 11.
† Judges 19: 15-21.

that she has five *children* and two girls, or as many as the case may be.

Not to have a boy is a great hardship to the family and is especially felt by the mother, for failure to have a son may become the cause of her divorce or her husband's excuse for marrying again. This feeling is hard to understand, since they look upon a girl as a profitable possession, for a would-be husband must pay a comparatively handsome price for her. The boy, on the other hand, is a greater expense, and his wife and wedding are costly affairs. The only explanation is that their great aim in life is to perpetuate the name of the father.

To be polite the *fellah,* in speaking of a pig, dog, donkey, or anything out of good taste, invariably says, *b'eed 'annak,* meaning, "Be it far from you!" So, also, when a girl or woman is spoken of, they often say, "Be it far from you!"

Although women are thus looked upon as something inferior, still when they have become well advanced in years and are perhaps the grandmothers of large families, or have signalized themselves by some special attainment, they are frequently the object of the respect and reverence of the younger women and of the men as well (see page 265).

The woman may never call her husband by his first name, but "O father of Ahmed," or whatever the eldest son's name may be, which indeed is the name by which he is generally known.

In naming the first son it is customary to give him the name of his grandfather on the father's side; therefore, even before a youth is married he will often be addressed as the father of Ali, or Mohammed, or Suleiman, as the case may be. The first daughter is usually named for the grandmother, again on the father's side.

The wife likewise takes the name of her first-born son. The husband, speaking of her, especially to men, will never say "my wife" or mention her first name, but will say either "the mother of Ahmed," or "my family," "the relative in my house," "the forbidden," or "the daughter of my uncle."

The reason for this is that a man marries his first cousin in preference to any one else, and in fact she cannot marry another if he wants her. Gauged by our conception of the subject, the women are rigorously ruled by the men; still the men feel that in these days the women are becoming too independent, as what follows will illustrate.

ESSA'S LAMENTATION

Only yesterday Essa, who tends the vineyard of a friend near the village of Sharafat, lying between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, was heard thus complaining to another:

"Oh! my master, when I was young I used to rule 'my family' with a hard heart, for her ways did not please my mother, and I used to beat her much. My father, may God have mercy upon him,* often said to me: 'My son, these are the days of women, and if you so treat your wife you will not be able to live with any woman. Their ways are perverse, but you cannot change them. The days of men are passed.'

"In former days, my master, a woman would not dare to go to her father's house or that of a neighbor for a visit without first getting her husband's consent, and much less would she think of addressing her husband before people. If he happened to be in the village guest-chamber with the men and she desired to call him, she would say to some man sitting by, 'Tell *him* to come,' and sometimes, to amuse ourselves, the man would inquire, 'Who?'; to which she would repeatedly answer only, 'he,' for modesty would prevent her mentioning his name or saying 'my husband'; but now my woman calls me 'Essa' in the midst of the village and I hold my peace.

