

***HENRY HARRIS
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***THE WOMEN
OF THE ARABS***

Henry Harris Jessup

The Women of the Arabs

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PREFACE.

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THE Orient is the birthplace of prophecy. Before the advent of our Lord, the very air of the East was resounding with the "unconscious prophecies of heathenism." Men were in expectation of great changes in the earth. When Mohammed arose, he not only claimed to be the deliverer of a message inspired of Allah, but to foretell the events of futurity. He declared that the approach of the latter day could be distinguished by unmistakable signs, among which were two of the most notable character.

Before the latter day, the *sun shall rise in the West*, and God will send forth a cold odoriferous wind blowing from *Syria Damascena*, which shall *sweep away* the souls of all the faithful, and *the Koran itself*. What the world of Islam takes in its literal sense, we may take in a deeper spiritual meaning. Is it not true, that far in the West, the gospel sun began to rise and shed its beams on Syria, many years ago, and that in our day that cold odoriferous wind of truth and life, fragrant with the love of Jesus and the love of man, is beginning to blow from Syria Damascena, over all the Eastern world! The church and the school, the printing press and the translated Bible, the periodical and the ponderous volume, the testimony of living witnesses for the truth, and of martyrs who have died in its defence, all combine to sweep away the systems of error, whether styled Christian, Moslem or Pagan.

The remarkable uprising of christian women in Christian lands to a new interest in the welfare of woman in heathen

and Mohammedan countries, is one of the great events of the present century. This book is meant to be a memorial of the early laborers in Syria, nearly all of whom have passed away. It is intended also as a record of the work done for women and girls of the Arab race; to show some of the great results which have been reached and to stimulate to new zeal and effort in their behalf.

In tracing the history of this work, it seemed necessary to describe the condition of woman in Syria when the missionaries first arrived, and to examine the different religious systems, which affect her position.

In preparing the chapter on the Pre-Islamic Arabs, I have found valuable materials in Chenery's Hariri, Sales and Rodwell's Koran, and Freytag's Arabic Proverbs.

For the facts about the Druze religion, I have consulted Col. Churchill's Works, Mount Lebanon, and several Arabic manuscripts in the mission library in Beirût.

Rev. S. Lyde's interesting book called the "Asian Mystery," has given me the principal items with regard to the Nusairîyeh religion. This confirms the statements of Suleiman Effendi, whose tract, revealing the secrets of the Nusairîyeh faith, was printed years ago at the Mission Press in Beirût, and translated by that ripe Arabic Scholar Prof. E. Salisbury of New Haven. The bloody Nusairîyeh never forgave Suleiman for revealing their mysteries; and having invited him to a feast in a village near Adana, 1871, brutally buried him alive in a dunghill!

For the historical statements of this volume, I am indebted to the files of the Missionary Herald, the Annual Reports of the Syria Mission, the archives of the mission in

Beirût, the memoir of Mrs. Sarah L. Smith, and private letters from Mrs. Whiting, Mrs. De Forest, and various missionary and native friends.

Information on the general work of the Syrian Mission may be found in Dr. Anderson's "Missions to the Oriental churches," Rev. Isaac Bird's "Bible Work in Bible Lands," and the pamphlet sketches of Rev. T. Laurie and Rev. James S. Dennis.

The specimens of poetry from ancient Arabic poetesses, have been gathered from printed and manuscript volumes, and from the lips of the people.

Some accounts of child life in Syria and specimens of Oriental stories and nursery rhymes have been gathered into a "Children's Chapter." They have a value higher than that which is given by mere entertainment as they exhibit many phases of Arab home life. The illustrations of the volume consist of drawings from photographs by Bergheim of Jerusalem and Bonfils of Beirût.

The pages of Arabic were electrotyped in Beirût by Mr. Samuel Hallock, the skilful superintendent of the American Press.

