EIGHT YEARS

IN

ASIA AND AFRICA

FROM 1846 TO 1855.

BY

J. J. BENJAMIN II.
FROM FOLTITSCHENY IN THE MOLDAVIA.

WITH A PREFACE BY DR. BERTHOLD SEEMANN.

WITH A MAP AND CORRESPONDING NOTES FROM BENJAMIN OF TUDELA, R. PETACHIA, PEDRO TEIXEIRA AND RITTER'S ERDKUNDE.

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1859.

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PREFACE.

One of the most pleasing contemplations of our time is to see abuses, which have existed for thousands of years, corrected and prejudices sanctioned by numberless centuries removed. The sun of enlightenment begins to reach the remotest parts of the earth, and warms with its rays objects and conditions, which appeared to have been condemned for ever to an icy death-like life. In simple words: Science now more than ever makes its salutary influence felt, and all that does not rest upon that foundation, finds its very continuation threatened. Whereever it can be applied one knows beforehand to which side victory will finally incline; and it is this conviction that spurs on to ever fresh exertion, and ever inspires fresh courage for continued combat against everything false and bad; whether it appears to us in the form of prejudice, of abuse, of oppression or of vice. — The parts visited by Herr J. J. Benjamin, the countries of the East, offer to that exertion an immeasurable field; all that debases mankind has held there for centuries an undisturbed sway, and created such confusion in the notions of right and wrong, that for the present one dare not hope for a speedy removal of this fearful condition of society. Fanaticism stands forth there in its most repulsive form, and often with bloody finger traces the horrors of its errors on the pages of history. Might, not right, takes the precedence; and he, who pos-

sesses not the former, can *never* obtain the latter. Before all others it is especially so with the Jews, who, everywhere dispersed, in no place forming a „people", are exposed to all the wretchedness of arbitrary government. Only in a few places, such as Bagdad, do they enjoy a happier condition, and develop there an activity and prosperity, which is as advantageous to themselves, as it is for the places in which they have settled. In most places however our Benjamin found his co-religionists crushed under the weight of arbitrary oppression, here and there even in absolute slavery, others only in name belonging to that great sect, whose traditions have exercised the most abiding influence upon mankind. The deepest resentment takes possession of the philanthropist at the description of such a condition; and filled with pity he looks around for the means to remedy such a state of things. Happily these lie nearer than a superficial consideration of the subject would incline us to suppose; they consist first in the removal of prejudices, under which the Jews still groan even in some of the most advanced parts of Europe. Every man of enlightenment, in whatever circle of society he may move, can do his part towards this; and as the great statesman, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe assured the British Parliament on the 27th April 1858, it is our failure hitherto in removing the fetters of prejudice in Western Countries, which binds the hands of the friends of religious freedom and political equality of the Jews in the East. — When the furtherance of such a sacred purpose is in question, surely it behoves every enlightened man to contribute joyfully his mite. Arguments in favour of his doing so are not wanting; for the learning of the last years have supplied them abundantly. Moreover the Jews, in every place where they have been put on a footing of equality with other religious sects, have developed an industry, attended by the most happy results for those countries which have accorded this act of justice; and this has authorised the political economist to ask with good reason: „If it would not be more advantageous to encourage by liberal concessions

such an active intelligent people, rather than to restrict them in their material and mental progress?" — The Jews of our time have been most successful in their exertions in science and art, and many of the most esteemed names among poets and authors, have been pointed out by them with just pride as their brethren in the faith. What this highly gifted people have effected under the most unfavourable circumstances, under continual oppression and clogging prejudices, historians have sufficiently proved. But what, if free, they could effect for mankind and the world, bids defiance to every calculation; it offers the elements of a power which no political economist, no politician, who would not lay himself open to the charge of shortsightedness, dare undervalue. Wherever these people are found, even if it be in the most depressed state, they furnish matter for reflection, and germs capable of extraordinary developement. Apart from their Biblical history, great interest has always been connected with the Jews in their separation and dispersion; and to ascertain which country received the ten lost tribes of Israel is a scientific problem, the solution of which possesses universal importance. — To this end Benjamin's „Eight years in Asia and Africa" furnishes an unpretending but nevertheless a valuable contribution, which as such merits recommendation, even to those, who do not belong to the same faith as the estimable author. May these few words serve to recommend this book, — be a helping hand, which one traveller willingly lends to another when they accidentally meet, soon after by *different paths* to continue their earthly wanderings towards the *same goal.*

22. Canonbury Square, Islington, London.
May 3, 1858.

Berthold Seemann, Ph. D., F. L. S.,
Adjunctus Praesidii of the Imperial Leopoldino-Caroline Academy.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

During the time that the present work was in course of printing, the author had the honour of being allowed to lay parts of it before several of the most renowned men of science, whose favourable opinions of them he prefixes to his own introductory lines; as in them he finds the best proof that his endeavours have not been quite destitute of result.

I.

Extract from a letter of His Excellency Baron Alexander v. Humboldt, Member of the King's Privy Council, and Chamberlain to His Majesty, at Berlin.

Acknowledging the noble purpose which you have pursued in your travels in distant lands to ascertain the condition of a scattered and oppressed people, I have read with much interest several portions of your book. You portray conditions of degradation in the oppressed, and of arbitrary power in the oppressors, which are but little known in Europe, and which will assuredly and with justice induce many to peruse your work.

May your new undertakings be likewise attended with success!

Berlin, March 25th 1858.

Alexander von Humboldt.

II.

Opinion of Professor Dr. Carl Ritter in Berlin.

Several chapters which I have read from proof sheets of an oriental journey of Herr Benjamin have much interested me. They describe in very clear and simple language the adventures and experiences of the author; written certainly in a special point of view, but in the warmest interest of his brethren and companions in the faith. They are calculated to contribute in no slight degree, by awakening interest in the West, to new and more complete journies and researches for the improvement of their state in the East; and every real exertion in behalf of their oppressed condition must be attended with fruitful result for a better future.

Berlin, March 30th 1858.

C. Ritter, Dr. & Prof. phil.
Member of the Academy of Sciences.

III.

Opinion of Professor Dr. H. Petermann in Berlin.

The travels of Herr J. J. Benjamin, which he undertook in the same spirit as his celebrated namesake of Tudela, gives interesting disclosures respecting the dispersion of his brethren in the faith in the different countries he has visited, respecting their communities, their customs and traditions, and may serve, by being brought into comparison with the work of that Rabbi, to make known how the Israelitish population in those parts has in one part increased and in another decreased. Notwithstanding his partiality for his brethren he does not conceal their faults, their want of education and their superstition, when it comes to his view; and altogether his accounts bear the stamp of truth and

credibility; so that the work, written as it is with freshness and liveliness, will gain the interest of many readers. This at any rate I heartily wish. — I can corroborate much of it by my own experience.

Berlin, March 29th 1858.

H. Petermann.

IV.

Opinion of Dr. A. Helfferich in Berlin.

To judge from what he has already accomplished, a second accurate research of Asia by Herr Benjamin would, in my opinion, lead to even more satisfactory results. He is perfectly conversant with the condition of things in that country, and just the man to draw forth information respecting the now completely lost remnant not only of the Jews, but likewise of the Nestorians of Central-Asia. An invaluable acquisition of manuscripts could be then expected, which could not fail to be welcome to every friend of civilisation. The more difficult it is to make researches amid the ruins of antiquity the more sincerely is it to be wished that many others would not shun the hazard of such a journey to these clouded but memorable countries; and the way and manner in which Herr Benjamin has understood his work, and in part has already accomplished it, justifies us in forming great hopes for the future. May the expectations of the worthy traveller himself be fulfilled!

Berlin, April 10th 1858.

Adolph Helfferich.

V.

Opinion of Dr. Magnus in Breslau.

Being requested by Herr Benjamin from the Moldavia to give my opinion of his book of travels, which will shortly appear complete in print, concerning his eight years' wanderings and adventures in Asia and Africa, I can assert with the fullest confidence, as far as I have had an opportunity of looking through them, that these accounts are not only adapted to every educated person, as interesting and entertaining as well as instructive, but that they are, in so far as they describe from the author's own observation, the state of the Jews in the above mentioned countries at the present time, a valuable acquisition to science. Herr Benjamin's work possesses peculiar interest from the unassuming spirit and simple language in which it is written, reminding as of the book of travels of his celebrated brother in the faith and namesake of the 12th century after Christ, of the Massaot of Benjamin of Tudela, by the side of which it worthily deserves a place.

Breslau, June 15th 1858.

Dr. E. J. Magnus,

Prof. of Eastern and Rabbinical Literature
at the University of Breslau.

Space does not permit me to have printed with these the opinions of other learned men of our time.

After such recommendations as these I hardly dare venture myself, and in fact I deem it superfluous to say more of the work in question. After the exertions of several years I have found in *them* not only the richest reward for all my labours, but the courage necessary for the publication of this work, as well as a spur to me for unceasing efforts in the prosecution of that which I have begun.

In laying the results of my eight years' researches before the general reader as well as before all my brethren

in the faith, I venture to reckon on the indulgent opinion of all those who know the difficult and almost impracticable task imposed upon me. Since the days of the venerable and celebrated Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, no one has exclusively devoted himself to such a solemn undertaking, and this secular interruption of a highly important enterprise, increases the natural and numerous difficulties which oppose themselves to the prosecution of the matter.

Notwithstanding all these obstacles, I believe I have still succeeded in throwing some light on the remnant of the descendants of a people, whose long exile of hundreds of years has only appeared in the annals of history; of a people, who deserve the researches and sympathy of all those who are impressed with a knowledge of the high mission which Providence had assigned them. I have endeavoured by a faithful description of their present condition, and by an investigation of their ancient traditions, to draw them forth from their night of forgetfulness; happy shall I esteem myself if thereby I have been able to awaken some sympathy for them, and if I may hope to obtain some amelioration of their material condition, some of the benefits of civilisation, and in particular religious tolerance. Above all others, however, I wish to awaken the sympathy of my fellow-believers in Europe for their unhappy brethren, who are exiled in those inhospitable countries, which are seldom, if ever, trodden by the foot of a European. Under the yoke of fanaticism and barbarism for hundreds of years, nothwithstanding all persecutions and oppressions, notwithstanding pillage and murder, they have still remained steadfast in the faith of their fathers. If through my descriptions anything effectual should by really achieved, then indeed I should not consider lost the troubles and dangers of a long and wearisome pilgrimage.

Besides this great and chief object of my wanderings in the East, I have endeavoured to give in their proper places in my work, by the introduction of historical, geographical, statistical, and other notices, some elucidation, until now un-

known, respecting the countries I have visited, and I hope that these will not be everywhere unwelcome.

The French original edition of this work only contains an account of my journey in Asia; and as I was not able to superintend personally the printing of it, a number of mistakes in the events themselves, as well as in the geographical names, have crept in. The present English edition contains besides the travels in Asia, accounts of my wanderings in Africa; and is likewise throughout corrected and improved.

After having ceased for a time my wanderings and researches for the purpose of publishing this work, I intend again to resume them. — In a short time I shall with God's help undertake a second journey to the East, for which I am furnished with a number of important instructions for my researches from esteemed hand, and hope after the completion of my journey to be able to furnish a more exact and valuable work.

Hannover, May 1859.

Israel Joseph Benjamin.

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INTRODUCTION
TO BENJAMIN'S ACCOUNT OF „EIGHT YEARS IN ASIA AND AFRICA."

Pedro Teixeira.

By

Dr. M. Kayserling.[1]

An unsettled and wandering life has been the appointed lot of the Jews for thousands of years. As this people in their early state led a nomadic life, so too in later years, after they had disappeared from the number of nations, did the unhappy Jews, accustomed to expulsion and exile, wander from place to place, from country to country, dependent on the policy and caprice of various Governors and Princes.

This unsettled, wandering life, which increased the sufferings of these despised outcasts, did not further the cause either of science or literature. He, who is driven forth as an exile, how can he have an eye for any spot but that on which he can rest his weary foot? How can the wanderer, fleeing from danger, seek on his long and weary journey any other place but that which protects him from his pursuers? — Those, who reflect on this, have no right to wonder that after all the journeys and wanderings, which the Jews above

[1] This sketch has been published at the wish, and for the benefit of Mr. Benjamin. As an addition to the history and geography of the Jews, may it find a friendly reception.

all nations have been forced to undertake, the science of geography should have been so little benefitted. Talents and powers of observation were certainly not wanting to the travellers, but they were so entirely engrossed by themselves and their own fate, that they cared but little for that which surrounded them.

Like everything else it was in Spain that the history of Jewish travel also was early encouraged.

It is more than a mere metaphor to designate the Peninsula of Hesperia as the seat of the best informed and most learned Jews of the middle ages. Besides the profoundest study of the Talmud, philosophy, medecine, natural history and astrology were also cultivated and fostered by them; and it is from the Spanish Jews, that we received the first accounts of their travels.

Benjamin de Tudela, the well known Jewish traveller, was the first to direct his attention to his exiled brethren, and the events and results of his journey are described in that celebrated and valuable work, which bears his name, and has secured for him an undying reputation.

From Spain, his native country, *Charisi* began his wanderings. Having travelled through Spain and Provence, he visited Alexandria, and took up his residence in the Holy City, in that land, glorious in the sacred places it contains; and proceeded thence to Persia, and through Greece retourned to his own land.

The Jew, *Parchi*, was also a native of Spain. He journeyed through Egypt; and it is to him we are indebted for the accurate knowledge we possess of the condition of Palestine at that period.

The Jews of the Peninsula were learned men; and much as the greater number of them had ever been oppressed and insulted, still for centuries they had been respected for their scientific acquirements. Not only did they serve kings and rulers as ministers of finance and treasurers, as taxcollectors and stewards, — not only did they entertain lords and ladies in courts and in palaces with their songs

and poetry, — but they were also the teachers and preceptors of kings and princes, yes, they — the Jews — were the guardians and propagators of knowledge in a Christian land.

When the Portuguese prince, Henry the Navigator, celebrated alike for his heroic conquests and his love for geography, turned his thoughts towards Africa, in order to discover the gold districts there, it was from the Jews that he obtained information concerning the places they had visited in their commercial journeys, and every Jewish traveller was sure to find an hospitable reception at Algarve, the country seat of this studious prince. It would be worse than ingratitude if, in recalling to mind the earliest discoveries of the Portuguese, we did not also remember the Jews, — the important communications they made and the advice they gave.

A long line of learned geographers sprang from the Portuguese nation; and the widely extended connections, which the new discoverers cemented with the people of Asia and Africa, could not but further the interests of science.

To the Portuguese, who have enriched the science of geography by their works, and who, on account of their travels, have been numbered among the „travellers of the world, belongs the name of *Pedro Teixeira,*" — a man whose memory we wish to revive by this sketch, and whose discoveries and reflections, as far as they relate to the Jews and their antiquities, shall be once more in our time brought before the world.

Even the name has a good sound, and is well known in geographical literature.[1]

Our *Pedro Teixeira*[2] belonged to one of those Portuguese Jewish families, who dared not openly avow their

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[1] We will here only mention *Ludwig Teixeira* who in 1598 (1602) wrote a „*nueva Geografia y Hydrografia del Orbe.*" A *Pedro Teixeira* travelled along the whole Spanish coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and published a „*Descripcion de la costa de Espana.*" He died in the 70th year of the 17th century.

[2] Not Teireira, Teirera, Texera, as Wolff (according to Barrios) bibl.

religion, or educate their children in the faith of their fathers. Many a youth of this race has only in receiving the last blessing of his dying father been informed of his true descent, and of the religion, to which his parents, from their inmost conviction, had remained faithful, and for which their forefathers had endured tortures and martyrdoms of every description. This legacy of the heart, if we may thus express ourselves, was willingly received by many; and many only rekindled the glimmering spark of love to Judaism in their hearts, when the time appeared drawing near when they would have to give an account to those belonging to them of what they had done and left undone with regard to the guardianship of the legacy bequeathed to them, and were about to rejoin those they had loved in another world.

Thus it was with our Pedro Teixeira.

Although born of Jewish parents, who in all probability resided in Lisbon, he was still not educated in the Jewish faith. Notwithstanding that submission to the will of the Almighty, which seemed to have been innate in him, and wich may be traced in almost every leaf of his book of travels, — notwithstanding his indwelling conviction that everything that happened or befel him, everything he received and enjoyed, proceeded from the hand of his Creator — a feeling, which may be more than once traced in Teixeira — we still think that we are able to infer from his narrative, that during a great part of his life — during his travels — even up to the period of his arrival in Antwerp, he was a Christian, and even a devout Catholic.

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hebr. III. 922, IV. 593 and Zunz in his excellent treatise „on the geographical literature of the Jews" — in Asher's Edition of Benjamin of Tudela (Berlin 1840) II. 282, assert. — Many german-polish Jews often pronounce the syllable *ei* as *e*; and thus Spanish names like Teixeira, Morteira came to be read and written by them as Texera and Mortera. Besides this the aforesaid Barrios *(Triumpho del Gioverno Popular 10, 17)* calls him likewise Pedro Teyxeyra *(sic)*. The learned Thomas de Pinedo, the editor and commentator of Stephanus Byzantinus, frequently mentions our traveller in his commentary.

It was at Antwerp, the oldest dutch settlement of the spanish-portuguese exiles, that Pedro settled himself after the termination of his journey. There he published his valuable work on the origin and order of succession of the kings of Persia and Harmez; there he wrote his „Travels from India to Italy“;[1] — and there, not at Verona,[2] most probably towards the middle of the 17th century he died in the Jewish faith, and was gathered to his fathers in a better world.

Without enlarging further on the above mentioned historical work of Teixeira, who, from his earliest youth, had devoted himself to the study of history, we will resume our notice for a time of the learned and celebrated traveller himself.

In September 1601 Pedro returned from his first long journey to the Philippine Isles, China and a portion of the New World, which had extended over a year and a half, and which he had undertaken, as he expressed himself, to pass the time and become acquainted with new countries. After a residence of two years and a half in Lisbon, he started for a second journey for scientific purposes to India, Persia and other countries. Teixeira was admirably fitted for such an undertaking by possessing the talent, not given to all travellers, of remarking everything worthy of note, and of intuitively understanding it. We will not here en-

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1 The title of his work, which is now befor us, is: „*Relaciones de Pedro Teixeira d'el Origen, descendencia y succession de los Reyes de Persia y de Harmuz, y de un viage hecho por el mismo autor dende la India Oriental hasta Italia etc. Amberes Hieronymus Verdussen 1610.*

2 The Spanish poet Daniel Levi de Barrios — about him and his poems more in our forthcoming work: „*Romanische Poesien der Juden in Spanien*“ — mentions Verona as the place of his death; comp. *Relacion de los Poetas Espanoles, 58: „Pedro Teireira (Teixeira) . . . . murio en Verona.*“ So likewise Wolff I. c. III. 922; Zunz I. c.; Steinschneider „Jewish literature“ (London 1857) 258. — Barrios, a reliable authorithy, as long as he confines himself to speaking of persons and events of his own time, was not well informed on this point; and the statement respecting it of the Portuguese Biographer Barbosa certainly deserves more credence. Barbosa remarks in his Bibl. lusit. (Lisboa 1747) III. 622: „*Vizitou Veneza, donde por terra veyo a Anveres e nesta cidade fez o seu domicilio até a morte.*“

deavour to ascertain if it was the ancient Jewish spirit which incited him to consider the Jewish relics of olden times as worthy of notice, or if from respect to the fathers of his race his enquiring eye sought out those sacred places where the remains of those belonging to his tribe reposed, or if this simple unprejudiced view only bears the higher stamp of the superiority of his scientific acquirements. Enough, Teixeira, in his travels and in his book of travels, thought of Jewish antiquities and of the Jews themselves; and for this his brethren in the faith are bound to feel grateful to him. That this „reliable Author", as Menasse ben Israel calls him,[1] gives his information from his own observation, and not from any descriptions made by the Jewish merchant of Tudela, scarcely needs mention. Benjamin's book of travels was certainly in print, and had passed through many editions in his time. Without however whishing to detract from Pedro's learning, we believe ourselves justified in asserting that to him Benjamin's writings would have been of little value, in as much as he did not understand Hebrew: and the first translation of this work, by the learned Benedictine Arias Montano, was unlikely to have been in his possession.

With the sincerest regret that our Portuguese traveller does not speak more explicitly of those of his pursuasion in Persia and India, we now take leave of him.[2]

Teixeira has understood his task; and the manner in which it has been accomplished has been fully acknowledged.

May the travellor of the 19th century likewise have cause to rejoice in the favour of his readers.

BERLIN. June 2nd 1858.

Dr. *M. Kayserling.*

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1 Spes Israelis c. 26.

2 Teixeira's notes of this journey, especially those relating the monuments of the Jews, and his accounts of his brethren in the faith, we have added in their proper places to our work. — The course of his journey was from India to Europe, consequently in a contrary direction to our own; and therefore it is that we have chosen this method of arrangement.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from the Moldau. — Object of the journey. — Journal. — Tomb of the Rabbi Jacob bal Haturim. — Arrival at Jerusalem.

In Foltitscheny on the Moldau, where I reside, I used formerly to carry on an extensive trade in timber and other productions of the country. Being suddenly utterly ruined through the fault of my partners, I found myself compelled for my own sake, and more especially for the sake of my family, to enter on a new career under changed circumstances, and this was the ostensible cause of my wanderings in the East.

Added to these external circumstances there was a long and deeply cherished wish of my heart, a wish fostered from my earliest youth; and I determined therefore to make first a pilgrimage to those parts, where once my forefathers dwelt in the days of their glory and of their misfortune, and thus, as in a vision, search out the traces of what remained of the ten tribes of Israel.

I began my wanderings on the 5th of January 1845. — After visiting, as my private affairs compelled me to do, the principal towns of Austria, I proceeded through Turkey in Europe to Constantinople, where I embarked for Smyrna, wich place I reached without any occurrence worthy of remark.

After a voyage of 12 hours I arrived at the small town of Sakis, which is surrounded by lovely pomegranate and citron groves. At the extreme end of the town is the tomb of the Rabbi Jacob bal Haturim,[1] son of the Rabbi Ascher ben Jechiel. The tomb, which is of a round form, is covered over by a small tiled roof; the mausoleum itself is enclosed in a building, and the whole surrounded by a wall. Near the entrance rest the remains of the Meschoreth (servant) of the Rabbi. At different seasons of the year the Jews make a pilgrimage to this tomb. Sakis carries on a very good trade in pomegranates and citrons with Austria and Russia.

Having returned to Smyrna I resumed my journey on horseback, in company with some Turks, and arrived at Menessia fifteen hours' journey north of Smyrna. I was indebted to my European dress and to the Consuls residing at Smyrna that during this journey I did not suffer from that molestation, to which, on account of the hostile feelings of the natives towards Europeans, to whom they barely pay respect, travellers are repeatedly exposed.

Six hours' journey to the southeast of Menessia lies the town of Casiba, the principal source of commerce of which consists in cotton and raisins. These rich productions are cultivated to a great extent, and exported by Jewish merchants to Constantinople and other parts.

After travelling for three successive days through a smiling landscape, planted with olive trees, and enlivened by cheerful villages, the inhabitants of which employ themselves in the preparation and sale of olive oil, I reached a

[1] The Seder Hadaroth (Fol. 48, p. 2) and the Schem Hagdolim (Wilna 1852. Fol. 42, p. 2) relate that the abovementioned Rabbi died on a pilgrimage to Palestine, a day's journey from Smyrna; and they mention Kiaw, not Sakis, as the place of his burial. In the book „Abne Sikaron" (c. 7) it is asserted on the contrary, that he died in Spain, and was buried by the side of his father in Tultila (Toledo); and a sketch of his tombstone is likewise added. We annex all these reports or notions to our narrative of the above tradition without further observation.

town called Tirje. In three days and a half more, after passing through a long row of luxurious vegetable gardens and vineyards, intermixed with fig trees picturesquely scattered, I came to the sea-port of Couschadassi, lying to the northeast of Tirje. It carries on but a small trade. — Here, as in all the other places above mentioned, reside Jews.

Upon an island lies Stankoy,[1] for which place I embarked from Couschadassi, and reached it in about 18 hours. The town is surrounded by beautiful gardens, planted with orange and lemon trees, the fruit of which is sold in Turkey and elsewhere. Fifteen hours further on, at the foot of a high mountain, lies the town and harbour of Sima.[2] The lower part of the town is washed by the sea, and the other part is built on the ascent of the mountain, and here the European Consuls reside. — The neighbourhood is rocky, and is not built over; and there is also a scarcity of spring water in the town. The inhabitants carry on a trade in sponge and fish; the latter of which there is an abundant supply, and not an inconsiderable quantity of salted fish is exported to distant parts.

I left Sima in a small coasting vessel, and, after a voyage of 36 hours, reached the celebrated town of Rhodes,[3] situated on the island of the same name.

Rhodes, an ancient and farfamed fortress, carries on a considerable trade. The population is much mixed; Christians, Turks, Armenians, Jews and Greeks alike dwell there. The Consuls of the European powers occupy a certain quarter, wich is surrounded by a fortified wall. The Jews in the Turkish quarter live together in families, and Christians are forbidden to enter this part of the town during the night. After staying several days in Rhodes, I embarked for

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[1] Twenty hours by sea, to the north of Couschadassi.

[2] Benjamin of Tudela (A. Asher's edition, Berlin and London 1840, A. Asher) speaks (p. 25) likewise of Sima, where he found 300 Jews. Translator's note. By an hour's journey is intended to be signified a distance of 3 miles or thereabouts. We state this once for all.

[3] Benjamin de Tudela p. 25.

Alexandria, for the purpose of proceeding thence to Cairo.

My journey through Egypt I shall annex to the narrative of my journey in Africa, and will only confine myself to the remark that I travelled by sea from Damietta to Jaffa (the ancient Joppa of the Hebrews), and thence proceeded on my journey towards Jerusalem.

On the 7th June 1847 I arrived at Alexandria, remained there several days, travelled thence to Cairo, from wich place I proceeded by the Nile to Damietta, wich I reached on the 20th July. After a sojourn of a few days there, I embarked for Jaffa; in which place I had to keep quarantine for 10 days. The distance from Jaffa to Jerusalem is a journey of only 12 hours. The journey over Lud I performed on a Camel, and on Friday, August 14th, at 8 o'clock in the morning, I perceived the Holy City of Jerusalem, the goal of my ardent desires.

CHAPTER II.

Jerusalem.[1]

View of the City. — Its foundation. — Gates. — Ruins of the Temple. — Tradition of the Sultan Soliman. — Grotto of King Hiskia.

„How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"[2] — With these words in my mind I set foot upon the sacred soil of Jerusalem. How it lies there before me, that once mighty and majestic City! The sight

[1] The Arabians and Turks call Jerusalem „Kodesch", the Chaldeans and Persians „Beth-el-Mickdasch".

[2] Numbers. c. XXIV. 5. (The quotations are always after the hebrew bible.)

overpowered me; and, at the remembrance of all the great and noble deeds of those days, when my people, the chosen of the Lord, dwelt there in all the fullness of their might and power, — feelings of the purest pride and joy for the past, of the deepest sorrow for the present, and the brightest and most trusting hope for the future, passed through my heart, and awakened in me the warmest gratitude. Tears filled my eyes, and I prostrated myself and pressed my lips to the sacred soil of Zion, in acknowledgment of the mercy which the Lord God of Sabaoth had shown me: for He it was who had protected me in the trackless wilderness, and with His right hand had guided me through the deserts of Asia and Africa, and over the waves of the mighty ocean unto His own dwelling place, unto the seat of His glory, where He reigns supreme, and is adored in the holiness of His power; where His sanctuary extends its splendor far over the universe in the eternal glory of the Holy Faith. — With what veneration did I fall down and pray on entering thy gates, O Jerusalem!

There thou art, before my eyes, thou holy city, whose name fills the universe, — who, in the dreams of my youth, as I perused the holy Scriptures, wert ever hovering before my mind's eye, in all the brightness of prosperity and glory. How deep, how great is thy fall, thou beloved city of the Eternal One, — thou Crown of Cities, — thou Queen of Nations! — With what fearful accuracy have the prophecies and denunciations of thy Prophets been fulfilled on thee! „If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!“ [1]

The foundation of Jerusalem is assigned to Shem the son of Noah,[2] who began to build the walls of the city. Its earliest name was Salem,[3] but after the proposed sacrifice

[1] Psalm CXXXVII. 5. 6.

[2] Seder Hadoroth. Fol. 12, p. 2.

[3] Genesis. c. XIV. 18.

of Isaac by his father, Abraham called the place „Yirre", whence originated the name Jerusalem.[1] — Thus for such a length of time was this city the residence of princes! — Five and twenty years after the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity, the City was governed by King Jebusse, the successor of Abimeleck: he completed the walls, and erected a fortress, which he called Jebus.[2] It was not until the reign of David, who came with an army against Jerusalem and the Jebusites, that the Jews succeeded in gaining possession of this stronghold.[3] The building of the Temple, which lasted 7 years, was commenced by Solomon, 480 years after the departure of the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt.[4]

The destruction of the Temple, the fate of the Jews after their first dispersion, the rebuilding and destruction of the second Temple, as well as the last and entire dispersion of the Children of Israel, are too generally known to require that I should dwell longer on the relation of them. I will only mention one fact; — namely, that several monarchs and one caliph have made the attempt to raise the Temple from its ruins, and could not succeed. The prophecy of the Royal Psalmist is fulfilled: „Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."[5]

The Antiquities of Jerusalem are also well known; of the gates of the city however I will say a little. Jerusalem has six gates,[6] — five of which are open, and one closed. They are called thus: 1) towards the east, the Gate of Lions;

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1 Midrasch Raba c. 56.

2 Judges. c. XIX. 10. 11. — Seder Hadoroth. Fol. 9, p. 26. — Joshua c. XV. 8.

3 II. Chronicles. c. V. 6. 7.

4 I. Kings. VI. 1.

5 Psalm. CXXVII. 1.

6 Benjamin de Tudela, p. 36, mentions only four gates, to some of which he gives other names.

so called from the images sculptured on the wall; its arabic name is Bab-el-Schebat. 2) To the north, the Gate of Sichem; in arabic called Bab-el-Amoud. 3) Between these two is the gate which is closed. 4) To the West, the Gate of Hebron, now called the Gate of Joffa; in arabic, Bab-el-Chalil. 5) To the south the Gate of Zion; in arabic, Bab-el-Dahoud (the Gate of David). And lastly 6) on the same side the smallest of all, Bab-el-Maghra-bim (Gate of the Arabs); because the Arabs who come from the West, from Morocco &c. enter here, and dwell in the adjacent streets.

Concerning the ancient buildings of the Holy City I will only repeat the words of the celebrated and learned Munk of Paris, who said: „There is not a stone in Jerusalem which is not known, and has not been described, and has not deserved it."

The Seder Hadoroth informs us that the celebrated scholar Rabbi Jehuda Halevy, author of the book „Cusri", in his 50th year, somewhere about the year 4920, undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and in deep sorrow prostrated himself to kiss each stone. In pious enthusiasm he gave utterance to a song of lamentation, which commenced with the word „Zion." It is to be found in the 31st Chap., and is up to the present time sung by the Jews of the German church, on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem. — A fanatic Arab, who saw and heard the pious Rabbi, rode upon him in a rage, and the inspired singer perished under the hoofs of his horse.

The Temple.

I begin the description of my pious pilgrimage through the Holy City with the venerable ruins of the Temple, which have braved thousands of years, and are therefore certainly entitled to the first place in our notice.

A tradition, universally known to those of my faith

who dwell here, deserves however to be mentioned beforehand.

Among those monarchs who attempted the rebuilding of the Temple was Sultan Soliman,[1] who governed Jerusalem in 5280 (1520 years after Christ). — He erected the walls of the town, built aqueducts, and took up his residence in a building situated to the south of the Temple, which ever to this day bears the name of „Medrass Salomo“ (scientific building of Solomon). Later Soliman inhabited a building to the west of the Temple, in which afterwards the Turks held their courts of justice. A mound of rubbish and manure at that time covered the site of the Temple and the ruins of the Sanctuary. One day, so tradition relates, the Sultan remarked an aged woman clothed in rags, wearily dragging up a sack full of rubbish, and empty it on the mound beside the palace. The Sultan, very angry, gave orders that the old woman should be seized and brought before him. She came, and seemed tired and exhausted. After Soliman had asked her where she came from, and to what people she belonged, he desired to know why she had emptied the sack on that place. Trembling, the old woman answered: „Do not be angry, mighty King, I never in any way thought to offend thee by observing an ancient custom of my people. Since the taking of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor Titus, they have never been able to destroy entirely the walls of the Temple. The priests and the soothsayers of Rome therefore ordered that all the inhabitants of the city should daily carry a sack full of rubbish to this place; a command which even the inhabitants of the surrounding country must attend to. Those who live near are obliged to perform it twice a week, and those at a greater distance must do it twice a month. The place where so many Romans fell will, by these means, be hidden for ever. Be not therefore angry, my Lord, with thy servant, who only obeys the law!“

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[1] Son of Salim I., also called Sliman Aben Olim; he reigned 46 years.

Soliman however caused the old woman to be cast into prison, and in order to ascertain the truth he caused sentinels to be stationed around the place, with orders to arrest any who should attempt to empty rubbish on the mound. The statement of the old woman was verified; and Soliman was seized with a desire to know what was concealed beneath the mound. He himself took a spade and a basket, ascended the mound, and began to dig, at the same time calling on all who were in his service to follow his example. Men and women of every class came in crowds, and began to clear away the rubbish. For 30 days thousands of persons were occupied in this labour; and daily the Sultan caused money to be secretly thrown among the rubbish in order to stimulate their zeal. At last the ruins of the Temple were discovered; and a long wall was brought to light, which may be seen to this day, and which bears the name of „Cothel Maaravi",[1] the west wall of the Temple. — During the clearing of the place many of those had arrived who brought sacks and baskets of rubbish, but they were seized and thrown into prison with the others. On the completion of the work Soliman had the prisoners brought before him, and, in order to punish them for their desecration of the Temple, he took by lot 30 men and 8 women, and hanged them upon the wall; at the same time he forbade any one from polluting the place for the future, and threatened each offender with a like punishment.

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[1] Benjamin de Tudela mentions these walls; but as he visited these places in the 12th Century, this account of the throwing of rubbish must certainly have taken place during the three following centuries, otherwise the whole story would not be correct. Benjamin of Tudela says that in this wall is situated the gate Schaare Rachmim (Gate of Mercy), at which the Jews used to offer up their prayers. Rabbi Pethachia of Regensburg, who, according to Ritter in his *Erdkunde* (Vol. 4, p. 1417) only followed Benjamin de Tudela two years later, speaks, in the account of his travels (Lublin edition with latin translation, p. 198. 199) likewise of the Gate of Mercy, which however lies opposite to the western wall, towards the side of the mount of Olives. The latter assertion is the right one.

After this the Sultan summoned the Jews before him, and addressed them with the following consolatary words: „Acting on an inspiration from above I have done what you have seen. Through me shall the Temple rise again in fresh splendor, for I also am called Soliman, like the first founder of this Sanctuary. But as this place is your property, it is for you to complete and restore the building, for which purpose I offer you the means.“ — On hearing these words these unhappy Jews wept and remained silent. — But Soliman asked: „Why weep ye? — Rejoice rather, for your God has not forgotten you.“ — An old man then approached the Sultan and said: „May thy life be long upon the earth, O gracious Sultan. We will praise the Almighty for having given to thee such benevolent thoughts, and the wish to restore to us our Temple, our only glory and pride. But according to the Scriptures, we are forbidden to erect the Temple ourselves; God alone can do this.“ [1]

„What, ye will not build up the Temple again!“ cried the Sultan; „yet Solomon, in his prayer of the consecration of this sanctuary said: „Moreover concerning a stranger, who is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake. For they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and of Thy stretched out arm, when he shall come and pray toward this house. Hear Thou in Heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for!“ [2] — I myself will rebuild the Temple of the Lord, and to Him alone shall it be dedicated.“

Soliman caused the plan of the first Temple to be given to him, in order that he might erect the third in accordance with it; an undertaking which however remained unper-

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[1] The last words of the old man refer to the Song of Solomon c. 11, 7. — Midrasch Rabba. Fol. 11, p. 1. According to my view one sees in Talmud Jeruschalmi, Messechet Maassir Scheni chap. 5, v. 2. that the third Temple shall be built as the second was; and that the monarchs favorable to the Jewish nation, shall erect this Temple.

[2] I. Kings. c. VIII. 41—43.

formed. Under his reign the Jews enjoyed the same privileges as the rest of his subjects, and lived happily.

I have thought the above tradition worth relating only so far, as it shows how much faith and hope for a brighter future still animate the hearts of my people.[1]

On the east side of Jerusalem, opposite to the side of the Mount of Olives, lies the site of the Temple, to the southeast of the present town.

To the north and the west are those large buildings, which touch the western wall (Cothel Maaravi), and surround the site on all sides. The Jews of Jerusalem perform their evening devotions near this spot each Friday afternoon and on the eves of their high festivals; but no one dares to tread on the inner part, which is strictly guarded by the Turks. On the site of the Holy of Holies stands a splendid building erected by Solomon, dedicated to the religious solemnities of the Mussulman. It is said that there is here to be found a cave; the contents of which are unknown however, to this day. The Jews assert that the sacred coffer of relics is concealed here.[2] The first Turkish rulers wished to have it examined; but when persons sent for that purpose attempted to enter, they were struck dead; and so all further researches have ceased.

The Medrass of Solomon, a building erected by that king, is the spot, where, according to tradition, the Jews established the Sanhedrin (or high Court of Justice). To this place there are two entrances; one to the north, the other to the west; the southern side is distinguished by numerous windows. The way from this building to the Temple is through an avenue of trees, surrounded by a moat. The Arabians tread this path with bare feet; as they consider the soil sacred; and to this spot they bring their dead previous to interment, in order to protect them from

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[1] This tradition I likewise found in „Chibath Jerusalem" (which appeared in 5604 in Jerusalem); probably likewise related as tradition.

[2] Messechet Juma p. 54.

the judgments of God. — To the west of the Temple is a trench, which is called by the Arabians Bir-el-dam (or trench of blood; they believe that in that trench was poured the blood of the burnt offerings. Beside this trench, as tradition goes on to say, Nebusaradan, a captain of Nebuchadnezzar, caused many children, Jewish mothers and priests to be massacred, in order to avenge the innocent blood of Zachariah, son of the Priest Jehoiada.

Outside the city, but still within the walls surrounding it, is a cave, excavated by command of King Hiskia. It is related that Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, escaped through it, in order to avoid falling into the hands of the Chaldeans. This cave is near the gate Bab-el-Amoud, and, according to the assertion of some Jews, it is said to be large enough to contain a man on horseback. They say also that in it is a square room hewn out of stone, which was intended for a Synagogue; and in the wall of this room was embedded a written roll of the Pentateuch; but any search there is forbidden. Through a cleft in the rock, which time had caused, I could perceive something of the interior of this cave.

At the foot of the Mount of Olives, opposite to the Temple, is the tomb, surrounded by a wall, of Mary, the Mother of Christ.

In the city of Jerusalem is the Sepulchre of Christ;[1] to which a great multitude of Christian pilgrims from all nations of the world resort. At Easter particularly the streets of the city are thronged with wayfarers. — As an especial sign of the intolerance of the 19th century, I will only add that no Jew, at the peril of his life, dare venture to tread the pathways leading to the Church of the Sepulchre.

Every Friday forenoon at 11 o'clock, the Sheik with several of his officers proceeds, amid chanting of prayers, from the Mosque of Zion through the city to the site of the Temple, where he performs divine service, which lasts an

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[1] Benjamin de Tudela, p. 35, mentions this tomb.

hour; during which time the several gates of Jerusalem are strictly closed.

