

(An excerpt of the)

TRAVELS
of
LADY HESTER STANHOPE;

FORMING THE COMPLETION
of
HER MEMOIRS.

NARRATED BY
HER PHYSICIAN

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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(Her physician was Charles Lewis Meryon, 1783-1877)

CHAPTER X

Mode of Life of Lady Hester Stanhope — Imaginary treasures of Gezzâr Pasha — Road to the Convent of Mar Elias — Description of the Convent — Village of Abra — Interior of a cottage — Poverty of the people — Change in the character of Lady Hester — Abra purchased by a Greek Patriarch — Revenues — Tenure of land — Occupations of the peasantry — Herdsmen - Village overseer — Notions of propriety in the behaviour of females — Dread of the plague — Precautions against the infection suggested by Lady Hester to the Emir Beshÿr — Visit of the Shaykh Beshÿr to Abra — Good breeding of the Turks — Greek monasteries — The patriarch Macarius — M. Boutin — Hanÿfy, a female slave sent to Lady Hester — Specification of her qualities — Discovery of an ancient sepulchre — Paintings in it copied by Mr. Banks, and by the Author — Various forms of sepulchres.

We are now arrived at a new period in Lady Hester's peregrinations, in which, from a traveller, she becomes a sojourner in a strange land; and, abandoning Europe and its customs altogether, conforms herself entirely to the modes of life of the Orientals. Not that it is clear whether she was fixed in such a determination at first; but, unwilling to return to England, with which country she had become, for several reasons, disgusted, and, finding no other on the Continent sufficiently quiet to insure a permanent asylum, she thought she would remain some time longer in Syria, where, looking down on the world from the top of Mount Lebanon, she might calmly contemplate its follies and vicissitudes, neither mixed up with the one, nor harassed by the other.

The state of retirement in which we now lived gave me time to turn my attention more particularly to a consideration of the geographical conformation of the country. A traveller, newly arrived in Syria, or passing hastily through it, will find much difficulty in doing this: for, although there are many prominent features to guide him, he will necessarily have few books, and perhaps only a bad map or two

Note: Neither French nor Latin has been proof read in this excerpt.

to refer to;¹ and he will sometimes seek in vain for the divisions of provinces, for the precise termination of mountains, for the course of rivers occasionally dried up, or for the sites of cities now overgrown with grass, which are placed on paper so distinctly; besides which his inquiries will always be impeded or stopped by the ignorance of those through or to whom he is necessarily obliged to direct them.

A general notion of Syria can be obtained from no author better than from Abulfeda, an impartial writer, dwelling in it, and distinguished for his knowledge on the subject. His words are, "Syria is a magnificent country, rich in its productions, blessed with fertility, adorned with gardens, woods, meadows, valleys, and mountains, watered by rivers, abundant in vegetables, game, flocks, and domestic animals. It is seasonably refreshed and fertilized by annual rains, and bears on its mountains perpetual snows."

Strabo divides Syria into four provinces—Seleucia, Phoenicia, Palestine (subdivided into Galilee, Samaria, and Judea), and Coele-Syria. Ccele-Syria was either Proper, or Common. Proper Coele-Syria seems (for there is some confusion in the account) to have comprehended those extensive vales, embosomed between Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and the best demarcation of which is by following the course of the river Leontes, or the modern Casmya, up between the modern provinces of Shkyf and Bsharra, and the valley of the Bkâ, and by continuing on with the course of the Orontes down to Antioch; then the country to the right and left of these two rivers included between the mountains will be Ccele-Syria Proper. Common Coele-Syria consisted of the plains spreading out towards Hems and Hamah to the north, and towards Damascus to the south, cut off from the sea-coast by the intervention of great mountains: whilst that slip of land between the mountains and sea-coast, running the whole length of Syria, from Antioch down to the river Eleutherus, or the modern Nahr el Kebyr,² is Seleucia; Phoenicia, thence to the Promontorium Album, or modern Ras el Nakûra; and Palestine from the Nakûra, down to the sandy Desert, which divides it from Egypt: or by another division, Strabo makes Phoenicia to extend

¹Of all the maps of Syria which I have yet seen, that of d'Anville, or more particularly that portion of it which he calls the map of Phoenicia, is the one chiefly to be relied on. Recent maps have generally been drawn up, with supposed corrections after late travellers; d'Anville seems to have drawn up his from a comparison of both modern and ancient authorities, and no subsequent geographer has equalled him.

²There is another Nahr el Kebyr close to Laodicea, which must not be mistaken for this, situated a little to the north of Tripoli.

from the river Eleutherus down to Damietta, and Palestine to be a district of it.

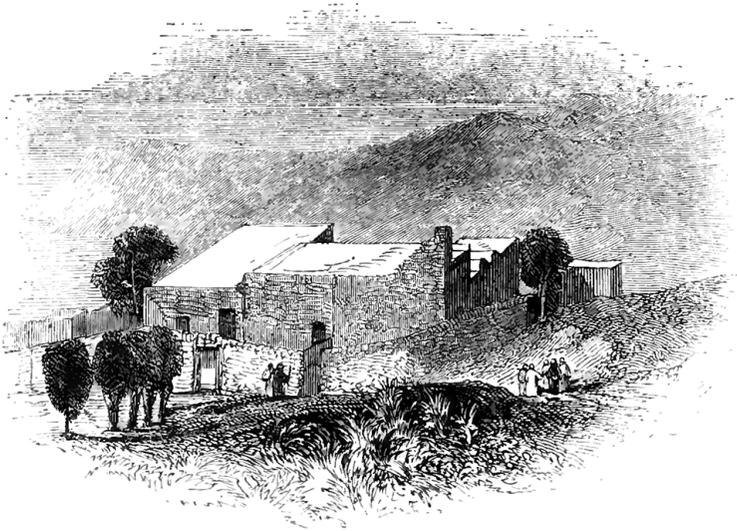
It was also probable that there was another motive which induced Lady Hester to delay yet awhile her departure. Among the many stories which were related of the celebrated Pasha el Gezzâr, one was, that he had amassed immense wealth, and, having in his lifetime hid it under ground, had disappointed the Porte at his death in the acquisition of it. She was possessed with the idea that she had obtained a clue to the discovery of some of his treasures, and she had applied to the Turkish government (as it was afterwards known) for permission to dig for them. This I conceive to have been one main reason for her stay.

In the mean time, as for myself, my thoughts would often involuntarily turn towards England, and then the prospect of a long residence in the Levant somewhat disquieted me. But I banished these anticipations; determined that no trivial cause should make me leave her ladyship alone and unprotected in so distant a country. Not that my presence could add materially to her safety; for there never was a person who relied more on his own resources than she did; besides, gloomy reflections could take no hold of an individual in this fine climate; for they were forgotten as soon as he emerged from the house into the air, where the inspiration of the balmy atmosphere and the scenes which surrounded him always begat cheerful sensations.

The day after our arrival at Sayda, I rode up to the monastery, in which we were to reside. I had never seen it before, not having been with Lady Hester and Mr. B. when the French consul had led them to it, during their former visit to Sayda. On quitting the city gate, we passed through several hedged lanes, between orchards and gardens filled with trees which shrink from the cold blasts of northern climates. Oranges were as thick on the branches as apples are accustomed to grow; and the broad leaf of the banana tree, which flourishes in great vigour hereabout, was an object singularly striking. The hedges were in most places rendered almost impenetrable by the prickly leaf of the cactus indicus.

At the distance of half a mile we came to the skirts of the gardens, at the foot of Mount Lebanon. It was not very steep, and about a quarter of a mile brought us to the top of the first hill, where we looked down before us into a deep valley; then, carrying our eyes up on the opposite mountain, we descried a low building, which I was told was the monastery. The descent was rugged, but the asses are

accustomed to mountains. The soil was bare, rocky, and apparently sterile; and here and there an olive or a fig-tree was the only thing which it seemed capable of nourishing. In ascending on the opposite side, the path, over a loamy soil, was so slippery from recent rains, that I dismounted and walked up, as the ass could not make good his footing.



CONVENT OF MAR ELIAS.