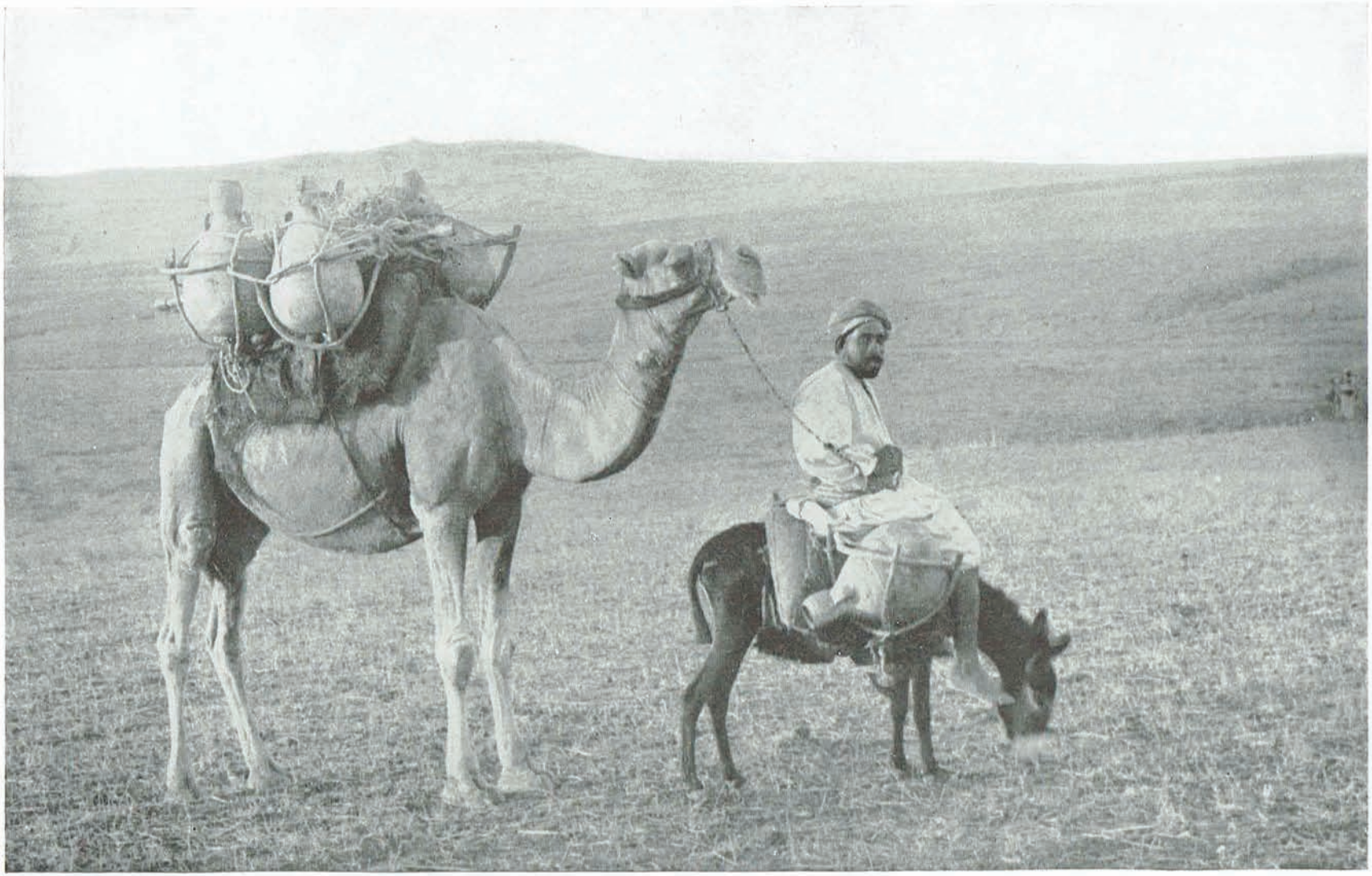
"Women formerly, when passing men on the road, would cover their faces with their hands and keep their eyes on the ground; but now when we meet them they are not shy, so we men keep our eyes on the ground until they have passed.

"A common saying among the women used to be, 'O Preserver, protect me from my husband's displeasure!' Now

* This expression is always used when speaking of a deceased relative or friend, while when mentioning an enemy or evil person they say, "May God not have mercy upon him!"

MARRIED AND SINGLE IN THE HEBRON DISTRICT

It is a very simple matter to tell if a woman is married or single in the neighborhood of the ancient city of Hebron. All the unmarried girls wear a large silver coin on their foreheads, like the girl in the picture. When no such coin appears, it is a sign that the woman is or has been married.



AN UNUSUAL SIGHT

From time immemorial the task of furnishing the village with water has fallen to the lot of the women, who can be seen morning and evening returning from the stream or well with their water-pots on their heads. In exceptional instances the men bring the water on the backs of donkeys and camels, as shown in the picture.

it is reversed and we men say, 'O Preserver, protect me from my wife's displeasure!' Women never in former times were seen riding, but today it is a common sight to find a woman astride of a donkey, and the other day I met one so mounted, and she was even singing aloud *until she caught sight of me.*"

THE BIRTH OF THE BABY

When the *fellah* or peasant child is born, its tender skin, without being washed, is rubbed with olive oil and salt. For seven consecutive days it is re-oiled, and when a week old gets its first bath and is again oiled, and each week until it is forty days old the bath is repeated. In some localities they consider it unsafe to bathe it before it is forty days old.

Into the little eyes they put drops of liquid tar, and when two days old begin the periodical application of *kohl*. This is a dye used to blacken the eyelids of not only babies, but of women and sometimes also men, and is considered both beautifying and beneficial to the eyesight. They believe the tar to be a preventive of weak eyes, and that a child who has not been salted will develop into a weakling.