Jerusalem, once so flourishing and prosperous, then for a long time demolished and desolate, is now inhabited by people of all climes. In my last chapter on Palestine I shall speak of them more particularly.

We hope however that as all the words of the Lord to Solomon and the Prophets have been fulfilled, so, one day the prophecies of Isaiah (c. 11, 2) concerning Jerusalem and her future destiny may likewise be accomplished.

CHAPTER III.

Zion.

On Mount Zion stands an ancient building, under which is to be found the entrance to a cave, which is said to extend to the interior of the City of Jerusalem, where a large stone denotes the place of outlet. The cave is said to contain the tombs of several Kings of the house of David. In the building above the cave the Mahomedan pilgrims perform their devotions. Sometimes permission is also given to the Jews to pray at the spot, supposed to contain the remains of their departed kings; for which permission they pay the tribute of 1 piastre.

In the year 4915 (1155), so it is related,[1] a Bishop endeavoured to remove stones from this sacred place, in order to repair a delapidated church with them.

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[1] Benjamin de Tudela, p. 38 and 39, relates this circumstance, with some triffling alterations.

One day two of the labourers engaged there did not come to work at the appointed time; and the overseer ordered them to make up this loss of time in their leisure hours. While digging, these two men discovered a large slab of marble, which, on account of its weight, they could scarcely move from its place. But after much exertion they succeeded in doing so, and found under it the entrance to a large cave. Full of curiosity they wished to enter it, but by a strong gust of wind they were violently thrown to the ground, and were found by their fellow workmen in a state of unconsciousness. The Bishop, to whom this event was immediately made known, caused the two men to be brought before him, and ascertained from them that in this case they had perceived two tables of gold, upon which a crown, sceptre, sword, and other insignia of royalty were displayed, but that they had not been able to penetrate into the cave itself; but had sunk down unconscious at the entrance of it. The Bishop after that ordered the cave to be walled up again. — The Josiphun, which Israelites ascribe to Flavius Josephus, asserts that there Solomon concealed his treasures. Hircan and Herod the Great took possession of the tombs of the Kings of Judah, and appropriated a large portion of the treasures to their own use.

At the foot of Mount Zion lies a valley, whence one ascends to another mount, on which is to be seen a house hewn out of the rock. Over the entrance of it is an illegible inscription, which, according to the assertion of the Jews, contains the following words: „This building was erected in the reign of our King Solomon."

Har Hassethim (the Mount of Olives) lies to the east of the town; from which it is separated by the valley of Josophat. An extensive view is to be had from the top of this mountain; Jerusalem, the site of the Temple, the Jordan, the Dead Sea, the Mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, can all be seen from it. On the mountain itself is a small village, and about half an hour's journey from it, in a cave,

is to be found the tomb of the Prophetess Huldah,[1] of whom mention is made in the Bible.[2]

Further down, towards the town, mid way up the mountain, is another cave, consisting of several divisions, containing the tombs of the Prophets Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi, which are frequently visited by the Jews. At the base of the mountain is a Jewish place of burial, and here, according to tradition, is the tomb of Zachariah, son of the Priest Jehoida,[3] as well as the house Bethachaphschith, in which King Uzziah was confined when struck with leprosy.[4]

Chazzar Hamathara (the place of prison),[5] lies to the north of the city; in it is a very deep dungeon, which can only be reached with much difficulty. According to tradition Jeremiah was kept a prisoner in it by command of the King of Judah. The courtyard of the prison contains several small houses and rooms hewn out of stone, which were used as places of confinement. Several old buildings on this place are said, by the people dwelling there, to cover the tombs of the Prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah; of which however, after a careful search, I could find no traces.

To the north of the city rises a grand cluster of rocks beside a courtyard, to which the entrance is on the south side. Two trees raise their branches over it on high, one a date tree and the other a tree bearing a fruit which they call tuth. Here again is to be found an extensive cave divided into several compartments. On entering there is a large room first, which leads to two smaller ones; these again conduct to a still larger apartment, followed again by

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[1] The Talmud contradicts this assertion; for it mentions that she was buried near the walls of the town. Tosephta Baba chap. 1, and Messechet Simachot chap. 14. Altogether the writer himself believes that it requires much careful research to ascertain if *other graves* likewise are really in the places, where they are believed to be.

[2] II. Kings. c. XXII. 14. — II. Chronicles. c. XXXIV. 22.

[3] II. Chronicles. c. XXIV. 20. 21.

[4] II. Kings. c. XV. 5.

[5] Jeremiah. c. XXXVIII. 13.

two smaller ones. In a small room towards the north a tomb stone covers the place, where, according to tradition, rest the ashes of one of the richest men of Jerusalem, Calbe Schewua, who lived in the days of the second Temple. Many wonders are related which are said to have taken place here. — During my stay at Jerusalem in 1847 in the month of Ellul, the Pacha caused numerous excavations to be made, for the purpose of discovering a treasure which was supposed to be buried here. — On account of their extraordinary size, these rocky buildings attract the peculiar attention of travellers.

An hours' journey further on, to the north of the city, is another cave containing three separate adjoining rooms. In the first of these rooms bubbles a spring of water, which is sometimes dried up. The second contains two tombs, and in the third is the tomb of Simon ha Zadik (the Just), the last member of the Kenesseth-Hagdola (Great Assembly),[1] which was originally summoned by Esra. The two tombs in the second room are those of the sons of Simon. — Half an hour's journey distant from this spot is another cave divided into four parts; of which one is to the right, an other to the left, and the remaining two are underground. Here are said to rest the remains of the celebrated men of the Sanhedrin.

Rama. Two hours' journey to the north west of Jerusalem is a mountain, on which, in a grotto, is shewn the tomb of the Prophet Samuel,[2] and to the right of it is the tomb of his parents. Descending the mountain one arrives at a smaller grotto, from which flows a murmuring stream; they say that this was the bath of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. The Jews, as well as other inhabitants of the country, make pilgrimages to this spot, which, in Arabic, is called Ziara; and they pay a piastre for permission to enter.

Two hours' journey to the south of Jerusalem, on the

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[1] Messechet Awoth. chap. 1. — Mischna. 1.

[2] I. Samuel. c. XXV. 1.

road towards Hebron, stands a small fortress called Barak; beside the gate of which are three tanks for the reception and preservation of rain water. Near this fortress, beside a spring, stands a house, said to have been built by King Solomon. — A mile and a half further to the south[1] is the tomb of Rachel. As Benjamin of Tudela[2] relates, several monuments have been erected over this tomb; of which the first consists of a dome, supported by eleven columns.[3] Mahomet Pacha had another erected in the year 5385; and the present one is indebted to the piety of Sir Moses Montefiore. The Jews often make pilgrimages to this tomb of their ancestress; and particulary on the 15th of Cheswan (November), the anniversary of Rachel's death; when many go there to perform their devotions.

Two hours' journey from Hebron lies the village Halhul, where are the tombs of the Prophets Nathan and Gad. This village bears to this day its ancient biblical name.[4]

Half an hour's journey from Hebron is shewn the foundation of a house, in which it is said Abraham once dwelt. At the side of it is likewise shewn a spring, which is called Sarah's Well; supposed to have been the bath of Sarah; many Jewesses make use of it to this day.[5] It was told

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[1] Genesis. c. XLVIII. 7. XXXV. 19.

[2] Benjamin of Tudela p. 40.

[3] Rabbi Pethachia (p. 196) likewise speaks of the tomb of Rachel, which is formed of eleven stones, according to the eleven tribes. *Adiit porro sepulchrum Rachelis in Ephrata, quae dimidii diei itinere Hierosolymis distat, illis monumento undecim lapides impositi sunt, secundum numerum undecim Tribunum etc.*

[4] Joshua. c. XV. 58.

[5] Benjamin de Tudela (p. 42): In his time a house stood there of which however now only the foundations of the walls are to be seen. — He speaks likewise of a spring, but does not give its name. — Rabbi Pethachia (p. 199) who also mentions this spring, calls it by the above name.

me, that the Arabs in the neighbourhood, a few years since, hewed down the tree,[1] under wich Abraham sat when the angels appeared to him.[2]

CHAPTER IV.

Hebron (called by the Arabs Chalil).

Foundation of the town. — Grotto and tombs of the Patriarchs. — Three other grottoes.

Hebron, formerly called Kiriath Arba,[3] was, at the time of the conquest of the promised land by Joshua, the capital of a small kingdom.[4] According to tradition, a family of giants dwell there, consisting of four persons: a father and three sons. The ruler of the country called himself Arba.[5] The Talmud (Eruben p. 53) explains the name of Kiriath Arba by the fact that four couples were buried there; viz. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, for the Hebrew word „*Arba*" signifies „*four*".

The Seder Hadoroth (p. 11) informs us that Hebron was founded at the time of the dispersion of men at the building of the tower of Babel. The Bible likewise assigns the foundation of the city to the most remote period.[6] It stood formerly upon a hill, where travellers can find ruins to this day.[7] The newly built city is raised around

1 Rabbi Pethachia (p. 199) speaks of this tree.
2 Genesis. c. XVIII. 4.
3 Judges. c. I. 10.
4 Joshua. c. X. 111.
5 Joshua. c. XIV. 15, according to Abarbanel's explanation.
6 Numbers. c. XIII. 22.
7 Benjamin de Tudela (p. 40) likewise mentions these ruins.

the cave, called by the Arabs Halil Machpelo, which is situated in the street called Rachman. The Bible mentions that Hebron was formerly surrounded by vineyards; and to this day there are still many to be seen there; for the neighbouring Arabs devote much attention to the cultivation of the vine.

Above the cave stands a magnificent building, the first stone of which, according to tradition, was laid by King Solomon himself. Esther, Queen of Persia, is said to have restored this building; and the Empress Helena had it put into the same state in which it remains to this day. — For its especial preservation the cave is again surrounded by a wall. Within it are two Mosques; of which the one over the grave of Abraham bears the name of *St. Abraham;* and the other over the grave of Jacob, the name of *St. Jacob.* The permission to visit these Mosques, which are held in the highest veneration by the Turks, is given to no unbeliever.[1] In the year 1833 however a Jewish merchant from Russia, named Schemerl Arlick, succeeded, by means of making great presents to the Scheik, in obtaining leave to visit the Mosque over the grotto, in the latter half of the night. According to his assertion, the interior is decorated with the greatest splendor; illuminated by innumerable lights, which are again reflected with magic brilliancy in the gold and silver ornaments. Through two windows in the floor of the Mosque one looks down into the grotto. At break of day the visitor, notwithstanding his disguise in the garb of a Turkish priest, was obliged to withdraw for fear of being recognised.[2]

Outside the city, in the direction of Jerusalem, are three wells; which, according to the Bible, were dug by Abraham. On leaving the Sepulchre of the Patriarchs, and proceeding

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[1] Near the entrance to the Mosque of St. Abraham a particular place is set apart, where Jews and Christians are allowed te perform their devotions.

[2] Rabbi Pethachia (p. 197. 198) mentions this cave; he gained access to it.

on the road leading to the Jewish quarter, to the left of the courtyard, is seen a Turkish dwelling house, by the side of which is a small grotto, to which there is a descent of several steps. This is the tomb of Abner, captain of King Saul.[1] It is held in much esteem by the Arabs, and the proprietor of it takes care that it is always kept in the best order. He requires from those who visit it a small gratuity.

Likewise outside the city, towards the south, in a vineyard, which was purchased by the Jews, are the graves of the father of King David and of the first Judge, Othniel, the son of Kinah.

CHAPTER V.

Sichem. Samaria. Zephath. Miron.

An hour's journey to the east of Sichem[2] near the village Ablanuta, is the tomb of Joseph and of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh.[3] The graves are in the field which Jacob bought of the King of Sichem, near which flows a spring called „Jacob"; by the Arabs also similarly named, Beeïr Jacob (Jacob's Spring).[4]

As Midrasch Rabba (book 1, chap. 100) relates, the children of Israel on their departure from Egypt took the

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[1] II. Samuel. c. III. 32; c. IV. 1.

[2] Abbé Bargés, Professor at the Sorbonne at Paris, who in the year 1853 visited the Holy Land, has given, in an episode of his journey, under the title of „*Les Samaritains de Naplouse*" (Paris 1855), some very clever and clear accounts respecting the ancient city of Sichem, the Samaritans, their worship, and their language, — which are, and especially with regard to the latter, — of the greatest value.

[3] Joshua. c. XXIV. 32.

[4] Compare Bargés „*Les Samaritains de Naplouse*" p. 10. 11.

mortal remains of the ancestors of their race in coffins with them; and, after the division of the promised land, by Joshua, buried each in that portion of land which had fallen to the lot of his posterity. The writer, who has visited these spots, is convinced that this tradition is founded on truth, and using the authority of Midrasch Rabba as a guide, gives here the account relative to the tombs of the twelve Fathers of the Tribe, relying on the statement of Seder Olam Zuta (little Seder Olam) with respect to their ages.

1) Reuben, lived 124 years, and was buried in Rumia on the further side of the Jordan.
2) Gad, 125 years; buried at the same place as Reuben.
3) Simeon, 120 years; his grave is in the village Manda.
4) Levi, 134 years; buried in the same place.
5) Judah, 129 years; buried in the village Babi near Bethlehem.
6) Isachar, 122 years; lies buried at Sidon.
7) Zebulon, 124 years; lies there also.
8) Dan, 127 years; interred in the country of Astael.
9) Napthali, 132 years; interred in Kadesch-Napthali.
10) Asher, 126 years; rests in the land inherited by his posterity.
11) Joseph,[1] 110 years; as above mentioned.
12) Benjamin, 111 years; in the neighbourhood of Zion (Jebussi, the ancient name for Zion); the exact spot unknown.

The order of the names does not agree with the scripture account, but they are mentioned according to the order of their graves, of wich some are to this day distinguished by monuments, which are held in high veneration by the Turks.

To the north of Sichem, about four hours' journey from it, lies the place Dothan,[2] and near it is a tank or cistern,

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[1] Genesis. c. L. 26.

[2] Genesis. c. XXXVII. 17.

in which, according to tradition, the sons of Jacob cast their brother Joseph.[1] This spot is called by the Arabs Gub Joseph; and opposite to it a Mosque and a Funduk (or inn) have been erected.

In Samaria, likewise called Sabdia, wich, according to the saying of the people, is the once celebrated city Somron, is shewn, in different parts, the graves of several of the Kings of Israel.

One day and a half's journey from Sichem is the town of Tiberias, which by some of the Talmudists is called Rakkath, by others Hammath (hot waters);[2] in the Bible both names are to be found.[3] — According to the Talmud the town was formerly a most important one.[4] In the vicinity of Tiberias are numerous graves of Talmudists. — In the year 1857 Tiberias and Zephath were laid waste by an earthquake; but the most dreadful misfortune happened to them on the 8th of Sivan 1834, which may in truth be designated a day of mourning in the history of Palestine.

The Druses of Lebanon invaded the city of Zephath and plundered it for the space of 33 days; the Synagogues were destroyed, and the Tables of the Law demolished. The words of the Prophet Jeremiah were fulfilled.[5] The Jews had fled for refuge to the mountains. — The inhabitants of Tiberias, fearing a similar fate, sent a deputation to the plunderers, and purchased their forbearance by a sum of money.

By the earthquake of 1837, Tiberias and Zephath were almost entirely destroyed. Many hundred Jews and a great number of Mahomedans perished by it; few only were able to flee for safety to the mountains, and these spent there a night full of fear and horror, listening to the distant cries

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1 Genesis. c. XXXVII. 24.
2 Messechet Megila. Fol. 5, p. 2; Fol. 8, p. 1.
3 Joshua. c. XIX. 35.
4 Messechet Berachot c. 1.
5 Jeremiah. c. XIV. 17.

of pain and anguish of those who belonged to them; but whom they were unable to assist. On the next day they ventured to the scene of misfortune, which presented to them a fearful aspect. Under the earth and ruins of the city lay the horribly mutilated bodies of their relations and friends; few only were brought out still living, and these were mostly so disfigured that they envied the fate of the dead. Not a family was there that had not to deplore the loss of one of its members. But still no murmuring was to be heard; submissive and resigned to the dispensations of the Almighty, they said: „The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.“ [1]

Zephath lies at the foot of a mountain, and is now only a heap of ruins, from among which rise some houses and works of fortification. At the base of the mountain is a large cave, called by the Arabs Maarath Jacob; where it is said Jacob mourned over the loss of his son. To the south west of this mountain is another cave and a spring, which latter is called Aolad Jacob (Jacob's children). In the vicinity are to be found the graves of several Talmudists; and in the burial place of the Jews, near the town, are shewn the tombs of the Prophet Hosea and of his father Beeri; both the tombs are ornamented with a grave stone.

Two hours' journey from Zephath lies the village Mirom, and half an hours' journey further is to be seen an extensive courtyard surrounded by a wall, on which beside a magnificent tree stands an ancient building. It contains one large chamber and two smaller ones, in one of which is the tomb of the celebrated Talmudist Rabbi Simon, son of Jochais,[2] and the other that of his son, the Rabbi Eleazar. Generally on the 18th of Ijar (May), a great solemnity takes place there. Many thousands of Jewish pilgrims from Palestine, Syria, Persia, Africa, and other distant lands arrive several days

[1] Iob. c. I. 21.

[2] Benjamin de Tudela (p. 45) speaks of this village and of several tombs of the Talmudists found in the vicinity: of the above named tomb however he makes no mention.

before the festival and encamp in tents round about, while the Rabbis take possession of the tomb-house and the neighbouring buildings. Divine service, which begins in the night of the 17th — 18th of Ijar, commences with the reading aloud of the work Sohar, which is ascribed to the Rabbi Simon. In the middle of the night they give utterance to their songs of praise and the rejoicing becomes so vehement that they even break out into dancing, and continue it until break of day. In every part of the court these ceremonies may be seen and heard, and they are repeated in the open air at the graves of the various Talmudists who are interred near by. The day appointed for this festival is the 18th of Ijar, the anniversary of the death of the Rabbi Simon. To add to the grandeur of it an immense number of lamps is lighted, and for this purpose a colossal lamp has been put up in the first apartment of the house; this lamp is capable of containing about 100 measures of oil. The lighting of this lamp, which is called Hadlaka di Rabbi Simon, is considered a peculiar privilege, which is even sold to the highest bidder. The lighting by means of the smaller lamps is called Hadlaka di Rabbi Eleazer. Many rich people even give their dresses ornamented with gold to serve as wicks for the great lamp; so highly venerated is the memory of Rabbi Simon. — On receiving the benediction which is bestowed by the Rabbi presiding over the ceremony, each person present hastens to present an offering, oftentimes of considerable value, — intended for the Portuguese Congregation of Zephath, and serves chiefly to keep the building in proper repair.

These ceremonies are called Hilloula di Rabbi Simon (wedding feasts of Rabbi Simon),[1] but I cannot relate the tradition which has given rise to them. I have not done so in my account of this festival, which is held in such high estimation in Asia, Africa, and even among the Turks. I

[1] This appellation is generally given by all the eastern pilgrims; who say, that when the Rabbi died, Heaven rejoiced.

have confined myself to the simple facts alone; the several parts of which would fournish matter for a whole book, if one took into consideration the very copious traditions concerning it.[1]

CHAPTER VI.

The state of the Jews in Palestine.

Deep misery and continual oppression are the right words to describe the condition of the Children of Israel in the land of their fathers. — I comprise a short and faithful picture of their actual state under the following heads.

1) They are entirely destitute of every legal protection and every means of safety. Instead of the security afforded by the law, which is unknown in these countries, they are solely under the orders of the Scheiks and Pachas, men, whose character and feelings inspire but little confidence from the beginning. It is only the European Consuls who frequently take care of the oppressed, and give them some protection.

2) With unheard of rapacity tax upon tax is levied on them. With the exception of Jerusalem, every where else the taxes demanded are arbitrary. Whole communities have been impoverished by the exorbitant claims of the Scheiks, who, under the most trifling pretences, without any control, oppress the Jews with fresh burthens. It is impossible to enumerate all these oppressions.

3) In the strict sense of the word they are not even masters of their own property. They do not even venture

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[1] In Tunis, in the same night, just such a festival is held, with similar ceremonies.

to complain when they are robbed and plundered; for the vengeance of the Arabs would follow each complaint.

4) Their lives are taken into as little consideration as their property; they are exposed to the caprice of any one; for even the smallest pretext, even a harmless discussion, a word dropped in conversation, is enough to cause bloody reprisals. Violence of every kind is of daily occurrence. When, for instance in the contests of Mahomet Ali with the Sublime Porte, the City of Hebron was besieged by Egyptian troops and taken by storm, the Jews where murdered and plundered, and the survivors scarcely even allowed to retain a few rags to cover them. No pen can describe the despair of these unfortunates. The women were treated with brutal cruelty; and even to this day, many are found, who from that time became miserable cripples. With truth can the Lamentations of Jeremiah[1] be employed here. Since that great misfortune up to the present day, the Jews of Hebron languish in the deepest misery, and the present Scheik is unwearied in his endeavours, not to better their condition, but on the contrary to make it worse.

5) The chief evidence of their miserable condition is the universal poverty which we remarked in Palestine, and which is here truly characteristic; for nowhere else in our long journeys, in Europe, Asia and Africa did we observe it among the Jews. It even causes leprosy among the Jews of Palestine, as in former times. Robbed of their means of subsistence from the cultivation of the soil and trade, they only exist upon the charity of their brethren in the faith in foreign parts. — The writer, who has seen all this misery with his own eyes, and with his hands has touched the deep and ever open and bleeding wounds of his brethren, has often repeated in his heart the words of Jeremiah: „If I go forth into the field, there behold the slain with the sword, and when I enter into the city then behold those

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1 Lamentations of Jeremiah. c. V. 10.

who are sick with famine.“ [1] — „How is my heart oppressed with sadness! how loudly it throbs that I can nowhere find peace.“ — But with all the misery which he grieves over, has he also admired the resignation with which his brethren in the faith have borne their misfortunes for hundreds of years up to this time, and the confidence, with which they continue to be steadfast in hope. Like shadows they steal over the land, which nourishes their cruel and imperious tyrants. The ignorant and barbarous Arab tramples this sacred soil beneath his feet, and considers the Jew a disinherited and accursed being, unworthy of dwelling there; and yet these ruins, these desolate cities, these wide-spreading fields now uncultivated and laid waste, are the inheritance of Israel; and still does this fruitful land up to the present day bring forth abundantly every kind of grain, fruits of all countries, and excellent wine; and its air is also of exquisite purity and freshness.

„For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem, or who shall bemoan thee? [2] — My heart is pained that my people have fallen into such great misfortunes; it grieves and afflicts me. — Let us pray, lifting up our soul under the Lord. Oh Thou, the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? — Why shouldest Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name; leave us not.“ [3] Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise. [4]

In a word the state of the Jews in Palestine, body as well as mind, is an unbearable one; and yet there the land yields most abundantly. If the possession of it were not to *completely* in the hands of the Arabs, — if one could only

[1] Jeremiah. c. XIV. 18.
[2] Jeremiah. c. XV. 5.
[3] Jeremiah. c. XIV. 8. 9.
[4] Jeremiah. c. XVII. 14.

secure for the Jews some little portion of it, and give them the means for its cultivation, sufficient sources of industry would be open to them, wherewith to obtain a livelihood. But what does it benefit them to cultivate the ground, if the Arabs rob them of the harvest?

At the sight of all the misery in which a country languishes, — a country, which has so much right to universal sympathy, I venture to raise a cry for help to my brethren in the faith in Europe. They will hear me; their hearts will be touched, and full of noble feeling, they will stretch forth their hands in aid of those imfortunates for whom I plead. „The fettered prisoner," says the Talmud, „cannot free himself, and it adds: „He, who has a good purpose in view will receive from God the means to carry it out."

A noble hearted man, whose name is ever mentioned with gratitude and veneration by our brethren in the faith, has been himself in Palestine among our people. I mean Sir Moses Montefiore, of London.

The charitable institutions, which he has himself founded at Jerusalem, are the abiding proofs of his great and noble exertion to alleviate the misery of his brethren; and thanks to the piety of this distinguished man and to the unwearied benevolence of his wife, the condition of the Jews in Jerusalem may become in time less wretched.

The old system of yearly almsgiving, which was but of little benefit, was of necessity discontinued; for a mere improvement in their personal condition, unaccompanied by any elevation of their moral worth, could have no lasting and happy result. In order to raise the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine from their degradation, — a work, which was commenced with much zeal and circumspection — it was necessary above all else, besides securing to them the supply of their bodily wants, to awaken in them, by instruction and by personal exertion, a feeling of their own worth.

And certainly never has assistance been more nobly

and usefully bestowed. Even strangers admire this work of love; and mouths and hands are full of praise and gratitude.

May the Almighty, the all seeing One, protect and sanctify their work; and the Children of Israel will not cease to bless them.

„The Lord hath shown His power before all people, that all nations may see the salvation of our God."

„I pray to the Lord Omnipotent, that He will end my sufferings. May He send me help from above, and assistance against my oppressors." — The Lord hath made bare His Holy Arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.[1]

Journey through the Mountain of Lebanon.

In January 1848 I left the Holy Land Palestine, in order to go over Lebanon to Damascus. I began my journey according to the following route. Several hours' journey from Zephath flows the river Jordan, which is here very narrow, it is crossed by a bridge, which by the Arabs is called Djesser Jacob (Jacob's bridge). On the other side of the Jordan, near the bridge, is built an Arabian Funduk (inn), where I spent the night. From this place I passed in company with two Arabs over the plain Medan towards Novaran or Nuaran, and towards evening we reached a mountain, which is called by the Arabs Djebel (mountain) Heisch, of which I shall speak later. Opposite this mountain to the west is another high mountain, the Djebel Makmel, which is covered with snow nearly the whole of the year. Between these two mountains lies a broad deep valley, which the Arabs call Al Bika. In this valley to the east of Mount Makmel are found the ruins of Balbec, and under the fragments and rubbish are stones from 10 to 20 feet in length, — the remains of a building which, according to

[1] Isaiah. c. LII. 10.

tradition, was formerly a magnificent palace of King Solomon. The legends of the Arabs assert that King Solomon had this palace built for Balkis, Queen of Sheba.

Balbec is one of the most remarkable structures of King Solomon. It is mentioned in the Bible by the name of Beth Halwanon (house of Lebanon). In the first Book of Kings c. VII. 2. the extraordinary structure of the Palace is described; which we likewise find mentioned in the same Book c. IX. 19. and in II. Chronicles c. VIII. 6.

In the account of Rabbi Joseph Schwarz a native of Jerusalem in his Hebrew work Tewuat Haarez (Jerusalem 1845) Vol. 2. Fol. 33. p. 2. it is related when, and by whom this extraordinary building was destroyed. It is written as follows: „In the year 5162, according to Biblical calculation, Tamerlane, an eastern King, who dwelt at Samarkand in Mongolia, came and conquered the whole of Persia and the middle of Asia. In the same year he also subdued Anatolia, Syria and Palestine, spreading desolation and destruction wherever he went. This ancient and remarkable building in Lebanon likewise fell a sacrifice to his fury.“ From this account, according to my calculation, the house of Balbec stood for 2200 years: — this I will here historically note down.

According to the calculations of Seder Olam Solomon began his reign, after Biblical reckoning, in the year	2926
He commenced the building of the Temple in the 4th year of his reign (I. Kings VI. 1. II. Chronicles III. 2.); therefore in the year	2930
The building of the Temple lasted seven years (I. Kings VI. 38); therefore up to the year	2937
Later he built a palace for himself (I. Kings VII. 1.), which took up 13 years; bringing it therefore to the year	2950
Solomon reigned forthy years (I. Kings XI. 42. II. Chronicles IX. 30); 24 of which were spent in erecting the above buildings; after	

which a period of 16 years remains up to the time of his death. In these 16 years he built the house of Lebanon, Tadmur and other places (I. Kings VII. 2. IX. 17—20. II. Chronicles VIII, 1—7). If we add these 16 years to the above date 2950, then we have the year of the death of Solomon . . 2966

The house of Balbec was destroyed 5162

It had therefore stood from 2196

or about 2200 years.

On the road from Balbec to Damascus one comes to a spring which is called Fije (Arabic Fitschi), the water of which united to several other springs ultimately forms a river which flows down past Damascus towards the sea, where it unites with the river Bardi, and falls into the sea Bahret-el-Merdsch.

To the north of Mount Makmel, near Danijeh, is a forest of several hundreds of cedar trees, of which some have attained a height of about 80 feet, and beneath round the trunk a circumference of 36 to 40 foot.

The first mentioned mountain Djebel Heisch rests with its base on one side of the Antilebanon mountain, whose north side is uncultivated and stretches away into the desert, whilst its southern side cultivated and inhabited extends to the place Banijas.[1] The north side extends nearly to Damascus. Near the Djebel Heisch a second mountain rises upon Antelebanon, -- the Djebel Assaik, called by the Arabs Djebel Tels (snow mountain). These mountains form the highest summits of Lebanon.

On these mountains, on the road to Damascus, lies the village Beth-el-Desana in the neighbourhood of which, about an hour's journey towards the north, rises the source of the river Al-Bardi (Bardi means *cold*), which flows north-east towards Damascus, where it is divided into two parts, one

[1] On a mountain an hour to the north of Banijas, is shewn to this day an ancient building, called by the Arabs Messet-el-Tair, where, according to their tradition, God made His covenant with Abraham.

of which runs trough the city of Damascus, and the other by the side of it, and after a while becomes united with the Fitschi, and falls into the sea Bahret-el-Merdsch.

The mountain of Lebanon is very fruitful: it produces superior good grain and abundance of excellent wine. The breeding of cattle, particularly of sheep, is a matter of great importance in the country. Of natural produce the cultivation of cotton and silk is especially attended to, from which the inhabitants make a stuff which they call Kitbye.

The chief part of the population is formed by the tribes of the Druses, whose religion is a mixture of Christianity and Mahometanism; among whom I was told, the practice, abhorrent to all human notions prevails, that a father may take his daughter and a brother his sister, to wife.

As a particular proof of the degree this strange custom is practised I will relate the following fact. An Israelite was on very friendly terms with the head of a Druse family, and was asked one day by the son of his friend to obtain for him from his father his own sister for his wife. The Israelite expressed himself willing to undertake this commission, and conveyed to his Druse friend the petition of his son. The father however replied that he could not comply with the wish of his son, because he had determined to marry his daughter himself. This fact was related to me by the Israelite himself.

The inhabitants of the mountain form a sort of republic. Two sheiks each of whom has his own district, govern the country. The one, named Amir Abschir, dwells in the city of Dir-el-Kamir, to the north-east of Tyrus; the other, called Hamir, lives near Aldania. The Druses are of great and powerful stature, and bold and fearless warriors.

In some places isolated Jewish families are to be found; they are much esteemed by the Druses, and, like the inhabitants themselves, are occupied in the cultivation of the soil. The above mentioned unholy custom is not practised by them; they are very religious, but ignorant. Their children, especially the girls, according to the old patriarchal

custom, go out to tend their flocks, just as the Bible (Genesis c. XXIX. 9.) relates of Rachel. A circumstance was related to me which took place some years ago, which was to this effect: a young girl was tending her flocks on the mountain, when she was assailed by a Druse. She begged him to leave her, and then threatened to meet violence with violence. As the Druse was heedless of either prayers or threats, the girl drew a pistol and shot him. When the case came before the Court of Justice the girl not only escaped unpunished, but received much praise for her courage.[1]

In the district of Sheik Hamir resides a great number of Christians, — the so called Maronites, whose Patriarch lives in the city of Kaniban, where also their church stands. Sanguinary skirmishes frequently take place between them and the tribes of the Druses; in one of which, some time since, many Christians perished.

From Lebanon I went on to Kanneitra, Sasa, Kokab, Daraya, and after fourteen days arrived at Damascus.

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[1] Rabbi Joseph Schwarz in the work we have already mentioned likewise relates this fact.

CHAPTER VII.

Damascus (Arabic Schamm).

Synagogue of Djubar. — Medrasch Gachsi, the ancient asylum of lepers. — The Mosque Moawiah. — The grave of Naoman. — Latkie. — Antakijeh. — Aleppo. — The grotto of Ezra. — Ancient Synagogue. — Tedif. — Aintab. — Merasch. — An accident. — Birdschak, city of Nimrod. — Urfa, ancient monuments. — Suwerek. — Tschermuk.

The city of Damascus was, as the Bible relates, for a long time the residence of the Kings of Syria. From 500 to 600 Jewish families (Rajahs) dwell there. Besides the leprous Jews, there also resides here a great number, under the protection of their respective Consuls, members of their own faith dwelling in the city, so that the total amounts to more than 4000.[1] They possess several Synagogues, of which one contains the five books of Moses, written in one volume on parchment bearing the date of 4749 (989 after Christ). There is another manuscript, containing the writings of all the Prophets, dated 4344 (581 after Christ). The first pages are ornamented with coloured pictures, representing the Temple with the altar of the Holy of Holies, several sacred vessels and a drawing of the ancient walls of Jerusalem, which latter though somewhat faded is still very correct, and bears the traces of a clever masterhand. The letters of the manuscript are Hebrew, square, and of the usual form.

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[1] Pethachia, p. 193, mentions 10,000 Jews in Damascus.

Half a mile to the east of this town, on leaving by the Gate Bab Duma, lies the little village of Djubar[1] or Djubaris in which reside several Jews, and where there is a very ancient Synagogue.[2] Tradition says that it was built by the Prophet Elisha and destroyed by Titus, but restored again by the Rabbi Eleazar, the son of Arack. In the Talmud[3] there is also mention made of a Synagogue in Djubar, which was ruined in the 16th century by the apostasy of a Jew.[4]

The structure of this ancient building reminds one of the Mosque Moawiah,[5] the interior was supported by 13 marble pillars; 6 on the right and 7 on the left side, and

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1 *Ritter, Erdkunde,* Vol. 17, 2. div., p. 1312: The village Dschobar to the north-east of Damascus is particularly held sacred by the Jews; because they consider it as the Hobar (or Hoba, Genesis XIX. 15), to which place Abraham, with his servants pursued the four Kings of Syria, „and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus, and delivered Lot and his goods from the hands of the enemies. But another etymological explanation of the ancient Arabs mentions instead of Hoba the spot Berzeh (derived from *baraza*, to advance), which is situated more to the north, at the foot of the Kasinu-mountain, as being the place to which Abraham victoriously advanced, and then performed his devotions on the mountain, which is therefore dedicated to him. — His house steward Eleazar of Damascus is likewise honorably mentioned in the legend.

2 *Ritter's Erdkunde,* Vol. 17, 2. div., p. 1424: In Dschobar, according to v. Kremer, is an ancient venerated Synagogue, in which is preserved an old scroll, written on parchment, containing the Law. In this Synagogue is likewise shewn in an old walled up stone vault, the tomb of the Prophet Elijah, in which sick persons are said to recover in one night. Every Friday the Jews dwelling at Damascus assemble there, and read together the Old Testament.

3 Messechet Berachot Fol. 50. — Seder Hadaroth Fol. 77.

4 Teschuwath Mabit Vol. 3, Fol. 147, p. 2.

5 Benjamin de Tudela does not mention these Synagogues. — Pethachia, p. 198, speaks of two Synagogues; of which the one was erected by Elisha, the other by Rabbi Eleazar, son of Asariah. He transfers them however to Damascus: *In Damasco Synagoga exstat, quam condidit Elisaeus, itemque alia magna, cujus fundator R. Elieser Asariae filius, in qua precantur.* — I however think that my assertion is correct, and that the two Synagogues are but one, as above mentioned.

is everywhere inlaid with marble. There is only one portal by which to enter. Under the holy shrine, where the Pentateuch was preserved, was a grotto, wherein several persons could stand upright; the descent to which was by a flight of about 20 steps. According to the Jews, the Prophet Elisha is said to have found in this grotto a place of refuge from the persecutions of King Ahab. Except the grotto, in which there is nothing uncommon, there is nothing more of the above mentioned to be seen. — At the entrance of the Synagogue, towards the middle of the wall to the right, is an irregularly formed stone, on which can be observed the traces of several steps. Tradition asserts that upon this stone sat King Hazael, when the Prophet Elisha anointed him King. The Jews relate wonderful things of this Synagogue. It was respected by every conqueror; and, even the Arabs, who otherwise laid waste the whole country, have not touched this building, which is of an extraordinary solidity; and the Jews, who sought refuge there, were never exposed to attacks.

If one go out of the Gate Bab-el-Sherky an hour's journey to the east of the town stands an ancient building called Medrass Gachsi, after a servant of Elisha,[1] who being cursed by that Prophet was struck with white leprosy, which tormented him to the end of his life. Even in the present time they seek out those who are afflicted by this incurable illness, and endeavour for the sake of safety to confine them to several houses, which are surrounded by a garden and moat. Tradition has ascribed to this place since the remotest period, the power of curing this disease. A clear spring of water bubbles on one side of this hospital, which has been founded for hundreds of years, and is entirely supported by the gifts and alms of pious Mahomedans.

In the city is a very extensive place surrounded by a strong and high wall, in the centre of which is an ancient

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1 II. Kings. V. 20. 27.

building called by the Mahomedans Moawiah,[1] by the Jews Bethrimon.[2] It is used at the present time as a Mosque.[3] A marble colonnade passes through this large square building; walls, columns, floor, ceiling, all are of marble. Light and air enter by means of a large opening in the ceiling. There are four large portals to the interior of the building. Here the Mahomedans commence their pilgrimage to the grave of their Prophet in Mecca. Furnished with all that is necessary for their journey, the caravans with their camels enter at one door and go out at the opposite one, continuing from thence their pious journey. In the interior of this Mosque is the tomb of Jichia ben Sachor, who is venerated as a Saint by the Mahomedans.

In the eastern part of the town, outside the Gate Bab-el-Scherky, at a distance of about half an hour's journey, is to be found a tomb of colossal size; but otherwise unworthy of any observation. Tradition relates that it is the tomb of Naeman, the chief general in the brave army of the King of Aram. The Arabians call this tomb Sheik-Atzlan, and venerate it as a sanctuary. A few steps from it flows a strong stream, which springs from the Mountain Riboui-Vill-Min-Sar. The Jews say that this is the Mount Hermon, mentioned by King David.[4] The name of the stream is Zouf (wool); because wool is oftentimes washed in its waters. From the same source rise four streams, which send their waters to Damascus, and from thence divide themselves into several smaller rivers. The first of them is called Annivad, the second Thora, the third Jazid, and the fourth Bardi; these, according to the Jews, are the rivers mentioned in the II. Kings. c. V. 12.

From Damascus I journeyed through Mount Lebanon

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[1] See the history of this Mosque in Dr. Carl Ritter's *Erdkunde* B. 4, Vol. 17, div. 2, p. 1363—1375.

[2] II. Kings. c. V. 18.

[3] Benjamin de Tudela p. 47, likewise speaks of this Mosque, and calls it Guona Damessek.

[4] Psalm CXXXIII. 3.

up the river Bardi over Deir Kanon, Zuk, Ez Zebedoni and Andjar towards Beirut, where I embarked, and over Tripoli di Suri (called by the Arabs Trabolus-el-Scham) proceeded to Latkie. This last journey was a very difficult one on account of the wind being against us, and the ship was oftentimes in danger of being wrecked. After a stormy passage of 11 days I landed at Latkie, procured there a horse and, accompanied by two Arabs, of whom the one acted as guard and the other was the owner of the horse, rode on towards the Antakijeh of the Talmud. On the way there we came to a tent, out of which an Arab appeared, and demanded of me, as I was a Jew, a toll of 2 piastres, whether in the name of the government or for himself I am unable to decide. I declined paying, and rode on undisturbed. In Antakijeh itself I found 150 Jewish families, tolerably contented with their position, very religious, not ignorant, but remarkably superstitious.