On arriving at the monastery, I found it to be a quadrangular stone building, of one story, with flat roofs or terraces, according to the custom of the country, enclosing a small square paved court, which had a little mould in the centre, with a few flowers, and two small orange trees. The rooms were as neat as whitewashed walls could make them, but without chairs or tables; and in one or two was a long sofa bench of solid masonry against the wall on one side only. There was a small chapel attached to the south-east corner, with an altar in it. A discolouration in one of the walls, in which a staircase ran up to the roof, led me to inquire what it was; when the servant told me that the late patriarch was buried there, seated in an arm-chair. Although his body was said to have been embalmed, it smelt most offensively; and I anticipated that this unusual burial would give rise to many ghost-stories. This chapel is dedicated to St. Elias, whose name the building bears, being called Dayr Mar Elias, or the Monastery of St. Elias, although I could not learn that,

within the memory of any one, it had served for anything but the residence of the patriarch of the Greek schismatics, or of the bishop of Sayda: nor were the rooms in any respect adapted for the cells of friars.

The situation is picturesque, but lonely and barren, on the top of a mountain without verdure, surrounded on every side with mountains equally sterile; excepting a few olive and mulberry trees on a shelving bank at the back of the building, which were not to be come at but by a circuitous path, or by leaping down a perpendicular rock of twenty feet. Though now on Mount Lebanon, where the imagination of the reader will supply him with umbrageous cedars at every step, fiction alone could throw their shade over Dayr Mar Elias. From its elevated situation, the monastery commands a most extensive view of the sea, from which it is distant in a straight line about two miles. But the sea, on the Syrian coast, is only a vast waste, where small craft are seen coasting before the wind, and now and then a three-masted vessel in the distance. The magnificent spectacle of a passing fleet, so common in the British Channel, is here unknown.

I found that, during the late rains, the roofs had leaked, and some of our baggage had been damaged. This was an unpromising prospect for the new residence; and several repairs, which were absolutely requisite to render the rooms habitable, must necessarily retard Lady Hester's removal from Sayda some weeks. The four sides of the quadrangle were not equally commodious. On the west were three good rooms, convertible into saloons or bed-rooms; so that one as a drawing-room, one as her ladyship's bed-room, and one for her maid, occupied the whole of that side. The north side was made up of a kitchen, a kelár or storeroom, and a corner room, in which the patriarch had died. The east side had three small rooms, and an oil and wine cellar; and, as it had already been decided that two of these were to be converted into a vapour bath, the dwelling became reduced to five rooms. This confined space rendered it necessary for me to look out for a cottage for myself in the village, which was a quarter of a mile off, on somewhat higher ground than the monastery: I therefore rode to it. Its name is Abrah, or Abra. I little thought, on first beholding it, that I was destined to spend there nearly three years of my life.

Abra consisted of forty cottages, each of one story, and of the rudest construction. The cement for the unhewn stones, of which they were built, was mud from the road. Rough trunks of poplars or other slight trees formed the beams for the roofs, which were flat,

and made in the following manner. Over the trunks were laid rough stakes for rafters, over these brushwood, and the coating was common loam, rolled and trodden down, until it resisted in some degree the passage of wet: but there were few roofs that appeared to be waterproof. Within, the walls were covered with a rough plaster of mould and water without lime, and this was whitewashed.

I entered the best cottage in the village. It consisted of a single room. One end of it was occupied by two cows and an ass, the other end, somewhat raised, by the family. The floor was of yellow clay, beaten down to hardness. In the middle of the room was a small plaster fireplace, about the size of a chafing-dish; the door and windows served for chimneys. Three or four unbaked earthen jars, as big as tubs, stood in a corner to contain wheat, barley, rice, figs, &c.; a jar for water; a spinning-wheel; a wheel for winding off cotton; a couple of copper saucepans; a hand-mill, to grind corn; with a mat spread on the ground to sit on, formed the furniture and utensils of the family, which consisted of a stout man, a pretty woman, her mother with two children, and the grandmother.



INTERIOR OF A SYRIAN COTTAGE: WOMEN GRINDING CORN.

The walls of the rooms had holes through them, high up, to let in the air; and, on a level with the waist, were small recesses which served for putting away a dish, a saucepan, or a drinking jug. Cupboards

there were none; one chest alone seemed to be sacred from the examination of any one. There was a bed rolled up, but I discovered afterwards that the peasantry very seldom had more than a cotton quilted coverlet, sleeping in their clothes. Few have a change of their outward dress, although I had occasion afterwards to observe that they were more particular than English peasants in changing the linen next to their skin.

The inhabitants of Abra were Greek Catholics. The village perhaps is more pleasantly situated than the monastery. It had several plantations of mulberry trees for silkworms, and of fig-trees. It is in the division called Aklým-el-Tafâh, in the district of Gebâa, where one Ali Aga resided at this time, as *motsellem* or governor. Though close to the coast, and belonging, as a part of Ali Aga's district, to the pashalik of Acre, the peasants rather clung to the Emir of the Drûzes.

The patriarch owned two-thirds of the village. The villagers seemed very poor. They had not even coffee to offer, which I never yet had found wanting anywhere. Tobacco, from an old pipe and a still older bag, seemed their only indulgence. When I told the owner of the cottage that I was under the necessity of turning him out of his home, he said he was willing to comply, if I would bring him an order from the patriarch, his master, to that effect, and that he would soon build himself another.

As I returned to Sayda, in descending the steep hill close under the monastery or *dayr*, I observed a spring of clear water, running from a stone lip in a stream not larger than my thumb; and this, I was told, supplied the village and monastery. Close by was a cave, formerly a sepulchre, as the recesses in the bottom and sides, still visible, denoted. In it were several naked female peasants, who were washing themselves with water from the spring. Though the path was within forty yards of them, they did nothing but turn their backs, and squat on their haunches until I had passed by.

The masons were sent up to Mar Elias, and the repairs were begun immediately: but it was the middle of February before the house was ready for Lady Hester's reception; the building of a bath having more especially occupied a great deal of time. Masons, carpenters, and workmen of that class in these countries give infinitely more trouble than they do in England. There it is necessary for their employer himself to purchase every article they stand in need of. The mason, for example, says he wants so much lime, so much powdered pottery, so many tiles, &c.; all these are to be sought out

and bargained for by the employer. The mason, indeed, would take the trouble off your hands, but he requires money in advance, and cheats besides.

Lady Hester was but indifferently lodged in the French caravansery, where Damiani's house was. Her spirits seemed lately to have been somewhat depressed by her protracted illnesses. She had a relapse of her ague, and was again confined to her room. To increase her sufferings, her maid Mrs. Fry was attacked with a most violent dysentery, which threatened her life: she, however, recovered slowly under my hands. All communication with the French consul was dropped, as also with every person in Sayda. Just at this time, M. Beaudin was attacked with a paralytic affection, which deprived him of the use of his limbs and speech. My troubles were now at their height. However, by the end of January, Lady Hester felt strength enough to ride out into the gardens; and never shall I forget this, as it were, her new return to life. From that time her character changed deeply. She became simple in her habits, almost to cynicism. She showed, in her actions and her conversation, a mind severe indeed, but powerfully vigorous. Scanning men and things with a wonderful intelligence, she commented upon them as if the motives of human actions were open to her inspection. Sometimes she looked into futurity like the sybil of old; and, as she reasoned on the great changes which were taking place in Europe, she scattered her prophetic leaves, which, as subsequent events have shown, may almost be supposed to be the effect of inspiration.³

I endeavoured to collect such information respecting the taxes and revenue of the village of Abra as might illustrate the general nature of property in Mount Lebanon. It was not so easy to do this as might at first be imagined: for the peasants and more particularly the bailiff of the village (or Kûly, as he is called in Arabic) fancied that Lady Hester had an intention of purchasing it of the patriarch. And, as the thing was desirable for them, on account of the increased opportunities which must necessarily occur for cheating, they were apt to answer my inquiries as best suited their purpose of inducing her to buy. The population amounted to about forty families, most of them descendants of peasants who had for generations inhabited the same spot. The man who for twenty years only had been settled in the village was still looked on, when disputes called

³For the truth of this, I appeal to those letters written by her to Mr. Coutts, the banker, at this period; to his grace the late Duke of Buckingham; to the Honourable General R. Grenville; and to others.

forth the expression of any spiteful remarks, as an alien. I have heard a woman, with scarcely a rag on her back, when quarrelling with another, cite the respectability of her descent from ancestors established time immemorial in Abra.

The village of Abra was bought by a patriarch of the Greek Catholics, not many years before our arrival in Syria, from a Drûze family, whose property it was. As far as I could gather, it cost him eighteen purses, £450 sterling. I could not learn its extent in acres; but the whole of the land belonging to it produced eighteen gararas of corn, a garara being equal to seventy-two mids, each mid equal to a gallon or thereabouts.