How old a custom this salting is can be seen from Ezekiel's reproachful words to Jerusalem: "And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born . . . thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all." *

Swaddling clothes like those of Bible times† are still in use. A small shirt is the only real garment put on, around which may be wrapped some old rags, care being taken to keep the arms tightly pressed against the sides.

A cap, perhaps decorated with a blue bead or some charm to keep off spirits and the evil eye, completes the apparel (see page 314).

When one looks at a child, before admiring it or speaking of it, in order to avert a calamity, one must say *Bismallah* (in the name of Allah), or "May Allah encircle you!" or "May the evil eye be frustrated!"

Mortality among the babies is great and is not to be wondered at, for in view of the rough treatment they receive, it becomes a question of the survival of the fittest.

HOW THE BABY IS CARRIED

In the Judean mountain districts a cradle is often kept for the baby while at home, and a sort of small hammock is used to carry the child around in when out-of-doors. The mother when going to work in the fields will be found with this hammock, called *hiddil* in Arabic, on her back suspended by a rope which passes across her forehead, often with nothing indicating that life is in it except an occasional squeal from one end.

It is a common sight when passing through the bazars to find a baby in this sling hung on a small nail or on the lock or bolt of a turned-back shop door, while the mother sits in the street behind the basket of produce she is selling, seemingly unmindful of her child's hazardous position.

When in the fields she erects a tripod of sticks, from which she suspends the hammock, and she protects it from the rays of the sun by covering it with one of her garments.

In the Samaria district and along the plain of Sharon a crudely decorated wooden cradle is the fashion and is carried by the mother on her head wherever she goes.

We cannot refrain from narrating a story heard from an eyewitness.

THE GENII CAPTURE A BABY. A TRUE STORY

A woman of Abou Shoushey,‡ waking up late one morning and picking up the cradle in haste, started off for the harvest fields.

She had no more than entered the narrow path between the stretches of standing grain when she felt her babe leap from the cradle on her head and heard it glide rapidly through the wheat.

Terror-stricken and trembling, she screamed for help, calling to the men to pursue the genii that had taken her babe.

* Ezekiel 16:4.

† Luke 2:7.

‡ Abou Shoushey is ancient Gezer, which was given by Pharaoh as a dowry to his daughter when she married King Solomon.

After a heated chase some returned to inquire further particulars of her.

Unable to get a reply, for she still stood screaming, "The genii have taken my boy!" they lowered the cradle from her head and found the child still sound asleep.

The others soon returned to say they had overtaken the supposed enemy, only to find that it was her domestic cat, which had jumped from its hiding place near the baby.

HE HAD THREE DAUGHTERS BUT NO CHILDREN

Essa met us at the gate one evening and his face showed that something out of the ordinary had occurred. After the usual salutations he said, "I come to you for the reward of good news."

"And what is it?"

"My *family* gave birth to a baby."

"Imbarak" (May it be a blessing!); to which came his reply, *"Imbarak feek"* (A blessing by your presence!).

"What is it, Essa?" He hung his head and replied, "Be it far from you, a girl."

"How many children does this make?" he was asked. Essa looked embarrassed, and said, "I have no children; this is my third girl. When I went into the village this morning both women and men said to me, '*Imbarak*, Essa! May it be granted that she die!' but I replied, 'May Allah not listen to you!' for I have become like you foreigners and I am satisfied, although I had taken upon me certain vows in case it was a boy."

THE COSTUMES OF THE WOMEN

The costumes of the women differ sufficiently in each district to enable one to distinguish readily where the wearer comes from. From the variations of the headgear one can tell whether a woman be single or married; but, although differing from one another in the details, the costumes have much in common.

The dress, called a *tobe*, is like a long loose shirt, the sleeves narrow at the shoulders and widening out something like the Japanese pattern. The front and back are made each of one width of cloth, with a gore on each side to widen the skirt. A girdle either of white linen or bright striped silk is wound around the waist and the *tobe* is pulled up a little to produce a full bosom.

This *tobe*, when for common use, is of dark-blue cloth, the bosom is covered with cross-stitch embroidery and perhaps a little on the sleeves and skirt.

In the districts north of Jerusalem the *tobe* for the bride or for gala occasions is made of heavy white linen almost covered with embroidery, the prevailing colors being dark green and red with a little orange mixed in (see page 307). Around Samaria the *tobe* is made of white cotton cloth in which are woven bright strips of red, yellow, and green.