I send out this record of the work carried on in Syria with deep gratitude for all that the Lord has done, and with an ardent desire that it may be the means of bringing this great field more vividly before the minds of Christian people, of wakening warmer devotion to the missionary cause, and so of hastening the time when every Arab woman shall enjoy the honor, and be worthy of the elevation which come with faith in Him who was first foretold as the seed of the woman.

HENRY HARRIS JESSUP.

BEIRÛT, Syria, Nov. 28, 1872.

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WOMEN OF THE ARABS.

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CHAPTER I.

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STATE OF WOMEN AMONG THE ARABS OF THE JAHILIYEH, OR THE "TIMES OF THE IGNORANCE."

IN that eloquent Sura of the Koran, called Ettekwir, (lxxxix.) it is said, "When the *girl buried alive* shall be asked for what sin she was slain." The passage no doubt refers to the cruel practice which still in Mohammed's time lingered among the tribe of Temîm, and which was afterwards eradicated by the influence of Islam. The origin of this practice has been ascribed to the superstitious rite of sacrificing children, common in remote times to all the Semites, and observed by the Jews up to the age of the Captivity, as we learn from the denunciations of Jeremiah. But in later times daughters were buried alive as a matter of household economy, owing to the poverty of many of the tribes, and to their fear of dishonor, since women were often carried off by their enemies in forays, and made slaves and concubines to strangers.

So that at a wedding, the wish expressed in the congratulations to the newly-married pair was, "with concord and sons," or "with concord and permanence; with sons and no daughters." This same salutation is universal in Syria now. The chief wish expressed by women to a bride is, "may God give you an arees," *i.e.* a bridegroom son.

In the Koran, Sura xiv, Mohammed argues against the Arabs of Kinaneh, who said that the angels were the

daughters of God. "They (blasphemously) attribute daughters to God; yet they *wish them not for themselves*. When a female child is announced to one of them, his face grows dark, and he is as though he would choke."

The older Arab Proverbs show that the burying alive of female children was deemed praiseworthy.

"To send women before to the other world, is a benefit."

"The best son-in-law is the grave."

The Koran also says, that certain men when hearing of the birth of a daughter hide themselves "from the people because of the ill-tidings; shall he keep it with disgrace, or bury it in the dust." (Sura xvi.)

It is said that the only occasion on which Othman ever shed a tear, was when his little daughter, whom he was burying alive, wiped the dust of the grave-earth from his beard!

Before the Seventh Century this practice seems to have been gradually abandoned, but was retained the longest in the tribe of Temîm. Naman, king of Hira, carried off among his prisoners in a foray, the daughter of Kais, chief of Temîm, who fell in love with one of her captors and refused to return to her tribe, whereupon her father swore to bury alive all his future female children, which he did, to the number of ten.

Subsequent to this, rich men would buy the lives of girls devoted to inhumation, and Sa Saah thus rescued many, in one case giving two milch camels to buy the life of a newborn girl, and he was styled "the Reviver of the Maidens buried alive."

The following Arabic Proverbs having reference to women and girls *will illustrate* the ancient Arab ideas with regard to their character and position, better than volumes of historic discourse:

"Obedience to women will have to be repented of."

"A man can bear anything but the mention of his women."

"The heart of woman is given to folly."

"Leave not a girl nor a green pasture unguarded."

"What has a girl to do with the councils of a nation?"

"If you would marry a beauty, pay her dowry."

"Fear not to praise the man whose wives are true to him."

"Woman fattens on what she hears." (flattery)

"Women are the whips of Satan."

"If you would marry a girl, inquire about the traits of her mother."

"Trust neither a king, a horse, nor a woman. For the king is fastidious, the horse prone to run away, and the woman is perfidious."

"My father does the fighting, and my mother the talking about it."

"Our mother forbids us to err and runs into error."

"Alas for the people who are ruled by a woman!"