Abra, being a limitrope village, bordering on the Metualy district to the south, on the Drûze district to the east and north, and on the parish of Sayda to the west, seemed to share in the vexations of all three governments. To the motsellem of Gebaa it paid two hundred and forty-five piasters a year, which was the miri of the land: to the Emir Beshÿr two hundred piasters a-year, the miri of the houses: to the governor of Sayda one hundred and fifty piasters a-year. These sums were collected by the kuly or shaykh at stated periods, and delivered to the persons respectively claiming them.

The patriarch received, as yearly rent of the houses, from five to ten piasters each. Thus, when I threw two cottages into one, I paid for two as though not consolidated. The tenant made all repairs, excepting when the main beam of the ceiling broke, which was supplied by the proprietor.

The proprietor received of whatever grew from the leaf a half: as, of tobacco, figs, oil, mulberry leaves for feeding silkworms (which last two were commuted for a certain portion of the products, viz., silk and oil) and a quarter of all kinds of corn. Besides these certain receipts, he had incidental ones on particular occasions, and certain perquisites: all which may be put down as follows:

	piasters
Corn, eight gararas:	800
Each time the patriarch had a festival, as at Easter and Christmas, the peasants presented him with eggs and fowls, valued at:.....	40

Work done for the patriarch by the peasants gratis always on Sundays:.....	50
Green corn or other pasture allowed him for his cattle:.....	15
Oil, one quintal (worth three hundred piasters) half the produce:.....	150
Tobacco:.....	100
Silk, five rotolos from the leaves growing in the village, and eight rotolos from leaves bought in the gardens of Sayda, at eighty piasters the rotolo, makes one thousand and forty piasters — half of which is:.....	520
Rent for houses, forty one families at seven and a half piasters each house:.....	300
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The patriarch therefore had here a gain of thirteen hundred and eighty-nine piasters, or about £68 per annum. There were of course other sources of gain, with which I was not acquainted, and I may have even underrated the different products which I have enumerated.

I could never clearly understand the nature of the tenure of the land and other property. Thus the patriarch was the proprietor of the houses and could build or pull them down, or eject a tenant from them, when he liked. All trees, not bearing fruit, seemed to be his: for, whenever the peasants were in want of a rafter or joist, it was necessary to apply to the kûly for permission to cut. Yet, in those bearing fruit, as olive or mulberry trees, the peasants had a right of possession, and of transmission to their children; of which I saw repeated examples. With regard to the soil, that, too, was not the patriarch's; for each family would speak of certain pieces of land as belonging to them. Still it was odd that, when Lady Hester wanted a field any where for sowing or for any other use, it was always given to her, let her have cast her eye on what piece she would. I concluded therefore that the purchaser of a village became

the proprietor of the tithe, rather than the possessor of the soil, which was partitioned into smaller or greater farms or estates, as prosperity and adversity appropriated or alienated it, by purchase or sale, from man to man.⁴

A small village like Abra, away from any high road, was seldom visited by strangers. Occasionally, a pedlar selling soap, *kadámy*, or parched peas, and a little halawy or sweetmeat, would pass through, crying his wares: for the purchase of which he would receive money, or, in default of it, eggs, or chickens, which he resold, in the towns, to advantage. Sometimes a pauper, after begging from house to house, would sleep through the night in the village *tanûr* or oven, a favourite lodging both in towns and villages for the wretched.⁵

The life which these peasants lead is simple enough. At sunrise the husband goes to his field to plough, or sow, or reap, or plant his tobacco, or to cut leaves for his silkworms. The women wash, bake, grind at the handmill, feed the silkworms, gather the figs, the olives, and, if *fathy*, as they call it, or having nothing to do, they spin. Were I desired to describe a peasant woman in her most customary occupation, I should represent her as seated at the door of her cottage, spinning with a hand-spindle, and having a long cane lying by her side to drive away the chickens, which she talks to and scolds as if they were children, giving to each a name. When at the *tanûr*, baking, she gossips. She generally cooks once in the twenty-four hours, for the evening repast, to which her husband returns when his day's work is over.

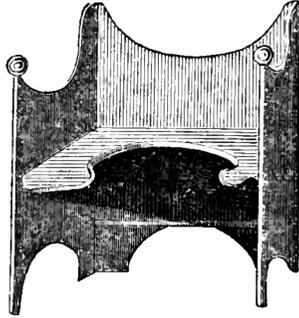
Midwifery at Abra was entirely in the hands of women.⁶ A woman lay-in of her first child soon after I came to the village. She was half an hour in labour. All the married females of the village assembled on the occasion, and they instructed her how to act in her new situation. She was placed in the chair used on these occasions, a sketch of which I have annexed, having caused it to be brought to

⁴Upon some occasions, where land was newly appropriated for tillage, it was customary for the peasants to draw lots for particular parcels, these having been first staked out by the head men of the village.

⁵Tanûr, in Arabic, means a large earthenware jar, as big as a barrel, but deeper, which, let into the ground up to the rim, is heated within by brushwood or brambles, and serves to bake bread. It is generally covered with a shed, and serves for the use of all or a portion of the village, according as there is one or more. It is in this way I conceive that the passage "or ever your pots be made hot with thorns" is to be explained, by brambles thrown into the *tanûr*.

⁶Ce'st une chose terrible, que, depuis que les femmes se melent de faire des enfans, elles ne savent pas encore accoucher toutes seules.— *Mem. et Corresp. de Madame d'Epinaÿ*, p. 272.

me for that purpose, and having thought it sufficiently curious to interest the Scriptural reader, who might find in it the explanation of a passage otherwise not quite intelligible.⁷



MIDWIFERY CHAIR.

A rope was made fast to the ceiling, by which the woman held, and hauled on it during her travail: at the same time the bystanders supported her under her armpits.⁸

It has occurred to all travellers, among people styled uncivilized, to observe with how much less pain and trouble the process of gestation and parturition goes on than among ourselves and other so called polished nations: as also how little care is bestowed on women during the days succeeding childbirth in comparison with the nursing they are said to require with us. But, what is more extraordinary still, such women, so neglected, seem to be less liable to bad accidents than those over whose welfare, physicians, midwives, nurses, and fond and foolish husbands, have watched with tender and unremitting anxiety. Does not this, or ought it not at least, to awake some doubts in our mind, as to which party pursues the right method; and whether over-officious zeal in some and mercenary motives in others have not tended to make of a natural act a very complicated and artificial one? for otherwise it would imply a defect of wisdom in our Creator to have left the great work of peopling

⁷“And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives? and he said, when ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools,” &c.

⁸Funem umbilicalem nunquam ligant, nisi retardetur secundarum disjunctio; quo in casu, funem, cultello divisum, parturientis femori nodo annectunt: nec memini, per tres annos, quibus hoc pago commoratus sum, ullam feminam hœmor-rhagia mortuam esse.

the earth subject to the control and help of man. There are daily examples occurring of parturient women, whether with a view to hide their shame arising from a guilty connection, or whether from accident of warfare, or navigation, who are left without aid from their own sex or obstetrical assistance from the other: yet they bring their offspring into the world in safety, and are often observed to recover from this (certainly) painful act, quicker than if delivered by the rules of art. But these are partial and individual instances, and are nothing in the account with whole nations, where the office of accoucheur or midwife is hardly known, and where women think no more of bringing a child into the world, than of the maturation of a boil, which, when ripened, will heal and discharge its contents as a matter of course.

In a cold climate, and among a disgusting people, Dr. Clarke in his travels in Scandinavia (p. 403) says —“The journeys with raids (sledges) are of course liable to danger and to the utmost degree of fatigue: yet women, far advanced in pregnancy, are often the drivers; and such is their easy labour in parturition, that childbirth hardly occasions any interruption to the progress of the raid.”

In England, the causes of unfavourable gestation and parturition, together with the subsequent danger to which women are supposed to be liable, I consider to be, first, stays; secondly, neglect of exercise and its consequences in impeding functions of the bowels; thirdly, the medicating of sickness; fourthly, unnecessary interference of accoucheurs; fifthly, heated rooms and the want of fresh air; sixthly, hurried and forced delivery; seventhly, hot beds; eighthly, unnecessary and prolonged confinement.