The shoes are crude affairs, the tops being of bright red or sometimes yellow sheepskin, with soles of raw cow, camel, or buffalo hide.

WEARING HER DOWRY ON HER HEAD

The headgear is of two parts: first, what we shall for convenience sake call a cap, and over it a veil. The Bethlehem women wear a high cap, in shape something like a man's *fez*, called *shatweh*, on the front of which are sewn rows of gold and silver coins.

A woman never parts with the coins from her headgear except in dire circumstances, and for her to admit that she has lost one of these is considered a great shame, for an evil meaning is put upon it. This throws a strong light upon the parable of the woman who lost one of her ten pieces of silver.*

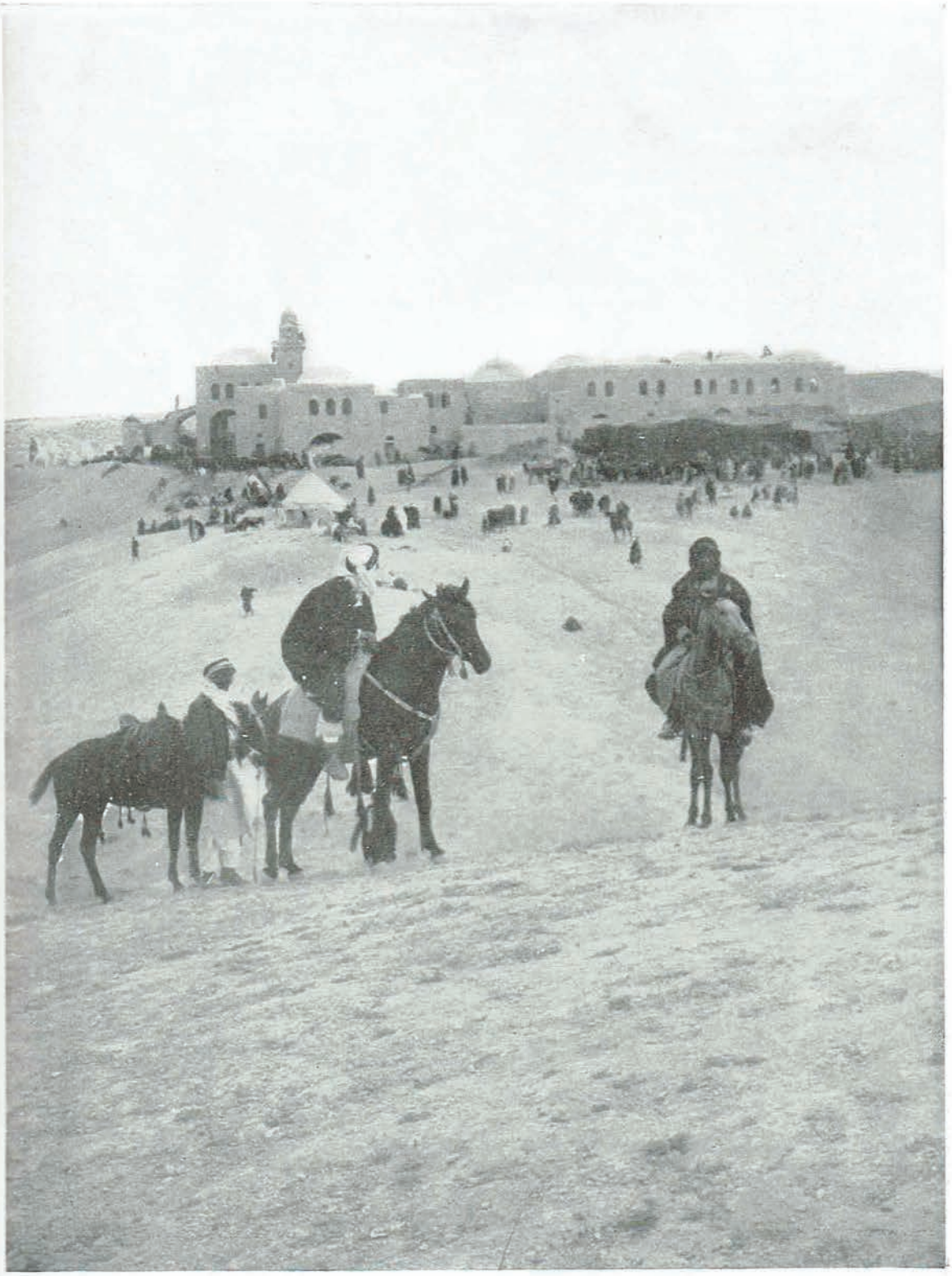
The woman in the Gospel had not lost a piece of money merely valuable as a medium of exchange, but a part of her ornament and dowry, and had thus brought a reflection upon her character. So it was vital for her to recover it.

