OUR PALESTINE LETTER.

KING'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.

(By Moses Levene)

Jerusalem, June 8.

The King's Birthday in London could not have been more loyally celebrated than it was at Jerusalem by the various communities composing the population of the Holy City.

The day was considered as a general holiday. All the schools were closed, as were the Government offices, and the Post Office kept Sunday hours.

In the morning, the heads of all the communities and chiefs paid official visits to Gen. Storrs as Military Governor of Jerusalem. In the afternoon, the Military Governor gave a reception to the elite of Jerusalem society at the Municipal gardens, a military band providing the music. Of course refreshments were also liberally offered.

In the evening General Money, Chief Administrator of the O.E.T.A. gave an official dinner to the notables of Jerusalem. The guests assembled in the anti-room where they were received by General Money. An excellent dinner was provided and one had the pleasure of listening to high class music rendered by a military band. The toast of the evening was His Majesty, to which everyone heartily responded. Among the guests were the heads of the churches, representatives of the different communities, and French, Italian and Spanish consuls. Special prayers were offered up in all the synagogues for the welfare of His Majesty and the Royal Family, and the Rabbinical Office of the Jewish Community wrote the following prayer in Hebrew: "King of the Universe! Thine is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory. Hearken Thou to the prayers of thy servants who have assembled in Thy places of worship, on this Pentecost Eve, the anniversary of the giving of the Holy Law. From the depths of our hearts do we supplicate Thee. Keep our Kings, and Lord of lords, to countenance the King of Great Britain, George the Fifth. Prolong Thou his days on the throne and aggrandise the glory of his greatness. May his enemies be subdued and humbled, and in his days may justice and abundance of peace spout forth. From his blessings, may the nations who find protection under his flag, be blessed. In his days may Judah and Israel dwell in safety Amen."

RAINS AND HABOOB.

The rainy season has begun in earnest in the upper regions of the Sudan, Khartoum's share however, during the last fortnight, has been limited to a succession of disagreeable haboobs. Rains have been reported at the following places: Melut, Taufikia, Malakal, Bor, Rejaf, Yei, Rumbek and Nasser; and yesterday at Gambela, Barakat, Tayiba, Roseires and Mafaza.

THE GREEK PATRIARCHATE.

The Greek Journal "Ta Nea" in an article urges the Patriarch to think seriously of forming a Synod of Bishops after the model of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and institute at the same time a Council which will be elected by the laity and will have charge of the financial control of the Patriarchate.

This question was raised several years ago but without any practical result.

PEACE FESTIVITY AND THE GREEK COLONY.

In view of the approaching celebration of the conclusion of peace a committee has been organised by the Greek colony of Alexandria to decide on the way in which the Greek colony may be properly represented at this festival. The committee held a meeting some days ago and decided to open subscriptions among all Greeks to assist them in their work. The same Committee is endeavouring to secure the making of 500 flags, which are thought necessary for the expression of Greek sentiment. As the necessary stuff for these flags is lacking the Committee has applied to the Hellenic Club of Cairo for assistance in this respect.

S.P.C.A. CAIRO.

We have received the following from the Cairo S.P.C.A. dealing with the month of May 1919:—

Animals arrested for cruelty numbered 5, for overloading 47, for treatment 355. Two hundred and six animals were discharged as cured. 38 were destroyed being unfit for work and two died while under treatment. The daily average in the infirmary was 253 and the average days of treatment was 16. The following is a note of cruelty cases tried before the Summary Courts during the month of April 1919.

Number of cases 3, number of persons 3, condemnations 3, acquittal nil. Three persons were fined P.T.25.

We are asked to advise the public that although the Lost Dog's Home is situated on the Society's premises, it is in no way connected with the S.P.C.A.

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THE NATIVE PRESS.

POWER OF STRIKES.

The "Mokattam" (from a lengthy article discussing the question of strikes)—We have been asked by some of our readers whether a strike is the best means for the attainment of objects viewed by strikers, and in reply we say that those who have spent their life in dealing with the question of labour, organising representative bodies for labourers, and clamouring for their rights and safeguarding their interests have different views on the subject. Mr. Smillie, one of the leading labour men in Great Britain, considers a strike as a sharp weapon which no one can blunt. He sees that it is necessary to use it for guarding the rights of artisans and labourers; but Mr. Gompers, head of the American Labour Union, who speaks on behalf of three million workmen, is against this. He states that artisans and labourers get more advantages by means of negotiation than by means of strikes. For our part we see that the labour problems are too important and numerous to be solved by one remedy in spite of the various circumstances and conditions thereof; and this is one reason why the Peace Conference has found it necessary to put the Labour question beside the League of Nation on the agenda, because it has seen that a great part of the happiness of the world depends upon avoiding industrial troubles and labour disputes. The world has had to change many of the ideas entertained by the leading socialists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because they are deficient in certain respects, and cannot properly be applied to the labour problems of the present time, the world having greatly progressed in this way, and it has become imperative to find new ways for the solution of the new problems most of which have arisen from the circumstances of the present war. We have before us as we write this article an official statistical account of modern general strikes of the world—from the Alicanti (?) strike in Spain which occurred in July 1874 up to the strike in Milan in Italy which took place in 1913—28 in number. The account shows that 10 of these strikes were fully successful, three partly successful and 15 failures. The first strike in history—the strike of the commoners in Rome which occurred in 494 B.C. was successful, and those who advised striking work in this era refer to that historic event in very high and optimistic terms.