As there were no enclosed fields in the country, cattle turned out to graze were tended by a herdsman. Hence the place of herdsman to a village was of some importance in the eyes of the peasants, and was annually assigned to a man of approved vigilance. For this service he received by the year, from each owner of a pair of oxen, one mid and a half of wheat; for sheep and asses something less; and thus in proportion for all animals that graze. Every day, when daylight appeared, he walked through the village, and each cottager drove out of his cottage-stable his ass, goats, or oxen, which he purposed to send to pasture that day. The herd was thus assembled, and the herdsman, called in Arabic *râay*, conducts them afield, taking care to prevent them from straying into cornfields, vineyards, and the like. For such trespasses he was fined according to the decision of the *natâr* (or overseer) of the village. The *natâr* was always

known by a stout stick, which he carried about with him; and his chief employ was to patrol day and night through the corn fields, orchards, vineyards, &c., to see that no damage was done.

Women seldom mixed in public diversions. On one occasion, after I had resided some time in the village, and was in some degree looked up to, Butrûs, a peasant, came running into my cottage, with a stick in his hand, and out of breath. "For God's sake," (cried he) "there is my niece, Mariam, in the street, among a parcel of strange men, skipping about to a fellow who is beating a drum; —do interpose, sir, and send her away. The village will get a bad name, and they will say of her that Bint Sulyba (the daughter of Sulyba) is a street-walker." This anecdote will serve to show the kind of demeanour which was expected in women, even of the lowest class, and in a small village. In France, an itinerant piper, in a similar place, would have all the lads and lasses dancing around him, and the old folks looking on.

It was about the 20th of February, 1814, that Lady Hester took possession of the monastery of Mar Elias, and I of my cottage at Abra. I had added to it a second cottage for a servants' room, opened a larger door, and endeavoured to make it habitable. Lady Hester's establishment was now very much reduced. As Beaudin recovered but slowly, she hired for a time, as interpreter, the same Damiani whose house we had inhabited.⁹ Pierre was gone home to Dayr el Kamar, and had sent down as cook in his place a woman named Um Bisk, who remained, as it will afterwards be seen, three years with her ladyship. Mariam had gone back to Latakia, and Stefano, who was in love with her, had followed her. I might be accused of inserting very frivolous details, were it not that the domestic incidents which, in travelling in Europe, would be but a counterpart of what occurs in every man's family every day, are here often novel, and always serve to render the picture of Turkish

⁹Extract from Let. xxiii. of a work entitled "Letters of a Prussian Traveller;" Sayda, Sept. 1814.

"The day before our departure, the French Consul introduced us to a Christian in the Levantine costume," (Damiani) "who, during the late war, acted as interpreter to Sir Sydney Smith, and is now major-domo to Lady Hester Stanhope, who, for several years past, has been travelling in the Levant. He informed us she was in a convent near the Drûze mountains, where she had been confined by indisposition, from which, however, she was fast recovering. When this lady visited Sayda, she wore a Turkish dress, and rode an Arabian charger, to the astonishment and admiration of the Turks, who hold her in the highest estimation; and we heard, in many places, that she was actually imagined to be an English princess."

manners more complete. Lady Hester had no horses and no grooms: she rode out daily on a small ass, and was now fast recovering from the debility which successive illnesses had brought upon her.

In the mean time, people were busy in their conjectures as to the reappearance of plague. It had not discontinued raging at Damascus, and St. Jean d'Acre was said to be newly infected. Every reason led to suppose that it would reappear at Sayda this year: we accordingly prepared for it in the manner usual in the country. In times of insecurity, whether from plague or insurrection, or any other cause, the markets were in part or entirely shut up, and he who had not had the precaution to provide against such contingencies found himself sorely straitened. It is with this view that annually a store is made, sufficient for the year's consumption, by every family that can afford it. About two hundred head of poultry were bought, with some sheep and lambs; rice, flour, wheat, figs, raisins, in fact everything that could be called dry stores, was laid in, enough for six or eight months, with oil, butter, candles, soap, &c. Thus provided, it was considered that, in a spot so retired, and so out of everybody's way, we could not very easily be exposed to danger. We were precisely like the crew of a well-victualled ship at sea: we had everything necessary within the walls; with this advantage, that instead of salt beef and hard biscuit we had abundance of fresh provisions. Individually, I must confess I did not look forward to this confinement with much satisfaction. Solitude is no disagreeable thing with a good library: rather otherwise; but books were not to be procured; Lady Hester never had any, and I had lost mine in the shipwreck.

Endowed with a very active mind, and convinced that neglect alone of many common precautions against the introduction of the plague caused the loss of a great number of lives, her ladyship bethought herself of writing to the Emir Beshýr, to advise him how to guard against its encroachments. She considered that the establishment of a patrole, which should watch all the outlets of the mountain, would be sufficient to keep out persons suspected of infection; and she suggested that a post should be established, as in Europe, by which all letters should be transmitted to and from the mountain, subject, in every direction where danger lay, to be fumigated or immersed in vinegar. Some correspondence passed on this subject, and M. Beaudin was sent to explain what was not clearly understood; but nothing was adopted otherwise than had been customary in former cases. It is not unusual for Europeans, impressed with the notion

that the Turks are an ignorant people, to offer them advice on many subjects, which, after all, are connected with a country with whose government, manners, usages, and climate they are unacquainted, and in which they arrive as strangers.

A month passed away at the monastery without any particular occurrence. I built a wall round my cottage, as a farther protection against danger from the plague, in imitation of Lady Hester, who had built one round her residence. The rains had occasionally been very violent, and the roofs of two cottages fell in from the additional weight given by a thorough soaking to the mould with which they were covered. There was not a roof in the village that was not leaky.

It will be recollected that, two years before, Lady Hester paid a visit to the Shaykh Beshýr, the chief of the Drúzes, at Mukhtâra. It was a custom with him to make a circuit annually through the Drúze villages, to administer justice, correct abuses, and collect his rents. For though, as the supreme power was vested in the emir, he could not, properly, arrogate to himself more than the rights of a landlord, still it would seem that, acknowledged as the second person of the mountain, he was in fact the equal of the emir, and, acting accordingly, what he dared not do himself, he caused to be done by his influence. For his domains in villages, farms, orchards, vineyards, and plantations, were always equal to those of the emir himself, and, being by religion a Drúze, he was looked up to by that people as their lawful master.

In his tour he combined pleasure and business. He was accompanied by about fifty attendants, on foot and on horseback, some with guns, some with hawks and dogs, and he sported from village to village. This was his manner: his footmen scoured the neighbouring hills, and drove the game (chiefly red-legged partridges and antelopes) into the valleys, through which he rode in the midst of his falconers and dogs. In the mean time those on foot made the mountains re-echo with shouts; whilst the horsemen occupied the sides of the hills, between the ridges where the footmen were, and drove down the game that was started into the valleys in which the shaykh rode, where it was hawked, or shot, or run down by the dogs. In this way he arrived at Abra on the 20th of March, some servants having preceded him to prepare a cottage for his reception. A few carpets were spread over the mud floor, a cushion or two placed against the wall for his sofa, and this was all that was thought necessary to make him comfortable; nor had he at night a bed to sleep on. When the shaykh was accommodated, his katibs and chief

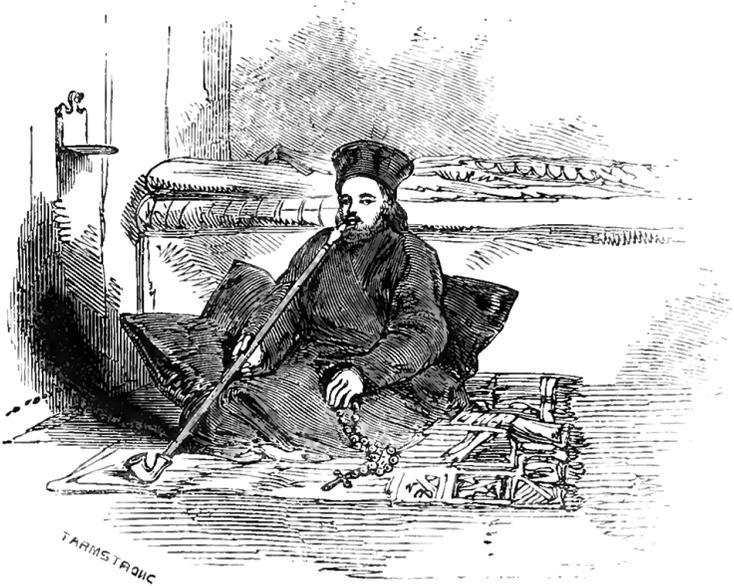
attendants laid their hands on the next best cottages; nor did the peasantry dare on such occasions to do otherwise than yield them up immediately. There was, however, no confusion, and a stranger passing through the village would not have perceived any stir more than usual. Immediately on his arrival, the peasantry hastened to ask permission to be admitted to tell their grievances; but, on the circuit of this year, he confessed his dread of the plague by dispensing with the usual custom of having the hem of his robe, or his hand, kissed by all those who entered.