No wonder, then, she is pictured as lighting a candle, sweeping the house, and seeking diligently until she finds it, and then calling her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her.

THE CAPACIOUS, USEFUL VEIL

The veil is a large affair, some 6 feet long and 4 feet wide, and placed over the

* Luke 15: 8, 9.



THE TOMB OF MOSES

This photograph shows peasants, town folk, and Bedouins assembled at the traditional site of the Tomb of Moses. Pilgrimages to this spot are quite popular, for among the Moslems the "Prophet Moses," as they call him, is held in high honor.

cap it covers the entire headgear, except the coins in front. It is considered improper for women to have their head or hair showing in public. At home they put off the veil.

Ordinary veils are made of heavy white linen, with sometimes a little embroidery, while in the districts north of Jerusalem each girl makes one almost covered with needlework, so that it will match the white embroidered *tobe* for her wedding (see page 307).

Whenever a woman lacks a basket or bag, the veil comes into use. She places what she has to carry in one end of her veil, gathers and ties it around with one corner, and places the burden on top of her head.

The story of Ruth, when Boaz says to her, "Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it; and when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city,"* clearly shows that this use of the veil is the survival of a very ancient practice.

Those not acquainted with this land of ancient customs may find themselves unable to understand how Ruth's veil could contain so much grain, because of their having in mind a veil of gauze and of small dimensions. The *khirka*, as the veil is called, is not only large and strong enough for this work, but such usage is very common down to the present day.

Nor is it only the veil that has survived, but the entire costume. Ezekiel the Prophet gives us a matchless description of the woman's attire of his day when, speaking allegorically of Jerusalem, he says:

"I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work." †

* Ruth 3: 15.

† Ezekiel 16: 10-13.

THE JEWELS OF BIBLE TIMES AND OF TODAY

Jewelry is very much prized, although it is mainly confined to heavy silver pieces.

A heavy silver chain is attached to the cap on either side and hangs down about the neck and below the chin (see page 307). A collarette made of plaited silver wire with many chains hanging from it used to be extensively worn by Bethlehem women, but is fast disappearing.

In the Hebron district the unmarried girls wear a large silver coin on their forehead (see page 259). Earrings are used and silver finger-rings, with Mecca stones or glass imitations, are much prized.

Were we living much later we would find it difficult to learn the meaning of the prophet's word, "And I put . . . a beautiful crown upon thy head." The *tasseh*, a disk of wrought silver or gold which, according to the old men, used to be so common, and was worn by the women sewed to the crowns of their caps, is today almost non-existent. They can occasionally be picked up at the silversmith's, where they have been sold for the silver that is in them, but the present writer has not seen a single one in use among the peasants.

In the Nazareth district European material is fast displacing hand-made goods. Even around Jerusalem the women are taking to shawls of foreign manufacture in place of the handsome hand-embroidered veils whose colors harmonize, which cannot be said of these shawls, with their flaming roses and pink backgrounds.