The position of woman among the Arabs before the times of Mohammed can be easily inferred from what has preceded. But there is another side to the picture. Although despised and abused, woman often asserted her dignity and maintained her rights, not only by physical force, but by

intellectual superiority as well. The poetesses of the Arabs are numerous, and some of them hold a high rank. Their poetry was impromptu, impassioned, and chiefly of the elegiac and erotic type. The faculty of improvisation was cultivated even by the most barbarous tribes, and although such of their poetry as has been preserved is mostly a kind of rhymed prose, it often contains striking and beautiful thoughts. They called improvised poetry "the daughter of the hour."

The queen of Arabic poetesses is El Khunsa, who flourished in the days of Mohammed. Elegies on her two warrior brothers Sakhr and Mu'awiyeh are among the gems of ancient Arabic poetry. She was not what would be called in modern times a refined or delicate lady, being regarded as proud and masculine in temper even by the Arabs of her own age. In the eighth year of the Hegira, her son Abbas brought a thousand warriors to join the forces of the Prophet. She came with him and recited her poetry to Mohammed. She lamented her brother for years. She sang of Sakhr:

"His goodness is known by his brotherly face,
Thrice blessed such sign of a heavenly grace:
You would think from his aspect of meekness
and shame,
That his anger was stirred at the thought of his
fame.
Oh rare virtue and beautiful, natural trait,
Which never will change by the change of
estate!
When clad in his armor and prepared for the

fray,
The army rejoiceth and winneth the day!"

Again, she lamented him as follows:

"Each glorious rising sun brings Sakhr to my
mind,
I think anew of him when sets the orb of day;
And had I not beheld the grief and sorrow blind
Of many mourning ones o'er brothers snatched
away,
I should have slain myself, from deep and dark
despair."

The poet Nabighah erected for her a red leather tent at the fair of Okaz, in token of honor, and in the contest of poetry gave her the highest place above all but Maymûn, saying to her, "If I had not heard him, I would say that thou didst surpass every one in poetry. I confess that you surpass all women." To which she haughtily replied, "Not the less do I surpass all men."

The following are among the famous lines of El Khunsa, which gave her the title of princess of Arab poetesses. The translation I have made quite literal.

"Ah time has its wonders; its changes amaze,
It leaves us the tail while the head it slays;
It leaves us the low while the highest decays;
It leaves the obscure, the despised, and the
slave,
But of honored and loved ones, the true and
the brave

It leaves us to mourn o'er the untimely grave.
The two new creations, the day and the night,
Though ceaselessly changing, are pure as the
light:
But man changes to error, corruption and
blight."

The most ancient Arab poetess, Zarîfeh, is supposed to have lived as long ago as the Second Century, in the time of the bursting of the famous dyke of Mareb, which devastated the land of Saba. Another poetess, Rakâsh, sister of the king of Hira, was given in marriage, by the king when intoxicated, to a man named Adi.

Alas, in these days the Moslem Arabs do not wait until blinded by wine, to give their daughters in marriage to strangers. I once overheard two Moslem young men converging in a shop, one of whom was about to be married. His companion said to him, "have you heard anything about the looks of your betrothed?" "Not much," said he, "only I am assured that she is *white*."

In a book written by Mirai ibn Yusef el Hanbali, are the names of twenty Arab women who improvised poetry. Among them are Leila, Leila el Akhyalîyeh, Lubna, Zeinab, Afra, Hind, May, Jenûb, Hubaish, Zarifeh, Jemîleh, Remleh, Lotifeh, and others. Most of the verses ascribed to them are erotic poetry of an amatory character, full of the most extravagant expressions of devotion of which language is capable, and yet the greater part of it hardly bearing translation. It reminds one strikingly of Solomon's Song, full of passionate eloquence. And yet in the poetry of El Khunsa and others, which is of an elegiac character, there are

passages full of sententious apothegms and proverbial wisdom.



CHAPTER II.

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STATE OF WOMEN IN THE MOHAMMADAN WORLD.

OUR knowledge of the position of women among the Mohammedans is derived from the Koran, Moslem tradition, and Moslem practice.