Aleppo.[1]

Aleppo is 12 days' journey from Damascus, and the route is a very dangerous one, on account of the many Arab robbers.

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[1] Kayserling, Pedro Teixeira: Before we accompany Teixeira to Aleppo, his next place of destination, let us make a halt with him at Ana on the Euphrates.*) — According to the tradition of the inhabitants the town is very old, and mentioned in the Bible under the name of Hena.**) The most difficult part of the journey which poor Pedro had to perform was that from Ana to Aleppo. It lasted from the end of December until the middle of March, and how truly did he thank God when at last he reached the town. That Aleppo

*) See Tewat Haarez by Rabbi Joseph Schwarz. Fol 143.
**) II. Kings. c. XVIII. 34; c. XIX. 13, and the corresponding passage in Isaiah. c. XXXVII. 13. — P. Teixeira, 139.

Aleppo is called by two names by the Jews, viz. Zova

or Haleb, as it is called by the Moors and Turks, is the often mentioned Aram Soba of the Bible is maintained by ancient and modern Geographers as well as by Teixeira. The town, which is generally supposed to contain more than 14,000 houses, formerly numbered about 2200, of which many were distinguished by their size and beauty. „But the houses not only of the Turks and Moors are as magnificent as can be imagined, but those of the Jews too and of the Greek and Roman Catholic Christians and Armenians are beautiful enough to be the dwellings of princes.*) We do not speak of the three hundred Mosques situated here, and of their magnificent internal arrangements, nor of the many warehouses, with their merchandise from all parts of the world, nor of the broad streets of the town paved with slabs of marble, neither do we dwell upon the royal hospital, of the management of which our traveller complains, but we do speak of the hill which rises in the midst of the town, and like a Palladium, is separated from it on all sides. It is round like a little mountain, and upon it is a fortress en miniature, which as the Jews and Moors maintain was founded by Joab, the general of David. According to tradition, not only the synagogue there was built by the same Joab, but — imagination gives itself play! — the Patriarch Abraham is even said to have taken up his residence for a time on the fortress mount.**) Moors and Turks, Christians and Armenians, Chaldeans and Greeks dwell in this rich commercial city. At the time that Teixeira visited the town more than a 1000 Jewish families dwelt in a separate part of it, which was enclosed by walls. Pedro relates that they possess a large synagogue, which, according to their belief, was built 1500 years ags. Most of the Jews there are rich and engaged in trade; others earn their livelihood as runners, and others support themselves as artists, workers in gold and such like.†)

*) Ibid. 175: *y no solo las de los Turcos y Moros son de aquella suerte, pero aun de las de los Judios y Christianos Griegos y Armenios son muchas de tanto precio que son capazes de habitar en ellas Principes.*

**) Ibidem 176: *En medio de la ciudad esta un collado alto, separado ygualmente por todas las partes de todo el resto de la ciudad, redondo como un monte de trigo, sobre el qual esta una fortaleza que Moros y Judios tienen per tradicion que primero la fundo Joab Capitan General de David: tambien affirman que en aquel mismo lugar residio el Patriarcha Abraham algun tiempo.*

†) Teix. 178: *Tambien viven Judios de los quales haura mil casas buenas en barrio separado, pero dentro de los muros, con una grande Sinagoga, que affirman hauer mil y quinientos anos que fue fundada y se conserua: hay muchos dellos ricos, los mas son mercaderes, el resto corredores y officiales como plateros, lapidarios, y de ostras artes semejantes.*

and Aramzova,[1] the first name is used to the present day in all Jewish writings. It was the capital of a small kingdom, whose ruler, in the time of David, was Hadarezer, son of Rechob.[2]

The Jewish population of the city comprises about 1500 to 2000 families,[3] who enjoy great privileges under the protection of the European Consuls, of whom some are of their own faith; for Raphael di Piechotti, Consul of Russia and Prussia, and Elias Piechotti, Consul General of Austria, have obtained a certain influence over the Pacha, which they frequently exert in favour of their brethren.

The Synagogue is of considerable age, and is supported inside by a triple row of 72 pillars. In order to enter the Temple one must descend 20 steps, caused by the sinking of the ground. The saying goes that this building was erected by Joab the general of David. The windows which lead out into a large beautiful garden belonging to the community, run parallel with it, on account of the ground having sunk. A room in the upper story is somewhat decayed, and serves at the present time as a retreat for the women visiting the Synagogue.

The Jews dwelling at Aleppo distinguish themselves as much by their faithful devotion and fidelity to the great and holy bequest of their fathers — the Jewish Law — as by their profound Jewish-scientific acquirements. Not less than 60 learned men bear there the name of „Chacham" (the wise). The venerable, grey headed chief Rabbi Abraham Antibi, who by the publication of several learned works, of which I will only mention „Ohel Jescharim", has gained for himself a great name, and the second Rabbi Mardochai Liwaton, who had the kindness to visit me several times in my lodgings, — stand there as especial patterns of piety and learning, and merit a place at the side of the great Rabbis of Poland.

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1 II. Samuel. c. VIII. 3. 5.

2 I. Chronicles. c. XVIII. 3—6.

3 Benjamin de Tudela, p. 49, relates that 1500 Israelites dwell at Aleppo.

The study of the Law is cherished here with the greatest devotion, there is scarcely a Jew in Aleppo of whatever age or rank, who, notwithstanding all the demands made on his time by his business or position, does not find leisure every day at certain time to repair to the ever flowing stream of Thora, in order to derive instruction from that bubbling water of life, and strengthen himself for the holy and sublime duties of his religion. At the hour of midnight the greater part of the community is to be found assembled within the walls of the Synagogue; youths, in the feeling of their full and undiminished strength, — men, with their cares for wife and child, — even the weak old man, fast approaching the tomb, — all are assembled in that sacred place; and while without darkness covers the earth, here within awake to the brightest spiritual light the pious minds of the faithful sons of Judah. Until the morning dawns they remain together, occupied in the study of the Talmud and Sohar, or giving themselves up to prayer. The morning prayer closes these assemblies, and the day finds them busy and active in their different occupations.

Thus passes night after night, with the exception only of the Friday to the Sabbath; for then their occupations are not divided; but led by four conducters of the choir, the whole assembly joins in sacred and edifying songs composed by their Chachamim. This kind of psalmody makes a deep impression upon an European, by the peculiarity of the method of singing, and the enthusiastic character of the chorus. The greater number of these chants are composed by the distinguished poet Rabbi Israel Nagarah of Damascus, whose celebrated work Semiroth Israel is universally known. The leaders of the choir possess an extraordinary memory. I heard of one who knew by heart more than 1000 hymns. Besides this there is a singing society, instituted especially for practise of psalmody, which is performed with an enthusiasm and reverence such as I never heard before, so, that it fills the listener with a true enthusiasm.

The Sabbath and festival days are divided between

devotional exercises and amusements. The latter are gone through with quite as much conscientiousness as the former. All take part in them, the rich as well as the poor, without any distinction. The wealthy take such loving care of the poor, that the latter want for nothing in the celebration of their Sabbaths and festivals. Altogether the benevolence and hospitality of the Jews at Aleppo is really great: they are indeed worthy sons of Abraham. To the European Jew all houses are open; he can spend weeks, even months, in the house of his host, without being reminded by the smallest inattention on the part of his host, or any member of his household, that he is not at home. I myself for the space of five weeks found in the house of the worthy Salomon Lunjado the most friendly reception.

But not only to the members of his tribe and faith, but to every Christian traveller is the Jewish house open.

The houses are very beautiful and are remarkable for their extreme cleanliness. The food is prepared in a savoury way, and would be found excellent even by the spoiled palate of an European. The Jews dress here as they do in Palestine. They speak Arabic, but many of them speak also Hebrew with a so called Portuguese accent, and likewise Italian with great fluency. The poor of the community are very numerous, but are generously assisted.

Aleppo is surrounded by high walls. Its flourishing commerce extends to Mosul, Bagdad, Diabekr, towards Egypt, the East Indies, and even to England and France. In the year 1705 an earthquake devastated the town, and many persons were half buried, so that they appeared like trees with their roots in the ground. Another earthquake, which was felt by the whole province, caused in the year 1822 great destruction. A third shock in the year 1848, which I myself witnessed there, was less violent, and left behind no important traces.

Eight hours' journey from Aleppo, on the road to Aintab, is a place called by the Jews Tedif, and by the Arabs after the name of the great Ezra, Capel-Azar. In the Sy-

nagogue of the place is shewn a grotto, and also a stone, where, according to the tradition of the country, Ezra is said to have written the Thora[1] after the return from Babylon. Only about 20 Jewish families live here, who, like the Jews of all the other places in the country which I visited, speak Arabic. Before the beginning of the Feast of weeks the inhabitants of Aleppo annually make a pilgrimage to Tedif.

From Tedif I retourned to Aleppo, whence I travelled to the Arabian town Killis, to the north of Aleppo; its Jewish population of about 50 families live by trade, and are in a very happy condition. After a short rest I turned my steps towards Aintab, south-east from Killis, which I reached after a journey of a day and a half. Before I was permitted to enter the town, I was obliged to keep with my companions a quarantine of 10 days in one of the two buildings composing the lazaretto, which is sometimes so overfilled, that travellers are often obliged to encamp in the open air. The travellers, who are looked upon with most suspicion by the officers of Health, are the merchants from the neighbouring mountains, especially from Daghestan and Grusim.

At a distance of three days' journey from Aintab, the country assumes quite another character; one enters upon a region of mountains, whose summits are constantly covered with snow, which when melted flows down in dirty foaming streams. To the north of Aintab, on the road to Merasch, flows the river Marad.

I next arrived at Merasch, which lies at the foot of Mount Taurus, whose glistening glaciers lift up their heads to the clouds. The climate is always rough but healthy; the men are strong and of great stature. The town trades with the neighbourhood and with Kurdistan in agricultural produce, cattle and wool. The streets of the place are on both sides encompassed by canals, which are supplied during the whole year by the water of the melted snow. The houses are handsome; and the inhabitants, of whom

[1] Ezra. c. VII. 6. 21.

many are rich, dress in the Turkish style. The Jewish community is comprised of about 50 families, who are in a tolerably prosperous condition, and enjoy many privileges.

From Merasch I roved through the neighbourhood, which, rich in picturesque views, deserves the attention of travellers, and then retourned to Aintab. While returning, and riding through a stream formed by the melted mountain snow, my horse shied and threw me, and I remained hanging with my foot in the stirrup. I fell backwards, and was dragged by the horse a considerable distance, until at last, bruised and covered with blood, I remained lying on the ground in a state of unconsciousness, in which condition I was picked up by a passing caravan. After some days of rest, I again resumed my journey; as I had neither time nor money enough to wait until I was perfectly cured.

I next proceeded to Birdschak, in Arabic Bir-Sacca (Birra), which was only at the distance of a day and a half's journey. The Jews believe that this is the city Aram Naharajim, in which the parents of Rebecca dwelt.[1] At present Jews no longer dwell in that place; though they often come there on business.

The travellers, who have eluded the quarantine in Aintab, have to endure this disagreable process here. In order to enter the city one has in a ferry-boat to cross the Euphrates, which protects the town on this side, whilst the other sides are protected partly by a chain of mountain, which rise quite close to the town, and partly by some old walls, which join on the mountain. From a distance, this large wall, which surrounds the town in a semicircle, and by its outlines forms a strong contrast with the dark blue back ground of the chain of granite, presents an extraordinary appearance. At the foot of the mountain are to be seen a number of houses of different sizes, part already fallen into ruins; the one however always adjoining the other. Each of these houses contains a cellar, in which are

[1] Genesis. c. XXIV. 10.

built two or three rooms, capable of holding at most two to three persons. All these rooms stand in connection with the enormous subterranean passages, which extend under the town, under the Euphrates to the distance of an hour's journey from the other side of the river. On the summit of the mountain is built a Funduk (inn), in which dwell Armenian merchants.

Urfa.

Eighteen hours' journey from Birdschak lies, in a desert neighbourhood, the town of Urfa, likewise enclosed by a wall. Round about the town are to be found a great number of grottoes, built by human hand; these are all open, and lead into a subterranean passage, which is said to be several hours' journey in length. Regular gates, doors, streets, extensive places and even wells are to be found here. It is beyond all doubt that these are the traces of a town destroyed by an earthquake. Could it not be the ancient „Ur" of the Chaldees, of which Moses speaks? [1]

In Urfa are to be found monuments of antiquity, which date from the oldest biblical times; some are preserved up to this day; others are lying in ruins. We mention here some of the most remarkable:

1) The house, in which Abraham was born. It is an artificial grotto, hewn out of a single piece of rock; and a cradle of white stone. The grotto is closed and guarded by the Arabs; one can however enter it on payment of a small gratuity. The Arabs are wont to carry thither their sick children, and to lay them in Abraham's cradle, in which they leave the little ones for the whole night; if they are not found dead the next morning, their recovery can be looked forward to with safety.

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[1] Genesis. c. XV. 7.

2) The furnace, into which Abraham, according to the Sefer Hajaschar, was thrown by Nimrod. It is a trench surrounded by a railing, and in order to protect it from the inclemency of the weather, a house, which is kept carefully closed, has been erected on the spot. — At the present time a stream flows there, which divides and forms two ponds, which abound in fish. Like all other places and subjects, which are in any way able to be brought into connection with the great patriarch, these are contemplated with the greatest veneration. The Mahomedans entertain the greatest respect for the holy man; the furnace therefore, as the place of his martyrdom, and the spring, which flows there, are considered sacred. Even the fishes, which live in the ponds formed and supplied by the spring, are regarded with reverence; so much so, that fishing in these sacred waters is considered a capital crime, and punished with death. The fishes are consequently so numerous, and are so accustomed to the presence of man, that instead of shunning his approach, they quietly continue their merry gambols.[1]

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[1] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: Four days' journey from Aleppo on the declivity of two mountains, is the old town of Orfa, the original residence of Abraham, as such, bearing the name of „Ur".*) Up to this day, says the traveller, is the spot on which the Chaldeans endeavoured to burn Abraham, universally reverenced. The inhabitants shew a spring, in which is to be found an excellent kind of fish. It would be considered a sin to eat these fishes, because they are said to have extinguished the funeral pile, which had been prepared for Abraham.**) The inhabitants of this place likewise know the spring, out of which Rebecca, whom they call Rafka, is said to have drawn water for the faithful servant of Abraham and for his camels, when he came there to fetch a wife for the son of his master.†)

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*) Genesis. c. XI. 28.

**) Midrasch Bereschit 38. (Of this miracle the Midrasch knows nothing.)

†) Teixeira 186: *Orfa, ciudad antiquisima, Hamada en otro tiemps Ur, ado los Caldeos quiezieron quemar a Abraham, y hay aun oy en ella lugar con este titulo tenido en grande veneracion; y muestran alli una fuente en cuya agua se cria buen pescado, comer del qual se tiene por sacrilegio, porque dizen que fue criada miraculosamente para apagar el fuego en que querian quemar el santo Patriarcha: fuera de aqueste*

3) About 50 steps from this furnace are two stone pillars, connected together by means of an iron chain. According to the tradition of the place, the fire into which Abraham was thrown is said to have been so hot, that a near approach to it was impossible; and this apparatus was therefore put up, in order that the martyr might be thrown from afar into the flames. The already mentioned book Hajaschar relates all the details, as to how the patriarch was saved: his brother Haran however perished.

About an hour's journey from the town, on the side of a rocky mountain, are built in several places a great number of square grottoes of considerable size. One of these, more roomy than the others, leads into a second one, these together form a large chamber. The interior of these ancient buildings is very regular; the ceilings are smooth, some stone pillars, consisting of one single piece, are still standing, — others have fallen down; all are however hollow and inhabited by serpents and scorpions; dreadful guests, whom it would not be advisable to disturb in their pleasant repose. — Some of these grottoes are furnished with a kind of fore yard, and at the present time serve as pens for the herds of sheep.

The Jews as well as the Mussulmans believe and corroborate the tradition of the place, that the celebrated hunter Nimrod, who is mentioned in the Bible [1] as the builder of cities, dwelt here with his people.[2]

At the distance of an hour's journey from the city of Nimrod, I visited another grotto, over which a beautiful arabian house, planted round with trees, has been built. This is said to have been the house of Iob, and beside it there is a cave, in which the pious sufferer is said to have

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[1] Genesis. c. X. 11.

[2] *Ritter's Erdkunde.* Vol. 11, p. 317.

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pueblo se ve un pozo, que affirman ser aquel de cuya agua Rebeca (a quien el los dizen Rafka) dio de beuer al criado de Abraham, que gua a buscar muger para Izach, y a sus camellos.

sat, when, tormented with leprosy and affliction, he received the visit of his friends. In the neighbouring rocks are deep holes, which were made use of by Iob as corn-magazines; and the Arabs use them to this day for the same purpose. In the courtyard near the house is a well, which is furnished with very good water.

In Urfa reside about 150 Jewish families;[1] they are free and happy; so ignorant however, that hardly 50 persons among them are able to perform their devotions.

The village *Charan*, which is well known in the Bible, being the death place of Tarah, the father of Abraham,[2] is situated six hours' journey further to the north. In this place Rebecca is said to have given the advice to her husband, that Jacob should flee from his brother Esau.[3] — The Arabs show, half a mile from Charan, a very deep well covered by a stone, and assert that this is the well mentioned in the Bible.[4]

The Bené-Haramachim (children of Haramachim) inhabitants of mountains, of whom the Book of Esther speaks, dwell near to Charan, about a day's journey from it.

Siwerek. Tschermuk.

On the day of my departure from Urfa, the caravan, which I had joined, was attacked by robbers. I applied to the captain, and tendered him my submission. The caravan offered but a short and fruitless resistance; after which our travellers were made prisoners, bound and gagged; I was however left at liberty, and was conducted in my Mahomedan dress to the tent of the chief. As it was growing dark

1 *Ritter's Erdkunde.* Vol. 11, p. 327. mentions 500 Jews.
2 Genesis. c. XI. 32.
3 Genesis. c. XXVII. 44.
4 Genesis. c. XXIX. 2. 3. 8. 10.

I offered him a drink, which consisted of nothing else than good brandy;[1] he drank without suspicion; and soon afterwards fell into a deep sleep. Of this I gave information to my travelling companions; during the night they all freed themselves from their bonds, and we escaped. We seized the chief bandits, bound them, and then applied for help in the next village. Near to Siwerek however a troop of horsemen assailed us, and we were compelled to let our prisoners go, and to take to flight ourselves. On the following day we arrived at Siwerek, after a journey of 3 days.

Siwerek is a very old town, situated in the midst of a very desert region, and surrounded by a wall half fallen into ruins; on one side of which stands a tower in the form of a pyramid. The houses of the town are small, and built of brick; every thing makes an impression of misery and poverty, although the corn-market is considerable and richly furnished. Near to the town are the ruins of a citadel.

Only four Jewish families live in this place; but the community was formerly much more numerous; celebrated Rabbis dwelt there, and commerce flourished. But the plague, that scourge of the east, carried away a great number of the former inhabitants. An hour's journey from the town is a very large Jewish place of burial, in which are some gravestones so ancient, that it was impossible for me to decipher either the dates or their inscriptions.

From Siwerek, the road in a northern direction leads through a mountainous region of enormous rocky cliffs; unhealthy, on account of the many swamps; it is the mountain Kirwantschimen Dagh, called by the Jews Touri Talga (snow mountain). In order to traverse this locality mules are used, which are especially trained for this purpose.

The Jews in the vicinity call the inhabitants of the mountain Ammonites or Moabites; as they believe the are the descendants of the tribes so often mentioned in the Bible as Ammon and Moab, who still maintain their old place of

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1 The Bedouins do not know brandy.

habitation.[1] I spent a night among these inhabitants of the mountain in the little village of Kirwan, and found there an hospitable shelter. My interpreter asked them whether they were descended from the people Ammon or from Moab, to which we received the answer that they did not know; all that could be asserted was, that the present inhabitants were descendants of both nations. They speak a peculiar language which much resembles the characters of the Kurdish, which, as I have already mentioned, possesses many Chaldaic letters. Their houses are very large, and are built of lime and decorated outside with chalk. In order to keep off the continual frost, a large fire is always kept burning in the inside of the dwellings. The climate is the same as at Kurdistan in Persia; the people themselves are powerfully built; their principal occupation is agriculture; besides which they carry on some trade in sheep, oxen and mules. The character of the people is rude even savage, and being separated from other tribes living around them they form a kind of independent republic. The dress of the people consists of a coarsely woven mantle, similar to those worn on the Moldau, add to this turkish trousers, falling down to their feet, which are enclosed in sandals, and a head dress of lambskin, or a high felt hat without a brim, resembling a tightly drawn up night cap.

I left these mountains accompanied by the Moabite who had sheltered me, and by a brother Israelite. The extremely difficult path which leads over the steep sides of mountains and deep hollows, is only to be traversed under the direction of a guide, which I possessed in the person of my Moabite host. In the midst of a deep hollow path surrounded on all sides by rocks, near to the rustring Kyziltschibu-Tschay river, my guide suddenly stopped, and desired me to show him the contents of my wallet. In reply to my question as to whether we were near to a frontier, or whether he was

[1] Jeremiah. c. XL. 11.

allowed to exercise the right of tax-collector, he gave me the short answer that so he would have it. I seemingly prepared myself to comply with his request; but took advantage of a favourable moment when he turned his back to throw my cloak over his head. Deprived of the use of his hands, I bound him with the help of my brother Israelite, and took him to Tschermuk; but there however I was soon obliged to let him go again, as I could find no turkish officer of justice.

Tschermuk lies on the montain Mehrab Dagh. The Jewish community numbers about 100 families, who, exposed as they are to be continually plundered, live in a wretched condition. Their customs and dress are mahomedan.

An hour from Tschermuk are numerous hot mineral springs; they are collected in a large stone cistern in a grotto, and serve as a public bath to the inhabitants of the town. I myself had an opportunity of trying the healing power of these springs; for, wounded and exhausted as I was, by using them for ten days, at the moderate price of 5 paras (3 centimes) the bath, I was perfectly cured. Not far from the springs an inn has been built, for the accomodation of the guests who come here to use the baths.

CHAPTER VIII.

Diabekr.

The town. — Expedition to Armenia. — Ezra's manuscript. — Nisibin. — Tomb of the Rabbi Jehuda ben Betera. — Jewish villages founded by Tselma. — Djesireh. — Zakuh. — Remarkable customs. — Extraordinary marriage.

In order to arrive at the important town of Diabekr, I had to take a two days' journey through the mountains, on which the vegetation is very scanty, and few traces of cultivation are to be found. Here, as well as in other places of the east, the Jews are obliged to inhabit a certain portion of the town: but this separation rests only on the custom of eastern countries, and has nothing exclusive or degrading in it, as the so called Ghetto in Rome. About 250 Jewish families reside in Diabekr; and although there is no learned man to be found among them, still, many of them possess profound knowledge of our dogmas, and understand the text of the Bible.

In a corner of the synagogue is a small apartment, always kept closed, which is held in the most extreme respect not only by the Jews, but also by the followers of other creeds; because it is believed, that the Prophet Elijah once appeared there. In a niche of the wall of this apartment is preserved a Pentateuch, written in the assyrian characters (Hebrew, square). This manuscript, a beautiful volume of the usual size, is only shewn once in each year, on the eve of the day of Atonement (the Col-Nidre), when it is placed on the holy table (Schulchan), and all pious persons draw near and kiss it with the deepest veneration. As a Chacham, it was easy for me to obtain permission to view this highly

revered relic; but I found nothing particularly remarkable in it. It is written on very thick parchment; the letters resemble those of our Pentateuch; the writing however is ungraceful; in many places it is illegible, and in many it is completely obliterated. The Jews there assert that this copy of the Pentateuch was written by the hand of the Prophet Ezra.

In answer to my question as to the origin of this relic, I was informed that formerly it was in the possession of the very large Jewish community at Mardin; but as that was exposed to continual plunderings, it had been confided to the community of Diabekr, which latter had subsequently refused to give back the work to its former owners. In Mardin I found this assertion confirmed by an acknowledgment of the proper delivery of the book to the community of Diabekr, signed by the chief Elders and other persons of consideration in the place. By further research I ascertained that the community of Mardin had come into possession of the work in the following manner: The Jewish inhabitants of Nisibin (now called Neitzibin by the Jews and Arabs), being attacked by a horde of robbers, had fled to Mardin, and taken the Pentateuch with them. According to their account, this Pentateuch came from the Jeschiba (Academy) of the Rabbi Jehuda ben Betera, who had an Academy at Neitzibin, and was one of the most celebrated and learned scholars of the Talmud. Their tradition also adds, that it was written by Ezra's own hand. Many other manuscripts are said to have been there at the same time; but have been lost in consequence of numerous pillages and attacks.

As this relic deeply interested me I made enquiries of many other persons concerning it; and particularly of a Jew, living in Mardin, a venerable old man, who seemed to me as a prophet in the wilderness, related to me the fact almost in the same words.

The work is doubtless a very ancient one, and deserves in every respect the special investigation of a connoisseur.

As up to this time, no mention has been made of it by any learned man, I esteem myself happy to be the first who, if only through the relation of widely spread traditions, has related anything concerning it. At the same time I only lament that it was impossible for me to devote my exclusive attention to the form of the „Petuchot and S'etumoth“,[1] to the letters, and to many other points differing in the German and Portuguese rites of the Jews, and by the autority of this ancient codex to decide them. Had I but imagined the importance of this Pentateuch to the Jewish world, I should certainly have devoted my entire time and energy to it, in order to have ensured a more satisfactory result. I shall however be enabled perhaps in my second journey to make this good.

The town of Diabekr is enclosed by a high wall, which dates from the Roman conquest, as some latin inscriptions prove, which have been preserved to this day. This wall is very strong, and extends along a chain of granite rocks, forming a sharp descent to the bed of the Tigris, which is here at least 20 feet deep, navigable and is the road of communication between the towns of Mosul and Bagdad. The navigation is however very dangerous, as the ships often get upon the rocks, and are then engulphed by the boisterous waves. Another great danger is caused by the melting of the snow on the mountains, which rushes down in fearful streams, dragging with it huge masses of earth and rock, and hurling them against the ships, so either crushing them, or causing leaks. I myself saw a ship go down in this manner with crew and freight; only one sailor was able to save himself.

The building of these ships, which can be constructed in the short space of two or three days, is very simple. A number of goats are slaughtered, and their skins taken off entire; these skins are sewn up at the end where the

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[1] Petuchot and S'etumoth are different forms of paragraphs in the Pentateuch.

head is cut off and at other open parts; and are then distended with wind, so that they form large bladders. These bladders are joined together in twelve rows, each row containing twelve skins;[1] and upon these are laid square planks of wood, and the bladders fastened to them. Upon these rafts planks are laid, and on them the goods are packed. These rafts fload very easily, but when they strike violently on a rock, the distended skins burst, and goods and property are sunk in the water.

Diabekr numbered in former years over 80,000 inhabitants; but they are reduced by the ravages of the plague to about one third of that number. This disease however almost exclusively visited the northern part, whose empty houses are permitted to fall into ruin. The town carries on an extensive trade with Anatolia, Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, Bagdad, and Kurdistan. Industry flourishes, and what it produces is widely celebrated; many clever artists in silver, and armourers are to be found here. Splendid gardens surround the town; the interior of which is distinguished by magnificent buildings, many bazaars, numerous fountains, ornamented with beautiful marble columns, and above all a superb Mosque. Much care is taken to keep the interior of the houses neat and clean.

The walls of the town, which I have already mentioned, are so extremely broad, that a carriage can with ease turn round on them. On the top of them, to which one ascends by terraces, several houses are built. As, in company with several Jewish friends, among whom was my host Isaac Misrachi, I was walking one day on the ramparts, from which can be enjoyed a most beautiful view of the town and the picturesque neighbourhood, I expressed a wish to find out what those houses contained. My companions endeavoured to talk me out of such a wild nation, by asserting that

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde,* vol. 11, p. 64, likewise describes these rafts; but there 59 skins are mentioned as requisite for such a ship. Our assertion is however correct; as we have several times seen them ourselves, and have travelled by them.

ghosts frequented those houses, and all curiosity would be dangerous. I would not be deterred from my intention, and boldly entered one of the buildings, in which I found nothing remarkable; for it was empty and desolate. It was only on my return that the real cause of this fear was told me: namely, that many Mahomedan women hold secret meetings with young Armenians in these solitary buildings; the deepest mystery is kept concerning it, and for safety one can only enter these buildings armed; so that any inquisitive person runs the risk of paying with his life for his intrusion into such secrets. Later, I found this confirmed, when I wished to investigate a second house; for hardly had I entered it, when a bullet whistled past me, after which I naturally lost all desire for further investigations.

In Diabekr, Arabic, Turkish and Armenian are spoken. The Jews however generally make use of Arabic. The national character of the inhabitants is mild; the usual dress is turkish; to which however the Europeans make an exception; for they go about in their national garb.

Two days' journey from Diabekr is the town of Mardin, on the mountain Djebel Mardin; on the summit of which are to be found the ruins of an old castle. About 50 Jewish families live here,[1] who, although they have a certain quarter of the town assigned to them for their abode, still live tolerably free. They mostly devote themselves to agriculture, dress in the Mahomedan style, and speak Arabic. Their Nassi is called Mailum Moses.

Two days' journey from Mardin is Nisibin; the Jews call the town Neitzibin, which latter name is also mentioned in the Talmud. This town, lying on the Tschak-schak, was formerly of some importance; and, according to the Targum of Jerusalem, is said to be the Arcad of the Bible. Only two[2] Jews live there now; a father and son. The father,

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1 *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 11, p. 390. Here a considerably greater number of Jews is mentioned: my assertion is however the correct one.

2 Benjamin de Tudela, p. 51, speaks of 1000 Jews. — Pethachia, p. 193, mentions 2800; he likewise speaks p. 170 of a Synagogue of Rabbi

Mailum Samuel, is a butcher; the name of the son is Isaac. — In the burial place, which is about an hour's journey from the town, near to which are to be seen wonderful ruins of the Roman time, is the tomb of the Rabbi Jehuda ben Betera,[1] which, as an object of general veneration, is the goal of many pilgrimages. Formerly a house stood over the grave; but it was pulled down about ten years ago by order of the new Pacha, and the stones of it used in the erection of barracks. One of the stones removed, is said, according to creditable assertion, to bear an inscription to the memory of the celebrated Talmudist; but it was impossible for me to discover it, even after a most strenuous search. A round stone about five feet high was shewn to me as his grave stone; but I could find no inscription on it. According to general belief, the Pacha was punished for this desecration by dying in the same year. In this same burial place are said to rest the remains of many Talmudists; but no monument and no historical trace justify the truth of this assertion.

Tselma. — The villages of the Jews.

Two hours' journey from Nisibin, in a south east direction, is the village of Tselma. According to ancient biblical custom, which is still always followed in the East, the village bears the name of its fonder, a Jew, celebrated and universally respected in the neighbourhood for his riches, his noble character, and his tried warlike bravery.

Jehuda ben Betera at Nisibin. — *Ritter's Erdkunde,* Vol. 11, p. 426, likewise mentions this tomb, and says, a ruin is to be found over it. But this, as above mentioned, is no longer in existence.

[1] Benjamin de Tudela, p. 45, says, that the tomb of the Rabbi Jehuda ben Betera is in the village Meron in Palestine. I believe however that my assertion, according to the Talmud Pessachim Fol. 3 is more correct.

A Pacha, who was favourably disposed towards Tselma, made him a present of considerable tract of land. Tselma built a number of houses on it, and offered these to the Arabs and Armenians, on condition, that they would cultivate his fields. Thus sprung up and encreased after a while the above mentioned village. Tselma, who, when attacked by some plundering hordes, repulsed them by his own personal courage, continued to rise more and more in the respect of the inhabitants of his village, so that he now governs there as acknowledged ruler. According to eastern custom, he has two wives, wo have borne him seven children. I remained two days in this truly patriarchal family, and enjoyed many proofs of love and sympathy. Several other brethren of my faith have likewise settled there.

The chain of mountains Djebel-Sandjack, which the people of the country believe to be the mountains of Seir,[1] extend to within an hour's journey of Tselma. Thence I made excursions into the villages, which are chiefly inhabited by Jews, and found during my visits in what deep ignorance they live. The Bible is to them a dead letter, a book with seven seals; they exercise only a few external traditional duties, without knowing or understanding their inner worth. On the Sabbath day they assemble in the Synagogue; but the Chacham, who is the only one who can read, must pray for all. He likewise reads the weekly lessons out of a printed Pentateuch, for manuscripts of the law they do not possess.

They occupy themselves chiefly in agricultural pursuits, and carry on a small trade in cattle, and weave some stuffs; few only are engaged in commerce. As they are frequently attacked by the Kurds, they know how to defend themselves, and take active part in the combats, in which the wandering hordes are ever engaged among themselves, as in fact they must be on one side or the other.

[1] I proved to them however that these traditions were certainly incorrect; as the mountains of Seir are on the southern boundary of Palestine.

Dschesireh. — Sachu.

After a sojourn of about ten days in these villages, I came over Kusri to Dschesireh, on the Tigris, at the foot of the mountain Djebel-Djudi, which the Jews call Crez-Gezera, and which they hold to be the wilderness mentioned in the Bible.[1] I consider this opinion incorrect, although I have considered myself bound to make mention of it. — They further maintain that the mountain, called by the Arabs Djebel-Djudi, at the base of which lies the town, is the mountain Tschuk, of which the Talmudists speak.[2] Towards this part, according to their tradition, on the day of Atonement, the scape goat laden with the sins of the people was driven forth into the wilderness, but I think this untrue, considering the great distance of the mountain from Jerusalem, as, according to the same authority, that place is said only to have been six hours' journey from Jerusalem.

About 20 Jewish families live in the town,[3] of whom some are very rich.

The dress of the inhabitants is very peculiar: they wear a long silk undergarment, which by the Moors in Algiers is worn open in front; over this a vest richly embroidered in arabesques, and over this again a kind of red satin tunic without sleeves. The covering for the head consist of a high pointed felt hat, and around this pyramid formed head dress are wound different stuffs, so that it attains a very remarkable circumference. They dress in this way in summer as well as winter.

On the road from Dschesireh to Sachu one has to pass over the Tigris, for which purpose the ships I have described are used. At low water the river can be passed by a

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1 Leviticus c. XVI. 22.

2 Messechet Jona chap. 6, v. 4.

3 Benjamin de Tudela p. 52 says, that at that time there lived in Dschesireh 4000 Jews, who possessed a Synagogue, which was founded by the celebrated Author Ezra. I have heard nothing of it.

floating bridge, which, while I was there, was carried away at high tide. In passing over an accident occurred; we came into contact with the rocks; the distended goat skins burst, and goods and chattels were all in the water; and had to be fished out again, without however having sustained other damage than a wetting. From Dschesireh the road goes in a south west direction for about 18 hours' journey. In order to arrive at the town of Sachu, the Chabur river has to be crossed, which is united to an old canal, and is passed by a brick bridge. At the gate an entry tax of 1 piastre is demanded from all strangers. On the north and west sides the town is protected by moats.

Sachu on the Chabur. About 200 Jewish families live in this town; they support themselves partly by commerce with the neighbouring Kurds, or, as workmen, manufacture woolen stuffs and such like kinds of fabrics. They are mostly wealthy, but live in a state of great ignorance.

Two Rabbis live in the town, of whom the one, Rabbi Schalom, is very rich, the second, Rabbi Eliahu, is well off. One day Mailum Eliahu summoned me to him on very important business, and on my arrival I found him leaning over the book Beth Joseph. He then told me, that a Jew, who went about in the different neighbouring villages with merchandise, had disappeared for some time. His wife considered him dead and wished to marry again. He, the Mailum, believed himself justified in giving the woman his permission; but he wished first to hear my opinion of the case. On this I remarked that as the husband might still be living, or have been obliged to adopt the Islam faith, and as in this case the woman was under the control of her husband, she ought not to contract any new marriage, as it would not be legal. — To this the Rabbi replied, that the young woman left alone, was exposed to the danger of forgetting herself. — On my further objection, that in our country no Rabbi would venture to decide such an important question without the advice of his colleagues. He replied that he was the chief Rabbi of the country; his

orders were sufficient, and would be accepted and executed without further convocation or appeal. Thus it remained, and the woman received from him the permission of her second marriage.

Six hours' journey from the town rises the summit of a great mountain, which joins the chain of mountains of Kurdistan. The Jews believe that this is Ararat, and that here the Ark of Noah rested after the Deluge. We find in the Bible[1] the word Ararat, which the Targum Unkulus translates by Touri Kardu[2] (mountain of Kurdistan); from which the country received its name. The mountain is very steep, almost perpendicular, and it takes six hours to reach the summit. Wonderful things are her related of the Deluge. One of the Kurdish tribes annually towards the end of June, ascends the mountain, and spends there the whole day in devotional exercises, surrounded by large lighted torches. They believe themselves descended from the royal house of Sennacherib; and they retain among themselves the tradition that King Sennacherib himself had divine service performed in memory of the Ark.[3] On descending the mountain they bring with them some remains of the Ark, which, according to their assertion, is still deeply buried in the earth. The little pieces received are in the form of planks; some whitish grey; some black and pierced with holes. It is not possible for me to give a more accurate account of this Kurdish ceremony; for it did not take place during my stay; and I can only repeat what I heard in answer to my questions.

At the base of the mountain stand four stone pillars, which, according to the people about here, formerly belonged to an ancient altar. This altar is believed to be

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[1] Genesis c. VIII. 4.

[2] Pethachia p. 176 relates that many thousand Jews formerly dwelt here and describes the cause why they were driven away.

[3] The Talmud mentions and explains this under the word „*Nisroch*", Isaiah c. XXXVII. 38.

that which Noah built on coming out of the Ark.[1] They likewise assert that his remains are buried here; they do not however specify the exact spot. I myself obtained several fragments of the Ark which appeared to be covered with a tarry kind of substance; but of these, as well as of many other things, I was robbed between Bagdad and Constantinople, three days' journey from Sivas, and twenty from Scutari. — At the same time I also lost several manuscripts written in the assyrian characters; and this grieved me more than the loss of my fortune.

CHAPTER IX.

First journey in the mountains of Kurdistan.

Reflections respecting the dispersion of the 10 tribes. — Sandur. — Deik. — Tanura. — Grotto of the Prophet Elijah. Alkusch. — Tomb of the Prophet Nahum. — Pilgrimages and ceremonies at this tomb.

On my arrival in these countries, when I saw the happy condition of the Jews who dwelt there, — their freedom from all oppression, and the flourishing state of their circumstances, — I could not get rid of the thought, that this was the land, in which the ancient dispersion of the children of Israel took place; in which, according to the words of the Bible, „they were lost." It was hither that Tiglath Pileazer had them brought;[2] and, by comparing those past times of misery and anguish with those words of Holy

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[1] Genesis c. VIII. 20.
[2] II. Kings c. XV. 29.

Writ: „And the lost of Assyria shall again be gathered together.“ [1]

Why does the Prophet call those „lost“, who inhabit this flourishing land, the high road of the great Caravans, which disperse life and wealth on their way, — this land of happiness and contentment? — And yet the words of the Bible are full of truth; for even because the children of Israel dwell here, are these countries visited by misfortunes.

Great was the anxiety with which I began my researches. I carefully examined each dwelling, — I interrogated the inmates, in order to arrive at the secret I longed to know; and at every question I believed myself to be a step nearer to the goal of truth.