In the evening Lady Hester sent the dragoman to the shaykh with a message, expressing her regret at not being able to see him, from indisposition: the shaykh, in return, signified the pleasure he felt that she had finally fixed her abode among his people. It cannot be denied that the Orientals are well bred. His conduct on this occasion was very delicate. Fearful that Lady Hester would think it necessary to send him provisions for the night (as is customary on the arrival of any great person who is travelling) he had previously ordered them to be prepared. He was likewise exceedingly strict in commanding that, for the accommodation of himself or his people, not the slightest disturbance should be given to any person or thing appertaining to Lady Hester. He left Abra on the morrow.

I occasionally rode out in the neighbourhood; and, among other places, went to a large monastery, distant about two hours, called St. Saviour's, or Dayr Mkhallas. The monasteries in the mountain, of which there are several, are generally very respectable but plain structures. They are, for the most part, quadrangular, with vaulted cells opening into the court, but which are arranged with little regard to symmetry. St. Saviour's was of the first rank, having a fraternity of fifty friars; and, from its situation on the very top of a mountain, wears an imposing appearance. The road to it was a rugged mule path, which wound and turned in a way unknown in England. Within a short distance, but with the intervention of a deep valley, was the village of Jôon, inhabited by Christians and Metoualis.

The monasteries of the Greek Catholics are as follow:—Dayr Mkhallas (Our Saviour's, near Jôon), with seventy friars; Dayr Sayda (our Lord's) with twelve friars; Dayr el Mezairy, near Gezÿn, with six friars; Dayr Arnêk, above Dayr el Kamar, with six friars; Dayr Aishmayeh, with five friars; Dayr Ayn el Joze (or the walnut spring,) in the Bkâa, with twelve friars; Dayr el Benat, (the maids') for women, near Dayr Mkhallas, with thirty to thirty-five nuns.

The Greek Catholics are called, indifferently, *malky*, or *kuwetly*, of the meaning of which words I must confess myself ignorant. They have bishops at all the cities along the coast, also at Bâalbek, at Carah, at Nebk, &c. There is a sect of the *kuwetly*, which goes by the name of the *Shuwarya*. The Greek Catholic monks adopt the order of St. Basilius, and they smoke tobacco, drink wine, and eat flesh.



A GREEK MONK.

These Greek schismatics retain the dress peculiar to the monks of the Greek Church — a felt hat without a brim, the hair of the head unshorn, and a black woolen gown, girded with a black leather belt. They have blue cotton drawers, and, in the winter, are allowed to wear a coarse jacket over their gown. Their shoes are black, which, in a country where everybody but a priest wears them yellow or red, becomes a singularity also. There are several monasteries of these monks in Mount Lebanon. Of these, the largest is that of St. Saviour, near to the village of Jôon, where reside the superior-general and the patriarch. The Maronites, with whom they are intermingled over the mountain, and who likewise own the supremacy of the pope, hold them nevertheless in aversion, principally, perhaps, because the Greek Catholics are permitted

by their rules to smoke, drink coffee, and eat meat, (when not in seasons of fasting) whilst the Maronites are interdicted from every one of these indulgencies throughout the year.

There are to be found among the Malkys men of great acuteness, and who are well versed in church learning; but the major part of them are no better than peasants, being employed in rearing silkworms, in ploughing land, and other works of husbandry. Such, indeed, are always their occupations during their noviciate; and, in case they exhibit no striking talents, for the rest of their lives also. It must be observed that every article of food and raiment is manufactured by their own body.

At Dayr Mkhallas resided the patriarch of the Greek Catholics, proprietor of Dayr Mar Elias, and successor of him who died there just before our arrival. His name was Macarius, which he had assumed on his elevation to the patriarchal dignity. He was a man of little conversation, and rather awkwardly professed his hope that Lady Hester would long continue to occupy his humble residence. These dignitaries of the Eastern church are accessible to the lowest person, and are not those of old, who could make an emperor tremble on his throne: the most they can now do is to tamper in the intrigues of the mountain, a field too small to give scope to the ambition of a churchman; but even now they are approached with the greatest respect, and persons of their own sect kiss the ground before a patriarch, and then his robe.¹⁰ He is waited upon by priests and deacons, who light his pipe, and do other menial offices about his person. In the East, all distinctions of rank are lost in the presence of a superior, if he be a great man, whether Christian or Moslem. Before a pasha, his vizir, or kekhyah, stands, nor dares sit, unless told to do so. In the same manner, a patriarch keeps his bishop on his legs; but, let the pasha or the patriarch disappear, the kekhyah and bishop will play the same farce with those next inferior to themselves. As the Porte acknowledges but one legitimate Christian church, which is the Greek, the Catholic patriarch cannot be seen in public in his robes, or, indeed, reside anywhere comfortably, but in Mount Lebanon.

On the 28th of March, M. Boutin, a French gentleman, arrived at Sayda, and lodged at his consul's. Lady Hester had known him at Cairo, where, on occasion of a dinner at the house of the French consul she had turned into ridicule the mysterious air which he assumed, and had laughingly denounced him as a spy of Buonaparte's,

¹⁰Franks, of course, decline performing this ceremony.

as, in fact, he was: for he had served as colonel of engineers, and was now on a mission connected with his department. He was said to have been a great friend of Moreau's. He was much urged to remain at Sayda until the plague, which now began to reappear everywhere, should have subsided: but, not being willing to do so, he departed about the 5th or 6th of April, taking with him a servant of Lady Hester's, whom she ceded to him as likely to be useful on the journey; and so he would have been, but they were destined never to return. The servant was carried off by the plague, and M. Boutin was assassinated by his own Turkish domestics in an unfrequented part of the Ansáry mountains! His story will be related in another place.

It was now the time of Lent, which was kept with much strictness by the Greek Catholics: but their rigid observance of fasts savoured strongly of pride; and, even in my own little family, between Giovanni, who was a Roman Catholic, and the kitchen girl, who was a Greek Catholic, I was often made very angry. Whatever I left at dinner was thrown to the dogs. What was cooked for me would neither do for man nor maid: and what was cooked for the man would not do for the maid, because their fasts fell at different times, according to the old and new style. Yet would they drink drams, lie, cheat, or do anything morally wrong, and then look me in the face, and justify their conduct, because, forsooth, they had not broken the fast.

The rains this year had continued somewhat later than usual; but the weather was now become very fine and warm, and the breeding of silkworms had begun to busy the whole of the peasantry. On the first days of April, the worms were hatched from their eggs, by being carried for a day or two in the bosoms of the women; that kind of warmth, or that degree of it, being found to be most fit for the purpose.

Nasýfa, widow of Murad Bey, once the ruler of Egypt, whose acquaintance Lady Hester had made whilst she was at Cairo, sent her about this time a black slave, named Hanýfy. She was thirteen years old, and exceedingly well made. Much pains were taken to render her a good servant; and, as she had been bred a Mahometan, her ladyship never would allow any attempts to be used to convert her to Christianity, but caused an old imám of Sayda to come, day by day, to give her instructions in her religion, and to teach her the forms of prayer. Many pious persons may be disposed to blame Lady Hester, who thus shut out from a young mind the light of the

Gospel; but she was accustomed to say, "I am a philosopher and not a missionary, and, between millions of Mahometans and millions of Christians, who dispute which is the right way to Heaven, I never pretend to set myself up as a judge which is the best."

When Hanýfy came from Egypt to Syria, a letter was sent with her, describing her merits by negatives; there being, in a new bought slave, few positive qualities ascertainable, until he or she has been some time in the possession of a purchaser. This letter was written by the person at Cairo into whose trust Hanýfy had been delivered, and by whose wife all proper examination had been made of her fitness for her new station. The slave-sellers are accustomed to give three days' trial, and the result was that, Hanýfy did not snore, did not talk or walk in her sleep, had a pleasant voice, seemed docile; that her back was not crooked; and that she had no bodily deformity. Such was the character she brought with her; and whether she was virtuous and good never seemed to have troubled the inquirer's mind.