I. In the first place, the Koran does not teach that women have no souls. Not only was Mohammed too deeply indebted to his rich wife Khadijah, to venture such an assertion, but he actually teaches in the Koran the immortality and moral responsibility of women. One of his wives having complained to him that God often praised the men, but not the women who had fled the country for the faith, he immediately produced the following revelation:

"I will not suffer the work of him among you who worketh to be lost, whether he be male or female." (Sura iii.)

In Sura iv. it is said:

"Whoso doeth good works, and is a true believer, whether male or female, shall be admitted into Paradise."

In Sura xxxiii:

"Truly, the Muslemen and the Muslimate, (fem.)
The believing men and the believing women,
The devout men and the devout women,

The men of truth and the women of truth,
The patient men and the patient women,
The humble men and the humble women,
The charitable men and the charitable women,
The fasting men and the fasting women,
The chaste men and the chaste women,
And the men and women who oft remember
God;
For them hath God prepared
Forgiveness and a rich recompense."

II. Thus Mohammedans cannot and do not deny that women have souls, but their brutal treatment of women has naturally led to this view. The Caliph Omar said that "women are worthless creatures and soil men's reputations." In Sura iv. it is written:

"Men are superior to women, on account of the
qualities
With which God has gifted the one above the
other,
And on account of the outlay they make, from
their substance for them.
Virtuous women are obedient....
But chide those for whose refractoriness
Ye have cause to fear ... *and scourge them.*"

The interpretation of this last injunction being left to the individual believer, it is carried out with terrible severity. The scourging and beating of wives is one of the worst features of Moslem domestic life. It is a degraded and degrading

practice, and having the sanction of the Koran, will be indulged in without rebuke as long as Islamism as a system and a faith prevails in the world. Happily for the poor women, the husbands do not generally beat them so as to imperil their lives, in case their own relatives reside in the vicinity, lest the excruciating screams of the suffering should reach the ears of her parents and bring the husband into disgrace. But where there is no fear of interference or of discovery, the blows and kicks are applied in the most merciless and barbarous manner. Women are killed in this way, and no outsider knows the cause. One of my Moslem neighbors once beat one of his wives to death. I heard her screams day after day, and finally, one night, when all was still, I heard a dreadful shriek, and blow after blow falling upon her back and head. I could hear the brute cursing her as he beat her. The police would not interfere, and I could not enter the house. The next day there was a funeral from that house, and she was carried off and buried in the most hasty and unfeeling manner. Sometimes it happens that the woman is strong enough to defend herself, and conquers a peace; but ordinarily when you hear a scream in the Moslem quarter of the city and ask the reason, it will be said to you with an indifferent shrug of the shoulder, "that is only some man beating his wife."

That thirty-eighth verse of Sura iv. is one of the many proofs that the Koran is not the book of God, because it violates the law of love. "Husbands love your wives," is a precept of the Gospel and not of the Koran. Yet it is a sad fact that the nominal Christians of this dark land are not much better in this respect than their Moslem neighbors.

The Greeks, Maronites and Papal Greeks beat their wives on the slightest provocation. In the more enlightened towns and cities this custom is "going out of fashion," though still often resorted to in fits of passion. Sometimes the male relatives of the wife retaliate in case a husband beats her. In the village of Schwire, in Lebanon, a man beat his wife in a brutal manner and she fled to the house of her brother. The brother watched his opportunity; waylaid the offending husband, and avenged his sister's injuries by giving him a severe flogging. In Eastern Turkey, a missionary in one of the towns noticed that not one woman attended church on Sunday. He expostulated with the Protestants, and urged them to persuade their wives to accompany them. The next Sunday the women were all present, as meek and quiet as could be wished. The missionary was delighted, and asked one of the men how they persuaded them to come? He replied, "We all beat our wives soundly until they consented to come!" This wife-beating custom has evidently been borrowed by the Christian sects from their Moslem rulers and oppressors, and nothing but a pure Christianity can induce them to abandon it.