My brethren in the faith related to me that these widely extending tracts of mountain were inhabited of Jews, who, living dispersed among the Kurds, never came from the mountains, and thus shut out from the world, as it were vegetated there. Notwithstanding all the representations of insurmountable difficulties which were made to me, I still kept fast to my determination to seek them out, and to penetrate into the recesses of the mountains, where no caravans can pass, and where dangers of every kind threaten at every step. I became ill; my brethren bestowed on me both consolation and pity; and I explained to them the words of Holy Writ, and spoke of the duty which I had imposed on myself of finding out the lost of the ten tribes of Israel. „I shall recover,“ said I, „when I see my brethren, of whose very existence the world has no idea; who inhabit that land where no traveller ever penetrates.“ My representations and prayers had at length a good result; and several offered to accompany me. „See, he cometh, he springeth upon the mountains, and hath passed over them.“[2]

The reader will follow me to those desolate mountains, where rise the warning graves of many a traveller to deter

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[1] Isaiah c. XXVII. 13.

[2] Solomons song II. 8.

the intruder from the fearful wilderness he enters, and to give him proofs of the dangers which threaten him. — The further I advanced the more difficult the journey became. For horsemen these small sloping paths are almost impassable; and I was often obliged to clamber upon my hands and feet. From time to time only a single pomegranate or figtree is to be found.

I next arrived at Sandur, where the Kurdish chain of mountains begins; about 200 Kurdish and 50 Jewish families live here.

Two days' journey from Sandur is the town of Deik, lying in a fertile valley, and surrounded by numerous springs, some of which possess mineral properties. Here dwell 40 Jewish and 280 Kurdish families.

After another two days' journey from Deik, I arrived at Tanura, a town, situated on a high hill and surrounded by mountains; it has a numerous Kurdish population, and about 30 Jewish families. Near it are two caves, the one cummunicating with the other; the first is empty, and serves as an anti-room to the second. Opposite the entrance falls from the wall a most costly curtain made of rich stuffs and embroidered with gold. In the middle of the ceiling, which is ornamented with oil-paintings, is suspended an antique chandelier, in which lights are kept continually burning, which, added to other lamps and lights in this mysterious place, shed around a solemn light, which irresistibly affects the visitor. This grotto, about which wonderful legends are told, is said, according to the traditions of the Israelites and Kurds, to have been inhabited by the Prophet Elijah. It belongs, as well as the fields surrounding it, to the Jewish community, who employ the profits arising from the produce of the fields, in keeping the grotto in proper order. It is for this purpose placed in the charge of a Mohamedan family, who as a reward for their care, are freed from paying taxes, and enjoy the highest consideration; they have from time immemorial, taken care of this sanctuary, which is likewise venerated by the Mahomedans. The alms and

gifts of Pilgrims, who at different times of the year come to this place, are also appropriated to preserve the interior of the grotto; the especial guard and care of which is under the superintendance of a Jew.

From Tanura I went to Alkusch, were I arrived in 1848, two days before the Feast of Weeks.

Alkusch.

Alkusch is situated in a very unfruitful neighbourhood. The town is inhabited only by Armenians, and appears to be very ancient. The houses, which stand single, are like fortified towers, rising at the foot of the mountains. Several Israelites and Kurds accompanied me to Alkusch, in order to attend the ceremonies here, which take place at the tomb of the Prophet Nahum.[1] Quite close to one of the mountains is a large court, in the middle of which stands a spacious building, consisting only of one room, capable of containing about 1000 persons. There are two entrances into this building, which was intended for a Synagogue; but, standing as it does without a community, it presents but a strange appearance. — In this desolate Temple on a spot, parted off by railings, is a catafalque, covered with tapestry worked in gold, and ornamented with various coins, above which is a costly canopy. This is said to be the tomb of the Prophet Nahum. The Jews from Mosul, Aruel, Arbil, Kirkuk, from the Kurdistan mountains and from a still further distance of eight days' journey round, annually assemble a week before the Feast of Weeks for a ceremony, at which they spend 14 days in religious exercises. The Armenians lodge them for this period, and even give up their own houses to them, and live themselves during the time in the courtyards and on the terraces. I my-

[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 53, mentions the Synagogue of Nahum as being in Mosul; I however found it here. He likewise states p. 68. that the tomb of Nahum is 6 hours' journey from the tomb of the Prophet Ezechiel at the place of *Ein-Schifta*.

self, was a witness to these ceremonies, and can vouch for the truth of my statement.

The pilgrims bring their manuscripts of the Law with them, and deposit them in the holy shrine of the Temple. The women then enter the chamber of the Prophet; and after this the service begins. First the Book of Nahum is read aloud from an old manuscript, which is laid upon the catafalque; when this is finished, they make a solemn procession seven times round the sacred shrine, singing sacred songs. After the seventh round, a hymn is sung addressed to the Prophet, the chorus of which is, „Rejoice in the joy of the Prophet Nahum!" — the initial letters which commence each verse follow in alphabetical order. Then come the women who do not understand Hebrew, and recite the prayers translated for them into Arabic or Kurdish, and then dance singing round the catafalque. This ceremony is gone through enthusiastically, and lasts for about an hour.

On the first evening of the Feast of Weeks, 5th of Sivan, they assemble in the Synagogue, which is lighted by about 1000 lamps, and enter the chamber of the Prophet, when service begins. Those, who are able to read, pray; the others listen with devout attention. This solemn proceeding has nothing particularly important in it; and as soon as it is over, they go without further ceremonies into the sacred house, where a festive and general entertainment takes place, at which coffee is plentifully served. At break of day morning prayer is recited; and then the men, bearing the Pentateuch before them, go, armed with guns, pistols and daggers to a mountain in the vicinity, when, in remembrance of the Law, which on this day was announced to them from Mount Sinai, they read in the Thora and go through the Mousaph prayer. With the same warlike procession they descend the mountain. The whole community breaks up at the foot, and an Arabic fantasie, a war performance, begins. The picturesque confusion, the combatants, their war cries, heard through the clouds of smoke, — the clashing of weapons and the whole mimic tumult presents

a fantastic spectacle, which is not without a certain dignity, and makes a strange impression on the spectator. — This war performance is said to be a representation of the great combat, which, according to the belief in those parts, the Jews, at the coming of the Messiah, will have to maintain against those nations, who oppose their entrance into the promised land, and the formation by them of a free and independent kingdom. The women who remained behind in the town, come, singing and dancing to the accompaniment of a tambourine to meet the men, and they all return together. — Even the followers of others creeds take a part in this jubilee festival of their guests, which moreover is to them a matter of pecuniary advantage.

I was at first almost stunned by the tumult and excitement of the noisy crowd; but later became quite meditative, when I saw to what a degree ignorance and custom can deface a religious festival, and injure even the most essential principle.

Several parts of these ceremonies are doubtless of foreign origin, and give evidence of Arabic custom. I therefore thought it as well to address some words on this subject to my brethren in the faith, who testify great respect to Jewish European travellers, and consider their opinion as especially important. It was explained to me, that these customs have been held in respect since ancient times, and that they must be kept up until the coming of the Messiah.

The return to the Synagogue took up nearly half a day; as they often stopped by the way and renewed their warlike games. When at length they reached the Synagogue, the Pentateuch, which they had taken with them, was replaced to the holy shrine; after which began near the catafalque the usual service for the Prophet. That finished, all returned to the town, to rest themselves after the exertions of the day. At Vesper time, the customary divine service was performed in the Synagogue; and afterwards all went out of the town to a place of amusement lying at the foot of mountain. There the men drank and

gave way to merriment, while the women danced to music performed by Armenians; and alms for charitable purposes and gifts for the preservation and embellishment of the chamber of the Prophet, poured richly in. When the day closed, all hurried back again to the Synagogue, in order to perform the Arwith prayer.

The belief in miracles is here almost general, and numbers many worshippers. Here the pilgrims bring their sick, and shut them up alone in the Prophet's chamber; if they surmount the fear so natural in such solitude, their cure is considered certain. For a superstitious patient such a night is often attended with the worst results; for, as tradition says, at midnight a movement is said to be perceived in the catafalque, and a large figure arises from it, who in a hollow sepulchral voice addresses the patient: „What dost thou here, and what is thy desire?“ — If the patient ventures to reply to these words without fear, he is cured instantaneously; in the other case however, he is lost. To every one in good health it is strictly forbidden to stay at midnight in this place. I wished to convince myself as to what had given rise to this superstition, and for that purpose took advantage of the tumult and confusion of the evening to furnish myself with everything necessary to oppose or prevent any imaginary fear as well as any real danger which might threaten me, and then concealed myself beneath the draperies with which the catafalque was covered. As soon as I was alone I quitted my concealment; took the manuscript, which is ascribed to the Prophet Nahum, and began to examine it; it contains nothing but the prophecy which is to be found in the Bible. — I felt myself very uncomfortable, and often ceased reading, fancying that I heard a suspicious noise, or a slight movement. Soon however I recovered my moral courage, and went on reading until I had finished the whole. The night seemed to me interminably long, and I was at some trouble to resist the drowsiness which almost overcame me; for this purpose I began to read in a book of Psalms. Wheter the oil of

the lamps caused my head to ache, or the atmosphere of superstition, in which I had lived during the last months, exercised its power on my imagination, — I felt that my ideas became confused, and rambled on without control. In these moments I really fancied I saw the mysterious tomb move, and spectral shapes pass before my mind, which however gradually disappeared. At last midnight struck, — my heart beat violently, and my whole frame trembled, while a profound sleep began by degrees to take possession of me. Thus I lay until early the next morning, when I was awakened by the devotees who entered the Temple, to resume the solemnities of the day. They gathered round me full of curiosity, and assailed me with questions as to what I had seen, and how I had spent the night. I answered however that it was forbidden me to disclose the events of the night and that nothing would ever induce me to betray the secret, the knowledge of which I had acquired. I really believed that I did right in not robbing these people of this almost single prop of their faith; but towards their Chachamim I was not reserved; but related to them the whole truth. The people of the country spoke afterwards very much of the services which I had rendered in the matter of the Prophet, in having surmounted the dangers to which so many had fallen victims.

During the time of the pilgrimage, a Jewish attendant is entrusted with the care of the Synagogue; during the rest of the year the keys are confided to a Christian woman of the place, who attends to the ever burning lamp of the sacred tomb. It is she, likewise, wo admits and accompanies the pious travellers, who wish to pray at the tomb of the Prophet. The Elder is Moses Zellem of Mosul.

CHAPTER X.

Second journey in the mountains of Kurdistan.

Akra. — Illusage of Jewish women. — Birsani. — Ascent of the mountain Zibari. — Sindu. — My illness and recovery. — Complaint of a Jew against his wife. — Dispute and arrangement of the difference. — Dangerous journey in the mountains. — The Jews there. — Threat of death and flight. — Return to Birsani.

Five days after the Feast of Weeks I started on horseback with several other pilgrims for Mosul, which I reached after a journey of two days. The portion of country through which I passed is called in the Bible in several places Assyria, a name which is used to this day in all public acts of the Jews, in marriage contracts, in divorces etc.

To my visit to Mosul I shall devote a whole chapter, and shall now only speak of the eastern parts of Kurdistan.

The journey there is even much more difficult and dangerous than that which I described in my former pages, and my Jewish brethren opposed my determination to visit these districts most strenuously; so that at last accompanied by one Kurd, I set off secretly. The journey through these inhospitable desert parts, which are made unsafe by numerous hordes of robbers, lasted three days; and on the very first day I found out how dangerous it was. The burning heat of the sun obliged me to take off a portion of my dress; when suddenly my guide sprang towards me, covered me with my clothes, and ordered me to throw myself upon the ground. The fearful Samum, the wind of the desert, of which the Bible speaks no doubt by the name of *Keteph*

Meriri[1], passed over us. The devastating effects of this scorching hurricane are well known.

After a journey of three days through a desert, I came from Mosul to Akra at the foot of the Chair-mountain, where about 100 Jewish families dwell, whose Elder Elijah bears the ancient title of Nassi; which title is generally borne by the Elders of all the Jewish communities in the East.

Around the town are fruitfull and well cultivated fields. Olive and date trees as well as vines grow upon the declivities; a considerable portion of them belonging to the Jewish community. In the middle of the fields, about half an hour's journey from the town, stands a Synagogue, remarkable for its great age; adjoining is a small reservoir, which serves as a bath for the women. Formerly the women there were exposed to frequent attacks from the Kurds; several facts were related to me, of which I will here mention some.[2] One day a woman was surprised while in the bath by four Kurds, — she had however the courage to seize a large piece of wood, and to hurl it at the head of one of the men, and thereby killed him on the spot. For this her own life was the penalty; for the three other Kurds murdered her. — Another woman was seized by a Kurd; she defended herself and snatched from him a dagger which she buried in his side. A friend of the wounded man accidentally passing by, saw him weltering in his blood: he immediately threw himself upon the woman, and stabbed her.

Every afternoon before Vespers the Jews go to the river which flows near the Synagogue and partake there of a meal in common, and then perform their devotions. Many of our brethren there are very wealthy, even rich; and their condition has become more endurable since they have been under the Turkish dominion.

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[1] Numbers XXXII. 24. — Psalm XCI. 6. — Jesaiah XXVIII. 2. — The Talmud in several places.

[2] The same kind of thing took place in France, as the Sefer Hajaschar of Rab. Tam Fol. 74, tells us.

The tract of land is under the control of a Pacha from Mosul, placed there by the Turkish Government. All the inhabitants speak Kurdish, with the exception of the Cadi, who speaks Turkish. The Kurds have preserved their independance of character as well as their old habits and customs; and the only token of their subjection to the Ottoman Porte consists in their payment of a moderate tribute.

Birsani.

From Akra I proceeded over the Chair-mountain to Birsani. No caravans pass through the recesses of the mountains I wished to investigate. The locality is the most desolate and dismal that can be imagined; it is, so to say, the very heart of the deserts, little known even to the inhabitants of the country, and but seldom visited. Rocky mountains and deep hollows in which enormous hordes of robbers conceal themselves, are the principal features of this wilderness. It was only with the greatest trouble that we could advance, and we were always obliged to be on our guard, as we were not safe for a moment. At last we reached the ancient town of Birsani,[1] built on the summit of a mountain. About 200 Jewish families live here, whose Nassi is Mailum Jacob. I only remained in the town long enough to collect information respecting the community. I remarked that, according to the observance there of religious customs, there was no proper bath for the women, as is prescribed by the religious laws, and I made representation upon this subject to the Elders of the community, when it was promised that this deficiency should be supplied. The ignorance of our Jewish brethren here is so great that

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[1] The town lies upon a hill between the Chair- and Zibari-Mountains.

they are not even capable of reciting a prayer; and nowhere, I must confess with pain, did I find them in such a debased state, and sunk in such moral degradation, as here.

In company with a brother Israelite named Jonas, son of the Nassi Mailum Jacob of Birsani, and a Kurdish guide belonging to the Nestorian sect, I left the town. In about 12 hours we ascended the steep wooded mountain Zibari, called by the Kurds Baris. On attaining the summit, the Kurdish guide called out to me, „Tam Turah!“ (the mountain is ascended), words, which are derived from the Chaldaic, from which language the Kurds — as I remarked during my journies in the mountains — mix many expressions with their own; for instance, Malka (the king), Malketa (the queen), and others which are to be found in Ezra. On the whole desert way to this mountain I found but very few wild fruits and nuts; instead of these a very good salad, which is eaten by many of the inhabitants without any dressing. From the summit of the mountain the eye is refreshed by an extensive view into deep vallies, scattered villages and fruitful smiling plains, in which, surrounded by gardens, rise the tents of the nomadic Kurds. We spent 6 hours in descending Zibari. Among the Nomads, dwelling at the foot of the mountain, I found four Jewish families by whom I was received with hearty and almost child like joy; and they assured me at the same time that never before had a Jewish European traveller been seen or heard of here. The Jews of this part languish under a heavy yoke; the condition of the Nestorian Christians is on the contrary more endurable.

Sindu. — Journey in the mountain.

After a further march of four hours through a beautiful and fruitful country abundantly watered, I reached the town of Sindu. The Jews, of whom there are about 250 families,

occupy a separate quarter of the town. Their Nassi is Mailum Manasseh. Sindu lies on a plain surrounded by a chain of mountains, from which rush down numerous streams. Toil and deep privation of every description had so weakened me that I was attacked by a violent fever. — Without any medical assistance, which is there quite unknown, I could not even get any broth, for which the language of the country has no expression; and I was left solely to my own good constitution, which again helped me through. When I felt somewhat better, I was conducted one day at my desire out of the town to inhale a little fresh air. Near to the place where we were walking I observed a Jewess washing some clothes in a tank, and I asked her why she did not use for this purpose the clear water of the stream, to which she replied, that the water in the tank was hot. When the woman had left the spot, to the great astonishment of my guide, I plunged into the healing bath; by the repeated use of which for a few days I was completely restored to health. — Later I pointed out to the inhabitants of the place the great use of these warm springs; for they had no idea of the healing power of the water, and were astonished at my daily baths. — Another circumstance which greatly contributed to my recovery was an excellent medicine they brought me, consisting of some dried stalks of a plant similar in smell to the hyssop, from which I prepared an infusion which greatly benefited me. I was also told that as an effective remedy for head ache they made use of different herbs growing there, which they boiled in water; and the leaves of a certain shrub were used as a remedy for sickness. In the memorandum-book of which I was robbed, I had written down the names of these plants; but I was unable to find any more of them on my pedestrian journies.

In order to celebrate my recovery a festival was arranged by the members of the community. I then remained several days in the town, and had an opportunity of deciding a peculiar case which I relate as a proof how bad

the condition of the people is with regard to the observation of the precepts of religion.

As a Chacham from Jerusalem I was asked my advice by a man, who accused his wife of indifference to him. On my nearer enquiry, the young woman began such a long winded tedious excuse, that is was impossible for me to understand the state of the case. I perceived however from her answer that her marriage was opposed to religious laws, and I gave her a special hearing. I asked the woman whether at her marriage she was maid, widow or divorced, to which she replied that she was neither the one nor the other, but that she was married. Her husband had gone over to the Moslem faith, and therefore she was able to marry an other. — I then turned to the accusing husband, and asked him how he had dared against all precepts and laws of religion to marry a woman whose husband was still alive, — to which he told me that his father, the Mailum of the community, had given him permission to do so.

I then sent for the Mailum, and had a discussion with him which lasted two days, in which I cited all the Mosaïc precepts applicable to the case, and tried to prove that before the second marriage, it would have been necessary to have a legal separation from the former husband. The Mailum on his part, insisted upon the force of local custom, and maintained that the woman was freed from her marriage vows in consequence of the first husband having deserted her, that the marriage contract was thereby completely dissolved, and that the union contracted by Kidduschin (putting on of the wedding ring) became invalid, as it could not be considered binding with regard to any but a member of the Jewish faith. — I however asserted that this could only be correct if the man was not originally a Jew; and my proofs and quotations brought it so far that the Mailum Manasseh and Mailum Isaac agreed with me, and as the Mailum of the community now stood alone against the general opinion, he promised to induce the first husband to consent to a divorce, which was obtained on payment of a certain sum

of money. I then informed the young woman that after the divorce from her first husband, and my declaration that the second marriage was invalid, she could only marry a third husband, and left them all in a state of great satisfaction.

My weakened frame did not allow me to proceed further into the mountains, and I therefore returned to Birsani, in order to see if the promised bath for the women had been constructed. The community was assembled, the bath was soon arranged, and was solemnly consecrated; after which I made several improvements in their rites and ceremonies which were not in accordance with our customs and rules.

At the conclusion of an entertainment which was given in my honour, the chief Elder adressed me in the following words: „Chacham! thou art our teacher, thou art like a crown upon our head. The Lord hath sent thee to us, to keep us from sin, and the truth has become known to us through thy wisdom. The belief in thy high mission is the more strong in us, because thou hast refused all the presents which have been offered thee. — One favor however we pray thee to grant us, which thou canst not refuse!"

To this I answered that if it only depended on myself, I would promise to grant it, after which the chief Elder continued: „Well then, near to Urmia in the mountains, on the boundary of Lower Persia, live numerous brethren of our faith, who, ignorant as we are, share our desire for instruction, in order to advance in the path of truth. They are aware of thy presence here, and wait for thee impatiently. We pray that thou wilt not disappoint their hopes. Go, and seek them out, and thou wilt perform a work pleasing in the sight of the Most High; for it will tend to the benefit of the unhappy children of Israel."

I promised to undertake this journey, and begged for an escort; upon which twelve of the chief men, among whom was the Nassi himself, begged to be allowed to accompany me. After that four strangers, emissaries of the

communities I was to visit, were brought in; they greeted me with tears of joy, and begged me to follow them immediately. I informed them I was ready to do so, and they departed at midnight for their own homes, in order to announce there my coming, and to send an armed escort to meet me.

In the early part of July 1848 I set off accompanied by several Jews and by some Kurds, who had hired mules for us. The difficulties and dangers of the road are indescribable. During two days we could only advance one at a time on a small narrow path, on which no ray of the sun ever shines, while the thorns tore our clothes and lacerated our feet. Hardly had we left this difficult path, when we were assailed by about 50 Kurds with whom we had a desperate skirmish; after a long and firm resistance our assailants fled, taking their wounded with them.

On the third day we came to a river, which flows at the foot of a mountain; there we wished to rest ourselves, when we perceived eight Jews, who came to meet us as emissaries; their Nassi Mailum Jehuda was among them. They lifted me on their shoulders, and thus we reached the summit of the mountain, where they set me down near a Kurdistan village. Here four Jewish families live, to whose Mailum Benjamin they conducted me. Towards evening six more emissaries arrived, under the guidance of Mailum Asunah, and the next morning several came from other villages. On my enquiries respecting divine service I found that many of their customs did not agree with the precepts of the Law, and I pointed them out to the chief Elder from whom I obtained a promise to follow out the improvements and arrangements I had suggested in this respect.

Shortly after my arrival, an event occurred which may serve to give an idea of the state of things in these countries, and which obliged me immediately to resume my journey.

In the village, a man had assumed the title of Mailum,

and without any authority or right officiated as slaughterer. At my suggestion he was deprived of his office. This appointment he had purchased for a yearly sum from a Kurdish chief, who now perceiving the injury done to his percuniary interest, came to me himself, and asked me who I was, and what right I had to discharge an officer appointed by him. My companions explained to him that I was a Chacham of Bet-el-Mikdass, sent out to watch over the proper administration of the religious laws among the Jews. I myself made him attentive to the fact that a Marabut, who ventured to assume this title and these functions among the Mahomedans, would certainly be immediately deprived of his office. To this the Kurd had no reply to make, further than the exclamation: „That is true, — but you have deprived me of my revenue, and you shall pay for it with your head.“ He then went out in a rage.

My companions, and those of my people who had also heard this threat, were deeply grieved; for they knew that such threats were never spoken in vain. We were immediately afterwards told by some Jews that several armed men were lying in wait for us, for the purpose of delivering up my head to their master. During the whole evening I reflected on our difficult position and the way in which we could escape the danger which threatened us. At last the following idea struck me. „Remain together“, I said to my brethren, „sing and make a noise, but bring in no light. The Kurds will have no suspicion, and my companions will escape with me.“ — My proposal was approved of; but we were not to go out all together, but two or three at a time, and then meet at an appointed spot.

Our flight happily succeeded, as we took another road through the desert and over the well wooded mountains, — but what fate befel those who remained behind, — whether their joyful songs were changed into songs of lamentation, — I dare not think.

My escape soon became known; and armed men were sent after us in all directions. Some of them met us, but

being few in number they were unable to prevent our return to Birsani, at which place we arrived at the end of three days, safe but exhausted.

I had spent 55 days in these two expeditions to the Kurdistan mountains.

CHAPTER XI.

Mosul.

The ruins of Nineveh. — Tomb of the Prophet Jonah. — Erbil (Arbel). — Oppression of the Jews. — Relation of several facts.

The town of Mosul lies near the city of Nineveh, so renowned in olden times. Once more during my pilgrimage did I find myself among the shadows of the past. Great kings and mighty nations had dwelt here; cities, the enormous remains of which excite our admiration, still in their ruins baffle time, after a decay of centuries. My imagination conjured up from beneath these gigantic remains generations long since passed away, and from this solemn and noble tomb of antiquity I drew forth pictures full of strength and life.

Even to this day one can see the great extent and something of the site of the old celebrated city, whose ruins along the shore of the Tigris cover the country to within eight hours' journey of Mosul. At every footstep can be found fallen and shattered palaces and buildings formed of enormous pieces of rock of unusual height, which appear to have been raised by the hands of giants; caves of extraordinary form, and dwellings hewn out of the rock, which, according to tradition, are said to have been used as storerooms. On both shores of the Tigris stand, opposite to

each other, the remains of two magnificent colonnades of immense stones, which are supposed to have been the gates of ancient Nineveh. Antique vases in different forms and sizes, some of them with illegible inscriptions, are to be found within three hours' journey of Mosul, indicating an origin dating up the time of the building of the Tower of Babel, or at least to the time of King Sennacharib.

The centre of ancient Nineveh is said to form a village, which is about half an hour's journey from Mosul. In this village is shewn a tomb, which the people here assert is that of the Prophet Jonah,[1] who was sent forth for the conversion of the rebellious city. The tomb lies in a court yard, in which, according to the assertion of the Mahomedans, the celebrated Kikajon (pumpkin or gourd) grows afresh every year, the leaves of which once afforded shade to the prophet.[2] The Arabs honour this tomb most devoutly, and pray there especially for their sick. The earth which covers the grave is considered sacred; and little bags containing some of it are worn round the neck, and are regarded as a very powerful talisman. The Christians as well as the Jews are forbidden to visit this grave.

In the town of Mosul dwell nearly 450 Jewish families,[3] who have no reason to complain of their condition; several among them are engaged in very extensive commercial transactions. The Synagogue is large, but contains nothing remarkable, except that behind the sacred shrine is a cave, which is said to have been inhabited by the Prophet Elijah.[4] Three Chachamim exercise the judicial and civil offices; the

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[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 44 says that the tomb of the Prophet Jonah is in Palestine, on Mount Zipore near the city.

[2] Jonah c. IV. 6.

[3] Benjamin de Tudela p. 52 speaks of 7000 Jews. — Pethachia p. 171 mentions 6000 Jews. — *Ritter's Erdkunde* Vol. 11, p. 211 counts according to Niebuhr 150 Jewish houses.

[4] Benjamin de Tudela p. 52 speaks of three Synagogues; namely that of the Prophet Obediah, that of the Prophet Jonah, and that of the Prophet Elijah.

eldest Chacham, Rachamim, the second Chacham, Sason and the third Chacham, David, are all three of the family of Birsani, who appear to have originally come from the city of that name. The ignorance and superstition of the population is extreme: a school however is established, in which the children receive religious instruction; the teacher Mordecai, son of the Chacham David, is a relation of the money changer Isaac Zellem, with whom I lodged.

Industry flourishes here; the light transparent tissues, which appear as if made by fairy hands, the celebrated muslins, bear their name from this city. Hence they were first sent to Europe, and their manufacture there attained a perfection which inhanced their price.

Mosul is like all other Arabian cities; the houses have only one story, are furnished with a terrace, and have no windows towards the street. The town is on two sides protected by mountains, while by the third side flows the Tigris, and the fourth adjoins the coast. Numerous mineral springs exhaling a strong smell of sulphur, bubble up in the vicinity. On account of the heat of the climate the day is passed in vaulted rooms situated in the court, for the same reason the water could not be used if it were not collected in cisterns, or preserved in bluish white earthenware vessels, which keep it cool and fresh. The interior of the houses is peculiar; the rooms are long and narrow; on the floor lie cushions spread on thick carpets; mattrasses are used to sleep upon. — The population consists of Turks, Jews and Armenians; next to the Turkish, the Arabian language is most generally used. Turks and Jews wear the same kind of dress, — a red fez or a coloured turban, the women an oriental head-dress, which is ornamented with gold and pearls. A long tunic covers the body, and they wear a kind of slippers; the hands and legs are decorated with rings of gold and silver, and almost all the women and many of the men wear rings in their ears and through the nose. On going out the women throw a veil over their heads.

In Mosul reside the Consuls of England and France, of whom the latter during my stay exercised much influence among the authorities. I placed myself under his protection, and confess with gratitude, that his care for me deserves all praise.

After a stay of a month at Mosul I set out with a caravan for Erbil[1] which the Jews consider to be the Resen mentioned in the Bible.[2] Midway flows the stream El Kebir, which forms the boundary between the Pachalic of Mosul and Bagdad: it is a mighty rushing stream, which empties itself into the Tigris. The water abounds with an immense number of a reddish kind of fish, said to be excellent eating; some of them attain a weight of 200 lbs.

Erbil is divided into two parts; of which the one lying on the mountain is the city, the other, in the vast plain is the seat of trade and industry. One hundred and fifty Jewish families dwell here, whose Nassi is Mailum Mordecai; they are however much oppressed by the fanatic, rude and half civilised sects of Allah, of which I will relate some examples.

A short time before my arrival a Jewish girl emptying some dirty water into the street, accidentally besprinkled with it a Mussulman who happened to be passing by. Immediately a crowd assembled before the house, broke open the door, seized the girl, and heaped upon her all kinds of threatening abuse; asking her how she, the daughter of an accursed race, dare presume to insult a true believer. The girl defended herself to the best of her ability, but the leader of the uproar cried out to her: „There is only one way for thy escape, embrace our faith, and thou shalt marry one of our people, who is young, handsome, rich, and of a good family.“ But the girl refused and answered: „I am a

[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 52 says that Erbil is an hour's journey from Mosul. I do not know however which road the traveller could have taken, as by the nearest route it is two days' journey.

[2] Genesis c. X. 12. According to Benjamin de Tudela p. 64 this town lies near to Bagdad, at two days' journey's distance from it.

Jewess, born so, and as such I will die; never will I deny my God, my people and my faith. If you kill me, God will demand of you my blood, and the Lord will avenge me.“ — After that they seized her, killed her before the eyes of her parents by stabbing her with their knives, and then tore her in pieces. — The community desired at first to prefer a complaint before the Pacha of Bagdad and afterwards at Constantinople, but they refrained from doing so for fear of other persecutions and of a general massacre.

In the same year Rabbi Perachia, a deputy of the Portuguese Jews at Jerusalem, who was commissioned to receive the charitable alms for the poor Jews of Jerusalem, died at Erbil, and was buried with all the honours belonging to his sacred office. The night following the burial the Mussulmans tore the body out of the grave, cut off a hand, and threw the remains into an open ditch, without even a covering. The Jews repaired to the burial ground, and filled up the empty grave: that was all they ventured to do. The daily occurrence of such oppression has crushed them to such a degree, and the fear of still greater misfortune is so great, that they submit to anything without a murmur. But at the time of this occurrence several Jews from Bagdad were at Erbil, and informed the European Consuls of the matter; for the Rabbi whose grave had been desecrated, was an Austrian subject. By this means this deed of infamy came to the ears of the Pacha, who had the delinquents brought before him, and addressed them in the following words: „Do you not know that graves are prisons, in which God preserves his people until the day of judgment? Why do you not respect what belongs to Him?“ — After that judicial enquiries were instituted, and the grave-desecrators would have received the punishment they deserved, if the Jews of Erbil had not been compelled to beg that mercy might be shewn them, which was accorded.

Another proof of religious oppression causes especial astonishment, because the intolerance of the Mussulmans does not otherwise cross the threshhold of the house of God.

The Jews of the lower part of the town had erected a new Synagogue, and wished to convey solemnly into it, according to custom, the manuscripts of the Law. On the road they were attacked by Mussulmans, several of them killed, others wounded, and the new Synagogue pulled down. Since then a second Temple has been built; but at the solemn conveyance of the Pentateuch into it, the same scenes have been repeated.

I myself was a witness to the last disturbance, and can with justice proclaim the state of my brethren in Erbil to be a most unbearable one. They find a feeble compensation in unrestricted freedom of trade, for therein they are perfectly free and unmolested. All are sunk into a state of great ignorance: the Schochet is the chief of the community.

The dress, customs and language of the inhabitants of Erbil resemble those of Mosul; the Jews speak Arabic.

After resting for several days I made the resolution of investigating the north-west part of the mountains of Kurdistan towards Persia, and of going through a number of Jewish and Kurdish tribes, which had never been visited by an European. Sometimes Chachamim from Jerusalem go there; but the greater number of these pilgrims fall victims to their courage and devotion.

CHAPTER XII.

Third journey to the mountains of Kurdistan. — Passage over the Pirmam-mountain. — Rowandis. — Oppressed state of the Jews there; curious custom.

For the third time I ventured into these wild and dangerous mountains, into this primitive land, where the name of Europe is scarcely known, and into which only a fearless traveller, used to dangers, difficulties and deprivations of every description who devotes himself entirely to the purpose of his journey, dares to penetrate. These regions have been unexplored until now; and yet in many ways are they well deserving of investigation.

In company of a Kurdish guide I passed in two and a half days from Erbil over the Pirmam-mountain, which lies to the north of the town; it is a desert tract of land, full of cavities and hollows inhabited by robbers. I happily succeeded in surmounting all obstacles without any molestation and arrived at the town of Rowandis.

It lies on a very high mountain, at the foot of which flows the foaming stream Rowandis. The Jews of that city, in which for centuries they have only been exposed to insult and misery, having lately come under the dominion of the Turkish Government, now find their condition somewhat improved. Their dress is more decent, their houses are better built, and certainly better kept than in other parts of the mountain. Formerly they had not only to bear the whole tyranny of the Kurds, but were even sold like cattle, and attacked in that which to them is most sacred — their faith. Thus for instance on New Year's day, when the Schofar (the horn, which, according to the Mosaic law, is

blown on New Year's day) sounded in the Synagogue, the Kurds rushed into the Temple attacked the women and maltreated them, broke the symbolic trumpet, and compelled the Jews to desist from their ceremony. The Turkish Government has put a stop to such tumult and disorder; but in the more remote villages, where it is more difficult to watch over them, the Jews still have to endure every kind of bad treatment, although not sold as slaves. In many towns and in Rowandis, which, as I have already mentioned, is under the Turkish Government, are still to be found, remains of the old oppression — vassalage — in some cases with the knowledge of the Mutesellim (burgomaster), though the Pacha dwelling in Bagdad knows nothing of it. The Turkish chiefs compel men and women to break stones, to burn lime, mould tiles &c. and all this to the glory of the Lord. Our poor brethren think that it is their destiny to suffer, and submit patiently to their fate; the slighest amelioration of which they consider an unexpected happiness. Some of them enjoy a certain degree of opulence; and in particular the Nassi of the place, Mailum Nissim, is rich in landed property and herds, besides having two wives and several children. The Jewish population on the whole is very ignorant, and has no Rabbi; the son in law of the Nassi, the Schochet Mailum Samuel, certainly bears the title of Rabbi, but understands at most only how to superintend divine service in the Synagogue. Only the Rabbi prays aloud, so that the prayer Schemone Ezra, which as is known, is first repeated by every member of the congregation to himself, and is then repeated aloud by the Rabbi, is there only recited once by the Rabbi.

An other curious custom is that on New Year's day, after the ceremony of the Taschlich (prayer at the waters), they go to the stream flowing at the foot of the mountain, recite there the prayer, and throw themselves into the water and swim about. They imagine that by this bath they are cleansed from all their sins, quite forgetting the new sin they commit in taking the bath itself; as such an act is

forbidden on festival days.[1] — I made several remonstrances concerning it, and an improvement with respect to it was promised.

Rowandis is a place engaged in agriculture; grain and cattle are the commodities of trade.

After a difficult march of two days I arrived at Choi-Sandjack to the east of Rowandis. The Jewish population there consists of about 70 families, who live in a less oppressed condition than those at Rowandis. Some of them are engaged in agricultural pursuits, and some in trade. The inhabitants of this place are more industrious than those of the former.

Thus ended my travels in Kurdistan. In my three expeditions to these wild and inhospitable regions I had exposed myself such frequent and manifold dangers, that I would not attempt impossibilities.

CHAPTER XIII.

I. Descent of the Kurdish Jews, The Nestorians. — II. Vassalage and imports. — III. Slavery. — IV. Claims of the master. — V. State of ignorance respecting religion. — VI. Industry and labour. — VII. Biblical precepts, which the Jews and other nations follow. — VIII. Review of the whole in a religious and moral point of view. Observations respecting the customs practised against the Mosaic law.

In beginning this chapter, I feel the whole importance of the task I have imposed on myself. Truth, which I have often sought at the cost of so many sacrifices, at length

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[1] Messechet Sabat p. 1. — Mischna 1. — Hallochot Sabat in the Schulchan Aruch Vol. 1, art. 339, v. 2. — Hallochot Jontoph art. 524, v. 1.

appears to glimmer before me, and the darkness, which has so long rested on the past of the lost ten tribes of Israel, begins to disappear. But again almost insurmountable difficulties rise up before me, caused by the want of every historical vestige and record which could offer certain evidence, undiscoverable until now. In the absence of such proofs I have collected together my own researches and observations, and through them have arrived at some conscientious conclusions, which, to me, have assumed the value of authentic facts. — After my second journey — which by God's help I shall soon undertake — I hope by more accurate researches to render them more clear and complete.

I.

If one gives credence to the Jews and Nestorians, their settlement in these countries took place before the destruction of the first Temple.[1] The same traditions are everywhere preserved, and they assert, that the ancestors of our brethren, banished to these lands, remained there after the Assyrian captivity, and did not again return to Palestine. From this it follows, that they descend direct from the ten tribes of Israel, who were transplanted here by the Assyrian kings from their own country. We find a proof of this in the history of the Kings, where it is related, that in the days of Pekah, king of Israel, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser took possession of a portion of the kingdom of Israel, and carried away its inhabitans as captives into Assyria.[2] It is more than probable that Kurdistan, a country bordering on Assyria, formed a part of that great Assyrian kingdom; for to this day it belongs to the Pachalic of Mosul, the capital of which, bearing the same name, joins

[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 77 says the same. — The book Derech Emed Fol. 15, p. 1 translates the word Touri Kardu by „dark mountains"; from which perhaps originates the tradition of the Jews, that the banished ten tribes lived in the dark mountains.

[2] II. Kings XV. 29.

the ancient Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. To the authority of the Bible is annexed the testimonies of later writers and the corroborative traditions which have been handed down for centuries. I see therefore no further doubt, nay, I cherish the firm conviction that remnants of the ten tribes dwell in Kurdistan. Other well known travellers assert pretty much the same identical fact. Thus only some years since Mr. Grant, an American missionary, who investigated these regions maintained that Christians of the Nestorian sect resided at Kurdistan, adding that these Nestorians were direct descendants from the banished ten tribes of Israel, who only in later centuries had adopted the Christian faith. I rest my assertions on the following grounds:

1. Many Nestorians themselves maintain that they descend from the captive Jews, without however being able to determine either the period at which they settled or the tribe from which they spring, as all written evidence is wanting, and they themselves are too ignorant to rely on any other proofs than their own traditions.

2. The Nestorians of the places which I visited live mostly in friendly relations with the Jews; whilst with the nomadic Kurds they have no intercourse.

3. They are oppressed by the Kurds in the same way as are the Jews, which appears to be the result of the long captivity; a fall, which all banished nations carried into slavery share alike. The Nestorians assemble together for the performance of divine service in the same manner as do our brethren. They have no symbol, no cross, no bells; and their principles in this respect resemble those of the Jews. They celebrate the Sabbath. It is an historical fact that the ten tribes possessed but few learned men, and that they easily gave themselves up to strange worship, and adopted foreign customs and usages; therefore we may be well justified in the belief that these unhappy exiles, transplanted into unknown countries, and moving in a perfectly new and strange sphere, either willingly or unwillingly imitated those who had become their masters, and thus adopted

their customs, manners and habits, particularly as being slaves, they were obliged to obey. Thus it is quite possible that up to a certain extent the Jews have mixed and could mix with the primitive nations of Kurdistan. — I myself hold them to be the descendants of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali. (See II. Kings XV. 29. Isaiah IX. 1.)