Just at this time, I was exceedingly delighted by an unexpected discovery of an ancient sepulchre, made not far from my residence. As I now spoke Arabic, the news of the day often formed a subject of conversation between me and the villagers, my neighbours. One evening, a peasant, who was sufficiently aware of the curiosity which European travellers feel upon matters connected with the ancient history of these countries, informed me, that a cavern, full of painted figures, had been discovered, the preceding evening, within a short distance of Sayda. He added other circumstances sufficient to excite in me a desire to see it. Having, therefore, acquainted myself with the situation of the place, I went to it on the following morning.

The spot to which I had been directed was about half a mile to the north-east of Sayda, close to a deep glen, named Wady Abu Ghyás, and within, a hundred yards of one of the gardens to the east. A camel, whilst grazing here, sunk into a hole knee-deep, where it remained without being able to extricate itself. The driver, having relieved it from its distressing situation, was naturally induced to look down, and examine the hole; and, as it appeared to go to some depth, the constant notion which prevails (as has been before said) among all classes of people in the East, of hidden treasures, led him to fancy that it might be an opening to something of this kind; so he proceeded to enlarge it. The soil readily yielded, and presented the appearance of an underground chamber. Eager to realize the good fortune which awaited him, as he now supposed, he procured

a light, and, letting himself down into the opening, found himself in a spacious vault, the walls of which were covered with painted figures almost as large as life. He cautiously proceeded to examine the place, when, having convinced himself that his search would turn to no profitable end, he ascended to the open day, and went and communicated his discovery to the people of a caravansery, the resort, as in the inns of other countries, of many idlers. Some of these returned with him to the cavern: and the superstition of a part of them immediately converted the figures into a representation of Christian mysteries, a circumstance not worth mentioning, if it were not that this notion was afterwards the cause of their being defaced by the Turks.



INTERIOR OF A GREEK SEPULCHRE.

It was on the morning succeeding the discovery that I went to the spot. The chamber was crowded with people, brought thither by the report which had been circulated the preceding evening in Sayda respecting it. The Turks had already picked out the eyes of one of the most beautiful figures, and otherwise defaced it. Being known in the neighbourhood, my interference had some effect in stopping

them from proceeding farther, and I succeeded in convincing such as were then present that the paintings had no Christian symbol, and consequently could not be, as they imagined, any representation of the Holy Supper, or of the Virgin Mary, &c. as they thought them. But party succeeded party, and the task of reasoning with them all was impossible; for, to portraits of the human figure, whether Christian or pagan, the Turks are always enemies. Having no drawing materials, I could only take a hasty sort of outline in ink, which sketch, however, afterwards served me somewhat in the restoration of parts of some of the figures, subsequently destroyed. I again visited the cavern on the following day. Just at this time the plague broke out, and, raging terribly, spread consternation in the village of Abra, and in the town of Sayda. Called away by my medical duties towards others, and by the feeling of self-preservation, which forbade me to risk the danger resulting in pestiferous times from the contact of strange persons, so inevitable in a confined place, the sepulchre was abandoned. I will here anticipate the order of my journal, and relate how I afterwards made copies of these paintings, a rough sketch of which is here given.

The plague ceased in the month of July. I then bethought myself again of the sepulchre, and revisited it. Much injury had been done to the paintings. The only chance which remained of rescuing them from oblivion was the arrival of some traveller in these parts who could draw. This hope was not realized until the year 1816, when, in the month of March, Mr. William Bankes, the late Member of Parliament for Cambridge University, came to Mar Elias; and, having convinced me, by several drawings which he showed me, that he was an excellent draftsman, I conducted him to the sepulchre. This gentleman compared the paintings in it to those at Herculaneum.

During the lapse of a few months, considerable damage had been caused by the alluvion of mould driven in by the rains. The figures nearest the entrance were covered by it up to the shoulders, and the floor was sodden with wet. Mr. Bankes, nevertheless, executed in two days a perspective view of the interior, in colours. But he carried his projects yet farther: for he formed the design of removing some of these fresco-paintings from their places, and, accordingly, employed a mason to cut them out from the piers of the walls; which was effected in two instances.

Soon after this he departed, and, just at the time, a supply of drawing materials reached me from England. In watching the delineations I had seen made by him, I had conceived them to be

inadequate to the purpose of giving a complete representation of the sepulchral chamber, more especially as the ceiling had been entirely left out, and some other omissions made, which seemed to me material. I accordingly set diligently to work, and copied them as well as I could.¹¹

For the better elucidation of our subject, it will be proper to say a few words on the different kinds of tombs and sepulchres common to the country of which we are now speaking.

The traveller, who visits the Levant, cannot fail to be struck with the numerous excavations which are found near the site of almost every ancient city. These are readily understood from their form to have been sepulchres. They occur in a variety of shapes: some are simple oblong sarcophagi, hewn out of the rock, and only capacious enough to hold one human body; others are spacious grottoes several yards in length and width, in the sides of which recesses or cells were hollowed out as receptacles of the dead; whilst, intermediate to these two, is a multitude of others, the size of which, and the more or less labour bestowed in making them, depended, it may be conjectured, on the means of those who caused them to be excavated.

Through the whole length of the coast of Syria, from Laodicea to Jaffa, we had remarked these sepulchres, and had observed them, likewise, in the interior of the country: as at Heliopolis or Balbec, at Malula, a village on the road from Damascus to Emesa, at Jerusalem, at Damascus, and at other places: but, in every instance, they were open; always in a state of decay, from the effects of time and the weather, and seemed long to have been the haunts of jackalls, or the pens of sheep and goats. In all of them little remained beside the bare rock, out of which they had been chiselled.

A concise description of the various forms observable in these sepulchres may not be unnecessary, as introductory to our particular subject.

The rudest sarcophagi, and such as we may suppose served for the tombs of the common people, were oblong parallelograms (*fig. 3*), large enough to receive (besides the corpse) a case or coffin enclosing

¹¹I was generally in the sepulchre, from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, and was obliged to have three assistants, two holding candles, whilst a third sponged the paintings, as I copied them, in order to bring out the colours, which method I learned from Mr. Bankes. Every thing was begun and completed on the spot, nothing being worked up at home; a custom too common with some persons, whose recollection is made to supply the place of reality.

it: these were hewn out on the surface of any convenient rock.¹² Such seem to have been covered with a double pent lid (*fig. 1*) and which had within a concavity corresponding to the exterior, and in them perhaps were placed terra cotta coffins; a conjecture rendered probable by the discovery made in 1805 of a coffin¹³ of this material, found entire in one of these sarcophagi near the city of Sidon.

There was a second sort of sarcophagus (*fig. 6*), of the same shape, as to the interior, with the first mentioned, and hewn likewise out of the rock; but the rock was chiselled away externally, so as to leave it entirely in relief and insulated.¹⁴ The lids and sides of this sort were plain in some, and in others sculptured into ornaments, mostly consisting of bulls' heads and festoons of flowers.¹⁵ Of the plain kind several are still remaining on the road from Sayda to Beyrout, near what is called the Gruffer or toll-house. This spot has obtained the name of the Jews' Sepulchres (Kabür el Yahüd). Numberless fragments of this kind of sarcophagus are to be seen in and near every town in Syria, often of marble, and sculptured in the most finished manner.