MOHAMMED ALY FESTIVAL.

The "Express"—The function held annually in commemoration of the death of Mohamed Aly, founder of modern civilisation in Egypt, and the man who saved the country from anarchy, despotism and tyranny, was held this week in both Alexandria and Cairo. The ceremony was simple and it was attended by people who listened to the same speech which is delivered every year on the same occasion giving a brief biography of that great hero and reformer. We wish the ceremony could be made more commemorative and worthy of the memory of the man to whom Egypt is so greatly indebted. We suggest that the event should be made an occasion of a general celebration throughout Egypt. Speakers should deliver instructive speeches on the occasion referring to the glorious achievements of Mohamed Aly and giving useful lessons to the young in connection with his immortal deeds, his greatness, his genius and intellectual distinction. There is no reason why we should not make preparations to make this ceremony a general national fete in future.

EGYPT'S FUTURE.

"Wady el Nil" (from an article on the "Egyptian Question")—We have refrained for the last few days from writing anything about the Egyptian question and the work of the Egyptian delegation connected with it. This has not been of course due to our being too busy in discussing other political affairs, to devote time to our question, but has been due to lack of information. A crop of rumours have been current of late in some of the local journals about the Egyptian Delegation in Paris, but as the value of such rumours lies in the amount of truth in them, we have only contented ourselves with reflating the same according to our special information on their subject. Now we have two pieces of information regarding the Egyptian Delegation—the telegram sent to us by our special correspondent accompanying the Delegation on the 4th inst., with reference to the banquet which was given on that date to the representatives of the Italian press. In the message to us the Egyptian Deputation under the presidency of Saad Pasha Zaghloul, and the other is the statement of our Cairo correspondent with regard to a letter received from the President of the Delegation, referring to his affairs in general. The giving of the banquet can well be understood by our readers, especially when they remember the words of our correspondent that "Wissa Bey Wassef explained the Egyptian demands on the occasion." Our correspondent in Cairo informs us that the letter newly received from Zaghloul Pasha states that the Delegation is doing its work perseveringly and has submitted a Note to the Peace Conference, the latter receiving more impression than the former. The Note has been submitted by His Excellency the President of the Delegation; bearing his signature, to M. Clemenceau, President of the Conference. According to other news received recently from abroad the Delegation intends to send out two deputations of its members to England and America respectively, and the benefit of sending of these two deputations has already been explained in our columns. To conclude, the Egyptian question seems to have passed the first preparatory stage.

MR. ROSS TAYLOR.

The "Ahram"—It is not yet known what will become of the Supplies Control Board in consequence of the appointment of Mr. Ross Taylor as Sultanic Counsellor for the Legal Department in the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Agriculture; but it is quite believed that the Commission will maintain its authority. If the organisation should be abolished the functions undertaken by it would be transferred to another and similar Commission, and might be attached to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Notts War Agricultural Committee yesterday decided to pay 2d. per head for killed rats.

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THE ARAB WOMAN.

HER PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

By an Arabic Scholar.

The recent movement of the native woman in Egypt has inspired the well-known litterateur Abdul Fattah Ebada Effendi with the idea of writing on the Arab woman of days gone by. In the May part of the Al-Hilal Review, this versatile writer has an article on "The Arab woman in history" which I condense for the benefit of the readers of the "Egyptian Gazette." Ebada Effendi says:

Woman occupied an important place among the Arabs, and had great influence over their national life, from the remotest ages. Their history is full of her deeds and of the high position she held. Some women were noted for their sagacity and cruelness, others held the reins of government. History has preserved the names of many Arab queens; in fact there were, in the higher regions of the Hedjas, Arab Kingdoms which allowed only women to rule them. The Nabetians allowed their women to take part in the government of their country; and the kingdom of Tadmor left the imperishable memory of queen Zenobia whose history fills us with admiration. She possessed beauty of a very high order, was well-read, particularly in history, and extended her influence from the Euphrates to Egypt, thus occupying a part of the Eastern Roman Empire. She made Tadmor the capital of all the East, encouraged poets, scholars and litterateurs, knew Arabic, Syriac, Egyptian and Greek, discussed military questions with her generals when she conferred with her arguments and was the first to organise rear-guards to protect retreating armies. Another great woman was Balkis, queen of Sheba and southern Arabia, who had a historical conversation with king Solomon. It would be too long to give the names of all the great women of pre-Islamic days, some of whom were noted astrologers and called Kahinas or prophetesses, and had an immense following. Women in those days had complete liberty, and no girl was given in marriage without her own consent.

During the great social revolution before and in the early days of Islam, many women were noted in politics, war, literature, commerce, etc., and helped a great deal to spread Islamism. Women, at that time, had full control over their fortunes which they invested in business, as did Khadiga who, on hearing of the honesty of Mohamed before he declared his mission, employed him in her service, and sent him to Syria with merchandise, and finally married him. Other women, equally noted, were Aisha, styled the Mother of the believers, and her sister Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, which latter urged her son to die rather than deliver Mecca to the Beni Ummaya who were besieging it. Al-Khansa also urged her sons to continue to fight in the battle of Al-Kadisia, and on hearing of their death exclaimed: "Thank God who honoured me by the murder of my sons."

In those days Arab women not only accompanied the men to the fields of battle to nurse the wounded, as European women now do, but took part in the actual fight. They also inspired the men by their speeches and poems with renewed courage to stand before the enemy.

WOMEN POETS.

In literature, and particularly in poetry, many Arab women have immortalised their names. Among these was Aisha Bint Talha, a woman of considerable physical attractions, who used to argue literary questions with men and attend writers' meetings. On no occasions her face was never covered. In fact in those days the women had no need of the veil, not even when they went round the Kaaba with thousands of pilgrims. Further, women, during the reign of the Abbasids Caliphs, used to attend public lectures in schools and public meetings as European women now do, and it is reported that the great Imam Al-Shafei was taught jurisprudence (fiqh) and the traditions of Mohamed (Hadis) by two women.

The fact that woman had many activities in the early days of Islam, is not to be wondered at, for the Moslem religion gave her all those rights which the European woman has been enjoying for many centuries. Aisha was the golden age of the Arab woman, at the expiration of which she began to degenerate. During the days of the Beni Ummaya dynasty the character of the Arab woman began to change, owing to the introduction of the habit of concubinage, the spread of other vices such as drunkenness, and luxury and the evils of civilisation. In the Abbasid days things grew still worse under the Abbasides, and woman lost her liberty and dignity when she presented her husband with concubines. It was during the reign of Al-Mutawakkil that women were given a separate place in public entertainments, and the Emir of Mecca ordered men and women to go round the Kaaba separately. Eunuchs were employed at home, which habit was copied from the Greeks, and the women had their own apartments in their homes. Notwithstanding all these changes in the life of the women, they continued to mix with men up to the sixth century, and produced many who were noted in literature and politics, such as Al-Khansaa, Zobaida and Katr Al-Nada, which latter acted for her father and received deputations and ambassadors, not to speak of Shagarat Al-Durr, queen of Egypt, and others.

DEGRADATION OF WOMEN.

When the Tartars destroyed the Kingdom of the Arabs, scholars began to ask such questions as: Is it right and proper for a woman to show her hands and her feet?; thus ignorance and corruption spread and led to the degradation of the woman and the loss of her liberty. She became the object of man's contempt, and, what is worse, he lost all confidence in her, and locked her up in her house. No wonder, therefore, that her honour became the object of man's calumny, stories were written to cover her want of chastity, to warn men against her, and to recommend them to have no faith in her. In a word the talents of the Arab woman which distinguished her golden age, were lost, until the present time when she is trying to rise from her fall.

* * *

In the June part of the Al-Hilal Review, Ebada Effendi explains the efforts of the Arab woman to attain her former position. He says:

In the Moslem middle ages the Arab woman followed the general backward movement; she was confined to the four walls of her house, and in general was as described in the book entitled "A thousand and one nights." It is true the whole book is imaginary and things are much exaggerated, but the stories represent a faithful picture of social habits in those times, and prove in a very distinct manner that the veil is no protection against the corruption of morals. But such was not the case with the Moslem woman only, for the Coptic woman was in a similar position. In those days woman was a prisoner in her house, and it was an honour to speak of her as one who left her house only to be taken to her grave. She was married by her parents to a husband she did not know and who did not know her, and all she knew of the outer world were the fables she heard from old women. If she saw fighting she thought it was sparks from the clashing of the chains, and she believed to be the noise of the troops of the devils' horses. Although the law gave her full rights over her property, it was not possible for her to enjoy it, as the prevailing custom was for her husband to handle her money, and thought that education did not promote chastity; in fact the reverse.