Kurdistan belongs more in name than in fact to the Turkish kingdom. The inhabitants of the mountains entrenched behind those walls with which nature has provided them, hold fast to their peculiar habits and customs, laws and traditions. Thus they adher to their own life of freedom, paying the Sultan a small yearly tribute, and that only of their own accord. They form a kind of union of independent tribes, each governed by its own chief. These tribes again divide themselves into families, and live generally in sanguinary skirmishes and feuds with each other.

II.

The Jews scattered here and there, and compelled to remain at the places assigned to them, are in the true sense of the word, surrounded by tribes of savages. One often finds five, ten, or even twenty Jewish families the property of one Kurd, by whom they are laden with imposts, and subjected to illtreatment. Heavy taxes are imposed upon them, which, for the poorest amount annually to 500 piastres. Finally they are compelled at different periods of the year to perform serf-service, to cultivate their master's field, without receiving or being able to demand the smallest compensation for their labour.

III.

The master has the absolute power of life and death over his slaves; at his will he can sell them to another master, either in whole families or individually. If a gentleman on horseback meets a Jew or a Nestorian on the road, he makes him run before him to the stable door, without even

once allowing him stop to take breath. This barbarous custom is practised almost daily.

IV.

A custom, which reminds one of the old feudal barbarism of the middle ages, is the so called master's claims. — When a young Israelite or Nestorian wishes to marry, he must purchase his bride from the master to whom she belongs; for by the marriage contract the young wife comes under the control of another master, and through that, the former master suffers the loss of the yearly poll tax, for which a sum is always demanded as compensation. Besides this, the bride, before she enters the house of her husband, must place herself at the disposal of her master, which appears to have been an old custom introduced by the Orientalists; for even the Talmudists speak of it.[1]

Only within the last few years has this odious abuse been reformed, and changed into a money payment. A sanguinary event was the cause of this. A young girl, after a desperate resistance having killed her master. One abuse has therefore taken place of another: for now the master's claims must be bought off.

V.

The Jews, who inhabit the places round Kurdistan, scarcely know even the name of the Mosaic law. But very few of them can read, and their only religious knowledge consists of Kriath Schema (Schema Israel),[2] of which however they only know the first verse. For some time past bibles and prayer books have been sent to them from Bagdad. Their Mailum possess Schoulchan Aruch Beth Joseph (the collection): everything else is unknown to them, and the whole

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[1] Messechet Ketubot Fol. 3. p. 2.

[2] Deuteronomy VI. 4.

of their divine service is comprised in some performance of ancient ceremonies which are mechanically and superstitiously gone through.

I have here to mention an old traditional custom, which is observed in Kurdistan, as well as in the whole of the East. When a woman approaches the time of her confinement, sweet smelling herbs are strewn on a pan of burning coals, with which first the Synagogue and then the chamber, in which the mother expectant is lying, are fumigated. The Kurdish Israelites say that thus they present to the Lord a well pleasing sacrifice, and that the offering itself, the perfume, ascends as in the Temple at Jerusalem. True it is that the Talmudists speak of it, and mention a mill at Burne, in which different sweet smelling ingredients were ground. In the Messechet Sanhedrin chap. 4, fol. 29, p. 2, Raschi explains the text, adding that sweet smelling herbs were used to cure the wound caused by circumcision. Thus in the same Messechet is to be found the expression Schewua habben (week of the son); and this expression may well be the same as that which is at this time used, and the pronunciation only of which differs somewhat from the above mentioned. For during the space of a whole week, from the birth to the circumcision of the son, the father is called Avi habben (father of the son), and is received in the Israelitish families, as well as in the Synagogue, with marks of honour. In our time the use of the herbs is different; but they are still used as incense. — This proves that a very ancient custom has been observed among the Israelites in the East up to the present day.

When a Chacham from Jerusalem comes into these parts, which occurs but very seldom, they go out solemnly to meet him, kiss his shoulders, his beard, and even his feet, according to the rank of him by whom he is saluted; they then carry him in triumph to the house of the Nassi, bare his feet and wash them, and the water used for that purpose is collected for drinking. I do not exaggerate anything in this account. The highest people of the place have

the first right to partake of this water; the rest is divided among the women and children; and this unclean beverage is considered to be a preventive of all illnesses. Notwithstanding my opposition, I was obliged to submit myself to this extraordinary mark of respect.

On week days the men only wear a shirt with a girdle round their waist, short trousers, which only reach to the knee, and a little cap, round which is rolled a thin piece of black stuff; they likewise go barefoot. I inquired why they wore such a dress, to which I received the answer, that it was more convenient for work. This reminded me of the sacrificial garments of the priests, who, according to the Mosaic law,[1] were likewise obliged to wear such light garments, in order to be able to perform the sacrifices quickly, which the wide and inconvenient Egyptian garments would have prevented; and in order at the same time to distinguish the priests from the people; for only they were allowed to wear such a garb.

On the Sabbath they lay aside this dress, and wear a long dark robe of woolen cloth. This robe is buttoned from the neck down to the girdle, from which it falls in two large flaps down to the knees; the sleeves reach down to the wrist and are quite tight. Only the richest wear shoes, the others generally leathern sandals.

The women wear a coloured vest; round the head they fold a cloth or a piece of stuff, from beneath which their black hair falls down to the shoulders. They go barefooted, but ornament their hands, arms and feet with gold and silver rings; sometimes they wear through the nose a ring, which hangs down to the mouth.

VI.

The different woolen stuffs, which are manufactured by the Jews in Kurdistan, are likewise exported into foreign parts. This is a branch of trade, which many of them cul-

[1] Leviticus VIII. 13. XVI. 4.

tivate most industriously. They likewise manufacture carpets. Their looms are extremely simple: on two pieces of wood, which are placed in the ground, at a certain distance from each other, they make good and even beautiful stuffs. A portion of the higher classes devote themselves to the culture of the soil; one sees them going in the morning with their wives and children into the fields and vineyards, whence they only return in the evening. Instead of pressing the grapes, they satisfy themselves with drying them for their own use. The harvest is sufficient for their necessary wants, and but few fruit trees are planted.

The houses constructed of wicker work, have a very bare appearance; they are tolerably high, have one story, and inside and outside are plastered with a kind of mortar. In summer they sleep upon the terraces, in order to escape the bites of scorpions, which, during this period of the year, are frequently to be found in the houses at night. Food is so badly prepared, that it would excite the disgust of the poorest European.

VII.

Wherever I went during vintage and harvest time, I found a custom strictly observed by the Jews and Kurds, which reminded me of the precepts of the Bible.[1] Neither the ears of corn, nor the grapes nor fruits are wholly collected; but the portion of the widows and orphans is always left: it is even allowed to go into a ripe cornfield, to *break* the sheaves, and on the spot to boil the corn in water; but the ears of corn must not be cut,[2] neither may they be taken away. In the same way grapes are allowed to be gathered in the vineyards, and to be eaten there.[3]

The first fruits of all kinds, which the Jews present to their Mailum, and the Turks to their Cadi, are placed in

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[1] Leviticus c. XIX. 9. 10.

[2] Deuteronomy c. XXIII. 26.

[3] Deuteronomy c. XXIII. 25.

baskets made of date and other leaves, and according to my view remind one of the offerings, which in olden times the Jews made to their priests.

Besides this, there are several other customs in accordance with the Bible, which are observed in a very pious manner; some of which I will mention here.

If a dead body is found in a field between two districts, the authorities of the different places around go to the spot, in order to ascertain by accurate measurement, to which city or to which village it was found nearest, and that place must pay the price of blood to the family of the deceased. If in this measurement they are not able to agree, a quarrel and fight ensues, and the place itself is often sprinkled afresh with blood.[1] — The Jews, who are obliged to take part in these combats, behave with much bravery; and when one of their own people fall, and there is no family to demand the price of blood, they carry him away, and bury him in the Jewish burial ground.

It is usual to bury the bodies found in an open field, on the spot where they are found; and this pious custom accounts for the great number of graves one meets with on the roads. They are the resting-places of those who have been struck by sudden death, among whom are many travellers and missionaries.

A custom observed throughout the whole of the East by the followers of every religious sect is, to take off the shoes on entering the house of God. This also reminds one of the precepts of the Bible. Any one who refuses to render this mark of respect is forbidden to enter the Sanctuary.[2]

One of the usages, which has been strictly followed by the Jews and Kurds from the oldest times up to the present day is the refraining from eating pork. The use of fat in general in this climate is productive of disagreeable and serious illnesses; and I have known Jews, who, from the constant use of olive oil, have been covered with boils over

[1] Deuteronomy c. XXI. 1. 2. 9.

[2] Exodus c. III. 5. — Talmud Messechet Berachot Fol. 9.

the whole of the body; and sometimes the skin of the head is coated with a kind of scab, with which this disease has much similarity.

VIII.

The condition of the Jews in a religious, moral and social point of view is as follows: Their ignorance with regard to religion excites commiseration. Few among them can read or write, and in this they are far behind all our other brethren in the faith whom I have met on my travels. Some Bibles and prayer books are certainly to be found in these desolate mountains; but few understand the use of them, and fewer still how to perform their devotions. The elementary notions, and the knowledge of the grand ideas of their forefathers and brethren, are completely wanting in them; and in many places they have never even seen a Pentateuch.

Tradition only has preserved the celebration of the Sabbath and biblical festivals, as well as circumcision and the slaughtering of animals; — but these sacred customs are performed so imperfectly and mechanically, that it can be distinctly seen that they neither know the purpose or the reason of them, and are utterly ignorant of what they are doing.

In a social point of view their condition is deplorable; for the greater number live in a state of most oppressed slavery. The Kurd owns no master; and in his stupidity and brutality assumes to himself the most overbearing rights, which no one can dispute with him. He acts as uncontrolled master over the property, life, and even the feelings of his Jewish slaves. The Nestorians are quite in the same condition as the Jews.

The poll tax, an unbearable burden, is not enough, — any trifling circumstance, any and every excuse is sufficient to alarm and disturb the existence of these unfortunate beings. They are illused, sold, and murdered, just as the master pleases. They eat the bitter bread of exile, and moisten it with their tears and with their blood. I have

visited hundreds of families living scattered in these mountains, and did not find one, which could escape from this unendurable existence. I cannot express what I felt at the sight of all this misery, — for their low condition and their afflictions are indescribable. — From attacks without they are sometimes powerfully protected; but this does not arise from generosity or from love of justice; but is solely attributable to the advantage and personal interest of their selfish Kurdish masters.

In the districts of Kurdistan, which is now under the dominion of the Sublime Port, the condition of the Jews is somewhat more bearable. — The Muslem appointed by the government have abolished slavery; the poll tax goes direct into the hands of the Pacha.

But the hour of justice and humanity for these unhappy ones is not yet come. When I was obliged suddenly to give up my second journey to the mountains of Kurdistan, and to leave my brethren there to save my own life, I was surrounded by the deputies of four cities and of about thirty other places, which I had the intention to visit. — How many others may there be in the other parts of this barbarous country, whose existence is hitherto unknown to the investigator and to the world; — and who can tell how long this state of seclusion may still last!

In paragraph VII. I have mentioned several biblical precepts which are observed in the East; and here, in conclusion, I add a number of customs, which contrary to the Mosaic law, have been interwoven since the remotest time with the habits of these tribes.

In the account of my journey through Lebanon I mentioned the immoral customs practised among the Druse tribes living there, to which I here again refer.

The slave trade, that moral pest of the East, is carried

on to a great extent, and is an essential part of the customs of these tribes.

In a word, all that our great Lawgiver forbade, the evil he foresaw and pointed out, and from which he wished to preserve our forefathers, rages to this day among these people. — Those who wish to understand the Bible and the Talmud, should first journey through the East and investigate it; — many a dark passage would then appear to them in the clearest light. I intend later perhaps to explain some points of the Talmud, which to a certain extent appear difficult.

CHAPTER XIV.

Manna. — The quails. — Naphtha (mountain oil). — Tombs of the Prophets Daniel, Ananias, Misael and Azarias. — Ceremonies and customs at these tombs. — Journey through the desert.

The town of Kirkuk on the Chaffeh sea is by the Jews considered to be the ancient Calah [1] mentioned in the Bible, and this name is used to this day in all their public documents. The town is divided into two parts; of which the one is fortified, and situated on the summit of the mountain, and the other extends over the plain. The flat part of the town is the place for commerce; and there our brethren in the faith reside.

The town presents an appearance which is unique of its kind. Hardly could a more ill shaped heap of stones be found sunk in a swamp, which, during the rainy season, is quite covered with water. The town appears then but a

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[1] Genesis c. X. 11.

complete morass, which no one ventures to enter. The houses are kept somewhat cleaner, and the food is prepared better than in Kurdistan.

The vicinity of Kirkuk is very fertile, and, being well irrigated, only needs a skilful cultivation. The inhabitants carry on a considerable trade in thread and cotton goods. The language of the country is Arabic; the dress generally worn is the Mahomedan.

Towards the months of November and December whole flights of quails come from different parts and alight here; they are about as large as a chicken when a week old, and cannot fly well. For this reason they are so easily caught, and taken in such great numbers, that they are sold for 2 paras (half a farthing) each. The Jews, as well as the other inhabitants of the place, eat these birds, and I myself did so; but their flavour is only good when they are young.

Another extraordinary appearance which reminds one of the journey of the Jews through the wilderness, is the manna which here, in the form of grain, descends with the dew. The grain is of a whitish colour, and hard to the touch. It is collected in vessels at break of day, and placed in the sun; in the warmth of which it melts, and becomes a cheesy kind of substance in which state it is spread upon bread and eaten at breakfast. I found it sweet, like honey, and of an agreeable smell. The manna, which falls in the vicinity of Mount Sinai, which I have also tried, tastes still better; it is likewise placed in the sun to dissolve, whereby it becomes hard like cooked honey. Manna is also found in the neighbourhood of Mosul and Bagdad; but there only the trees are covered, whilst at Kirkuk, all the fields and meadows are strewed with it.

Another natural production which is of great use to the inhabitants, and likewise forms an article of foreign trade, is naphtha. The numerous swamps and ditches are covered with a thin blackish fluid, which is collected by the inhabitants, and represents naphtha in its natural state: it is

used for lighthing and other purposes, and has, in burning, a very disagreeable smell.[1]

Between the upper and lower town, at the foot of the mountain, stands a building in the middle of the courtyard, containing four tombs. The first of these, to the left of the entrance near the wall is, according to the assertion of the inhabitants, the tomb of the Prophet Daniel, while the other three tombs, which lie at some little distance, and are separated from each other, are considered to be those of the Prophets Misael, Azarias and Ananias.[2] They are small square sarcophagi, covered with a roof, and protected by a wall of wood, which is in tolerably good condition, although it bears the traces of great age. The three companions of Daniel were, according to the Bible, cast by Nebuchadnezzar into a fiery furnace, from which they came out unhurt.[3] Illegible inscriptions cover these three sarcophagi, but none is to be observed on the tomb of Daniel. I myself doubt the indentity of this tomb, as Daniel is said to have died and to have been buried in Persia; but still I do not venture to assert anything positively, as, notwithstanding the most accurate investigation, I could neither discover the spot mentioned, nor the least trace of his tomb.

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[1] It is possible that this is the naphtha of which the Talmudists speak in the Messechet Sabath (div. 2). See *Ritter's Erdkunde* vol. 9. book 3, p. 555.

[2] Benjamin de Tudela p. 68 likewise speaks of these tombs; but says that they are situated an hour's journey from the tomb of the Prophet Ezechiel, of which we speak later. The tomb of Daniel he places at Schuschan. — Petachia p. 183 says the same. — In *Ritter's Erdkunde* Vol. 9, book 3, p. 583 the description of the four tombs corresponds with my account. P. 294 — 308 the same book says that the tomb of Daniel is in the bed of a river near Suschan or Susa. The river was diverted from its course, a tomb of stones built out in its bed, and then the river allowed to flow back again. Tudela's assertion that Daniel's coffin hangs in a glass case by a chain in the middle of the bridge, is, p. 306, declared incorrect.

[3] Seder Hadoroth p. 36.

Perhaps the assertion of the inhabitants of Kirkuk is correct; as it dates from a tradition of the oldest times.

The tombs are in a state of good preservation, and but a short time since were ornamented with magnificent embroidred tapestries. The inhabitants, no matter what is their religion, make pilgrimages to them with the greatest respect. The Jews go there on the first day of the Feast of weeks, the 6th Sivan (May), in order to recite the Mussaph prayer; but they could give me no other reason for this custom, than its ancient usage.

The belief in miracles, and superstition, of which the east has even been the cradle, finds more followers here than in any other place. These tombs are said to possess a miraculous healing power over all kinds of diseases; — men likewise flee to them for their mysterious interposition in the good result of important undertakings, and call upon them as guardian angels in all affairs of life. This general adoration has an advantageous influence on the condition of the Jews living in the district sanctified by the protection of the tombs of Daniel and of his companions; for they are much less tormented and oppressed by the half civilised inhabitants, than they are in other places.

After leaving Kirkuk, my road led me through a desolate and dreary wilderness. Immeasurable tracts of land without the least sign of vegetation, reaching as far as the eye can see, and always extending further towards the horizon the nearer one approaches, — drifting sand, raised by the slightest breath of air and forming hills, which are just as quickly dispersed, — a moving sea of dust, in which a caravan is seldom met, — this is a picture of the tracts of land through which I had to travel. Whole caravans are frequently stopped by billows of sand, which like the tide of the sea, ebb and flow; half covered over they often wait for a favorable breeze, a burning blast from the desert, which ends their halt.

A few poor villages and scattered Arab tents, which are to be found in the sandy desert, refresh the eye, fatigued by the monotony of the scene. The scorching rays of the sun make it impossible to travel during the day time: at sun-rise therefore we pitched our tents, reposed until night, and made use of the cool hours for continuing our journey.

For seven days we had to travel through the desert tracts; until finally, three days' journey before the old caliph's town of Bagdad, one arrives at an enormous palm forest, which extends to within a short distance of the town. One must have travelled through a desert, in order to conceive what the wanderer feels at the sight of fresh luxuriant nature, bright in all the glowing richness of vegetation, when, exhausted by fatigue, scorched by the burning rays of the sun, the eye wearied by the glaring yellow sand of the monotonous desert, he enters the forest shades. He feels as if newborn, and begins to hope that he is now approaching places where he will meet with fellow creatures.

On quitting this forest, which always affords refreshing shades, are to be seen on the horizon the slender minarets and the proud majestic domes of the Mosques of Bagdad, the white lines of which stand out in strong relief against the azure blue of the sky. To the right and left the town appears to be encircled by a glittering girdle, which is formed by the waters of the rapid and foaming Tigris.

CHAPTER XV.

Bagdad.[1]

The Jews of Bagdad and their happy condition; their sciences and government. — Synagogue. — Marriage customs. — Tomb of the Marabut Abd-el-Kader. — Supposed tomb of the priest Joshua. — General description of the town, trade and habits. — The ruins of Babylon. — Hillah. — Birs Nimrod (tower of Nimrod).

The Jewish population of Bagdad numbers about 3000 families. By their science, industry and opulence they contribute much to the progress of trade, to general activity,

[1] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: We now enter with Teixeira into Bagdad, into this highly favoured city, large, rich and magnificent, with its beautiful women, whose eyes particularly pleased our traveller. Bagdad had, in his time, above 20,000 houses (casas), of which 200—300 were inhabited by Jews. Twelve or thirteen of these Jewish families asserted that their forefathers were transplanted here at the time of the destruction of the first Temple. The Jews of Bagdad of whom some carry on trade, and are very poor, live in a certain part of the town with their Kanis or Synagogue — perhaps the Kenisa „gdolah des Rosch Hagolah", which Benjamin de Tudela mentions*) — in free excercise of their religion. So far Teixeira. — If we compare the numbers given by him with the accounts of Benjamin de Tudela, and of him of the Moldau, we come to the conclusion, that the Jewish population of Bagdad in his time must have been very low. Benjamin de Tudela found 1000 families,**) and Teixeira men-

*) *Teixeira, 121: Haura de doscientas a tres cientas casas de Judios, de que las 12 o 13 affirman que son aun del primero captiuerio, algunos dellos son facultosos, peró los mas pobriscimos; biuen en barrio separado con su Kanis o Synagoga libremente.* At that time Bagdad had 10 Armenian Christian families and 80 Nestorians.

**) Benjamin de Tudela 59. 60.

and to the flourishing condition of this important province. Merchants of the first rank are to be found among them, who extend their commercial transactions into the remotest countries, and labour with success not only against the competition of the natives, but likewise against that of foreign lands. In no other place in the east have I found my Israelitish brethren in such perfectly happy circumstances, and so worthy of their condition. With respect to superstition, the fruit of ignorance, and the result of the numerous traditions, which people of the east imbibe from their earliest youth, — the Bagdad Jews may be considered the ideal of the Jewish population of the east. They have noble principles, are hospitable, enlightened and benevolent to all those with whom they come in contact. By continual intercourse with strangers, they have acquired good manners and politeness, and they possess a knowledge of the world, which places them on a level with the most civilised nations of Europe. Their Rabbis are well informed men, and are treated with the greatest respect.

The three chief Rabbis are invested with judicial power; they bear the title of Dajanim (justice of the peace), and are chosen by the community for this important office. At the time of my sojourn among them, Rabby Jacob, son of Joseph Jacob, was the first Dajanim, and was greatly respected on account of his learning, benevolence and noble character. His colleagues were Rabbi Eliahu Obadja, a rich and learned man, who, by means of caravans, carries on an important trade with Damascus, — and Rabbi Avdola, one of the richest merchants of Bagdad. These three Judges

tions 300 families! It is to be wished that our travellers would fix their attention on the increase and decrease of the Jewish population in the countries they visit. Like Teixeira, Benjamin de Tudela (p. 60, 61), also speaks of some families of Bagdad, who could boast of their ancient descent. He also speeks of a Rabbi Elieser ben Zemach, who could trace his pedigree up to the Prophet Samuel, and he and his brethren knew the melodies which were sung in the Temple before its destruction. A Rabbi Daniel, whom Benjamin knew, traced his descent from the royal house of David.

are not however able to determine any punishment, as this power is possessed only by the Chacham Baschi (chief Rabbi). The Chacham Baschi is appointed direct to this dignified office by the Sublime Porte. He represents the community before the highest authorities, and watches over their religious interests and the administration of civil affairs. He collects from the Jews the taxes, for which they are in arrears. Every male member of the community pays, from the time he arrives at the age of fifteen, a yearly tribute of 15 to 120 piastres, which is collected in quarterly payments.

The Chacham Baschi is supported in his office by the highest members of the community; and it is necessary that their opinions should agree with his own, in order to establish the validity of his acts. In my time, this honorable appointment was held by Rabbi Raphael Kassin of Aleppo, a man about 30 years of age, of stately figure and noble appearance, wearing a long black beard. He enjoys the especial favour of the Pacha, who has assigned him a guard of honour consisting of four Gavaz (gendarmes), and besides these, five or six Jews are in attendance on him, who have to convey and execute his orders and commands. When he goes out, it is always with truly princely pomp, and the guard of honour preceeds him on horseback. As a mark of high consideration and respect, he wears the decoration of the imperial order of the Nissan, a distinction, of which very few Jews in the Ottoman empire can boast.

Under the orders of the Chacham Baschi the community is presided over by the Nassi. Up to the year 1849 to 50 Rabbi Joseph Moses Reuben, a very rich learned and benevolent man, was the Nassi of the community. He did me the honour to invite me several times to his table. Before the appointment of the high office of Chacham the Baschi, the Nassi was always chosen from among the richest and most influential Jews. He possessed much power, which, if abused, might have been productive of serious consequences, not only among those of his own persuasion, but likewise among the Mussulmans; for as he was only

dependent on the favour of the Pacha, he could purchase by a sum of money indulgence for all his actions, and act according to his own caprice and advantage, towards all whom he wished to injure.

The religious instruction among the Jews of Bagdad is admirable; for there is a large Jeschiwa (rabbinical school), in which 60 young Rabbis study theology. This school is under the direction of the learned Rabbi Abdolah ben Abraham Seumech, who performs the duties of his office gratuitously. He is a very rich man, and, in my time, conducted one of the principal commercial houses; he has given over the management of his business to a partner, in order to devote himself exclusively to his pious office.

The Jews in Bagdad inhabit a particular quarter of the city; but they have the option of settling in other parts of the town, and many of them dwell among the Mussulmans. The community possesses nine Synagogues; of which eight are situated in the same court. At a poor-box, placed at the entrance of the court, stand several of the highest members of the community, morning and evening, to receive the alms and gifts of the passers by. These amount daily to about 1000 piastres, — and are generally used for the maintenance of the poor of the community, and for the support of the Jeschiwa. For the same purpose a tax is also levied on Kosher meat.

The ninth Synagogue is a very large building supported by sixteen columns. The Megila (book of Esther) is read there on the 14th and 15th of Adar (March). The interior of the edifice presents nothing worthy of note; the ceiling is ornamented with sculpture. This Synagogue is called Beth Haknezeth Sheik (Isaac) Gaon.[1] In a side room of it is the tomb of this learned man. It is a catafalque, the height

[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 60 speaks of 10 Jeschiwas, and p. 63 and 64 of 28 Synagogues and of 1000 Jewish families, but of the latter Synagogue he makes no mention. — Pethachia p. 173 mentions the same number. P. 182 he speaks of three Synagogues.

of a man, decorated with flags of four colours at which ten learned Rabbis are always reading and reciting prayers.

On Friday afternoon between two and three o'clock, all business ceases among the Jews of Bagdad, and all the commercial houses are closed. Each returns to his own home, puts on his best garments, and hurries to the Synagogue, where evening service is performed, which lasts until an hour before sunset. All then return to their families, sing pious Hebrew songs, and drink aniseed brandy. As soon as the last rays of the sun have disappeared, the Kriath Schema is said; and they then partake of the evening meal, which sometimes lasts until midnight. On Saturday, they go to the morning service, afterwards breakfast, and then religious reading commences and with such decorum and devotion that even every casual listener must be edified. Several families are usually assembled at these readings, which are generally taken from the Prophets. Every member of the family listens with much devotion, and the strangers who happen to be present follow this example. After the reading there is an interchange of visits, and the afternoon is devoted to enjoyment in the open air. The rich possess beautiful country houses and palmgardens on the Tigris, where they spend the summer.

With feelings of the highest satisfaction and pleasure I saw how devoutly and solemnly, and with what strict attention to the precepts of the Law, the Sabbath was observed in Bagdad. With true delight did I assist at the readings and brotherly meetings, where pleasure was always enhanced by true and deep knowledge. In no other country I visited did I find my brethren in the faith so void of care, so happy, so free from persecutions and oppressions of intolerance, as at Bagdad. Often when looking with sorrow at the misery and profound ignorance of my brethren, when I saw how under the yoke of despotism they wandered like mere shadows of that once celebrated, great and learned people and compared their condition with that of their brethren in Bagdad, then the hope took possession of me,

that soon for them also a better and happier future would dawn.

In Bagdad I found the words of the Bible verified: „And thou shalt rejoice in the presence of thy Lord, thou, and thy son and thy daughter, thy man servant, and thy maid servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates."[1]

I myself was received with the greatest hospitality; and kindness, coming from the heart, rejoiceth the soul. The head of one of the richest families, Awdul Asis ben Awdul Nawi, received me into his house during my stay there. I saw with much pleasure how the poor, the widows and orphans receive before the beginning of the Sabbath the alms of the rich, and how often, besides these customary gifts, they are entertained at the tables of the wealthy. The sight of all this happiness, of this piety, and of their sacred observance of the precepts of the law, was for me a true refreshment, an oasis in the wilderness, and it animated my courage to continue my researches.

Another observation which I made in Bagdad is the following: In the town about a third more girls are born than boys; at the birth of a girl, the house is filled with sorrow; for the dowry is thought of. They likewise marry at a very early age, for instance, — some years before my visit to Bagdad, a girl of 8 or 10 years old was married to a young man of 18 or 20 years of age. Much sorrow and evil was caused by these early marriages: there was therefore a judicial determination that the daughters of the rich should not marry before their thenth year, those of the middle classes before their eleventh, and the poorer population not before their twelvth year. If a girl therefore remains unmarried until her fifteenth year, she may give up

[1] Deuteronomy c. XVI. 11. 14.

all hopes of being married at all. So it is with widows; they have no chance of a second marriage; as every one would prefer to marry a poor girl than a young and pretty widow, be she ever so rich: and I was informed that the Jewish community alone numbered about 4—500 widows.

The marriage ceremonies are as follows: When a man wishes to marry, it is not the custom, as with us, that he should previously be acquainted with his future wife; but the mother, or some other female relation, goes and looks at the girl, and if she pleases her, the husband must be pleased also.

The night before the wedding is called Lel-al-Chana (the Arabic word „Lel" means *night*, and „Chana" is a red colour). The relations of the bride assemble in the house of her parents, and begin to sing and play music according to the custom of the country. After spending about two hours in this way, a colour (Chana), prepared for the purpose, is taken, and they paint with it the palms of the hands and the nails of the bride and her attendant maidens, and the soles of their feet up to the toes. The paint is washed off the next morning, when a little dark reddish colouring will denote for the space of several weeks the places marked. This same ceremony is gone through with the bridegroom and with his companions at his house; and then in both houses the night is spent in singing and music; as it is considered injurious for the bride and bridegroom to sleep the night before the wedding. I was present at the ceremony at both houses; and must confess that it much pleased me.

The next day about three hours before sunset come the Chachamim with the bridegroom and his relations to the house of the bride, and the preparations for the wedding are begun. The bride sits veiled with the women behind a curtain. The Chacham lifts the veil from the face of the bride, and shows her to the bridegroom, as, according to the Talmud, the marriage ceremony dare not take place

unless the bridegroom has seen the bride.[1] The marriage is then performed according to the precepts of the Talmud.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Chachamim return with the bridegroom to his house, while the bride remains under the parental roof. In the evening the bridegroom and his companions fetch the bride, and conduct her to his dwelling. The young wife is not accompanied by her parents. They then partake of a short repast, and after that, the young couple are conducted to a chamber especially prepared. The bridegroom being contented with the modesty of his young wife, a messenger is immediately sent to the parents and the night is spent in merry revelry. Not until the third evening do the parents of the young wife with all the relations come to the house of the son-in-law. There, grand and expensive entertainments take place; and the poor are liberally remembered. The marriage solemnities last, according to patriarchal custom, seven whole days.

The town of Bagdad is divided by the Tigris into two unequal parts; of which the largest, the town itself, is enclosed by a wall, at the end of which is a fortress, used for barracks. On entering the town by the gate of Mosul, the view is really magnificent. The streets are broad; in them are numerous shops, filled with the most splendid wares, and costly bazaars, particularly those which are situated in the middle of the town.

On the other shore of the Tigris is that portion of the town at which the different caravans arrive, and from which they take their departure. It is a very large market place, where the foreign merchants and travellers join the caravans. A bridge in a very bad condition crosses the river, the inundations of which, particularly in the spring, cause much damage.

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[1] Messechet Kiduschin p. 41.

When the water is very high they make use of a peculiar kind of boat to pass over, which consists of a kind of deep basket, made of wicker work, and covered over with pitch; for the same purpose they make use of canoes, which are made in two divisions, and each capable of containing 8—10 persons. Going along the streets towards the Jewish quarter of the town, I passed a mosque of imposing appearance, enclosed by a wall. In this mosque is the tomb of the great Marabut Abd-el-Kader, which is visited by numerous pilgrims. Tradition relates that the mosque was formerly a synagogue, and that the Marabut was no less a person than the celebrated Talmudist Joseh Haguelili.

In Bagdad the heat in summer is unbearable, so that one is obliged to remain at home during the day, and to attend to business at night. On account of the heat subterranean grottoes have been constructed, which are kept cool by reservoirs of water. In the summer one sleeps on the terraces, in order to avoid the smothering heat of the rooms, and the stings of scorpions. These scorpions are real plagues to the country; they are everywhere to be found here, and particularly in the narrow streets, where at night it is necessary to be furnished with a lantern in order to be able to get out of their way. The scorpions here are of different kinds and colours, they are black, blue, and green; the sting of the black scorpion is deadly, and up to this time no remedy for it has been discovered. For the stings of the other species the following remedies are used: 1) A little flat blackish-blue stone is laid upon the wound, and there remains for 24 hours, until the poison is drawn out. 2) A scorpion is boiled in olive oil and laid upon the wound; if the same scorpion that caused the wound can be obtained for that purpose, the cure is the more certain. 3) A sheep is slaughtered, the inside taken out, and the wounded member placed in the body of the still warm animal. 4) The poison may be sucked out of the wound by a strong man, a process which for him has no danger. 5) And lastly, ice applications are put on the wounded part. All

these remedies must however be employed immediately after the infliction of the sting; for the effects of the poison are rapid and fearful.

The terraces are planted and ornamented with flowers, and when the heat prevents sleep, persons meet together, and spend the time in friendly conversation. The apartments of the rich are splendidly decorated, and kept almost in the European style.

The population of Bagdad consists of four different elements. In the first rank are the Arabians, Jews and Christians; after them follow the Persians and Indians. — Two consuls reside in the town, one French, the other English. Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Italian are spoken.

The men dress in the Turkish style, with a splendour, which is only known in the East. They wear yellow shoes, with turned-up toes. The dress of the women resembles the négligé of Europeans; for a headdress they wear a little red fez (a sort of cap), with long gold- or silk-tassels ornamented with pearls and diamonds. When they go out, they wear a silk haik, a kind of apron, reaching to the neck; and a long veil protects them from the rays of the sun. In general the women possess great beauty, and their cleverness and activity in needle work are astonishing.

The importance and extent of the commerce of the town are universally known; enormous caravans, some more than 2000 camels strong, come and go daily in ceaseless change from, and to all parts. I was told that twice a year a caravan of more than 6000 camels went to Damascus. The trade with India is completely in the hands of the Jews, who possess manufacturies in Calcutta, Bombay, Singapore, and even at Canton. The most important articles of trade in these countries are indigo, spices, silk stuffs, some kinds of rare fruits and dyes, which come from different provinces of China. From Persia come chiefly carpets, shawls, silk, tombako (a kind of tobacco), wines, almonds &c. From the same country are also obtained precious stones, rubies, eme-

ralds, and corals; and from the Island Rein in the Persian Gulf beautiful pearls are procured.

The larger ships containing articles of Jewish manufacture go to Mascat, Abeshur, and Bassora; in the latter place they unlade, and wait for smaller ships to take their cargo on farther. — The steam-boat between India and Abeshur only goes once in six weeks.

In the year 1841 Bagdad was visited by the plague, which caused fearful ravages; many persons died, and many thousands left the town. A second misfortune, which visited the town in the same year, was the overflowing of the Tigris, by which many houses were inundated or destroyed.

According to the prevailing custom of the East the houses are always kept closed. If a stranger knocks at a door, and a woman opens it for him, she immediately turns aside, hides her face, and hurries timidly away. According to the Arabian style of building, the houses have a courtyard in their centre, round which the dwelling is erected. The kitchen is on the ground-floor, and the women live in the first story. A stranger may live several months in a house without once seeing the female members of the household: as soon however as he is known, he is treated with familiarity. Deprived of all society and amusement, the women have no idea of free and social propriety, they possess no knowledge which might serve to control their passions, and they readily surrender themselves to any one with all the vehemence of their warm temperament. Whenever they appear in the street, they are wrapped in a long veil, from beneath which only gleam their sparkling eyes, which look boldly on the passers-by.

One day I had a conversation with some worthy gentlemen, during which I was asked, if it were really true that the women in Europe were free, and showed themselves unveiled in public. On my replying in the affirmative, they explained to me that it was the destiny of the daughters of Eve to lead a retired life, and their faces ought to be veiled before strangers, and particularly before men. To this I

said: „The Bible speaks of a veiled woman; but Judah, the son of Jacob, took her for a harlot.“ [1] — The word was hard, although taken from the Bible, with which my companions were well acquainted; otherwise I had gone too far in saying this: for what matters it if the women cover their faces, and their form be displayed. The reader will kindly excuse my biblical remark with the same indulgence as my listeners did. I will also mention what was related to me on this occasion; namely, that a woman, who only wore one most necessary article of clothing, was cleaning a court-yard when, at the sight of a stranger who entered the door, she threw this, her only garment, over her head, in order to cover her face. — In such conversations it is always better to rest one's arguments on the Bible, for there is no gainsaying that authority; although unfortunately it is not always rightly understood.

An hour's journey from Bagdad is a small building, shaded by eight gigantic date-trees; it is divided into two parts, in one of them is the richly decorated tomb of the High-Priest Joshua,[2] mentioned by Zechariah.[3] Several old manuscripts are under the catafalque, portions of which are

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[1] Genesis c. XXXVIII. 15.

[2] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: A short distance from Bagdad Teixeira found in a little hut a tomb, for which Moors and Jews testify great respect. They say that the body of a Jewish High-Priest rests there. It is a large tomb built of stone and chalk. At the top of the catafalque is a metal plate, on which is written in hebrew characters: Jesuah Kohen Gadol. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood maintain that he was a holy man, and all venerate him on account of the miracles, which, as they assert, God performed through him.*)

[3] Zechariah c. III. 1.

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*) *Teixeira 124: Fuera de aquella parte de la ciudad esta recogida en una pequenna casa una sepultura tenida de Moros y Judios en grande veneracion, en la qual dizen està depositado el cuerpo de un summo sacerdote Hebreo. El tumulo es como una grande caxa de piedra y cal, y en la cabecera tiene una camina de cobre, con unas letras de relieuo en Hebrayco que dizen-Jehsuah Kohen Gado (1) que se Josuah summo sacerdato dizen que fue varon santo, y todos to reuerencian como tal, por milagros que affirman ha Dios hecho por el.*

read at his tomb; they contain a narrative of his history, which is to be found in the writings of the Prophet Zechariah. The interior of the vaulted tomb is lighted by a long narrow window. The Jews go there every month, in order to hear the writings of the High-Priest read; after the conclusion of which they join in singing hymns, and then assemble at some distance from the tomb, and partake of a social meal.

The ruins of Babylon. — Hillah.

The ruins of Babylon begin two and a half days' journey to the northwest of Bagdad, and stretch along the shores of the Euphrates to the town of Hillah,[1] which is at the distance of six hours' journey. Where once stood the ancient celebrated city of Babylon, is now a dreary waste, only relieved by a few miserable plantations near the tents of the Bedouins.

A deep religious feeling must take possession of any one who contemplates these magnificent ruins, these delapidated remains of palaces, monuments, columns, and edifices, which even in ruin give evidence of their former splendour. Up to this day are still found many costly articles under these fragments, — antique vases, and gold and silver coins. I myself possessed four coins, of which however I was robbed as well as of other things.