III. Some have supposed that there will be no place in the Moslem Paradise for women, as their place will be taken by the seventy-two bright-eyed Houris or damsels of Paradise. Mohammed once said that when he took a view of Paradise he saw the majority of its inhabitants to be the poor, and when he looked down into hell, he saw the *greater part* of the wretches confined there to be *women*! Yet he positively promised his followers that the very meanest in Paradise will have eighty thousand servants, seventy-two wives of the

Houris, *besides the wives he had in this world*. The promises of the Houris are almost exclusively to be found in Suras, written at a time when Mohammed had only a single wife of sixty years of age, and in all the ten years subsequent to the Hegira, women are only twice mentioned as the reward of the faithful. And this, while in four Suras, the proper wives of the faithful are spoken of as accompanying their husbands into the gardens of bliss.

"They and their wives on that day
Shall rest in shady groves." (Sura 36.)

"Enter ye and your wives into Paradise
delighted." (Sura 43.)

"Gardens of Eden into which they shall enter
Together with the just of their fathers, and their
wives." (Sura 13.)

An old woman once desired Mohammed to intercede with God that she might be admitted to Paradise, and he told her that no old woman would enter that place. She burst into loud weeping, when he explained himself by saying that God would then make her young again.

I was once a fellow-passenger in the Damascus diligence, with a Mohammedan pilgrim going to Mecca by way of Beirût and Egypt, in company with his wife. I asked him whether his wife would have any place in Paradise when he received his quota of seventy-two Houris. "Yes," said he, looking towards his wife, whose veil prevented our seeing her, although she could see us, "if she obeys me in all respects, and is a faithful wife, and goes to Mecca, she will

be made more beautiful than all the Houris of Paradise." Paradise is thus held up to the women as the reward of obedience to their husbands, and this is about the sum and substance of what the majority of Moslem women know about religion.

Women are never admitted to pray with men in public, being obliged to perform their devotions at home, or if they visit the Mosques, it must be at a time when the men are not there, for the Moslems are of opinion that the presence of women inspires a different kind of devotion from that which is desirable in a place set apart for the worship of God.

The Moslem idea of woman is vile and degraded. A Moslem absent from home never addresses a letter to his wife, but to his son or brother, or some male relative. It is considered a grievous insult to ask a Moslem about the health of his wife. If obliged to allude to a woman in conversation, you must use the word "ajellak Allah," "May God elevate you" above the contamination of this subject! You would be expected to use the same expression in referring to a donkey, a dog, a shoe, a swine or anything vile. It is somewhat like the Irish expression, "Saving your presence, sir," when alluding to an unpleasant subject.

A Greek christian (?) in Tripoli came to an American Missionary physician and said, "there is a woman, 'ajell shanak Allah' here who is ill. I beg your pardon for mentioning so vile a subject to your excellency." Said the doctor, "and who may it be?" "Ajellak, it is my wife!"

I remember once meeting the Mohammedan Mufti of Beirût in Dr. Van Dyck's study at the printing press. The

Mufti's wife, (at least *one* of them,) was ill, and he wished medical advice, but could not insult the Doctor by alluding to a woman in his presence. So he commenced, after innumerable salutations, repeating good-morning, and may your day be happy, until he could decently proceed to business. "Your excellency must be aware that I have a sick man at my house. May God grant you health! Indeed, peace to your head. Inshullah, it is only a slight attack!" "He has pain in his back, headache, and he will not eat." "Has he any fever?" "A little." "I will come and see *her* this afternoon." "May God increase your good. Good morning, sir!"

The Mohammedan laws with regard to polygamy, inheritance and divorce, are a decided advance on the Pagan Arabs of "the Ignorance."