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE.

But in the middle of the last century the wise-thinking Arabs, according to their intercourse with Europeans, realised the influence of woman on society, and a few of them were of opinion that it was necessary to emancipate her. It was only about a quarter of a century ago that girls' schools were opened, and writers and speakers publicly discussed the condition of the woman and her emancipation. Although these opinions met with opposition, some women became noted as writers and speakers. With the spread of education the authority of man was greatly grave lessened, and the veil very considerably changed. A woman now goes out of her house alone, whenever necessary to visit her friends, to make purchases from the great stores, or to take a walk in public gardens.

When this war made a great evolution in all parts of the world, the electric shock reached the soul of the native woman. She heard what her European sister did in the service of her country and was ready to abandon her forever inertia as soon as opportunity or an incident roused her feelings. No sooner, therefore, had the late historic movement begun than the native women emerged from her seclusion, and realised that it was time for her to declare her national feelings and aspirations. She, therefore, did not hesitate to take part with man, to the admiration of the Europeans. The strides the native women made in a few days would have required half a century in ordinary times. In short the education of woman, and the example she had of her European sister in the role she played in this war, animated her and prepared her for this evolution. Then came the political movement and the cry for liberty which awakened her intelligence and raised her feelings.

The native women took part in the recent demonstrations with men, carried them out in their carriages greeting the students, applauding with men, and waving their white handkerchiefs. All classes of women, Moslem and Copt, took part in these demonstrations. In former days native women drove in closed carriages, but on these occasions the carriage-hoods were down. In all these demonstrations they were not less aware of their dignity and the respect due to them than European women, and although the crowd were often great, and men and women mixed together, no disrespect was shown to the latter.

In conclusion these demonstrations prove the great evolution which has taken place in native women of all classes, which will be recorded in the history of modern Egypt with pride and admiration of their feelings and patriotism.

THE WAKFS APPEAL.

The officials of the Wakfs Ministry sent a petition to Mohamed Said Pasha, the Prime Minister, in which they demand the privileges possessed by all other officials in Government service. One of their appeals is against the Recruiting Code, which is exempted to all permanent officials except themselves.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

The adjudication held at the Ministry of Education on May 19, 1919, for the supply of Arabic reed pens and native black ink was approved in favour of the following:

Mohammed Aly Abd el Ghaffar Tabrizi Ef., L.E. 1,834·250; Ismail Ali Milani Ef. L.E. 171.500.

The adjudication which was held at the Ministry of War on May 31, 1919, for the supply of 68,400 B. Twills seeks for the Egyptian Army has been approved in favour of Messrs. Mosseri Curiel and Co., at a total cost of L.E. 4,286·600 mill.

THE SULTANIC LIBRARY.

We have received the monthly statistics from the Sultanic Library for May. The figures are as follows:— New acquisitions 134; books borrowed in the reading room 1,201 books on loan outside the library 1,125 readers in the reading room 647, borrowers outside the library 608, visitors to the exhibition 1,955.

TWO VILLAGE FIGHTS.

Two families of El Fugara district, Bebas Markaz, had quite an existing fight recently in which twelve combatants were seriously injured. The cause of the awakening of the pugnacious instinct was due to the herds of one family overstepping the boundaries and entering in the plantations of the second family.

Some natives of Basyoun district, Kafr el Zayat Markaz, had a fight which ended a dispute. One of the party was injured.

NATIVE LAWYERS.

Me Pearas, the well known lawyer in the Greek Consular Court in an article published in the "Telegraphos," highly praises the native lawyers whom he considers as not inferior to their European colleagues particular in learning or in honesty, but absolutely equal to them and worthy of their mission. The article is entitled "The Lawyer," and criticises that class of lawyers who take charge of important judicial affairs without sufficient knowledge.

DEMOBILISATION FROM EGYPT

Mr. Churchill on May 28, replying in the Parliamentary papers to a question by Mr. Hayday, says demobilisation in Egypt which had been delayed by the unsettled state of affairs there, has now recommenced and large numbers of men are expected to return home for demobilisation. Pending each of the next three months, it is hoped that all men who enlisted prior to January 1, 1916, will have arrived home by the end of August.

BRITISH TROOPS IN SYRIA.

An Exchange telegram states that General Wilson has arrived in Paris to arrange with M. Clemenceau as to the withdrawal of the British troops now occupying Syria and their being replaced by French troops.

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