In the vicinity is to be seen a cave, into which it is asserted, Daniel was thrown to the lions, and likewise the

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[1] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: Not far from Hela he trod the soil of Mesopotamia. From afar he perceived the ruins of ancient Babylon, „and this place of all others in the vicinity is the most seldom visited; a fulfilment of the words spoken by the Prophet.“ *)

*) *Teix. c. III: es el lugar menos frequentado de toda aquella region, en complimiento de lo que della estaua prophetizado. (Isaiah, c. XIV, 19, 20 ff.).*

place where is said to have stood the furnace, into which Nebuchadnezzar caused the Prophets Ananias, Misael and Azarias to be cast. The former site of the palace of this king is also shown, as well as the supposed dwelling of Daniel. In the interior of the so-called Daniel's cave bubbles now a spring, which is held in great veneration by the Arabs and Jews; as its miraculous water is said to cure fevers. An ancient lime-tree is also here, which is particularly venerated by the inhabitants; as, according to tradition, it was worshipped by Nebuchadnezzar. Formerly this tree divided itself into three branches, one of which, so I was told, an English lord had cut off; a desecration which caused a complete rebellion among the Arab population, and for which this nobleman as well as the English consul had to pay dearly.

Six hours' journey southwest of the ruins of Babylon rises a gigantic mass of ruins; it is the world-renowned work of presumptuous men, the well-known Tower of Babel, described in the Bible.[1] I should have liked much to view the ruins of this enormous building, but I did not possess the necessary means for hiring a strong escort, without which it is impossible to venture there, as these ruins are infested by hordes of robbers, and wild animals.

The people say that it takes three days to inspect the remains of the Babylonian Tower, among which are still to be found rooms in good preservation, and sepulchres. According to the accounts of the Jews and Arabs, these ruins are 1450 feet broad, and of such an enormous extent that, taking their highest point as a centre, they lie round in a circumference of twenty hours' journey. Several flights of steps lead to the summit.

About three days' journey from Bagdad on the right shore of the Euphrates, stands the town of Hillah.[2] About

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[1] Petachia p. 191 likewise speaks of this tower.

[2] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: Not far from Mexat-Ocem Teixeira passed over the Euphrates, entered Mesopotamia, and visited many of those ancient places of historical interest to his brethren in the faith. —

50 Jewish families live here, whose Nassi is Mailum Mordecai. This little community possesses a Synagogue.[1] In Hillah, different kinds of stuffs are manufactured, which are used in the country itself. The town is likewise celebrated for rearing the best Arab horses.

From Hillah to Kabur-Kefil is a journey of about six hours. Near the latter place I found in the middle of the desert, upon a hill, a small pyramidal-tower. It is arched and contains a subterranean apartment, which leads into a grotto. This tower, which is called by the Arabs Birs Nimrod, is of great antiquity, and, according to tradition, is said to have belonged to the hunter Nimrod, and to have been inhabited by him.

At first he thinks of Hela, *) mentioned by Tudela as Chila and Hillah,**) the place which the children of Israel passed, when they were led captive to Babylon. The fields of this part lying on the shores of the Euphrates are all intersected by small streams, — „those were the streams of which the Psalmist speaks in his writings.“ †) Teixeira made no stay at this place, and does not speak of the Jews here, of whom Benjamin de Tudela found 10,000.

1 Benjamin de Tudela p. 65 mentions 10,000 Jews and 4 Synagogues. With respect to several other towns, of which we will speak later, he mentions a population of several thousand Jews, of whom now no traces are to be found.

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*) *Teixeira c. III.: por do los hijos de Israel passaron cautivos para Babylonia.* We should be indeed inclined to consider the ancient Halah (II. Kings c. XVII. 6, c. XVIII. 11), Helah to be Hela-Hillah. Teixeira does not mention whether his account is a tradition which the experience of the inhabitants has proved, it certainly however agrees with Holy Writ, as II. Kings c. XVIII. 11 it stands thus: „*wajanchem ba — Halach*“ and he carried away etc. The Talmudists were perfectly acquainted with the situation of Halach, which (according to Gesenius) is the identical Helach (Genesis c. X. 11); and they quite agree with the account of our journey. Talmud babli, Joma 10*a* it stands thus: Helach su Phrat d'bursif. (Helach is the neighbourhood of the Euphrates in the part near Bursif). Now Bursif (Borsippa) is known to be the same as Babel; and thereby it is proved that Halach lay on the site of the present Hela, or Hillah.

**) Benjamin de Tudela 65.

†) *Ibid. 111: aquellos heran los Rios de que el Psalmista, haze mencion en su Psalmo.* (Psalm 137.)

CHAPTER XVI.

Kabur-Kefil.

Tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel. — Pilgrimages to the tomb. — Bequest of King Jehoiachim. — Tombs of the Kings Sitkejahu and Jehoiachim. — Sifkif. — Meshed Ali.

The town of Kabur-Kefil lies near the Euphrates, several hours' journey from the ruins of Babylon. Kefil means in Turkish and in Arabic „surety", and this name of the town is derived from the memorable circumstance of the Prophet Ezekiel's standing forth here as surety for the innocence of the Jews, at the moment when, in consequence of calumnies, a persecution broke out against them. Even at the present time, the Arabs dwelling there treat our people with great consideration.

The town presents the appearance of an irregular mass of walls, and is now exclusively occupied by the Arabs, and by one of their tribes, that of Hindu.

In the town is a building enclosed by a wall, containing the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel, which is covered with costly tapestry, and different kinds of rich needle work and embroidery. According to the calculation of Seder Hadoroth the Prophet died during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who had taken prisoner Jehoiachim, King of Judah. The tomb lay between the rivers Euphrates and Kaebar, and had at that time no wall to enclose it. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evil-Merodach succeeded. He not only liberated his royal prisoner, but presented him with land and vineyards in the vicinity.[1]

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[1] Jeremiah c. LII. 31.

After having regained his liberty Jehoiachim took several thousand Jews, and began with their assistance to build the above mentioned wall.[1] He furnished it with towers as if it were a fortress, the largest of which was surrounded by a gallery, and served as foundation to a building resembling a Mosque. A high winding staircase in the interiour leads to the top of this tower, from which one can distinctly see with the naked eye the Babylonian tower, rising like a giant in the distance. This tower has a peculiar contrivance, which leads the inhabitants of the country to believe something wonderful and super-natural. Through this tower goes a wooden beam or pole, both ends of which run into the gallery: if this beam is violently pulled, a shaking movement is felt in the whole upper part of the tower. According to the belief of the inhabitans, the following words must be spoken as a magic spell: „Beschem Malka Schalum wa Atharato" (in the name of King Salomon and of his crown): if this is forgotten to be said, the most disastrous consequences may ensue. It was in vain I endeavoured to explain to my brethren the natural cause of this supposed wonder, which most likely consists in a hidden spring, or some other concealed piece of mechanism; but I was not able to shake their superstitious belief.

On this spot is the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel,[2] upon which a large stone sarcophagus is erected, which, like the rest of the building, is whitened over with chalk. At the

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[1] Seder Hadaroth.

[2] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: About half a day's journey from the town Teixeira perceived a large building with a high tower. This contains the tomb and the remains of the holy Prophet Ezekiel, who is called by the Moors and Jews Ezkehl — I'cheskhel — and held by all in the greatest respect.*)

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*) *Teix. 102: una casa grande con una alta torre, adó esta la sepultura y cuerpo del santo Propheta Ezechiel, à quien Moros y Judios llamen Ezkhel, tenida de todos en suma veneracion, tanto por su vida y santidad, como por los milagros que affirman obra Dios alli por su sierno.* Besides Benjamin de Tudela (66 ff.) this tomb according to Asher (1. c. II. 141), is also decribed by Petachia, Charisi and Niebuhr.

side of it stands a large Synagogue, the outside of which is covered with a beautiful varnish, similar to the colour of tortoise shell. In the interior, the side towards Jerusalem is quite bare and unfinished, as a sign of mourning for the Holy Temple in the city of the Almighty, and in remembrance of the fragments of its walls. The tomb of the Prophet is entered by a door in the Sanctuary.

On one of the walls of the building two figures of the size of life are to be seen: they were painted in days of old, and are almost obliterated by age. According to the assertion of the Jews they are the pictures of the Prophet Ezekiel and King Jehoiachim. From the dim and faded outlines of these pictures any resemblance to the human form is with difficulty to be traced; the colours and the fashion of the apparel are no longer to be seen. The whole wall at the entrance-door is covered at different places with groups of figures, something like the inscriptions and decorations of the ancient Egyptians; they are in remembrance of those who built this edifice, — that is, of a whole people, who, with their king, erected it.

According to the assertion of the people of the country, this is said to be the only Synagogue built by command of a King of Judah, and at the erection of which he personally assisted. The sacred and other writings do not always notice this: later I shall mention several other Synagogues which are to be found, in or near this province, at the tombs of the Kings of Judah; but it was impossible for me to obtain any certain proofs that these edifices were erected by command of these kings.

In the holy shrine of this Synagogue are preserved different manuscripts of the law; among which was one of the most extraordinary size I had ever seen. It is written on a kind of parchment which is called Guewil, and, according to the belief of the people of the country, was penned by the hand of Ezekiel himself.[1]

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[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 66, 67 also speaks of this Pentateuch and of

I entertain another opinion respecting this. After many enquiries I made on the spot itself, and after having consulted with the Chachamim of the country, I have arrived at the conviction that this Pentateuch was witten by Rabbi Anan, who lived in the year 4490, at the time of the great Gaonim, as is related in the work Raawet. This Rabbi possessed no rank under the Gaonim; he therefore turned to chism, and became the founder of the sect of the Karaites, who, by the Jews, are called Karahim; that is, Followers of the Word, of the dead letter of the Bible (from the Hebrew Kera, to read). He drew a great number of Israelites over to his sect. This account is found confirmed in the work of the Abbé Bargès, — Professor of Oriental Languages at the Sorbonne in Paris, — called: „*Japhet ben Zeli Bassorensis Caraïtae in librorum psalmorum commentarii Arabici.*" The learned author, who made me a present of a copy of his work, likewise explains the name *Caraïtae* „Readers or writers, the sons or mediators of Holy Writ."

This Pentateuch is only used on the Joumkipur (day of atonement); and all my entreaties to be permitted to examine the manuscript were useless, as it is only allowable to read it on the above mentioned day.

In the interior of the Synagogue is a certain room, which is always kept closed; it is never even entered by the Jews, and is certainly therefore not accessible to any one else. It is a so-called Guenisa[1] (place for the safe custody of ancient writings) in which old manuscripts are

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the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel, but he does not mention the name of the place. He likewise says that the Jews assemble there from new year until the day of Atonement, which however now takes place at quite a different period as we shall mention. He also speaks of 60 towers and of many Synagogues. I, however, only found one tower and one Synagogue. — Petachia, p. 179, likewise speaks of this tomb of the Prophet; but does not mention the place. Like Tudela he also mentions that the Jews assemble there from new year until the day of Atonement; the Pentateuch he does not name.

[1] The Jews in the East and in Africa have still the custom of preserving in an appointed place torn and worn out books and manuscripts,

preserved, which are said to date from ancient times, and to have come from different places. This place for the preservation of old relics is held in great veneration by the followers of every creed.[1]

Beside the Synagogue and the tomb of the Prophet, a Jeschiba is erected, in which the Chachamim, sometimes 20 in number, continually assemble for pious reading and for the study of the Talmud and other books of the law: They are the only Jews who have a settled dwelling place in Kabur-Kefil. Their rich brethren in Bagdad supply them with everything necessary for the support of themselves, and of this institution, which is maintained by large gifts and legacies. For instance, a few years before I was there, a rich Jewish merchant in Bagdad, named Jacob Zemach, died without any male heirs, and left the whole of his property in charitable bequests to his brethren in the faith at Zephat, Palestine and likewise 150,000 karans (1 karan = 5 piastres) for the support of the Jeschiba at Kabur-Kefil. These pious hermits, so devoted to learning, in whose family the name of Servant of the Prophet is hereditary, are freed from all taxes, and served by three Arabs.

The Jews, as well as the Arabs of the vicinity, cherish a very firm belief in the efficacy of certain acts for the protection of which they call on the tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel, especially with regard to sick people, who are not considered quite incurable. — But who knows the will of the Almighty? — This question no one could answer.

Every Friday afternoon the above mentioned Chachamim go to the tomb of the Prophet, sing hymns there and pious songs, and change the tapestry with which the catafalque is covered. The Jews of the surrounding provinces likewise make pilgrimages to this place. Every year at

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and Pentateuchs which have become illegible, and of burying them every two or three years in the cemetery. A stone is placed over them with the inscription „Guenisa"; and a festival takes place at the time.

[1] Benjamin de Tudela p. 67 speaks of this Guenisa.

the time of the Feast of weeks many pious pilgrims from Bagdad and Bassora, from Persia and from other countries, without distinction to rank or sex, come to celebrate the festival at Kabur-Kefil. Numerous ceremonies take place at this time. On the eve of the festival the men go into the Synagogue, and read there the book of the Prophet Ezekiel. An hour before daybreak the privilege of replacing the old covers by new ones as well as of reading aloud before the tomb of the Prophet the Hafthora[1] of the day, is sold to the highest bidder. The first of these functions can be executed by several pious persons; the result of the sale of this privilege often exceeds the sum of 1000 piastres. When this has been arranged, they proceed to change the draperies, which takes place amid the songs of the assembled multitude; songs, the beauty and harmony of which, added to the accuracy with which this solemn religious ceremony was executed, excited my admiration. Hymns were sung in the pauses during the ceremony. This lasts three hours and the Hafthora lasts quite as long. During the whole time the women are present in the Synagogue, in order to listen devoutly to the hymns, which are especially composed for this festival.

Shall I now relate some of the narratives, of which I was told thousands more or less fabulous, concerning the different miracles and wonderful things, which are said to have taken place at the tomb of the Prophet? The reader will allow me to be silent on this subject; for I could not relate anything of interest to him.

The nomadic Arabs of the desert likewise come in true belief to the tomb of the Prophet, and kiss the catafalque with veneration. They also offer gifts to the Chachamim of the place, in order to obtain by their mediation the favour of the Prophet.

After the liberation of King Jehoiachim from captivity, he gave a great portion of the land and vineyards, which

[1] A portion of the book of the Prophet.

he owed to the generosity of the King of Babylon, for the support of these buildings. The institution stands to this day; and even Ali, a relation of Mahomed, venerated by the Persians as a Prophet, when he came to these countries to obtain followers for the new religion, allowed it to remain in its integrity.

On my return to these countries at the end of the year 1850, I heard that the Arabs of the tribe of Hindu, in conjunction with other Arabs had refused to pay tribute to the Pacha of Bagdad. The Pacha sent troops in order to enforce it; but on account of their small number they were repulsed with loss by the rebels and withdrew into the town of the Prophet Ezekiel. The Arabs did not dare venture to follow them there, or to shoot upon them, for fear of desecrating the sanctuary. The little band thus gained time to wait for further help from Bagdad, on the arrival of which the rebels were routed on all sides, and compelled to submit and to pay the required tribute. During these events I was at Bagdad. — Veneration for the Prophet works so powerfully on the minds of the uncivilised people of these parts, who consist of the most powerful and courageous warriors of the numerous hordes of robbers, that the Chachamim of Kabur-Kefil never have to fear the least invasion on their part, and they are even protected by them against other robbers.

The tombs of King Sitkejahu, of the Prophet Zephaniah, and of several members of David's family, which are in the vicinity of Kabur-Kefil, — as well as Siftif, with its ancient Synagogue, — are mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela p. 68, 69; to which I refer. But the Jews, which he found at these places in his time in such numbers, are now no more to be found; a few only are scattered here and there.

Meshed Ali. — Kelbella.

From Kabur-Kefil I went to Meshed Ali, a distance of about six hours' journey.

In the town of Meshed Ali[1] is the tomb of Ali, whom I have before mentioned. He was the founder of a Mussulman sect, which is greatly diffused throughout Persia. — Over te tomb is built a large Mosque of white marble, the

[1] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: The next place he visited was Bagdad. As at this time could he not cross the Tigris, he determined to take the route through the Syrian-Arabian desert. The chief person of his cafila or caravan was, according to his description, a Jew, who had gone over to the faith of Islam: in whom the Portuguese, who came to transact business in this country, and the Venetians, placed much confidence. On the 2d September the caravan began to move. The account which Teixeira gives of his journey through the wilderness is interesting. On the second day of his journey he perceived a mountain on his right hand, called by the Arabs Gibel Sinai (mount Sinai); near to which the natives place the ancient Bassora.*) The difficulties of a journey through the wilderness were not wanting; soon came the terrible Simoom to trouble him, and then the burning thirst, wich so often tormented him in these dry and parched regions. Great was his joy at being able to quench his thirst at Reamelah, as the Arabs call this part. But of his wanderings through the wilderness we must not relate more here, lest we should overstep the space allowed us. Only this one remark we must make, — that there were Jews who journeyed with Teixeira in that caravan, who, as he said, separated themselves on Friday from the general company, because they would not travel on the Sabbath.**) After a journey of several weeks he approached the territory of Merat-Aly or Mam Aly, or Meshed- or Imam-Ali.†) On a Sabbath he entered the town, which was founded at the time of Ali. Here was consigned to the earth, after having wandered for several weeks in the wilder-

*) Petachia likewise, the traveller of Regensburg, mentions p. 78 a Mount Sinai near Bagdad, which is said to form a chain with the sacred mountain of the same name.

**) Teixeira, 94: *quedando alli los Judios, por que el dia siguiente hera Sabado y no podian caminar.*

According to the Law the Jews are permitted, on account of the dangers to which they are exposed, to travel with a caravan on the Sabbath day. I was told of a traveller, who, through the strictness of his religious observances, left the caravan on a Friday, and furnished with a wallet and mat went into a little wood to celebrate his Sabbath: — it was his last. All enquiries respecting the non-appearance of the Jew were in vain; he was never heard of again. — I believe that these travellers were Karaites, who take the Bible literally. (Exodus XVI. 29.)

†) *Ibid. 99: Mexat Aly o Mam Aly que todo es uno, y quiere dezir Mesquita o casa de oracion de Aly.*

cupola of which is of silver gilt, with a massive gold spire. Around the Mosque is arranged a cemetery, in which the richest Mussulmans of Persia, within a distance of 30 days' journey, are buried; in order that they may rest in a spot made sacred by the tomb of their Prophet. The embalmed bodies are transported on mules in solidly closed coffins: and for every such body, brought past Bagdad, a tuman (persian gold coin of 55 piastres) must be paid. The souls of the dead, they believe, are conducted by their Prophet direct to heaven.

Near Meshed Ali is the town of Kelbella, in which only Persians reside. The inhabitants formerly paid no taxes, because the soil was considered sacred, and even entrance into the town was denied to Jews and Christians. About nine years ago the Nasi Pacha of Bagdad insisted on the payment of tribute; they resisted, but were conquered and fled into the Mosque of Ali, where they thought to find shelter, but the Pacha had the Mosque fired upon: and upon this the rebels surrendered. The half-destroyed building was however afterwards rebuilt. The town now has a better population, and is open alike to Jews and Christians.

After having visited these places I returned to Bagdad, and in October 1848 embarked for Bassora.

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ness tied to the back of a camel, the body of the founder of the celebrated Mahomedan sect, which after him bears the name of the Aliïtes. The tomb is held sacred by the Arabs and a splendid Mosque is erected over it. The structure of this temple, which, when Teixeira saw it, possessed no longer its former interior splendour, gives evidence of the high artistic taste of those who erected it; as the interior itself reminds one of the well-known magnificence of the Eastern people. The portuguese traveller was not a little astonished at the three large golden lamps in the temple, which were decorated with precious stones, and had been presented by the different princes.*) The inhabitants of Meshed-Ali suffer neither Jews nor Christians among them; in fact no one who does not belong to their sect; for they bear a mortal hatred to all.**)

*) Teixeira, 199 ff.

**) *Ibid. 101: no assienta en esta pueblo Judio ni Christiano alguno, porque ellos tienen a todos odio mortal.*

CHAPTER XVII.

From Bagdad to Bassora. The desert El Ozeir (called by the Arabs Deser Asar).

Voyage on the Tigris. — The bird Debi-Kousch. — The tomb of Ezra in the desert El Ozeir. — Koath. — Suk-e-Shejuck. — Gumruk. — Gorna. — Bassora. — Mohamma. — Abeshur.

I had the choice of two routes; the one by land through the desert, the other down the Tigris. The way through the desert was too dangerous on account of the many hordes of robbers, so I decided on going by the Tigris, thus choosing the longer, but the safer and more convenient journey; though even in this case there are Arabs often lurking on the shores, who board the vessels, and plunder them of everything. I embarked in one of the sailing boats which cross the river. — On my way I was told of an enormous bird, bearing the name of Debi-Kousch, which follows the caravans, and feeds on its favorite food, camels dung, from which it receives its name. Later I myself saw this bird: it appeared to me to be a stork, although it looked larger than the specimens I had seen in Africa. It cannot fly, as it has only short wings; but is able with one flap of them to kill a man. When caught young, it is capable of being tamed.

About an hour's journey in the desert, we discovered a large square tower, terminating in a point. Four gates lead into it, and at its corners are large blocks of stone, about 24 feet in height, and 18 in breadth. The building is remarkable on account of its beautiful sculpture; and ac-

cording to the assertion of the inhabitants of the country, it is said to have been built in the time of the first Babylonian kings.

Three days' journey down the Tigris, in the middle of the desolate and barren desert El Ozeir, rises, on the shore of the river, a large square building, in which is the tomb of Ezra. The building is surrounded by some smaller houses, and contains two spacious rooms leading one into the other, of which the first belongs to the Mussulmans, and the second together with the tomb, to the Jews. A dim half-darkness reigns in the apartment, into which a faint light from without is admitted through the door. There is a catafalque here, 16 feet long, 10 high, and 6 broad. Inscriptions, now illegible, cover all the four sides of this catafalque, over which are spread costly tapestries embroidered with gold; and many rich decorations ornament the room. Although in the midst of the desert, and surrounded by tribes of Arab robbers, still there is nothing to fear for the safety of these treasures; as, from the veneration which the Arabs pay to the tomb of Ezra, they are safe from being plundered, and, according to tradition, no robber would be able to leave that sanctuary, without having first restored to its place that which he had taken.

The ships cast anchor not far from this tomb and all travellers, without distinction of faith, betake themselves to it, in order to pray. The stranger, who has spent some days in the desert, cannot divest himself of a deep religious impression when, in the middle of the wilderness, he perceives this memorable tomb.

The tomb of Ezra was for me an object of repeated investigation; for as the Bible neither mentions his death nor the place of his burial, I entertained some doubts as to the identity of the tomb. From the Seder Hadoroth, and other historical works, I have however perfectly satisfied myself of the fact. They relate that Ezra went to King Artasatha (from whom he received letters), in order to beg for some privileges for his brethren dwelling in Jeru-

salem, and that he died near Babylon. The Bible likewise mentions one part of this assertion.[1] The place of burial is not distinctly named by the Seder Hadoroth; I therefore keep to tradition, as, after a most accurate research, I could not find anything more correct.[2] The anniversary of the death of Ezra is fixed on the 9th of January in the Selichot of the Portuguese Jews: the Seder Olam says that he died in the beginning of the year 3500, according to Bible-reckoning.

Many Jews from Bagdad and Bassora celebrate the Feast of weeks at the tomb of Ezra, and take part in the pious ceremonies. The Arabs know the purpose of these pilgrimages, and place no hindrance in their way.

Koath. Suk-e-Shejuck. Gumruk. Gorna.

After a further voyage of two days I arrived at Koath (Kut-el-Amara). Twelve hours' journey from this place is the small market-town Suk-e-Shejuck (called by the Arabs Sukasuk); it is reached from Koath by the canal Sheh-Sah, which unites the Euphrates with the Tigris. About forty Jewish families live here, who occupy themselves in trade; their situation is tolerable. A branch of the Tigris divides itself here into several small streams, and but a few hours' journey further on is a branch of the Euphrates. The Arabs use these small streams for irrigation by conducting them by trenches into their fields, in which occupation I have often seen them engaged. The Tigris here is so rapid that it carries away whole blocks of rock with it, and in its

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[1] Ezra c. VII. 11.

[2] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 73, speaks of the tomb of Ezra. He says it lies on the river Samura on the Persian boundary, and many Mahomedans dwelt there as well as 1500 Jews, who possessed four Synagogues. I found it in the desert. — Petachia, p. 192, places it on the boundary of Babylon.

headlong course overflows the shore. In vain do the inhabitants build dams to control the flood, and keep it in bounds. The course of the river is very changeable, and navigation is rendered difficult by its many windings. The vicinity is inhabited by numerous warlike tribes of Arabs, who are almost entirely independent, although the Sheik of the country acknowledges the rule of the Pacha of Bagdad by sending him occasional presents.

Five hours' journey from this place is the village *Gumruk* on the shore of the Euphrates. The Turkish word „Gumruk" signifies „tax", and here tax is demanded. From this place the Euphrates becomes very broad; its shores are planted with trees, and of palms in particular there are considerable woods.

Gorna lies on a sort of peninsular between the Euphrates and the Tigris, and is surrounded by fruitful trees and fields. Numerous herds graze here, and buffaloes are very numerous, the milk of their cows is so rich, that in an hour it becomes as firm as butter, of which fact I convinced myself. The Sheik demands a toll from the ships coming from Bagdad. Not far from Gorna the Euphrates and the Tigris unite into one stream, which then bears the name of Shat-el-Arab (river of the Arabs). The shores abound in woods, and navigation becomes safer, as the desert, the territory of the bandit Arab tribes, ends here. From the place where the two streams flow together, their waters are broad, and calm as a lake.

Bassora.

The town[1] is an important place of commerce, where, only about twenty years since, nearly 3000 Jewish families

[1] Kayserling, P. Teixeira: After a voyage on the Tigris from India, I arrived, on the 14th April 1604, at the ancient and strong city of

dwelt, which number is now reduced to 50.[1] A devastating epidemic decimated the population, so that a whole portion of the city is empty, and the houses fallen into ruins. In the middle of these ruins stand four Synagogues, of which however three are unused and empty; for *one* now suffices for the little community. The Jews possess full liberty; they are all wealthy, and many of them carry on very extensive commercial transactions; they are moreover hospitable and benevolent, but their education is much neglected. Be-

Bassora. The town is particularly celebrated for its dates, which as Teixeira remarks, form the chief means of support to the inhabitants of this part, and are so fine and good that annually a large quantity of this fruit is sent to Bagdad and to Persian cities. Teixeira found the town in a deplorable condition: eight or ten days before his arrival, a powder-explosion had destroyed a portion of it and done considerable damage.*) It is surprising that he does not mention the Jews of this city, who in the time of Benjamin of Tudela, amounted to 2000.**) If however we consider that the 3000 Jewish families, who only 20 years since dwelt there, have now decreased to 50, it is quite possible that their number at the beginning of the 17th century was in like manner too inconsiderable for Teixeira to have anything to relate concerning them.

Near to this town he perceived a small house, in which native Moors performed their devotions. On his enquiry he ascertained that it was dedicated to Içá ben Mariam (Jesus, the son of Mary.†) At the same time those of whom he enquired told him that they reverenced the founder of the Christian religion as Ruyalah (spirit of God), „espiracion de Dios," as Teixeira adds in explanation.††) Without doubt these were remains of Christian communities, which had formed themselves at the time of the foundation of Christianity.

1 Benjamin de Tudela, p. 73, speaks of it, and says that at his time 2000 Jews lived there. — *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 11, p. 1037, specifies 100 Jewish families according to Niebuhr. Now the number is decreased to the above statement.

*) Teixeira 77: *ocho o diez dias antes de mi llegada hauia tomado fuego una casa de municiones y hauiendo tocado en la poluora, ardieron cinco mil y tantos odres . . .*

**) Benjamin of Tudela (ed. Asher) 73.

†) Teixeira 78: *perguntele que casa era aquella, respondieron me, que era dedicada a Içá ben Mariam . . .*

††) Ibid.: *los Moros lo veneran mucho llamandole Ruyalah, que es espiracion de Dios. (Ruy* the Hebrew *Ruach.)*

sides their commercial transactions they possess large plantations of date trees, the produce of which forms a considerable trade. I was assured there were 70 sorts of dates; but I only know 12 of them.

The Jews of Bassora, whose Nassi Rabbi Eliahu wished to have my opinion of a case concerning a Chalitza [1] have peculiar customs at the burial of their dead. The body is borne in an open coffin on a bier hung with black, and, amid chanting of funeral songs, the procession passes to the place of burial. They stop seven times on their way; and at each halt the funeral procession walks round the coffin with prayers and singing, and each person throws a piece of money into an urn placed upon the corpse. At the seventh halt the Chacham lifts up the urn, and says: „We know that no one in the world is free from the sin Sera Lebathalah,[2] which produces legions of dark thoughts, which come after death and torment the man, under the pretext that they are his children, and ought to have part in his inheritance. We therefore give to thee this money, in order that thou mayest let his body and his soul rest in peace. In the name of the Eternal and of His Holy Thora, and with the consent of the members of the congregation here present, we lay upon thee the Anathema, which shall compel thee to flee into wild and solitary regions, where thou canst no more follow any one.“ On arriving at the burial place they go round the grave, and after having placed the body in it they return to the town.

The Stadtholder of the Pacha of Bagdad, a very polite and friendly man, desired to see me, and received my visit very affably.

The inhabitants of Bassora suffer from the scourge of leprosy,[3] which rages particularly at the time of the ripening of the dates in the month of August, when scarcely any one

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1 Deuteronomy c. XXV. 9.

2 According to a cabbalistic acceptation.

3 Leviticus c. XIII. 9.

is free from this illness. The symptoms of this disease consist first of little blue ulcers upon the skin, which later become grey, then swell up, extend over the whole skin, and even attack the flesh. After recovery this illness leaves behind visible marks and scars. The Jews call this disease — which likewise appears in winter, though in a milder form — by its biblical name. Those who are attacked by the white leprosy never recover, as is mentioned in the Bible.

Near to Bassora are four large buildings fallen into ruins, said by the people of the country to have been the stalls of King Salomon, which, however, is most improbable.

From Bassora I proceeded by the Shat-el-Arab towards Mohammerah, situated at a distance of three days' journey on foot. With a favourable wind the passage by ship lasts three hours. This town belongs to the Persian dominion; there are no Jewish inhabitants. Hence I continued my journey by the Chor Bahmeshir, called by the Arabs Shat Mohammerah,[1] and arrived at the village Koi, which is at two days' journey distance on foot, and forms the extreme southern boundary of Asiatic Turkey. Hence I proceeded by the canal Shat-el-Arab to Mohamma, where the river flows by several mouths into the Persian Gulf.

From Mohamma, Abeshur, called by the Persians Bender Abeschur, may be reached in 24 hours.

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[1] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 73, speaks of a river Samura; it is possible that this is the Shat Mohammerah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

East Indies.

The ten tribes, their wanderings and dispersion. — Quotations and proofs.

From Abeshur I went by steam-boat to Bombay, where I arrived at the beginning of February 1849, after a voyage of 20 days. I pass over the details of my journey and of my visit to the principal towns of Hindostan — in which I spent a year — and shall occupy myself here only with the object of my journey, which was, to discover the lost ten tribes of Israel, Ben-Israel. It is necessary first to cast a glance at the history of their wanderings, for which I take the Bible as my guide.

1) In the reign of Menachem ben Gedi, Pul, king of Assyria, invaded the land, but was induced to withdraw on the payment of a war-tax of 1000 centners of silver. (II. Kings XV. 19.) And again we find in the I. Chronicles V. 26. that the Assyria Kings Pul and Tiglath-pilneser carried away into captivity the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the shores of the river Gozan (Ganges).

2) Under Pekah ben Remaljahu, Tiglath-pilneser, King of Assyria, carried away the inhabitants of many Israelitish cities, and among the rest the whole tribe of Naphtali into Assyria. (II. Kings XV. 29. and Isaiah IX. 1.)

3) In the 9th year of the reign of Hoshea ben Elah Shalmaneser King of Assyria invaded the land. After a siege of three years he conquered Shomrom (Samaria) and carried away the remainder of the ten tribes to Assyria,

Halah Habor, to the cities of the Medes and to the shores of the river Gozen (Ganges). (II. Kings XVII. 6.)

The kingdom of Israel was released after that by means of three events following each other; and the different divisions of the captive children of Israel were conducted to different places, the names of which were not always mentioned. The Bible gives however different intimations concerning them. Thus, for instance, in Isaiah XI. 11: „And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again a second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from *Assyria*, and from *Egypt*, and from *Pathros*, and from *Cush*, and from *Elam*, and from *Shinar*, and from *Hamath*, and from the islands of the sea.“ — And further on it is written: „Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth.“ [1] — And finally: „Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.“ [2]

Egypt and *Assyria* are sufficiently known. With respect to *Cush*, it is generally believed that by that name Ethiopia and Abyssinia are meant; for Jeremiah says: „Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?“ [3] which has distinct reference to the colour of the skin. — Elam is Persia; as is evident from the Prophet Daniel, when he says: „Shushan in the Province of Elam;“ [4] and I believe that this one proof is sufficient. By an edict of King Cyrus the scattered tribes in this latter country were permitted to return to their own land; this refers particularly to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who with some Priests, Levites, and different members of the family of Aaron, alone

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[1] Isaiah c. XLIII. 5. 6.
[2] Isaiah c. XLIX. 12.
[3] Jeremiah c. XIII. 23.
[4] Daniel c. VIII. 2.

returned to Jerusalem. To this I will add the remark that the name Cyrus in the Bible is called „Kores.“ — A second return took place in the reign of Artaxerxes, but only the two latter tribes made use of this permission. Hence it follows that the exiles of Israel, together with a small portion of the tribe of Levi,[1] excluded from the benefit of these two edicts, remained behind in the cities of the Medes and other places, to which they had been transported according to the above quoted texts.

Halal and *Habor* are, as I believe Chilah or Hillah and Kabur-Kefil, to which the ten tribes were banished, who were then afterwards removed further into the interior of Asia. — This subject has been likewise treated by former authors.

Skinar is the land of Kurdistan, which, according to the Targum Jeruschalmi, begins near the city of Nisibin.[2]

The word *Hamath* is explained in the first Latin Bible by „sunrise“; it means „heat“, in the further sense of the word „sun“, and consequently the place where the morning-star rises. The Hebrew expression „Hamath“ can therefore, I believe, signify all countries lying to the east of Palestine.

The islands of the West. This appellation is a very extensive one; but the discoveries of celebrated travellers allow of the conclusion that by them is meant the West Indies.

According to the credible assertion of other travellers, I subjoin the following observations:

Pathrus is, according to the Mikwe Israel, Fol. 11, p. 2, the land of Parthia on the Black Sea.

„I will bring thy seed from the east.“ In these words the Bible speaks of the scattered Israelites in the lands of Shinar, Persia, Halah and Habor, in India and China, which last place the Orientalists call Tschina.

„I will gather thee from the west“ — has reference to

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[1] Ezra c. VIII. 15—20.

[2] Genesis c. X. 10. Messechet Pessachim Fol. 3. after the interpretation of the Tosefeth.

the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who are in certain countries of Europe, which, according to geographical calculation, lie to the west or north-west of Palestine.

The address to the south: Place no hindrances! has reference to Ethiopia, Abyssinia, and Nubia.

CHAPTER XIX.

The East Indies, from time immemorial, have been inhabited by many different tribes. I have devoted my attention especially to the six chief tribes, and have endeavoured to become acquainted with their habits and religious customs; of which I will here give a succint account. — As in the whole of my work I have occupied myself foremost with my brethren in the faith, I shall therefore mention them first.

I shall speak of the following tribes:

1) The Bene-Israel, or the white Jews.
2) The Canarinz.[1]
3) The black Jews of Cochin.
4) The Banians.
5) The Parsees.
6) The Hindoos.

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[1] Derivation from Cranganor.

1. The Bene-Israel, or the white Jews.

The tribe, which bears this name, as well as the Canarinz, which I also consider to be partly descended from the ten tribes, has dwelt in the East Indies since the remotest ages. I have the firm conviction, and do not consider it difficult to prove, that the Bene-Israel are not only real Jews, but are likewise lineal descendants of the ten tribes, who in the time of Hoshea, the last king of Israel, were carried away by the Assyrians to Halah, Habor, the shores of the Ganges, and the cities of the Medes.

I rest my assertion on the following facts and observations:

1) The systematic and strict separation which they observe towards the heathen tribes among whom they dwell, and their endeavours to avoid all connexion with them.

2) Their exact and strict observance of the most essential precepts of the Jewish religion; for instance, of circumcision, and of the celebration of the Sabbath.

3) The extreme care they take in observing all the ancient customs with regard to the slaughter of animals, and their abstaining from those which are forbidden in the Bible.

4) Their pious veneration for the manuscripts of the Law which, — although they are unable to read them, — they preserve in their Synagogues. These manuscripts of the Law are very ancient; the writing is of a reddish colour, which can only be attributed to the work of time: in all other respects they resemble ours.

5) The name of their tribe which they have born for centuries, and by which they are known throughout Hindostan.

With respect to the descent of the Bene-Israel from the ten tribes, I add the following proofs:[1]

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 2, part 5, div. 1, Asia, p. 594 — 601, asserts that they descend from the tribe of Manasseh.

1) The river Gozen, mentioned in the Bible, is according to the assertion of the Bene-Israel, no other than the Ganges which flows through India, on the shores of which this tribe dwells in great numbers. The Indian word „Ganges" contains all the letters of the Hebrew word „Gosen" (Gozan).

2) It is known the Ganges has its rise in Upper Thibet, a country bordering on the kingdom of Cabul. From the side whence the children of Israel came to India the way through the desert is so dangerous and difficult, that only large caravans at long intervals venture upon it, and up to this day only most imperfect and doubtful accounts are possessed respecting the people, who inhabit these wild and unknown regions. The Jews, who wandered through the desert, have, as it were, left a trace of their passage behind them; for several brethren remained there, whose descendants have been preserved up to the present day.

3) The Bene-Israel have no Cohanim out of the priestly tribe of Aaron, and no Levites. It is well known that the Jews of the German and Portuguese rites, who spring from the kingdom of Judah, have, up to the present time, Cohanim and Levites and pay them extreme respect; and that even in the Temple, they enjoy some privileges, in remembrance of the ancient privileges of this priestly race. It is also known that the whole tribe of Levi, who performed the office of priest, was most closely connected with the fate of the royal house of Judah, and did not mix with the rebellious tribes of the kingdom of Israel.

4) The Bene-Israel dwelling in India formerly possessed a chronicle, which was written up to the time of their arrival in this country. Unfortunately during the many wars, which they had with Europeans, respecting their occupation of the country, this chronicle was lost; the Bene-Israel being obliged constantly to flee from one province to another. The Bene-Israel of Cochin on the coast of Malabar possess however a similar document, and have preserved it among all the storms of ages. In this chronicle is written the history of the tribe from the period of its banishment, in

the reign of Hoshea, down to our time. For a long period this important document was in the possession of the family Halagi, one of the most highly respected in the country. I had the most earnest desire to see this remarkable and interesting work; but could not succeed. A traveller who visited these parts in the former century was more fortunate; he was even permitted to copy several passages from the chronicle, which are to be found in the Mikwe Israel, and are likewise mentioned by Dr. Jost in his history, and in our first edition of this work.