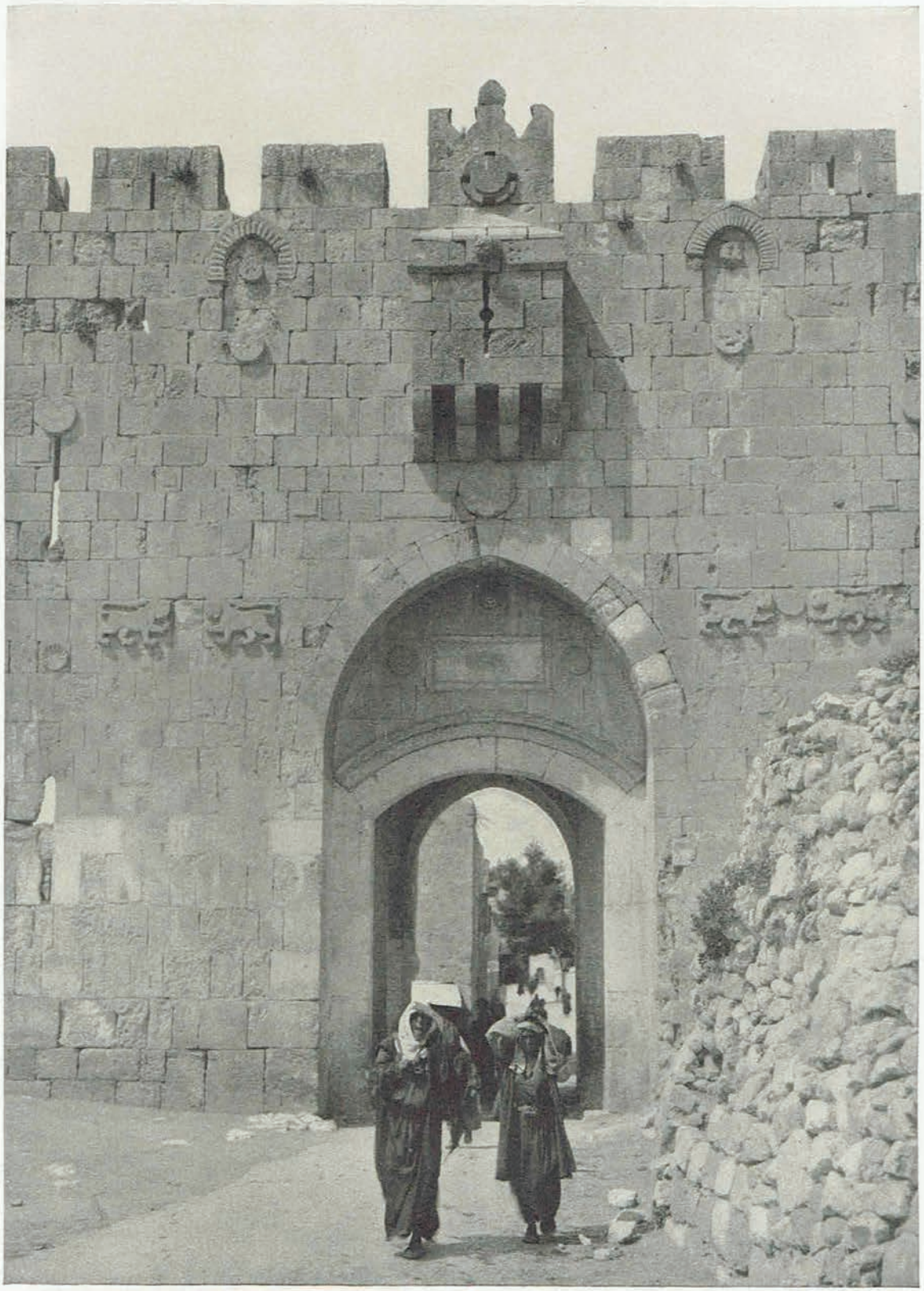
Few of these peasant women can be said to be handsome; still, they make an interesting and picturesque sight, as they walk in companies along the roads, going to town with their baskets of produce, or returning, chattering like magpies over the day's transactions.

When the road is very stony or wet, it is a common custom for them to take off their shoes to save them, placing them on top of their loaded baskets (see page 306). It takes *metaliks* (coppers) to mend shoes, but feet mend themselves.

The Bethlehem women have the repu-

THE JERICHO MEDICINE WOMAN

ALTHOUGH women are looked upon as something inferior, still, when they have signalized themselves by some special attainment, they are frequently the object of respect and reverence. The Jericho women dress like the Bedouin, but live in villages. Photo by the American Colony, Jerusalem.



"BAB-SITNA-MIRIAM": JERUSALEM

THIS gate is called by the Arabs the "Gate of Our Lady Mary," and is otherwise known as St. Stephen's Gate. The lions that appear are said to have been placed here by the masons to commemorate the meeting of the two gangs of workmen at this point on the completion of this wall.

WASH DAY: NAZARETH

"Unfortunately, in the Nazareth district European materials are fast displacing the handmade goods."

"BAB-EL-HABIS"

This street is called in Arabic the "Door of the Prison," since it leads to the jail.

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GILBERT H. GROSVENOR, EDITOR

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