A third kind of sarcophagus is that hewn horizontally, like an oven, in the sides of rocks. In these were placed earthenware coffins, like that described in the preceding page. The whole length of the cavity was, in one instance which I measured, somewhat more than that of the human body. At the mouth, or at the bottom, or somewhere near it, there was placed a tablet or a stele (*fig. 5*), with the name of the deceased on it.¹⁶

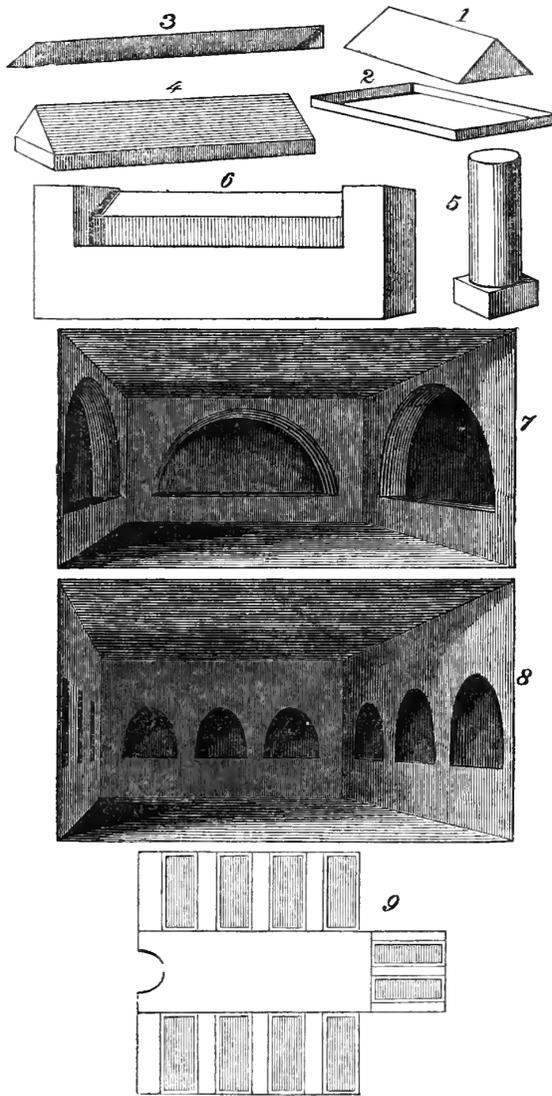
¹²The sepulchre shown as that of Our Saviour at Jerusalem, as well as that of Nicodemus at Bethlehem, is of this kind.

¹³It was found near the spring which supplies the village of Abra with water. A French gentleman, at that time residing near the village, heard of the circumstance as a matter of gossip among the servants of his house, but too late to save it. It had been broken to pieces by the peasant boys, who attached no more value to it than to a common piece of useless pottery. A gold ring and a pair of ear-rings of the same metal were in it, and were sold to the goldsmiths of Sayda, who melted them down to make more modern trinkets.

¹⁴"Near it there are many sepulchres cut in the rock; some of them like stone coffins above ground: others are cut into the rocks like graves, having stone covers over them." — *Maundrell*

¹⁵"The chests were carved on the outside with ox heads, and wreaths hanging between them, after the manner of adorning heathen altars." — *Maundrell*, p. 11, f. ed.

¹⁶A flat tablet, once in my possession, was found, together with the earthenware coffin, near Abra spring. I could not gain correct information as to the position which it occupied.



VARIOUS SARCOPHAGI HEWN OUT OF ROCKS.

Another kind consisted of an arched alcove, excavated in the side of a rock, the base in its whole length being a sarcophagus. Sometimes these were single; at other times they were triple, and then occupied the three sides of a subterraneous chamber; the doorway filling up the fourth. (*Fig. 7.*)

After these come the sepulchres on a larger scale, containing several recesses (*fig. 8*), in which the sarcophagi are perpendicular to the sides, and not, as just seen, parallel. In some instances these sarcophagi are excavated breast high from the ground, and are of a length and height just sufficient for the sliding in of a coffin. Of these there is one in a garden near Sayda, in tolerable preservation. The chamber is subterranean; and although the inscriptions¹⁷ over the mouth of each sarcophagus are still legible, yet the stucco which coated the walls is, from the moisture which oozes through the ceiling, quite discoloured, and, in many places, crumbled away. In the immediate vicinity of the same city are perhaps a hundred sepulchral chambers, the general conformation of which varies only in the greater or less number of the cells.

These form a sixth class, wherein the cells are squares or parallelograms, having their sarcophagi sunk from the level of the floor. (*Fig. 9*) Most of them have an arched entrance, where once hung a door. In one or two only can be discovered some indistinct remains of the sculpture which adorned the entrance or the interior. In a few of them some bones are found, but all seem to have been rifled, and marks of the pickaxe are often visible in the sides and in the floors, proceeding, no doubt, from the attempts which have been made to find treasures, supposed to have been concealed in them.

In some places two or more sepulchres are connected with each other by a door of communication, although examples of this are fewer along the coast than in the interior. Near the sea, throughout the whole length of Mount Lebanon and the mountainous chain northward of it, an argillaceous rock, easy to work and easy of access, afforded great facilities for these excavations, and probably induced each separate family to choose its own tomb apart from that of another: in the interior of the country other causes seem to have operated. Thus, in the modern village of Malula, on the road from Damascus to Emesa, the modern Hems, where a solitary projecting rock seems to have confined these excavations within a narrow compass, we find innumerable chambers hewn into a variety of forms, close to and above each other, and in many cases communicating. The outer one, by which entrance is obtained to

¹⁷I have found among my papers the copy of an inscription which I believe to have been taken from one of them. It is as follows:

ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΥ ΦΙΛΙΟΣ
ΛΕΟΝΙΔΟΥ ΑΛΥΠΙΟΙΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ

the others, in some instances has its door several yards from the ground, and is accessible only by a ladder, or by steps cut out of the rock, probably to prevent sacrilegious profanation.¹⁸

Before we come to the sepulchral chamber with the paintings, I will first say a few words of another of the same kind, discovered posterior to that above mentioned. Its existence was made known to me by one of the boys, who assisted in holding the candles during the time I was employed in drawing. A description of it will serve as a useful step to the gradations which we have been trying to establish in tracing these sepulchres from their simple to their most perfect shape.

It is situate, like the other, on the first rise of Mount Lebanon, within a mile and a half of Sayda, and almost due east of it, above and near to the small village of Heleleyah, and close to the footpath leading from that village to Dayr Mar Elias. The entrance was almost choked up with mould, washed in (as in the foregoing instance) by the winter rains. Being provided with candles, I entered, and found it to be a low vaulted chamber. In the sides and extremity of it were cells, having in their floors sarcophagi, which sarcophagi had evidently been rifled many generations ago. On the ceiling was painted, towards the four corners, a something not unlike a carpenter's square. The south-east side was totally defaced, and the bottom nearly so. The chamber was hewn out of an argillaceous rock: but it seemed to have been executed with no great care, as the sides and arches of the recesses had many inequalities.

I now proceed to the description of the cavern at Abu Ghyás; this being, as we have already observed, the name given to the sepulchral chamber, near the glen so called.

The ground plan (see fig. 9, p. 346, and p. 340) represents an oblong chamber, 27 feet long by 10 feet wide. On each side were four recesses or cells; and at the bottom, facing the entrance, two. Each recess contained two sarcophagi, two of which were free from

¹⁸Maundrell seems to have thought that they were calculated for places of security, for he says (page 117, Oxford, 1732, 8vo.) — "We were carried ... to see a place . . . which very well deserves a traveller's attention. At about the distance of a mile from the sea there runs along a high rocky mountain, in the side of which are hewn a multitude of grotts, all very little differing from each other. They have entrances of about two feet three quarters. On the inside you find in most of them a room of about four yards square, on the one side of which is the door, on the other there are as many little cells, elevated about two feet above the floor. . . . The great doubt concerning them is whether they were made for the dead or for the living."

rubbish; but, in the remaining cells, the mould covered them so completely as to render it impossible to come at them.

The ceiling was slightly arched, and, from the centre of it to the floor, the height was nine feet. The whole was hewn out of a rock, and worked with much exactitude.¹⁹ It is probable that the descent into it was by steps; but these were now entirely hid by the mould washed in through the aperture, and which, accumulated near the entrance, threatened to choke up the vault altogether. The four sarcophagi not covered with mould were in length about 6 feet 8 inches by two feet wide. In them I found a few human bones. They had no coating, nor any remains to show of what materials the coffins, once deposited in them, had been. The lids of the sarcophagi in the left hand corner were still lying on them in broken fragments, and appeared to have been each composed of one single block of stone, without any sculptured ornaments on it. These sarcophagi, like those we have before described, bore evident marks of having been opened forcibly; for the sake, probably, of the gold ornaments usually left on the persons of the dead; or possibly from fanaticism.

The cells were painted, and each in a different pattern, but always in plain or flowered stripes parallel to each other. It will be observed that one of the recesses or cells was longer than the rest. Was it that the heads of a family, or the founders of a sepulchre, laid claim to this distinction?