Near Bombay, about two hours' distance from Barkout, is to be found a community of the Bene-Israel; they live according to patriarchal customs. Their Nassi (chief, president) was a man of the name of Babi. I was told concerning them, that before the arrival of the Europeans they had been a numerous tribe, and had been governed by a chief chosen by themselves, who had borne the title of Sheik. Being compelled to disperse, many of them had sought a place of refuge in the remotest boundaries of Hindostan, where they enjoy a certain degree of independence. The narrations of other travellers serve to corroborate these assertions; as, for instance, the account of Gildemeister, who relates that at the beginning of the Christian computation of time in India, Jewish viceroys governed, from which it may be inferred that there was a numerous population of Jews. Dr. Wilson also, who was in India in the year 1839, speaks of the Bene-Israel in the vicinity of Bombay. The Bene-Israel in this colony dwell in houses surrounded by gardens, which they cultivate themselves; they are in general wealthy, and occupy themselves in trade and agriculture. With strangers they speak the Indian language, but among themselves Tamul, in which occur many Hebrew words. The features likewise of the Bene-Israel betoken their descent; for although the influence of the country and of the climate may have produced in them some change, still the original peculiarity of feature has remained the same. But a few years since they were very ignorant with respect to

all matters of religion, and had completely forgotten the Hebrew language, even so far as the elementary knowledge of the letters, although, as before remarked, they devoutly preserve several Pentateuchs in their Synagogues. Their divine service was confined to several external performances, which had been disfigured by length of time; but their veneration for the Mosaic law was deeply rooted in them, and to this day they ornament their manuscripts of the law with great splendor, approach them full of reverence, and kiss them fervently, after which they slowly retire in silent prayer. They had no Hebrew prayers, and with the exception of the *one* verse „Schema Israel", all their prayers were in the language of their country: they entertained nevertheless a firm belief in the coming of the Messiah.

Some Jews of Arabic origin from Bagdad and Bassora, forming a community of about 50 families, have, within the last seven or eight years, sent teachers and slaughterers among these scattered tribes, in order to spread some knowledge and the precepts of Judaism among them. Although the Jews of Bombay are favourably disposed towards the Bene-Israel, they still do not consider them as real brethren in the faith, and avoid intermarriage with them, unjustly placing this tribe on a level with the Canarinz and other heathens. But the Bene-Israel eagerly lay claim to the name of Jew, and strive more and more to ally themselves with those of the orthodox faith.

Some Christian missionaries sometimes visit this tribe, but their endeavours to obtain proselites have until now been unsuccessful.

I estimate the number of the Bene-Israel in this colony, and in other places I have visited, at about 2000 families.[1]

In the town of Bombay live about 50 Jewish families from Bagdad, who have a Synagogue, but no Chacham only a Chochet. The richest of our brethren in the faith at Bombay are David Season, Moses Esra and Isaac David.

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 6, p. 1087, speaks of 800 Jews.

CHAPTER XX.

2. The Canarinz.

This Tribe which inhabits the coast of Malabar, offers a strange spectacle to the observer. The Canarinz have no particular religion of their own, but follow the different religious ceremonies of other tribes living around them, believing thereby that they follow the only true and correct religion. Thus they have appropriated to themselves a great many Jewish customs, among which must be especially noticed the celebration of the Purim-feast (Feast of Esther), mentioned in a former page. At this festival, in order to give it a typical meaning, they make two figures of wood, dress them in splendid garments, and knock them one against the other, until one is broken to fragments. The broken figure is to represent Haman, the other Mordecai. In conclusion they carry this childish game so far, that the figure of the old minister of Ahasverus is hanged.

partly lifted from vD

The origin of this tribe, and the period of their settlement in Hindostan is uncertain. I venture to start the notion, that it is a remnant of the banished ten tribes of Israel, which, in the course of centuries, and under the most contrary circumstances, has forgotten its Israelitish origin.

The author of the Zemach David and other writers relate that a great portion of the ten tribes have intermixed with the population of Hindostan.[1] Hence it may

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 5, book 2, p. 599. It was told A. Buchanan in India, that the Jews who once passed over the Indus had become so intermixed with the people and customs of their new place of residence, that they were often by travellers passing-by, no longer recognised as Jews.

be concluded that the Canarinz originally belonged to these tribes, as, notwithstanding the difference of their worship, they believe only in one God as the Highest Being, and only marry among themselves; probably they have been compelled by circumstances to forsake the belief of their fathers, to which however in some customs they have always remained faithful. This assertion is the more easy of credit as, in other countries in Europe, particularly in Spain and Russia, similar facts were to be met with: thus in Russia, at the beginning of the present century, thousands of Jews, known under the name of Shobatnik (observers of the Sabbath), who had been compelled to apostatize for several centuries, of their own free will again embraced Judaism, the faith of their fathers. I have compiled a collection of historical facts relative to the Shobatnik, and published them in the year 1855 at Tlemsan in Algeria, under the title: „Four years war of the Poles against the Russians and Tartars (1648 to 1652),“ to which p. 64—69 I here refer.[1] The Shobatnik, like the Canarinz, had completely forgotten their origin; they celebrated mechanically the traditional festivals of the Jews, and it only needed an accidental circumstance to induce their return to Mosaism.

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[1] A portion of the preface of this little work and the conclusion p. 61—63 were not written by me, but added by the French translator.

CHAPTER XXI.

3. The black Jews of Cochin.[1]

In this town and in its vicinity dwell about 2000 black followers of the Jewish faith: their colour however is not quite so dark as that of the negroes. They are real Jews, very religious, and tolerably well-informed. Respecting their descent, the often mentioned Mikwe Israel relates, that after the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, about 10,000 fugitives with a great number of slaves wandered towards the southern part of Asia. The slaves, who had previously adopted the Mosaic faith, murdered their masters on this journey, and took possession of their property; but still continued faithful to Judaism.[2] This assertion does not correspond with the traditions which I collected on the spot itself; it is however possible that there were two tribes of black Jews, of which the one really descended from those slaves, while the other relates its origin as follows.

The conquest of a part of Hindostan by the Europeans had opened immense facilities for trade, and had also tempted the inhabitants of other countries to this Eldorado, to which they wandered in great numbers. Among these adventurers were many Jews, who, young and unmarried, came hither from Bagdad, Bassora, Yemin, and other parts, to seek their fortune. These young men settled themselves in the conquered provinces, and bought negro slaves, whom, when

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[1] See *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 5, book 2, Asia, p. 598.

[2] In the book just mentioned p. 600 it is remarked, that the black Jews believe themselves to be descended from the ten tribes.

they had adopted the Jewish faith, they afterwards married. — This account given by the native black Jews of their descent is rendered credible by two important facts; first, that the black Jews only dwell in those parts of the country occupied by Europeans; and secondly, that their religious customs are the same as those of the Jews of the eastern rites — from whom it may therefore be inferred with certainty that they are descended. In favour of this opinion, and against the asserted descent from the slaves, can be likewise added, that their features, and their hair bear the type of pure oriental origin.

Dr. Buchanan, in the account of his travels, relates that this Jewish population possess Hebrew manuscripts and Pentateuchs on parchment, which formerly belonged to the Jewish fugitives, who, according to the Mikwe Israel, were murdered and plundered by their slaves. I myself have seen these documents, but found in them nothing particularly remarkable or interesting, either in respect to their antiquity or their contents.

The black Jews bear the curse of prejudice on account of their colour. Just as most of the Jews of Bagdad avoid any connection with the Bene-Israel, so do the white Jews reject all connection with their black brethren.[1] I have remarked in general that the other Jews have more sympathy for their black fellow believers than have the Bene-Israel; for they take interest in their poor, and often have large commercial transactions with them. — The black Jews of Cochin rejoice in every recognition of their being brethren in the faith, and are likewise very hospitable to strangers of their persuasion.

The black Jews have their communities, their Chachamim and schools; they live apart from the others, and occupy themselves with trade, in which many of them have obtained

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1 *Ritter's Erdkunde*, Vol. 5, book 2, Asia, p. 599. The white Jews likewise look down upon the black ones, as upon an inferior and unclean caste.

a brilliant position. They have two or three Synagogues, large rooms without any decorations, round the walls of which are placed benches, and in the middle stands the the Bima (altar), from which the Pentateuch is read. The ceremonies are the same as those of the oriental Jews, but they sing the Piutim (hymnes) in the Indian manner. They follow the Talmudic laws. — Their dress has no peculiar character, but resembles that of the Bene-Israel; the rich according to the fashion of the Jews of Bagdad, the others like the Banians.

CHAPTER XXII.

Journey to Cabul. The tribes of India.

My journey to Cotchin had for its principal object the wish to see the above mentioned chronicle of the Bene-Israel; in which however I did not succeed; although I received from the natives the assurance that it was still in existence. I therefore returned to Bombay, and thence began my journey to Cabul by the following route. After seven days' journey through the mountains of Gath I arrived at Punah, and thence went on to Sholapoor, the first possession of the Mussulmans. After another journey of seven days I reached the city of Hydrabad, where ends the territory of the Mussulmans. Eleven days' journey further brought me to Crinsa on the Goubli, — nine days' journey more to Nagpore, and again eight days' journey to Rewah, which until now has belonged to the English. — I had travelled the whole way from Bombay to this place in bullock waggons. From Rewah to Mirzapore on the Ganges

(which belongs to the Hindoos) is one day's journey; and for this distance I used horses. After four days' travelling in a bullock waggon I reached the city of Allahabad, and went on in the same manner to Cawnpore, which occupied seven days. From Cawnpore to Delhi (eight days' journey), and to Amritsir (one day's journey) I again used horses. In Amritsir I joined a caravan going to Lahore on the Ravi and arrived there at the end of eleven days; here ends the English territory. With another caravan I proceeded to Peshauir in Cabul, towards the borders of Afghanistan, and after I had crossed the Khyber Pass, arrived in seventeen days at Cabul. The whole journey from Bombay to Cabul had lasted nearly one hundred days.

In several places during this long journey I had met with some scattered Jews, but being unable to tarry on my way, I could not collect any particular information concerning them. Respecting the heathen tribes, their customs, and worship, I give the reader some of my observations, extracts from my work published in Algeria in the year 1854: „*Un an de séjour aux Indes orientales,*" written in French, and „*Nesiath Israel,*" written in Arabic, and printed in Hebrew letters.

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4. The Banians.

The Banians are divided into several sects; some of which worship fire, some water, and others have the cow for their Deity. The customs of the fire- and water-worshippers are similar to those of the Parsees, of which I shall speak later. I therefore mention here only the last sect, — the cow-worshippers.

The sacred cow is to be known by several marks, and is venerated from her birth on account of her high destiny. She is never used for labour or service, and is always fed

with the choicest wheat; she therefore gets extremely plump and her skin is smooth and glossy.

The worshippers of this Deity assemble daily on a spot outside the town, and form a circle, in the centre of which the cow is placed. One of the priests preaches to the believers, and takes one, or more costly vessels, in which to catch the water of the sacred cow. This is mixed with a red colour, and each priest dips his finger in it, and makes a mark over his eyebrows.

As a covering for the head the Banians wear a turban, which is not, as is usual, folded round the head, but is drawn in front over the forehead, and forms by knots their religious symbol, a horn. Their garments are white, they consist of a long robe buttoned in front, long European trousers, shoes, and stockings.

The Banians have a peculiar language, but likewise speak Indian, the language of their country. They have a particular dislike to eating flesh, even to milk, and live on vegetable diet. Their children are betrothed in their third or fourth year, but remain according to an ancient custom in the East, until maturity with their parents. If in this interval one of the betrothed should die, the survivor in condemned to perpetual widowhood, and this causes the great immorality among the women there. The latter wear a long silk generally a red garment, and when they go out a long veil, which hangs down on each side leaving the face uncovered.

The dead are not buried but burned,[1] and the ashes scattered to the wind; sometimes the family of the deceased collect some of the dust, and preserve it carefully in an urn. They do not believe in a future resurrection; with them, death is a complete dissolution of the whole being, and they therefore believe that they are acting rightly in completely destroying the body. Only children under 18 months

[1] In the Bible is also to be found a passage (I. Samuel. XXXI. 12), where a similar custom is mentioned.

are buried, not burned, when they die: a peculiar exception, for which I could ascertain no reason.

By the English occupants of the country, these customs are forbidden; but the Banians employ all their cunning and art in order to escape the vigilance of the authorities, and to persist in their traditional customs. I myself was a witness of one of these burial ceremonies: when the fire touched the stomach of the dead body, it burst with a loud noise, like the explosion of a gun.

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5. The Parsees.

A great part of this tribe belongs, as already said, to the fire- and water-worshippers; many however worship heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars as Deities. Their daily worship consists in their assembling every evening, according to the sect to which they belong, at an appointed place in the open air, and praying. The worshippers of the sun place then their hands on their heads and gaze on their source of light; the moon- and star-adorers stand after sunset in the same solemn way, — their eyes turned towards their Deity. The water-worshippers go, according to the position of their residence, either to the sea or to a river; and, up to their knees in water, perform their devotions.

Each of these sects wears, as an outward sign of the worship, to which it belongs, a particular mark which has some reference to it. We have already said that the Banians, as cow-worshippers knot their turban in front in the shape of a horn: in the same way these sects wear badges. The sun-worshippers make a peak of their turban, which is made to fall over the right ear; the moon-worshippers have it over the left ear. The worshippers of the sun wear a cylinder-formed covering for the head, similar to our hats, without any ribbon, and in front it has a small shade, as a protection to the face. The stuff of which it is made differs

according to the means and taste of the wearer; but it is always covered with little spots, intended to represent the stars. The fire-worshippers are dressed entirely in white like the Banians, and, as a badge of their sect, wear a red patch on their garments.

All these sects live entirely on vegetables; their disgust to meat is even greater than that of the Banians, even the mere sight of it is hateful to them. One day in Bombay I saw two officials, one on each side of the street in which was situated the public slaughter house, who, in reply to my questions, told me that a rich Parsee who dwelt there had bought from the Authorities the right of preventing the carrying-about of meat, and that he had placed them there as guards, and paid them well for it.

A particularly objectionable custom of these sects, which in March 1849, I myself witnessed in Bombay is as follows: — Each year on three successive days the Parsees assemble in an open spot; they begin then a regular scuffle; they beat each other, and throw stones and dirt, and during this time give themselves up to the most dissolute and repulsive conduct.

On another day I was witness to a sight not less remarkable. A fire broke out in the town, and while from all sides the inhabitants hurried to the spot to extinguish the flames, the worshippers of that element, which was then committing such fearful ravages, threw themselves on the ground as if enchanted, and prayed.

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6. The Hindoos.

Of all the tribes which inhabit the country, the Hindoos, the original Indians, are the coarsest and the most uncivilised. Neither the heavenly bodies nor the elements, have they as Deity; but they borrow it from the animal world, and find it in that lowly animal — the goat. This they reverence

as sacred, and in such a manner that every believer worships his own goat, which is fastened to the door of his house. They milk the animal, and then pour the milk into the sea or the river, according to the situation of the place, where they dwell: in this consists their whole worship.

They eat flesh and fowl, but have no meals in common: every one eats alone. They go without any clothing except a loose band round their middle, which is fastened on the body by a sort of girdle. The women wear short trousers, like those used for bathing, and cover the bosom with a thin veil; arms and legs are bare. The Indian women are very reserved towards strangers, and have no intercourse except with those of their own people.

Although many among them are very rich, still in the cities they lower themselves to the performance of the hardest and most repulsive labour. The colour of their skin is more like copper than that of the other Indians; they speak only Indian.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Cabul.

After a journey of nearly hundred days I arrived at this town. It is very large, and well populated. Of my brethren in the faith I found here but few, and those had wandered from Bokhara. Respecting the town and its inhabitants, I can give no accurate or detached account, as it was not possible for me to remain here for any length of time. The town in consequence of a revolution which had taken place not long before, was still in a state of excitement; the cause of which, as I heard from my brethren there, was as follows:

A general belief prevails there in Metampsychosis, and the resurrection of the body; which latter however cannot take place unconditionally; but the right to it can only be obtained by a living being voluntarily sacrificing itself with the dead. If a man dies, leaving no children, his wife is immediately burnt with his body, for this soul full of life will serve the dead at the resurrection of the first-born soul, and then follows a second union of this faithful couple.*

The ceremonies of this human sacrifice are as follows: The body is laid out in a room for the space of eight days, but the survivor (man or woman) is ornamented, and conducted into a princely palace. In her or his presence, dancing, music, and games succeed each other, and three times daily the inhabitants of the place come and fall down before him as before a Deity. On the eighth day the survivor is splendidly apparelled, and carried with the body out of the town to a certain place, where a little house is erected of very dry and combustible wood, in which the dead is placed. The survivor is then solemnly carried seven times round the little house in which procession all, even children, take a part. After each turn all those present fall down before him. After the seventh turn they take from the sacrifice the ornaments and garments, and place it with the deceased in the little house of the dead, which is then set fire to at all four corners. In order to drown the shrieks of the sacrifice, the whole assembly join in hymns, amid the noise and discordant sounds of tambourines. When all is reduced to ashes, they collect the remains of the deceased couple in an urn, and some time afterwards place them in a sepulchre.

The king of Cabul had an only daughter, whose husband had died. Immediately after his decease, the priests came to the young widow with the request that she should comply with the sacred custom; for which the princess,

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* Orig.: „the first-born“ or original „Soul“; the Soul possessed by the defunct in this world. (Translator's note.)

who passionately loved her husband and cherished a blind belief in the infallibility of this religious rite, expressed herself willing. The ceremony took place, and the ashes of the young and illustrious sacrifice to a barbarous prejudice were united with those of her husband.

The father inconsolable for the loss of his only child, fell into a state of deep melancholy, and determined to put an end to this unholy custom. At the hour of midnight he caused his guards to attack the dwellings of the priests, and many of them were murdered as an atonement for the death of his daughter. This sanguinary revenge excited to revolt a great part of the population, who held to their old customs; so that the king was obliged to seek refuge with the English, in order to save himself and his throne.

These events and the general confusion in the kingdom, which resulted from them, made it impossible for me to carry out my intention of continuing my journey to the mountains of Afghanistan, and compelled me to return to Calcutta.[1]

Respecting one of the tribes which inhabits this country, I was told in Calcutta of a curious custom. On the shore of the Ganges dwells the tribe of the Barbarinades (barbarians), who do not consign their dead to the earth, but throw them into the fields. The Barbarinades likewise treat their sick in a very simple way: they take those who are seriously ill in a boat to the middle of the river; take hold of them by the ears, and dip them three times into the water: if they die under this treatment, they are finally thrown into the river; but if they survive it, they are again taken home. As soon as a patient has recovered, they dress him in a long white garment, with a rope round his waist, and a staff in his hand; without rest he is obliged to wander about like Cain, without ever being permitted to return to his own country. — The Ganges often carries to Calcutta the bodies which this tribe throws into the water.

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[1] In the French edition of this work, this passage is not clearly expressed.

What the Jews of Cabul related respecting the inhabitants of Afghanistan, corresponds with what the Courier-Litewski of the 8th October 1828 reports. This paper, which appears in Wilna, speaks as follows on this subject: „The inhabitants of Afghanistan are descended from the ten tribes. They comprise about 4,300,000 souls, who are all nomadic. They form an independent people, have princes, and a government of their own, and their bravery in their wars with the English is well known."[1]

I hope in my next journey to be able to investigate this country more accurately, and I beseech the Eternal to guide thiter my steps.

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[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde* 3. book, Vol. 8, p. 189. The Jews belong to the most remarkable of these strangers in Afghanistan, and the number of them there is very considerable. They are thought to be descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, who,having been made captive by the Medes did not return to Jerusalem, but later, in the beginning of the caliphat, like many Nestorian Christian communities of Upper Asia perished by the sword of Mahomed or submitted to him; those in Bokhara (Benjamin of Tudela advanced as far as to them), Cashmere and Afghanistan resisted and endured cruel persecutions; but the greater part of them yielded. Many who had remained true to the faith of their fathers retreated to the extreme part of the upper country. The Afghans believe that they themselves are descendants of Israel; and according to Vansittart (in Asiat. Res, part 2) direct descendants of King Saul. Buchanan maintains that the number of Afghans really descended from the Jews can be but small, as their tribes are so very different even in language, feature and religion. At present very many Jews live in Cabul, whose commercial transactions lead them through the whole of Upper Asia to China. Abut 60 of these ancient Jewish colonies are mentioned in Upper Asia, India, and China, and a most intimate and lively connection is said to exist among them. No place could be more conventient as a link of communication than Cabul. Buchanan shows that there are two kinds of Jewish tribes in the more remote parts of Asia; the old or dark coloured Jews, which are hardly to be distinguished from the Hindoos, and live beyond the Indus, — and the light coloured Jews, who, according to their own assertion only emigrated here after the second destruction of the Temple. Al. Burnes has given us no new tidings respecting these Jews in Cabul.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Jews in China.

From Cabul to Calcutta. — Journey to China. — Singapore. — Notices respecting the state of the Jews in China. — Extract from the Mikwe Israel. — Extract from the „Zeitung für Norddeutschland.“ — Menasse ben Israel.

From Cabul I travelled to Allahabad, Mirzapore, Benares, and Patna, and so to Calcutta. I consider it unnecessary to relate to the reader anything respecting Calcutta, since I could only repeat what must be already known. With reference to my brethren in the faith of whom about 1500 families dwell there, I can relate nothing new. They live in free and happy circumstances; some of them possess large commercial houses, and their habits and customs are similar to those of the Jews of Bagdad. They are all well educated, but have no appointed Chachamim; one of the richest commercial men of the town Ezekiel Jehuda Jacob Sliman, a very enlightened man and an excellent Talmudist, performs the duties of the Chacham. Some of the richest of our Jewish brethren there are: Joseph Ezra Kalifi, Reuben Isaac Sekar, Ezekiel Ezra Kalifi, and Sason David.

At Calcutta, I embarked in one of the ships belonging to the East India Company, and sailed for Singapore, which place I reached after a very difficult passage of 25 days. Here is a little Jewish community, whose elders are the sons of the above mentioned Ezekiel Jehuda of Calcutta. Although I remained but a very short time in Singapore, I had still the opportunity of making the acquaintance of many of the Jews settled there, of whom however I ascertained nothing particularly worthy of remark.

Notwithstanding an indisposition, which took place in consequence of my wearisome journey, I determined to proceed by an English packet boat to Canton, which voyage lasted six days. Among my fellow-travellers I had a brother Israelite from Bombay, who was likewise proceeding to Canton. In the city of Canton itself no Jews are settled, though merchants from the remotest parts are to be found passing through the place. Immediately after my arrival I experienced a violent attack of fever, which compelled me to keep my bed for twenty days; and as I ascribed my illness to the climate, I again embarked to return to Bombay, and there my health soon really improved.

The whole advantage my work derived from this journey to China was confined to some information I obtained from my brethren in the faith. From them I ascertained that no Jews dwell in the vicinity of Canton; but on the other side of the Yellow River there is a tribe, which every two or three years sends a considerable caravan to Canton with spices, colonial goods, dyes, tea, and other produce of the country. The people belonging to this caravan are known by the name of Havaia or Havaists, and pass for Jews. In fact the Hebrew word „Havaia" (derived from I. H. W. H.) significies „eternal, immortal." Thus in this country, where people are named after their worship, Havaists would signify worshippers of the Eternal, a name which is very significant for the followers of Moses. I do not however venture by this translation of a word to prove the descent of this tribe: in order however to give it more weight, I add the verse from Isaiah which I have already quoted: „These shall come from Shinar." According to the most credible accounts, Shinar is China.

Without doubt I should have been more fortunate in my researches, had I been able to institute them personally; but from want of an account of my own, I add an important communication respecting the Jews in China, a letter written by a fellow-believer living there, for which I am indebted to the kindness of his cousin, the chief Rabbi Aron

Arnauld in Strasburg. I give it to the reader literally, as well as the certificate of its authenticity. The letter is as follows:

„Last year, and since then, a second time, a few days ago, I saw some Chinese Jews. They had come from their particular quarter of the town in Kai-fang-fu in the province of Ko-Namri, in consequence of an invitation given them by some Arabian Israelites residing there, and of some English missionaries, who were desirous of obtaining some exact particulars concerning them, as well as some Hebrew manuscripts and books. The travellers paid me a visit, and I had several conversations with them in the Hebrew language. They are known in China, and particularly in the province they inhabit, by the name of Pan-Kyin-Kian, which is said to signify „believers in sinew-tearing."* According to their belief they come from a country which they call Jou-Tack (Judah), and about 1850 since imigrated under the imperial dynasty of Khann. By another pedigree they can be followed for 800 years. A Chinese emperor had a Synagogue erected for them but it is now in ruins. They keep to their religion with that firmness which characterises the Jews up to the present day, and they only marry women of their own faith. For the last 40 years they have had no Rabbis, being too poor to be able to maintain them. They do not read Hebrew, and the whole of the present generation is uncircumcised, because men capable of performing the rite are wanting. They are not however wholly ignorant as to customs, and those which they observe quite agree with ours. They left me several Hebrew Bibles, and promised to give me a copy of their tablets of stone, which have reference to their wanderings, and are written in

* Translator's note. See Genesis c. XXXII, 32. The Jews still take great care to cut away the sinew of the thigh of such animals as they intend to eat. In many places they will not eat any of the hinder quarter; because great nicety and skill are required to take away this sinew as it should be done, and but few know how to do it with exactness.

Chinese letters. They also possess the Sefer Thora (Pentateuch), Tephilim (for the ceremonies of daily service), Zizith, and Arba Kanfoth. They intend to bring one or two boys here, in order to have them instructed by the Arabian Israelites in Hebrew, and in the rites of our worship. During the wars of the Tartars with the Chinese, a part of them went to the neighbouring province She-Kiang, and settled in Kangcheou, which city I have the intention to visit. Many of them went to Arnoy in the province of Fokien. These homeless people are scattered in Pekin, and in the whole of China, and live everywhere in the same state of degradation and ignorance. In Kangcheou and Arnoy there are no Synagogues. In Kai-fang-fu their number amount to nearly 10,000; in Tchangcheou to be tween 1000 and 2000; in Arnoy they are more numerous.

Their features resemble those of the Mongols: those I have seen are very intelligent and well instructed with respect to their Chinese education and knowledge. They speak the language of the Mandarins, and still make use of some biblical names, such as Moses, Aaron, etc. They likewise know the names of Jerusalem and Mizraim (Egypt), whence they say they have come. They likewise speak of the bondage of the Jews in Egypt, and possess several fragments of our history, religion, customs, and habits, which they have obtained from tradition.

The English missionaries have gained possession of a very ancient Pentateuch, which was in the possession of these Jews, and sent it to England: they obtained it by making them believe at first that they only wanted to inspect and copy it, and then offering to purchase it. As some cheating took place with respect to the sum of money paid by the English missionaries, the Jews desired to have their Pentateuch restored to them, which, it was pretended, had been sent to England. They have come back again this year to have this affair arranged, in order that they may be able to justify themselves to their community, and demand with right the restoration of their books; for they

refuse to take money for them in exchange, saying, that they are neither able nor willing to sell them. Finally, they will even await the return of their books from England, but the missionaries refuse them every compensation in money, or in any other way. But the Jews will now return again in three months, and make their cause of complaint known to the English Ambassador."

This notice is a literal extract from a letter of my cousin Aron.

Strasburg, Nov. 13th 1855.

Aron Arnauld, Chief Rabbi.

The French original is:

J'ai vu ici l'année passée, et depuis, une seconde fois, il y a quelques jours, des coréligionnaires chinois. Ils sont venus de leur quartier principal de Kaï-fang-fou dans la province du Ko-Namri, pour se rendre à l'invitation de quelques Israélites arabes résidant ici, ainsi que de missionnaires anglais. Ces derniers désiraient se procurer des renseignements exacts et des manuscrits ou des livres hébreux. Les voyageurs sont venus me voir, et j'ai eu avec eux plusieurs conservations en chinois. Ils sont connus en Chine, et particulièrement dans la province qu'ils habitent, sous le nom de *Pan-Kyin-Kian*, ce qui signifie: *Religion des arracheurs de veines*, ou, comme on l'a traduit en anglais: *Pluck sinew religion.* Ils sont originaires d'une contrée qu'ils prononçaient: *You-Tâk* (Juda), il y a 1850 ans, sous la dynastie *Khann.* Une seconde colonne les a suivis, il y a environ 800 ans. Un empereur chinois leur a bâti une synagogue, qui est à présent négligée et tombée de vétusté. Ils observent leur foi avec cette tenacité caractéristique qui distingue la race des Hébreux, encore aujourd'hui, ils n'épousent que des femmes de leur propre réligion. Mais, depuis plus de 40 ans, ils n'ont plus de Rabbins, étant trop pauvres pour les entretenir. Ils ne savent plus lire l'hebreu, et la plupart de cette génération, ou plutôt la génération entière de notre temps n'est point circoncise, n'ayant point de circonciseurs. Ils ne sont cependant pas trop ignorants des rites, qui sont parfaitement d'accord avec les nôtres. Ils m'ont laissé quelques livres hébreux, et m'ont promis de m'envoyer une copie de tablettes de pierres, en chinois, qui ont rapport à leur émigration. Ils sont aussi de *Séphar-Thora, Thephilin, Zizis, Arba-Kanfoth.* Ils ont l'intention d'amener un ou deux petits garçons que ces Israélites arabes instruiront dans l'hébreu et dans les rites de notre culte. Pendant la guerre de Tartares et de Chinois, une partie d'entre eux s'est transportée dans la province de *Che-Kiang,* voisine de celle où est située notre ville, et s'est établie à *Kang-Tchou*, cité que je me propose d'aller

visiter, et une autre partie est à *Arnoy*, dans la province Fo-Kien. Il existe de ces émigrés également à *Pékin* et par toute la Chine, mais toujours dans le même état de décadence et d'ignorance. A *Kang-Tchou* et *Arnoy* ils n'ont point de synagogue. Leur nombre à *Kaï-fang-fou* monte environ à 10,000; à *Kang-Tchou* il est de 1000 à 2000; ils sont plus nombreux à *Arnoy*. On m'avait amené aussi un Israélite de *Kang-Tchou*. Leurs traits sont presqu'entièrement conformes au type de la race des *Mongols*. Ceux que j'ai vus ici sont très-intelligents et bien instruits, j'entends en fait d'éducation et d'instruction chinoise. Ils ne parlent que le *mandarin*, mais ils se servent encore de noms bibliques, tels que Moïse, Aaron etc. Ils savent aussi les noms de Mizraïm, Jérusalem, d'où ils disent être venus, racontent l'esclavage et les servitudes des Hébreux en Egypte, enfin ils possèdent des fragments, des débris de notre histoire, de notre religion, de nos moeurs et de nos coutumes; notions qui leur ont été conservées uniquement par tradition.

Les missionaires anglais ont accaparé des *Sephar-Thora*, très antiques, et les ont envoyés en Angleterre; je dis accaparé, car les Chinois que les missionnaires ont envoyés à *Kaï-fang-fou* ne leur disaient pas que l'on voulait les acheter, et leur faisaient accroire que l'on ne désirait que les voir ou les copier. Quant à l'argent envoyé par les missionnaires anglais, comme il y avait eu des malversations, les Israélites, avant leur départ, demandaient la restitution des *Sephar-Thora* qu'on leur a dit avoir été envoyés en Angleterre. Ils sont revenus cette année-ci pour tâcher d'arranger cette affaire, afin de se justifier vis-à-vis de leur communauté. Ils réclament avec justice la restitution des livres, et refusent d'accepter de l'argent, en disant qu'ils ne peuvent et ne veulent pas les vendre. — Enfin ils consentent à attendre qu'on les ait fait revenir d'Anglettere; mais les missionnaires leur refusent toute satisfaction, soit en argent, soit autrement. Ils comptent revenir encore dans trois mois pour faire valoir leurs réclamations auprés du consul anglais.

Cette notice est extraite littéralement d'une lettre écrite par mon cousin Aaron.

Strasbourg, le 13 novembre 1855.

Aaron Arnauld, Grand-Rabbin.

In the Mikwe Israel there is an account of the Jews in China, a report of the missionary Matthias Bachia, which we gave in the first edition of this work, and to which we only allude, as it is almost generally known.

In the *Zeitung für Norddeutschland* (Nr. 2797, Evening Edition, March 1st 1858), which appears in the town where

this work is published, we read a notice respecting the Jews in China, which we here subjoin, as a corroboration of our above-mentioned statement. The article is as follows:

„It has been known for some length of time that in Kai-fang-fu in Honan is a Jewish colony. The Catholic missionaries in the last century 1704 and 1774 gave information respecting it. A large sum of money, given by a lady to the London Society for the conversion of Jews in order to obtain information respecting them in the country, induced the Bishop of Hong-Kong, Dr. Smith, 1850 to institute inquiries through the London Missionary Society at Shanghai, and this society on the 25th Nov. 1850 sent out two intelligent converted Chinese for that purpose. As Shanghai is only 600 English miles distant from Kai-fang, the Chinese returned in a few days, bringing with them two Chinese Jews; the one 40, the other 45 years old; one of whom possessed real Jewish features. With exception of their circumcision and religion, they had become quite Chinese in their language, dress, habits, and customs; they likewise bore Chinese names.

The most interesting things they brought with them were 8 manuscripts, with fragments of the old Testament in the Hebrew language, most of them in large rolls, but a few in smaller form, distinctly written on very thick parchment, or upon sheepskins with vowel-points. The manuscript of Exodus I—VI agrees with our editions. They possess little more than the books of Moses. The Jews are said to have come from the north west of India to China about the third century after Christ; at first to have remained secretly in Ning-hia, Hantcheou, and Pekin, but later to have settled in Kai-fang-fu. In 1163, the Emperor Hiao-tsung allowed them to build a Synagogue. In 1446, owing to a great inundation, most of their books and parchment rolls became illegible, and the Jews of Ning-po and Ning-hia replaced them. Between 1573 and 1620 the Synagogue and the books were burnt; in 1742 an inundation devastated the town, and they bought the Taking (the five books of Moses)

of a Mohamedan from Ning-hia, who had them from a Jew at Canton. P. Kögler saw this book. There are now about 200 individuals in and about Kai-fang-fu. Their family names are quite Chinese. A few of them keep shops, some are peasants; but the most of them are so poor, — without clothing or shelter, — that they sell the materials of the Synagogue, in order to keep themselves alive. They celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday. The boys are circumcised within a month after their birth. They wash themselves before entering the Synagogue (Li-pai-fu), which consists of three naves; and for this purpose there is a bath on each side of the Sanctuary. During divine service they turn the face towards the West, towards Jerusalem. A Hebrew teacher is said to have died here about fifty years since; now there is no one able to read Hebrew. In China the Jews as well as the Mahomedans are able to attain to all offices and honours. Like the Chinese, they call God, Shangtti. After the example of the Chinese, in their place of prayer they likewise honour their holy men (Tching-jin), such as Abraham and others. Insignificant as this colony is in itself, it is still remarkable; for it shows how the firm nationality of the Jews in some degree overpowers even the nationality of the Chinese.

CHAPTER XXV.

Particulars respecting the Jews of Yemin (Yemen) in Afghanistan and in Tartary.

(According to the statements of travellers.)

From the often mentioned chronicle, which is to be found in the Mikwe Israel, we also learn that the Jews of Yemen in Arabia likewise descend from the ten tribes. It is possible that the members of the faith scattered in the country, after having been compelled for a while, under the oppression of barbarous rulers and people, to give up the faith of their fathers, in later times returned to Mosaism, and have remained faithful to it up to the present day; for I have found no mention that, since that time, Jews have settled in these countries.

I have collected the following statements concerning them: In the year 1522 Nibuar, a captain in the Danish navy, wo had been sent out by Frederic V, found in Yemen many Jews: especially in the capital, Sana, where he numbered almost 2000 souls; and the accounts he gives of them are most interesting.

In the year 1846, when I was at Cairo, I lived in a Caravanserai with three Jews from Sana, of whom one was tolerably well instructed in Hebrew. Among other things, I asked them about their condition and descent; they answered, that their forefathers had been settled there since the destruction of the first Temple.

In the year 1849, at Bombay, I made the acquaintance of a Chacham from the same place, who added the following to the foregoing statement. From the traditions of their

forefathers, the Jews of Sana, had heard that Ezra, after his sojourn at Babylon, had visited the exiles of Yemen, in order to induce them to return to their country. But this they refused to do, as they imagined that this liberation would not be as general or as lasting as that from the bondage of Egypt, and because they would not expose themselves to renewed persecution. Enraged at this refusal, Ezra had given utterance to a curse upon them, prophesying against them continued misery and oppression. They also had cursed and blasphemed Ezra, beseeching God not to permit him to see Jerusalem again. — This double curse appears to bave been fulfilled: Ezra's tomb is in the desert between Bagdad and Bassora, as we have already mentioned; and the Jews of Yemen languish in the most cruel debasement and in the deepest poverty unto the present day.

The Danish captain whom we have named likewise relates, that in the vicinity of Sana, and in Arabia Felix, there are many Jews, who in the midst of the desert live as independent tribes.

Even at the time of the Maimonides the existence of Jews in these localities was known; for I myself have possessed the copy of a letter which was addressed to the Jews of Yemen. However, up to this day no one has thought of seeking information respecting our brethren in the faith in these parts.

In Bombay I became acquainted with a Jew from Bagdad, who had travelled through Persia, and had there acquired a little fortune. He related to me the following, respecting our fellow-believers:

In the year 1847, he, in company with another Jew, had travelled with merchandise from Teheran to Bokhara in little Tartary. Half way, about eighteen days' journey from Teheran, lies Meshed; from thence to Bokhara is about twenty-two days' journey; and from this latter town to Cabul extends a desert of great extent, which is inhabited by

several tribes, partly stationary, partly nomadic, some of whom still bear ancient biblical names. Thus are found there the Hagarites, of whom it is mentioned in the Bible that they waged war with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh; and most likely carried them away captive to Halah and Habor;[1] also the Togarnites and the Aramites.

These wild but still hospitable tribes plunder the caravans, and carry the travellers away into slavery if they pretend to offer any resistance. — The caravan, with which our traveller passed through the desert, met with just such a fate; and the conquerors led the rest of the travellers to their village. There they were examined to see if any one from a friendly tribe should be among them; during the course of this investigation it came to the turn of our traveller and his companion, who both declared themselves to be Jews, and my acquaintance gave himself out as a Hakim-Baschi. His master expressed himself much pleased at this, gave him a decent lodging, and treated him very respectfully. The other Jew, who had no title to boast of, and was not so learnedly educated, was treated with much severity, and made to labour in the fields. The pretended physician had continually patients to prescribe for, and chance favoured his cures. Six months thus passed without making the smallest change in the condition of the two prisoners. Our traveller, however, had remarked that his master was very avaricious, and he took advantage of this and said to him one day: „What benefit do you derive from supporting me?“ (for the patients paid nothing:) „Should any of my religion live somewhere in the vicinity, conduct me and my brother to them, and they will ransom us.“

To this his master answered that six days' journey distant in the desert lived some Jews, with whom his tribe was on friendly terms; and after some persuasion he expressed himself willing to conduct his two prisoners thither. Joined by several companions, he set out with them

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1 I. Chronicles c. V. 19. 20. 26.

on the way, and they arrived at the village of the Jews. Before reaching it, he left the prisoners under the charge of his companions, and went himself to the chief of the place. When the latter heard that two of his brethren in the faith were captives, he immediately hurried out of the village to them. He asked them from what country they came; to which our traveller replied that they were from Babel (Bagdad). „The name of Babel is known to us," said the Jew, „for we know that our fathers were once there in bondage; yet we have never seen an inhabitant of that country. — The acquaintance having been thus made, the ransom was discussed, for which the master of the two prisoners demanded an exhorbitant sum. But the chief of the Jewish village answered: „We will pay the usual sum for these two men: if you will not accept that, we will take them from you by force." As this threat was supported by numerous inhabitants of the village who had been drawn to the spot, the matter was soon arranged; and a ransom was paid for both the prisoners of 1200 karans (a Persian silver coin, worth five piasters; the whole sum amounting therefore to 6000 piasters); and the liberated captives were then conducted into the village with rejoicings.