The Pagan Arabs allowed any number of wives. The Koran allows *only four* to any believer, the prophet himself having peculiar privileges in this respect. The modern practice of Mohammedans in taking a score or more of wives is directly contrary to the Koran. The Pagan Arabs suffered no woman to have any part of the husband's or father's inheritance, on the ground that none should inherit who could not go to war, and the widows were disposed of as a part of their husband's possessions. The Koran says, (Sura iv.) "Women ought to have a part of what their parents leave." A male shall have twice as much as a female. But a man's parents, and also his brothers and sisters are to have equal shares, without reference to sex. "God commandeth you to give the male the portion of two females. If she be an only daughter, she shall have the half. Your wives shall have a fourth part of what ye leave, if ye have no issue."

Among the Pagan Arabs, divorce was a mere matter of caprice. The Koran says, (Sura ii.) "You may divorce your wives twice (and take them back again). But if the husband divorce her a third time, it is not lawful for him to take her again, until she shall have been actually married to another husband, and then divorced by him." I have known cases where the husband in a fit of passion has divorced his wife the third time, and, in order to get her back again, has *hired another man* to marry her and then divorce her. A rich Effendi had divorced his wife the third time, and wishing to re-marry her, hired a poor man to marry her for a consideration of seven hundred piastres. He took the wife and the money, and the next day refused to give her up for less than five thousand piastres, which the Effendi was obliged to pay, as the woman had become the lawful and wedded wife of the poor man.

No Mohammedan ever walks with his wife in the street, and in Moslem cities, very few if any of men of other sects are willing to be seen in public in company with a woman. The women are closely veiled, and if a man and his wife have occasion to go anywhere together, he walks in advance and she walks a long distance behind him. Nofel Effendi, one of the most learned and intelligent Protestants in Syria, once gave me the explanation of this aversion to walking in public with women, in a more satisfactory manner than I had ever heard it before. Said he, "You Franks can walk with your wives in public, because their faces are unveiled, and it is *known that they are your wives*, but our women are so closely veiled that if I should walk with my wife in the street, no one would know whether I was walking

with my own wife or another man's! You cannot expect a respectable man to put himself into such an embarrassing position!" No Moslem woman or girl would dare go into the street without a veil, for fear of personal chastisement from the husband and father, and the Greek, Maronite and other nominal Christian women in Syria shrink from exposing their faces, through fear of insult from the Mohammedans.

When European women, either residents or travellers, pass through the Moslem quarter of these cities of Syria and Palestine, with faces unveiled, they are made the theme of the most outrageous and insulting comments by the Moslem populace. Well is it for the feelings of the most of these worthy Christian women, that they do not understand the Arabic language. The Turkish governor of Tripoli was obliged to suppress the insulting epithets of the Moslems towards European ladies when they first began to reside there, by the infliction of the bastinado.

In 1857, the Rev. Mr. Lyons in Tripoli, hired Sheikh Owad, a Moslem bigot, to teach him the Arabic grammar. He was a conceited boor; well versed in Arabic grammar, but more ignorant of geography, arithmetic and good breeding than a child. One day Mrs. Lyons passed through the room where he was teaching Mr. L. and he turned his head away from her and spat towards her with a look of unutterable contempt. It was the last time he did it, and he has now become so civilized that he can say good morning to the wife of a missionary, and even consent to teach the sacred, pure and undefiled Arabic to a woman! I believe that he has not yet given his assent to the fact that the earth revolves

on its axis, but he has learned that there are women in the world who know more than Sheikh Owad.