Between every two cells was a pier, so that each side consisted of four cells with intermediate piers, and the bottom of two, with one intermediate pier. These were surmounted by a cornice, comprehended in a double border, between which were painted festoons of red roses, tied at each end, and hung on a light blue ground. The piers, which measured 57 inches in height, but varied in breadth from 27 to 40 inches, were ornamented with figures in fresco, $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, painted on a fawn or stone-coloured ground. In three of them the colouring admitted of being examined very closely: but the other six were done in a bold manner, and would not bear the eye too near to them. Seven of the nine figures were represented carrying a dish, as if for a repast. Over the first was the word

¹⁹Maundrell bears testimony to the neat workmanship of places of this description in Syria. He says, "But, within, you arrive in a large and fair room about seven or eight yards square, cut out of the natural rock. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with lead and plummet, could build a room more regular, and the whole is so firm and entire that it may be called a chamber hollowed out of one piece of marble."

ΓΛΥΚΩΝ; on the second pier was a female with a scroll in her hand, apparently a priestess; on the third a female resting on an urn. There was a peculiarity observable in this and two other figures, that lines seemed to have been drawn by the artist for his guidance as to the proportions of the body. The next figure had the word ΚΟΛΟΚΕΡΟΣ: the next ΕΛΙΚΩΝ: the next ΠΙΕΘΝΟΣ: one was without a name: and the last had ΝΗΡΕΥΣ. The ceiling was not the least curious part of the sepulchre. It has been said that it was arched. On a slate-coloured or light blue ground, scattered roses, with here and there some single flowers of a different kind, were painted in red. Among these were mingled, without any regard to order, wreaths of roses, knotted at the end, which, at first sight, seemed like so many centipedes. Birds of various kinds, with their wings shut, and winged boys in the act of flying, were interspersed. Thus, then, I have endeavoured to describe, more minutely perhaps than was necessary, the interior of this tomb. But to some persons, lovers of antiquity, such details may not be uninteresting; and I shall perhaps be excused, if, in explanation of the figures and ornaments painted on the walls, I add an ancient inscription, which seems illustrative of them. It is as follows:—

Tib: Claudius Drusi F. Caes. Aug. Germ. Pont. Max. Trib. Pot. ii Con. Desig. iii Imp. iii P. P. Dec. vij Collegii Fabri M. R. II. S. M. et libertate donavit sub conditione ut quotannis rosas ad monumentum ejus deferant, et ibi epulentur dumtaxat in v. Id. Jul. Quod si negligierint, tunc ad viij ejusdem Collegii pertinere debebit conditione supradicta,—

Tiberius Claudius, son of Drusus, Caesar, Augustus, Germanicus, HighPontiff, twice Tribune, thrice Consul Elect, thrice Emperor, Father of his country—hereby hath given to seven decurions of the Faber (smith's?) College of the municipality of Ravenna a thousand Sestertii (£8 1s. 5½d.) and their liberty, on condition that, every year, they carry to his tomb roses, and make one repast in it on the 5th of the ides of July only. But, should they neglect to do this, then will it belong to eight others of the same College upon the above conditions. — *Inscription on the tomb of Drusus:* vid. *Lives of Suetonius*, by Henri Ophellot de la Pause, p. 100, vol, iii. 8vo.

This inscription throws light on our subject in two ways — first, from it we learn that it was customary for the living to make feasts in the sepulchres of their deceased relations and friends; and next,

to scatter roses over their graves. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the sum appropriated to this purpose might, in the course of years, cease to be paid; and, instead, a representation of that which was before substantially done be substituted: when, as in this case, we should have, painted on the walls, servants carrying dishes, a priestess reading, and another making libations. The ceiling would be sprinkled with roses; and, in a word, we should have the same picture which we actually find here.

But, that such was the custom, we have farther proof in a dissertation on this very subject inserted in the *Thes: Antiq: Rom:* vol. xii., p. 1074, fol. *Lug: Bat:* 16.99: for, in a description of the ancient sepulchres of the family of the Nasones, by J. P. Bellorius, (after having spoken of the several rites customary on the death of great persons,) he goes on in the following words, which are here a translation, the original text being subjoined.²⁰

We will only add a few words more touching the flowers, wreaths, and different kinds of garlands, which are found, either *painted* or sculptured, in many sepulchres. This, indeed, appertains to a custom of the old Romans, by them borrowed from the Greeks, of not only binding a wreath round the temples of the dead, but also of honouring their tombs by annually strewing flowers and roses,

²⁰Pauca adhuc dicenda restant de floribus, coronis, et sertis variis, qua; in hoc multisq; aliis sepulchris picta et sculpta re-periuntur. Nimirum pertinet ad morem veterum Romano-rum, a Grascis derivatum, non solum coronandi mortuos suos, sed etiam sepulchra eorum quotannis honorandi sparsione florum, rosarum, et unguentorum; quoniam existimabant haec defunctis esse gratissima. Mos hic adeo erat receptus, ut quidam, moribundus, haeredes suos, in tabulis testamenti, officii hujus praestandi necessitate adstringeret; ingenti pecuniae summa huic fini destinata. Quod testantur, non solum auctores Grasci et Latini, sed etiam—inscriptioes et ornamenta sepulchralia, quae, ut hodieque ex antiquis monumentis apparet, ex coronis, sertis, frondibus, et floribus, constabant. Neque solum praeceperant ut sibi quotannis rosis et odoribus parentaretur, sed etiam, eum in finem, sibi comparabant bortos, sepulchris suis vicinos, ut ex illorum redivis parentalia ille fierent: quod ex sequenti inscriptione colligitur. Long: Patrol-lus, secutus pietatem col: centum bortos cum asdficio huic sepul. juncto vivus donavit, ut ex redivis eorum largius rosas et escas patrono suo et quandoque sibi parentaretur.— Forma usitata est in antiq: inscrip.—Ut quotannis rosas ad monumentum ejus deferant. Rosae, minirum, pras omnibus aliis floribus iu maximo habebantur pretio. Sed, &c.—Vid. eod. vol. *De jure manium* à Jacobo Guthcri, lib. 2. cap. xxviii.

Again,— Porro solenne fuit antiquis Graecis et Romanis caenas ferales apparare statis et anniversariis saepe temporibus, chm in honorem ac memoriam defuncti, turn ut per vini cibique lenimen ejus desiderium levaretur. Petebat autem stulta gen-tilitas mortuorum animas ab inferis reduces iis vesci et delectari.

and by sprinkling odours [in them]; for they had a notion that this was grateful to the defunct. And such usages were so prevalent, that many, on the approach of death, tied down their heirs, by clauses in their wills, to the performance of this duty; a large sum of money being set apart for the purpose. This we learn, not only from ancient authors, both Greek and Latin, but likewise from sepulchral inscriptions and decorations: which last, as we gather from ancient tombs still remaining, consisted of wreaths, garlands, foliage, and flowers. Nor did they merely enjoin that these annual obsequies should be celebrated by roses and odours; but, moreover, with this very view, they purchased gardens [or orchards] adjoining their sepulchres, and appropriated the rents of them to their obsequies: which may be inferred from the following inscription. — Long: Patrollus, influenced by the religious observances of his order, did, during his lifetime, make a donation of a hundred fruit orchards, with the building adjoining this sepulchre, in order that, from their rents, an abundant supply of roses and herbs might be appropriated to his patron's obsequies [might adorn his patron's grave,] and, some day, his own.

The formula most used in ancient inscriptions is—'That roses be brought annually to his monument:' because roses were considered more costly than other flowers.

These remarks are quite in point, and make sufficiently clear the purpose of the ornaments painted in this sepulchre. For, when the survivors of a dead person were unable, for want of funds set apart for that purpose, to bring fresh roses, garlands, &c., and to give banquets in his honour, we may suppose that they then caused, as being next to the reality, a representation of such funeral ceremonies to be depicted on the walls of his sepulchre.

But what is somewhat in confirmation of this ancient custom is a usage which still obtains among the Christians and Mahometans of Egypt. Every year they perform funeral rites at the tombs of their deceased relations. These consist in going to the cemetery, a whole family together; and there, under a tent, or, if rich people, in a small structure raised for that purpose over the tomb, they pass several days, moaning and howling at certain intervals, and then quietly amusing themselves in eating, smoking, conversation, or whatever else they please to do.

Of the antiquity of tombs hollowed out in rocks we have the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, as used by the Jews, and of Herodotus, as common among the Egyptians. The Greeks originally burned

their dead: and it was, probably, at the time of the invasion of the Persian empire by Alexander, that the custom of using stone coffins was first adopted by them.

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