In ancient times Moslem women were occasionally taught to read the Koran, and among the wealthier and more aristocratic classes, married women are now sometimes taught to read, but the mass of the Moslem men are bitterly opposed to the instruction of women. When a man decides to have his wife taught to read, the usual plan is to hire a blind Mohammedan Sheikh, who knows the Koran by heart. He sits at one side of the room, and she at the other, some elderly woman, either her mother or her mother-in-law, being present. The blind Sheikhs have remarkable memories and sharp ears, and can detect the slightest error in pronunciation or rendering, so they are employed in the most of the Moslem-schools. The mass of the Mohammedans are nervously afraid of entrusting the knowledge of reading and writing to their wives and daughters, lest they abuse it by writing clandestine letters to improper persons. "Teach a *girl* to read and write!" said a Mohammedan Mufti in Tripoli to me, "Why, she will *write letters*, sir,—yes, *actually write letters!* the thing is not to be thought of for a moment." I replied, "Effendum, you put your foot on the women's necks and then blame them for not rising. Educate your girls and train them to intelligence and virtue, and then their pens will write only what ought to be written. Train the hand to hold a pen, without training the mind to direct it, and only mischief can result." "*Saheah, saheah,*" "very true, very true," said he, "But how can this be done?"

It has begun to be done in Syria. From the days of Mrs. Sarah L. Smith to the present time, Moslem girls have been taught to read and write and sew, and there are many now learning in the various American, British and Prussian schools. But it will be long before any true idea of the dignity of woman enters the debased minds of Arab Mohammedans. The simple fact is that there is no moral purity or elevation among the men, and how can it be expected among the women. The Moslem idea of woman is infinitely lower than the old Jewish idea. Woman in the time of Christ was highly honored. Believing women followed Christ throughout Galilee and Judea, and although enemies stood watching with hateful gaze on every side, not one word of insinuation was ever lispd against them. It is a most sadly impressive fact to one living in Syria at the present day, that the liberty and respect allowed to woman in the days of our Saviour would now be absolutely impossible. In purely Greek or Maronite or Armenian villages, the women enjoy far greater liberty than where there is a Moslem element in the population. And it is worthy of remark and grateful recognition, that although Christianity in the East has sunk almost to a level, in outward morality, with the Islamic and semi-Pagan sects, there is a striking difference between the lowest nominal Christian community and the highest Mohammedan, in the respect paid to woman. Ignorant and oppressed as the Greek and Maronite women may be, you feel on entering their houses, that the degrading yoke of Moslem brutality is not on their necks. Their husbands may be coarse, ignorant and brutal, beating their wives and despising their

daughters, mourning at the birth of a daughter, and marrying her without her consent, and yet there are lower depths of coarseness and brutality, of cruelty and bestiality, which are only found among Mohammedans. I once suggested to a Tripoli Moslem, that he send his daughters to our Girls' School, then taught by Miss Sada Gregory, a native teacher trained in the family of Mrs. Whiting, and he looked at me with an expression of mingled pity and contempt, saying, "Educate a *girl!* You might as well attempt to educate a *cat!*"

Not two months since, I was conversing with several of the aristocratic Mohammedans of Beirût, who were in attendance at the commencement of the Beirût Protestant Medical College. The subject of the education of girls was introduced, and one of them said, "we are beginning to have our girls instructed in your Protestant schools, and would you believe it, I heard one of them read the other day, (probably his own daughter,) and she actually asked a question about the construction of a noun preceded by a preposition! I never heard the like of it. The things do distinguish and understand what they read, after all!" The others replied, "*Mashallah! Mashallah!*" "The will of God be done!"

Some ten years ago, an influential Moslem Sheikh in Beirût, who was a personal friend of Mr. Araman, the husband of Lulu, brought his daughter Wahidy (only one) to the Seminary to be instructed, on condition that no man should ever see her face. As Mr. Araman himself was one of the teachers, and I was accustomed to make constant visits to the school, she was obliged to wear a light veil, which she

drew adroitly over her face whenever the door was opened. This went on for months and years, until at length in recitation she would draw the veil aside. Then she used to listen to public addresses in the school without her veil, and finally, in June, 1867, she read a composition on the stage at the Public Examination, on, "The value of education to the women and girls of Syria," her father, Sheikh Said el Ghur, being present, with a number of his Moslem friends.

CHAPTER III.

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THE DRUZE RELIGION AND DRUZE WOMEN.

THE great expounder and defender of the Druze religion is Hamzé, the "Universal Intelligence," the only Mediator between God and man, and the medium of the creation of all things. This Hamzé was a shrewd, able and unprincipled man. In his writings he not only defends the abominations of Hakem, but lays down the complete code of Druze doctrine and duty.

It is the belief of many, and said to be the orthodox view among the Druzes that their system as such is to last exactly 900 lunar years. The date of the Druze era is 408 Hegira, or 1020 A.D. The present year, 1872, corresponds to the year 1289 Anno Hegira, so that *in nineteen lunar years* the system will begin to come to an end according to its own reckoning, and after 1000 years it will cease to exist. Others have fixed this present year as the year of the great cataclysm, but the interpreters are so secret and reserved in their statements, that it is only by casual remarks that we can arrive at any idea of their real belief. Lying to infidels is such a meritorious act, that you cannot depend on one word they say of themselves or their doctrines. Their secret books, which were found in the civil wars of 1841 and 1845, have been translated and published by De Sacy, and we have a number of them in the original Arabic manuscripts in the Mission Library in Beirût. From a chapter in one of these,

entitled "Methak en Nissa," or the "Engagements of Women," I have translated the following passages, to show the religious position of women, as bearing upon my object in describing the condition of Syrian females.

"Believers are both male and female. By instruction women pass from ignorance to knowledge, and become angels like the Five Ministers who bear the Throne: *i.e.*, the Doctrine of the Unity. All male and female believers ought to be free from all impurity and disgrace and dishonor. Believing women should shun lying (to the brethren) and infidelity and concupiscence, and the appearance of evil, and show the excellency of their work above all Trinitarian women, avoiding all suspicion and taint which might bring ill upon their brethren, and avoiding giving attention to what is contrary to the Divine Unity.

"We have written this epistle to be read to all believing women who hold to the Unity of Hakem, who knows His Eternity and obey their husbands. But let no Dai or Mazûn read it to a woman until he is well assured of her faith and her religion, and she shall have made a written profession of her faith. He shall not read it to one woman alone, nor in a house where there is but one woman, even though he be worthy of all confidence, lest suspicion be awakened and the tongue of slander be loosed. Let there be assembled together at least three women, and let them sit behind a curtain or screen, so as not to be seen. Each woman must be accompanied by her husband, or her father, or brother or son, if he be a Unitarian. The Dai in reading must keep his eyes fixed on his book, neither turning towards the place where the women are, nor casting a glance towards it, nor

listening to them. The woman, moreover, must not speak a word during the reading, and whether she is affected by a transport of joy, or moved by an impression of respect and fear, she must carefully abstain from showing her feelings either by smiles or tears. For the smiles, the tears, and the words of a woman may excite man's passions. Let her give her whole attention to the reading, receive it in her heart, and apply all the faculties of her mind to understand its meaning, in order clearly to conceive the true signification of what she is listening to. If she finds any passage obscure, let her ask the Dai, (the preacher,) and he shall answer, if he can, and if not, promise to ask those who are more learned, and when he has obtained the solution he must inform her, if she be deemed worthy.

"The highest duty of Unitarian women is to know our Moulah Hakem and the Kaim Hamzé. If they follow Him, let them know that He has released them entirely from the observance of the Seven Arbitrary Pillars of the Law (of Islam) which are (1) Prayer, (2) Fasting, (3) Pilgrimage, (4) Asserting, There is no God but God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God, (5) Giving tithes, (6) War on infidels, (7) Submission to authority. But on the other hand, all believing women must perform the Seven Religious Duties: The First and greatest is Truth in your words: (*i.e.* to the brethren and sisters); the Second is, To watch reciprocally over the safety of the brethren; the Third is, to renounce wholly and entirely whatever religion you may have previously professed; the Fourth is, To keep yourselves apart, clear and distinct from all who are in error; the Fifth is, To recognize the existence of the Unity of our Lord in all ages, times and epochs; the