Our traveller then enquired if any other Jewish tribes dwelt in the vicinity, and received for answer that several other Jewish tribes lived at a distance of ten days' journey; that the road to them was very dangerous, on account of its being infested by nomadic hordes of robbers; but if he wished to visit these brethren in the faith, it would be best to wait until he could join a strong caravan passing that way: fearing to fall again into captivity, he remained. A wife, a house, and a piece of land were offered to him, and he was entreated to settle himself among them; however our traveller refused; for he was already married, and longed to return to his family. They tried to console him, telling him, that he should have patience; that from time to time a caravan passed by, which was always joined by some Jews, and with such a caravan he could depart. After waiting anxiously

for two months, a caravan at last arrived, and our traveller joined it; but his companion, who had married in the meantime, remained behind. After a dangerous journey of seventeen days, he reached Cabul; from thence proceeded to Calcutta, and later to Bombay, where I made his acquaintance.

During my stay at Cabul, I received from a fellow-believer there a confirmation of the above statement, and ascertained that the Jews of Balach, thirteen days' journey from Cabul, had ransomed him.

But the Jew was unable to answer my principal question respecting the origin of these tribes, or the time when they settled in the desert. In the memoranda of which I was robbed, I had noted down several particulars concerning them, which have now escaped my memory.

Thus, even to this day, Jewish tribes are wandering among the nomadic tribes of the desert.

In Bombay I became acquainted with a fellow-believer from Bokhara, named Messiah; from whom I obtained information respecting the Jews dwelling there. My acquaintance had been obliged to flee from Bokhara, because he had given shelter in his house to an English missionary. He was pursued by the treacherous police of the Governor of Bokhara, who allows no European to enter his country, and much less does he allow the circulation of books. The missionary he had saved had afterwards written him a letter full of the liveliest expressions of thanks; and this letter I myself have seen. — He told me that nearly 2500 Jewish families live at Bokhara and in the neighbourhood, who support themselves by trade, agricultural labour, and mechanical employment. They are obliged to wear on their garments a piece of old stuff, by which they can be distinguished from the Tartars. He likewise related that a great number of Jews dwell in the north of the country, near the Russian frontier; a fact, which is confirmed by

other travellers to these parts. It is known that they have dwelt there for several centuries, and that formerly they bade defiance to powerful neighbouring kings.[1]

An Israelitish merchant from Tabur, whom I met in the year 1850 at Teheran, related that in that town, and in the districts round about, dwell about 12,000 Jewish families; and he added that in Great Tartary the Jews had built cities, the names of which he mentioned to me. The time of their settlement is said to date from the 6th century. Persecuted by the Chinese, who endeavoured to compel them to abandon their faith, they had settled in Great Tartary, and there they lived free, and on the best terms with the natives. The chiefs were chosen equally from among the Jews and Tartars, and both shared alike the dangers of war; but the Jews contracted no marriages with the Tartars, and adhered strictly to their own worship. It is worthy of note, that they all believe themselves to be descended from the tribe of Reuben. — I afterwards asked him if they possessed the scriptures, prayer-books, or any guide for the regulation of their rites, to which he replied, that a Polish Jew, who had visited them about 40 years before, had given them a complete Bible, which however they were not able to read; that he himself had given instruction to several among them, and later had sent them Bibles and Pentateuchs. — They perform several of our practical religious ceremonies without understanding their inner worth, and they have a firm confidence in their faith. In other respects they are without the least connection with the rest of the world; they did not even know that Jews lived in Europe likewise. — The day on which they received the sacred books is honoured by them as a festival day.

During my travels in Africa, I myself met with the above mentioned Polish Jew; he lives in Algiers, and his name is Sincha Rubinstein. From his own lips I received a confirmation of the statements I have given relative to

[1] Petachia p. 170, does not recognise the Jews in Tartary as real Jews; because they do not follow the Tamul customs.

the Jews of Bokhara. — The accounts respecting this country are so doubtful, — it is so seldom visited, and so little known, that I considered myself very fortunate to have obtained this faithful report of the Jews there. The corroboration of Rubinstein, who possessed a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew and other languages, and who had travelled many long years in these remote regions, was a valuable testimony for me. Like myself, he had also had the misfortune to be robbed of all his memoranda at the plundering of a caravan in the desert of Sahara, on his return from Timbuctoo.

Salomon says: „Heaviness in the heart maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad."[1]

My cares are not personal. — The great past and the immortal deeds of the people to whom I belong alone occupy me. My thoughts are fixed upon the remnants of them scattered in the world, upon those, whom fate has hitherto hidden from our eyes. My aim is to seek out the great family of Israel, — the members of which often do not recognise themselves; and who in many countries eat the bread of exile from Egypt and Babylon, wet with their tears and moistened with their blood. I will speak to them words of truth and words of consolation; and with the torch of our sacred history in my hand, will carry light among them. The Eternal, who sees all, and knows all, has likewise seen my deeds, — none of my wishes and intentions are unknown to Him. He will guide and protect me, He will give me strength to carry on the work which has been begun. He will inspire my fellow-believers to help me, so that I may again turn my steps to those sacred spots, the places of the glory of our forefathers. He will lead me from the West, where my brethren know all that is beauti-

[1] Proverbs c. XII. 25.

ful and sublime, to the East, where so many of our race languish in ignorance and misery. — I adress myself to all scientific and learned men with this request, and conclude with the words of Salomon: „Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."[1] — „In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury."[2]

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Jews in Persia.

Return to Bombay from Mascat by sea. — Perilous voyage. — Mascat.

In March 1850 I embarked on board an Arabian ship. The wind was strong, but favourable. Seventy persons from different countries were with me in the vessel, and we had every prospect of having a good voyage. — We knew not, however, the incapacity of our captain. On the third night after our departure, our steersman had gone to sleep, whereby the ship got considerably out of its right course, which infortunately was only remarked on the eighth day. Three days were spent in the most dreadful anxiety. I sent my servant and interpreter to the captain, in order to represent our situation to him. The captain received him with curses and threats, which only increased our alarm. At some distance from the ship we remarked something which looked to me like a flight of birds, and we began to indulge the hope that we were no longer far from land; but when we

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[1] Proverbs c. XIII. 12.
[2] Proverbs c. XIV. 23.

came nearer, we found they were flying-fish, — a sure sign, that land was far distant. We had placed all our hope on the steersman, who was an old and experienced sailor; and we implored him to use all his powers to rescue us from the threatened danger. After that we all went together to the captain, and begged him to give up the command of the ship to the steersman, who knew these parts perfectly. He consented. Our water and provisions were served out in considerably smaller rations.

This melancholy state of things lasted until the eighteenth day, when food began to fail completely. In this distress we distilled sea-water, in order to quench our thirst.[1] On the nineteenth day, the captain himself went to the top mast, and with his telescope observed the horizon. After a survey of an hour and a half he came down, looking pale and disturbed. In the evening he began his survey anew; and he saw a grey stripe in the ocean. Was it land, or was it one of those wonderful delusive appearances, which are so dangerous to erring seamen? — Tired and exhausted, I went down to the cabin, leaving my servant on deck. Hardly had I descended, when a huge wave threw him down. I called out to him: „Are you drunk?“— He answered: „Try it yourself, and you will see.“ — Immediately I went again on deck, over which at that moment dashed an enormous foaming wave, which struck me down. I believed myself lost, and was not a little astonished when, a few minutes afterwards, I became again conscious. The sails were torn — the mast broken — and the deck flooded with water. The storm continued to rage with unabated fury; and the ship, like a lost creature, was at the mercy of every wave. We had given up all hope, and saw the grave open before us. At this moment all the passengers,

[1] This is effected by means of sinking a vessel called Tanasa, made of a certain kind of red earth, the aperture of which is stopped. The vessel takes in a quantity of sea-water; of which, when the vessel is again drawn on board, the water oozes out, while the salt remains behind. In this manner a tolerably drinkable water can be obtained.

without distinction of faith, fell upon their knees, and commended themselves to God, whose awful power with mighty breath moves earth and sea. — This event took place on the eve of Easter-tide.

I finished my prayer, and felt more composed, and went down to throw myself upon my couch. The storm raged until midnight, when it gradually subsided. The next morning we all assembled on deck, full of joy at our deliverance from danger. But now hunger began to be felt in a still greater degree. — One of the passengers had accidentally ascertained that the captain possessed a small store of dates. We desired to have them, but were refused for good reasons: we were told that they were destined for the sailors, so that they might not lose their strength for want of food. We, however, were so tormented by hunger that we insisted on having our request complied with, and threatened the captain to complain against him to the European consul, if he would not give up the dates. We certainly allayed our hunger with them; but felt afterwards in consequence the most tormenting thirst. — Again the captain ascended the mast, and began his survey. „Land!“ he cried, and with joyful shouts was the cry repeated. We sailed towards the coast; with a favourable wind we steered round some ridges of rock, and on the twenty-second day of our voyage saw before us the gigantic mountain of Djebel Dahoudki, the same we had observed the previous evening, but which the captain had failed to recognise. With mixed feelings of joy and fear we saw some boats approaching us from the shore. A powerful voice called out to us: „Salem Aleikum!“ and with delight we all repeated the greeting. On the twenty-second day after our departure from Bombay we cast anchor, and were only six miles distant from Mascat, the goal of our journey.

We were saved, but fearfully exhausted. I immediately sent my servant to take my passport to the English consul, and to buy some provisions for me. An hour later, a boat with the English flag sailed up to us, in which were the

officials of the consul, who were commissioned to fetch me. Astonished at such a reception, I accompanied them, and had the joy of finding in the consul a fellow-believer. His name is Hasi Ezekiel; he is from Bagdad, and has discharged the office of consul for the last eleven years as successor to his father-in-law Reuben. This man is the only Jew in Mascat, with the exception of his black household, whom he has converted to Mosaism.

The town has a very beautiful synagogue, in which are some ancient Pentateuchs. In the court-yard of the synagogue is a bath for women, which was formerly used for religious purification. Several centuries ago the Jews of Mascat were visited by the plague, which carried off great numbers; the remainder left the place. I likewise visited the old burial-place of the community, round which now rise the tents of the Arabs. In Mascat I met several fellow-worshippers from neighbouring cities. The inhabitants are fond of the Jews, whom they call Walad-Sara (children of Sarah).

Mascat formerly belonged to the Portuguese, and was fortified by them; later it was conquered by the Abyssinians. An Iman now rules there, supported by England. The town is the most important commercial place of Arabia, and the pearl-trade, in which the Bedouins are chiefly engaged, is very considerable. The town itself is large, but dirty; it lies at the foot of great mountains, and is surrounded by them. The population amounts to about 60,000 souls. The air is unhealthy, chiefly caused by the dead fishes, which are found in great masses in the streets. After heavy falls of rain, rapid streams form in the mountains, which carry with them into the sea, all kinds of rubbish.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Journey from Mascat to Abeshur.

Jewish tribes in the desert of Arabia. — Bender Abassi. — Linsa. — Abeshur.

After a rest of 21 days, I embarked for Abeshur; but on the third day of the journey we were obliged to sail along the shore of Ormuzd. A violent gust of wind dashed our ship on some rocks, where it stranded. The water streamed into the ship, and a scene of dreadful terror and anxiety took place. Every one endeavoured to save himself, and sprang into the only boat we possessed. The little vessel was thus over-loaded and sank. Many saved themselves by swimming to the shore, but others were drowned. The goods and provisions were left in the ship.

Deprived of all our property and food, we lay upon the shore. Before us on one side the Persian Gulf, on the other the extensive desert. On the place where we struck formerly stood a town, of which now only the ruins remain. In the trenches between the rocks, we found rain-water enough to quench our thirst; but we suffered much from hunger. While the damaged ship was being repaired, we wandered about in the vicinity, seeking for food; but found nothing but some herbs and mushrooms, on which we lived for three days. In the meantime our ship was once more got afloat, and under the protection of Providence, in three days more, without further accident, we reached *Bender Abassi* where we remained several days, in order that our ship should be properly repaired.

A wide, fruitful tract of land extends from Bender to

Persia. On the opposite side of the Persian Gulf in the interior of Arabia, the desert extends to Aden, Medina and Mecca. The pilgrims who have visited the city of the Prophet report, that on the road they met with sixteen tribes of whom four bear the name of Ihud Cheibar (a name of terror to the Arabs), and belong to the Mosaic faith. I have heard this fact not only from Mahomedan pilgrims, but also from my fellow-worshippers at Bagdad. These tribes are said to form among the Nomads a confederacy of their own, and like the rest plunder the caravans.[1]

Not far from Bender Abassi lies the island of Rein, which is celebrated for its pearl fishery. Somewhat further on is the town of Linsa. It is governed by an almost independent sheik, who has money coined, which has value among the Arabs, who inhabit his little territory. Ships stop near Linsa, for the purpose of taking in provisions; in other respects the town is unimportant.

Three days' journey from Linsa begins the Persian boundary, which is marked by Arab camps. At this place our ship stranded in a storm. The captain, who was fearful of being plundered, sought out the commander of the sentinels placed on the frontier, and offered him presents, whereby he obtained protection for passengers and luggage. Afterwards we purchased there eggs and vegetables.

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1 The celebrated traveller Dr. H. Petermann in Berlin related to me himself that in his travels he had likewise obtained information respecting these tribes, from a physician: — from which account it appears that they are really Jews, although they possess no Talmud: — he at the same time expressed the wish that these tribes might be sought out. The dwelling-place of these tribes is twelve days' journey from Dsheddah, on the road to Mecca. According to the statement of this physician, they had, in the place where he visited them, 40,000 tents. Near to them dwell the Jam, an Arab tribe. — Benjamin of Tudela p. 71, 72, speaks of these tribes, and reckons them as descended from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. — *Ritter's Erdkunde* Vol. 13, p. 403—407 gives information from different sources about these tribes. We hope to visit them in our second journey, in order to be able at last to gain certain intelligence respecting them.

When our ship was again in a condition to sail, we continued our journey; and in two days landed at Abeshur. Here live about 70 Jewish families, who are less oppressed than those living in the interior of Persia. They owe this to the English consul, by whom I also was most kindly received, in consequence of a letter of recommendation which I presented to him. He gave me an introduction to his vice-consul at Shiraz, made arrangements himself with the Caravan-Baschi respecting my journey, and made him in writing responsible for my safety.

Abeshur lies on a projecting point of land in the Persian Gulf, and is surrounded by a half decayed wall. The town carries on an extensive trade, and twice a year the steamers from Bombay anchor here, to ship cargoes for the interior of Persia.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Journey through the desert to Shiraz.

For this journey I wore European clothes, but my servant wore the dress of the inhabitants of Kelbella. My safety was in the hands of the political authorities, and with confidence in God I began my journey. Our road led us through regions infested by hordes of robbers; but Providence protected us, although victory was often dearly bought.

During the journey I also was often exposed to personal danger, in which I owed my preservation to the Caravan-Baschi, who had pledged himself for my safety. — Every morning at daybreak I retired before the caravan proceeded on its way, in order to pray. This was remarked, and one day, when I was on the point of putting on my Tephilim (phylacteries) in preparation for prayer, I heard

with terror the words: „A Jew is among us!“ — I turned round; a Persian pointed his gun at me and fired, but the bullet whistled by me. The Caravan-Baschi, who with many others had run to the spot, wrested the weapon from the hands of the perpetrator, who cried out in a rage: „A Jew is daring to contaminate our company!“ — „How do you know he is a Jew?“ asked the Baschi. Because I have seen him pray and put on his sandals!“ The Baschi turned pale, but immediately answered: „Perhaps you are mistaken; but be it as it may, Jew or Mussulman, I answer for his safety with my head, and must deliver him up unharmed at the house of the vice-consul of Shiraz.“ — Nobody ventured to dispute the authority of the commander, for they were all too much accustomed to obey. This quieted the disturbance, and the affair was soon forgotten.

Two days later, we passed through several narrow roads overhung with enormous masses of rock. It was already night when two shots were heard, and we found ourselves attacked from behind and in front, and the outlets of the road were occupied by robbers. A fierce combat followed, but, owing to our position, all could not take part in it, and the struggle continued until daybreak. We then saw there had been some mistake, for in the front of the caravan we found friends, while behind us the combat still continued. Supported by our new allies, we soon succeeded in putting our assailants to flight.

On the second day after this occurence we came to a beautiful plain with dwellings and magnificent plantations, which refreshed us like an Oasis. Accompanied by my servant, I had withdrawn from the caravan, without remarking that we were followed by two Persians. The day passed; the caravan was no longer to be seen, and I proceeded towards a village close by. Then, for the first time, I observed that we were followed by the two Persians, whose appearance denoted no good. I had alledged that I could not speak Persian, while my servant was quite master of the language; so we heard how our two pursuers were

loudly planning that, favoured by the coming night, they would kill us and take possession of our property. In order to prevent this new danger, the idea struck me of propitiating these two men by a bottle of brandy, the favorite beverage of many Persians. I took a bottle from my packhorse, and my servant offered it to them, asking them in broken Persian: „Will you drink of this Rukiuh?“ One of the robbers replied in Persian: „Why not? we will drink, and get courage for the execution of our plan.“ Upon this, they took the bottle, emptied it and for a time left us in peace. Suddenly we heard the tinkling of the bells on the leading-horse of our caravan. It was now high time to escape. We cried for help as loudly as we could, and the two bandits fled away at full speed.

The morning after this adventure we arrived at Shiraz, when I immediately proceeded to the English vice-consul, a Persian by birth, who received me in a very friendly manner, in consequence of the letter of introduction I had brought from his superior at Abeshur.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Shiraz. — Deplorable condition of the Jews.

Only about twenty years since, nearly 3000 Jews[1] lived in this once magnificent and flourishing city. By persecutions, oppressions, and odium of all kinds more than 2500 of them were compelled to go over to the Mussulman sect of Ali. Although outwardly apostate, a great number of these families still preserve in their hearts the faith of their fathers, and even find means of having their children

[1] Benjamin of Tudela p. 82 speaks of 10,000 Jews.

circumcised in secret. Nine synagogues in the town testify the former greatness of the Jewish community; now unfortunately, they are almost all laid waste. The Jews of Shiraz speak the Hebrew language, almost like the Askenasim (german Jews).

On my arrival I found the town in a state of ferment and revolt in consequence of a change of government in Teheran. Fierce combats took place in the streets, and it was not until the evening that the tumult was calmed. The vice-consul received me into his house, and gave me a safe escort to the Nassi, Mullah Israel. This Nassi, a venerable old man, received me with the greatest kindness, and according to Eastern custom, gave me an hospitable shelter, and I lodged with his son Isaac.

My presence had quickly become known among the brethren of the faith, and I was soon visited by the leading members. From morning until night I was in request, my advice and help asked in many matters, and my opinions regarded as oracles. One day my room became gradually filled by women all wearing white veils, who, one after another, introduced themselves to me. As the Jewish women are allowed only to wear black veils, in order to distinguish them from others, this visit desquieted me, for I imagined the house might be attacked by insurgents. I was, however, pacified when they told me that all these women belonged to the families who had been compelled to embrace the faith of Islam, but who in secret adhered to the faith of their fathers. My visitors lifted their veils, and kissed my forehead and hand. I addressed some words to them on their apostacy, whereupon the women wept bitterly. One of the men present came forward and said: „Our brethren know under what fearful circumstances we were compelled to apostatise: we did it to save ourselves from tyranny and death. We acknowledge, however, that, notwithstanding our apparent apostacy, we still cling with all our hearts to the faith of our fathers, and this we testify by our presence here this day; for if it were known, we

should all certainly be lost!“ — These words much affected me; I tried to console them and said: „Have patience, my brethren; and continue to put your confidence in God. Perhaps the monarchs of Europe, under whose protection your brethren live happily, may be able to alleviate your misfortunes, and may place noble rulers on the throne of Persia, who will loosen your bonds, and allow you freely and openly to avow your belief.“

Another day the leader of the rebels came to the Nassi, in order to force on him a new tax. When he perceived me there, he asked who I was, to which the Nassi replied: „He is a Chacham from Beth-el-Mikdass.“ Hardly had the Persian heard this, when he addressed me in the following words: „I have been told that the Chachamim of that town are very learned, and understand in particular the art of making amulets; make one for me to protect me in war.“ — At first I wished to disclaim this honour, but my scruples vanished at the sight of his blood-stained yatagan (xymetar), and I promised to satisfy his wish on the following day. I set to work, but as I would not profane our sacred customs by this superstition, I turned over irresolutely the leaves of my Bible, and at length came upon the history of Esther. I took the names of the ten sons of Haman, by means of letters joined them into sentences, and in the form of cabalistic amulets wrote them on a square piece of parchment. This I gave to the Persian, — who expressed great joy on receiving it, — and I told him at the same time that the amulet would only be of use to him as long as he was courageous and brave. Two days later this Persian took part in a combat of the insurgents against the troops, in which the latter were worsted: he now believed firmly in the power of my amulet, brought me presents, and proclaimed that I was a man of God, because my amulet had been so effective. This little affair obtained for me no little consideration.

A few days later, the report was spread that the rebels were going to attack the Jews, who came to me, begging

for help and protection. I said that I was a poor pilgrim, and therefore *could* not help them; but they answered: „You are a learned man, and God is with you; you *can* save us.“ Thus urged, I advised that they should all assemble in a large house, and arrange a festive entertainment, that at the same time they should all be well armed, should barricade all the entrances, and then, trusting in God's help, await the result. Happily the report was without consequences.

A few months before my arrival, the Nassi Mullah Eliahu had drawn upon himself the ill-will of the Imaum, and was thrown into prison. The Imaum demanded such an enormous ransom for his release, that the community was unable to pay it. It was then proposed to him that, in order to be free, he should embrace the Islam faith. The prisoner declared, himself ready to do so, and was conducted before the Cadi. As, however, many preparations are requisite before the ceremony takes place, the Nassi sought to gain time by having this deferred. The Imaum made inquiries as to the reason of this delay, on which the Nassi declared that he withdrew his word, as he could not make up his mind to abjure at his age a religion, which he had followed the whole of his life. Without further parley, the Imaum ordered him to receive 500 filagos (blows) on the soles of his feet, and then to be thrown into a damp dungeon. Four days successively this was repeated, so that the unhappy Nassi received 2000 blows. Without movement, with his face to the ground and like a dead man, he lay in that dungeon. Bread and water was all his food, and he would certainly have fallen a victim to these tortures and sufferings, if Providence had not rescued him. During this time a tumult broke out, and on this occasion the rebels released all prisoners, among whom was the Nassi. He then repaired to Bagdad, and it was there I made his acquaintance some time afterwards. His fortune the Imaum had appropriated to himself.

Another circumstance, which may give an idea of the

desolate condition of the Jews, is the following. A rich Persian took a fancy to a Jewish girl, and sought her in the house of her parents. As, however, these visits became dangerous, he tried to persuade the girl to adopt the Mussulman faith, so that she might become his wife. „My parents would die of grief", said the Jewess, „if I forsook my religion." — „You hear it," said the Persian to his companions, „she will embrace the Islam faith." — Notwithstanding all her protestations he hurried to the Achund (Priest and Judge), and corroborated by his companions, stated to him that the maiden wished to embrace Islamism. The Achund immediately caused the girl, who had meanwhile been concealed, to be sought for at her parents house; the messengers treated the parents most cruelly, and their daughter was dragged before the Achund. At the end of two days the prescribed purifications were concluded, and the girl begged for permission to walk on the terrace in order to enjoy the evening air. This was allowed, and she threw herself down from the terrace and fractured her skull. The Persians, who knew the cause of this suicide heaped the most dreadful insults on the dead body, hacked it to pieces, and left it in the streets. Only during the night did the Jews venture to collect the remains, and bury them.

The town of Shiraz had formerly very beautiful plantations and buildings: mausoleums, colleges, bazaars, caravanserai, magnificent baths etc. It has been almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake. The vicinity is very fruitful, and produces costly wine. Tombaco also, — a plant which is smoked like tobacco through water pipes (Nargile) prepared expressly for the purpose — grows there of a superior quality, and better than in Ispahan.

CHAPTER XXX.

Ispahan.

Occurences on the journey. — Arrival at Ispahan. — The Minister Ismael.

My stay in Shiraz lasted twenty-one days; after which I continued my journey to Ispahan. The vice-consul took care that I should join a caravan of more than 2000 men going to Ispahan, and it was thus that under the safest possible protection I began a journey of 22 days, attended with great dangers and toils, through a barren tract of country.[1] By his advice I gave myself out for a physician, and assumed an European dress.

The third day after our departure we were attacked by one of the numerous bands of robbers, which we repulsed, however, without any serious loss to ourselves, and gained a booty of several horses; I soon found an opportunity of proving my abilities in my new calling of physician: During the next few days, three of the most important merchants belonging to our caravan became ill. With trust in the help of God, and the remedies in my travelling medecine chest, I attended to the patients, and succeeded in restoring them to health. By this I gained for myself three friends, whose gratitude protected and saved me in a time of great danger.

In order to shelter myself from the burning rays of the

[1] Benjamin of Tudela p. 82 gives the distance from Shiraz to Ispahan as 4 days' journey. I do not know which way he went, for when the caravans go quickly, they want at least 15 to 18 days.

sun, I had brought with me from Bombay a parasol, which was of beautiful workmanship, and this parasol was the cause of my life being twice endangered. One day, being tormented by the glare of the sun, I made use of this shelter; — suddenly a shot was heard and a bullet touched my mantle. I did not know that in Persia it was forbidden for a stranger to carry a parasol: it was a Persian who had fired at me. By this occurence the whole caravan was thrown into a state of confusion, and the Caravan-Baschi had much trouble to keep me from these new inconveniences.

Another Persian took a fancy to my parasol and begged I would sell it to him; and when I refused to do this, he swore in his anger that he would not only take the parasol but my life also. He concerted a plan with his companions to murder me during the night. Providence and my three grateful patients and friends, however, saved me; they had discovered the whole plot, and watched carefully over me. One evening one of them asked me to pitch my tent beside his, and, as I had a foreboding of the intentions of the Persians, I willingly complied with his request. In the middle of the night a man, armed with a dagger, crept up to me, but was suddenly seized by my friend. The man begged for mercy, and promised to desist from any furture attempt on me. He sought, however, several times the same night to come near me, but was prevented doing so by my three watchful friends.

I was thus richly rewarded for my medical assistance, and thought with gratitude of the vice-consul of Shiraz, to whose advice I owed the friendship of my brave protectors. From this same cause arose many other advantages, especially this, — that on the whole journey, the different tribes hastened to furnish me with provisions. — The continued watchfulness of my friends effectually preserved me from any further persecutions.

For four days we passed through a region filled with the ruins of whole cities: melancholy proofs of the devastating scourges of God, — plague and persecution. We had

reached within two days' journey the goal of our long pilgrimage, when we were attacked by a horde of robbers consisting of 2000 men. As we were in the vicinity of a caravanserai, we were able to save ourselves, and act on the defensive. For a day and a half we were engaged in the most obstinate struggle, and our distress had reached its highest point, when we tried to obtain help by means of messengers, whom we sent to Ispahan. They succeeded in getting away safely, and on the third day native troops came to our rescue, with whose assistance we routed the bandits, who left behind them several of their wounded. — Three hours' journey from Ispahan we were again attacked; as, however, the noise of the firing could be heard in the city, help was at once sent to us, and thus we surmounted the last danger of our journey.

We entered Ispahan in the morning, and immediately on my arrival I visited the English consul, who received me very kindly. I then sought out my brethren in the faith, who where all much astonished that I had so happily surmounted the dangers of a journey through such barren parts, — parts which even numerous and well armed caravans scarcely ventured to traverse — particularly during the political tumults, which had lately taken place in consequence of a change of government.

Ispahan is the greatest city in the kingdom of Persia. The perfectly beautiful situation, the rich and luxuriant vegetation, the abundance and beauty of which pen scarcely can describe, offer food enough for reflection and admiration to the traveller, and awakened in me the remembrance of the magnificent regions of the East. — About 400 Jewish families live in the city, they possess 3 synagogues and 8 Mullahs (Chacham).[1]

During my stay in Ispahan, I had the good fortune to meet there the Minister Ismael, a native Jew named Jekutiel, whom the dispensation of Providence had raised to this

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[1] Benjamin of Tudela p. 82 speaks of 15,000 Jews.

high position. I had the honour of being allowed several times to pay my respects to him, his brothers Joseph and Mordecai, and his father Aga Babi. This influential and noble man merits that I should present the reader with a short biographical sketch of him, which I obtained from the statements of some members of his family, and for the truth of which I can safely vouch.

About thirty years ago a poor Jewish jeweller, named Aga Babi, lived in Ispahan. He had three sons, of whom one, Jekutiel, distinguished himself as a dancer, and the great people of the city were so delighted with him, that in the dancer they forgot the Jew. At a large fête, which was given in the city in honour of the Shah, Jekutiel was engaged as a dancer, animated by the presence of the ruler to display the most extraordinary powers of his art, the young man had the boldness in one of his daring leaps to kiss the hand of the monarch, who, admiring his talents, kindly excused his temerity, and induced him to follow him to his court, although the father of Jekutiel endeavoured by prayers and remonstrances to keep him back.

The youth grew up under the eyes of his patron the monarch, and proved, by his fidelity and zeal, that he was worthy of the favour which had been shewn him. But even at court, surrounded by flattery and temptation, he never forgot his parentage or his low origin, and long remained faithful to the faith of his fathers. The son of the Shah, his friend and companion, whose amusements he shared, obliged him one day at a feast to partake of forbidden meat: from this time the favorite offered little resistance to the wishes of the prince, and soon afterwards embraced the Islam faith.

In a short time there was an outbreak at Meshed, to subdue which the Shah went in person with his army. In his company was his young friend and servant Jekutiel, who, after going over to Islamism, had taken the name of Ismael. The town of Meshed was besieged, but the rebels defended themselves obstinately, and in a sally put the army of the besiegers to flight. During this general flight

the Shah was deserted by his troops, and left alone and without shelter: his faithful Ismael alone remained, and both owed their preservation to the speed of their horses.

When the Shah perceived his faithful servant following him, he called out to him: „Save yourself if you can, and leave me to my fate.“ — But Ismael answered: I will not leave you, oh Master; I will save myself with you, or I will perish.“ — The fugitives gained a wood, in which they wandered about for the space of six days. The Shah thought they would perish of hunger, but Ismael shared with him the remains of some biscuit and water. When this slender store was exhausted, the noble youth mounted his horse and rode away to seek for food. After a long search, he at length fell in with a Persian from whom he obtained some bread, and with that he rode back. But when he arrived at the spot where he had left the Shah, he was no longer there. In despair he prayed to God, and rushed through the wood in all directions calling him by name. At last he found his master, but in a half famished state, and refreshed him with the bread. Finally on the seventh day, the two fugitives were discovered by some horsemen, who had been sent out to the rescue of the Shah.

In consequence of this fidelity and devotion, the Shah, as soon as he had returned to Teheran raised his favorite Ismael to be the first minister of his kingdom, and this high post he filled with the greatest zeal up to the death of the Shah. Without becoming proud, he remembered with love those belonging to him, and became an unwearied protector of his former brethren in the faith. When the Shah was near his end, he had his son called to him, and solemnly recommended to him the minister Ismael as his friend, his most faithful servant, and most honest adviser; and he begged the heir of his throne to respect the noble servant as such and allow him to retain his high office. After the death of the Shah, envy and jealousy endeavoured to render the minister an object of suspicion to the young ruler, and to bring him into disgrace. An

especial event, however, kept him in his high position. During the change of succession, the town of Ispahan had revolted, and the young Shah determined to punish it by a demand of 100,000 tumauns. For the exaction of this sum he choose the minister Ismael, and promised that, if he fulfilled his duty, he would keep him in his place. In the city an Achund had arranged a new revolt against the emissaries of the Shah; but with a numerous army Ismael suppressed the rebellion, destroyed a portion of the city, chastised the rebels, and carried out succesfully his difficult commission. But in these events he had to mourn the death of his father and one of his brothers. The instigator of the rebellion escaped punishment by flight.

These events took place towards the end of the year 1850, shortly after the time I had left Ispahan and during the time I was at Teheran.

Ismael still lives at the court of Teheran, but no longer occupies his former high appointment. In the general esteem and respect which are paid him, he finds compensation for his fall, and still endeavours to alleviate the sufferings of his former brethren in the faith to the extent of his power. As already mentioned, I had the honour of becoming personally acquainted with the worthy man, and I owe to his kindness introductions to some influential men at Teheran, particularly to the Mullahs Ababi and Jacob, proprietors of a considerable business in jewelry.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Meshed. — Kashan. — Yezd.

A desolate and sterile track of land of eighteen days' journey lies between Ispahan and Meshed. Here are to be found the ancient ruins of a tomb, to which the Jews used formerly to make pilgrimages, and which the inhabitants assert is the tomb of Abraham ben Ezra. It is known that this great and learned man travelled in the East; I believe, however, that this tradition about the tomb is false, although it may be the tomb of one of his relations who bore the same name.

A considerable number of fugitive Jews met me, and they related to me cause of their flight as follows: Before the death of the last Shah, about 1840 or 1842, the Mussulmans in Meshed suddenly attacked the Jews who dwelt there, who numbered nearly 400 families,[1] and insisted that they should embrace the Islam faith. The Jews refused, upon which many of them were murdered by the Persians; some of them saved themselves by flight, and escaped safely

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde* Vol. 3, part 8, p. 103. The Jews of whom there are about 100 families in Meshed, are held in great contempt, says A. Conolly. They are not rich, but still wealthy, compared with their brethren in Ispahan and Teheran, who are only permitted to carry on the most disgusting trafic, like so many in Europe. In Meshed the Jews are not permitted to tread on holy places, nor to visit the Moslem baths; they must wear different caps from the true believers, and as a badge, must have a strip of cloth on their breast. They are not allowed to defend themselves by a single blow against a Mussulman, and are followed by the urchins in the street, who, before the eyes of their parents, pelt them with dirt and stones; for it is considered meritorious to frighten the soul of an infidel. In

to Bagdad, while others were overtaken by their pursuers, and compelled to apostatise. Here as in all other places, notwithstanding their seeming apostacy, the enforced converts still remained in secret faithful to Mosaism. They agreed together to frequent the Mosques, but not to partake of forbidden meat. Every Friday the Shochet went from house to house to the new converts and performed his office. This complete separation gave rise to supicions. The Achund asked them if they were true believers in Islam. The Jews answered: „With body and soul.“ Then why do you not partake of meat?“ inquired the Achund. — „Because by abstinence we wish to atone for our former sin,“ was the reply. — At first this answer satisfied them; but those who were suspected were watched, and one Friday the Shochet was surprised in the performance of his office. The unhappy man was immediately hacked to pieces and thrown to the dogs; the other culprits murdered, the synagogues, which until then had been only sealed up, completely destroyed, and the Pentateuchs torn to fragments. It is true the Shah desired afterwards to know the cause of these acts of violence, but for the present the affair remained unnoticed; as from the frequent disturbances in this country, the commands of the ruler are not always recognised. After the death of the Shah, and the removal of the Minister Ismael, these atrocities remained unpunished.

Six days' journey from Ispahan is Kashan, celebrated for its silk manufactures. I saw there magnificent taleds (garments to be worn during divine service), and one of them I sent home. The Jewish community in Kashan numbers 180 families, who live in a state of dreadful oppression.

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their synagogue a portion of the homily is sung in Persian, the Old Testament is read in Hebrew. During prayer, they cover their head with white mantles, and turn towards Jerusalem during the time that the priest holds on high the roll of the Pentateuch. In their library they showed 50 copies of their Holy Scriptures; written on rolls of parchment by devotees, to which the signatures of the writers were affixed: each of these writings was kept by itself.

It was on a Friday that we entered the town, and wished to rest there on Saturday. The caravan remained in the caravanserai outside the gates. I inquired for the Jewish quarter of the town, intending to proceed there; but I had scarcely shewn myself in the streets, when I was surrounded by a number of street boys and low rabble. My European dress excited displeasure, and I was pelted with stones amid abuse and cries of „Giaour" (dog). The least resistance would have brought me into still greater danger; so great is the hatred of Persians for strangers.[1]

The Nassi Mordecai received me very kindly, and my arrival was hailed by the community as an especially happy event.

The following day I put on my Jerusalem attire, and went into the streets. A caravan-companion, who happened to meet me, recognised me, and called out loudly: „This Giaour is a Jew." He immediately informed the Caravan-Baschi, as well as his fellow-travellers, of his discovery, who all exclaimed that I had contaminated them by my presence. On Saturday evening I entered the caravanserai quite innocently in my European dress. Hardly had I entered, when a tumult took place before the closed door, which was broken open, and I heard the cry: „Death to the Jew."

The Caravan-Baschi, who had shewn me much sympathy, threw hastily some Persian garments over me and concealed me in his harem, the door of which he closed. He then approached the enraged crowd, and asked: „Whom do you want? there is no Jew here; we had a Hakim-Baschi among us, but he has remained behind in the town, I know not where." The infuriated rabble gave little heed to this explanation, but surrounded the caravanserai and sought for me everywhere: the harem, however, as a sacred and in-

[1] Messechet Barachot chap. 9, v. 4, fol. 60, reminds one of the prayers which are spoken on entering and leaving a town. It appears as if formerly the same dangers threatened the Jews as at the present time.

violate apartment, remained undisturbed, and at last, cursing and swearing, the mob retired. When all was quiet, the Baschi conducted me to a trench near by, and advised me to wait in this place of concealment until the caravan should pass. With watchful ear and eye, fancying at the slightest noise that my pursuers were coming, I waited. At last at midnight the caravan, which was going to Teheran, approached, and I was released.

Five days' journey to the north-east of Kashan lies the town of Yezd, celebrated for the manufacture of wonderfully beautiful shawls. A Jewish community of 150 families dwell here, and they too languish under the yoke of the most ignominious oppression. I have not been able to visit this town myself, but from other fellow-believers, who have relations settled there, I have heard descriptions of their unhappy condition.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Teheran.

In the capital of Persia live about 500 Jewish families; they possess eight synagogues and have several Mullahs. Their social condition is also considerably better than those of the Jews in the provinces, which is chiefly caused by their living under the immediate control of the highest authorities in the land, and, at the seat of government. Perhaps another circumstance to which they owe better treatment is, that the father of the reigning Shah has a Jewess among his wives. Our fellow-believers occupy themselves mostly with trade, especially with the sale of pearls and precious stones; several of them are jewellers, lapidaries, and doctors.

The father of the reigning Shah was in the habit of personally visiting occasionally the Jewish quarter of the town, all the inhabitants of which came out to meet him, and white lambs were slaughtered in his honour, and the flesh divided among the poor.

A circumstance occurred which led to my being summoned before the council of the Shah, in order to give my opinion on a rather difficult case; — it was as follows: In Shiraz lived two brothers, both Rabbis, Mullah Ababi and Mullah Isaac, of whom the former for some cause became an apostate. He was considered one of the most learned Rabbis in Persia, and obtained access to the court of the Shah, where he used every means and artifice to establish himself in the favour of the monarch. By application of passages in the Bible, the principle of which did not accord with the notions of government, he oppressed his former fellow-believers, and then again offered them his services in order to extort money from them. Thus he drew their attention to a passage in Deuteronomy, where it is thus written: „Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury.“ [1]

In consequence of this, the Mullahs of Teheran, Mullah Rachmim, the Nassi Aga Ababi, and the first Jews of the town, were summoned before the highest authorities of the kingdom, and desired to explain this passage. They, however, said that they were not learned enough to be able to expound the text, adding, that in all Persia there was no Mullah who could answer this question; there was, however, a Chacham from Beth-el-Mikdass in Teheran, who would be able to explain it. By this, they meant me; and I, as well as several other Jews, received shortly after a message from the authorities, inviting me to appear before them. I immediately obeyed the summons, presenting on my entrance

[1] Deuteronomy c. XXIII. 19. 20.

a certificate from the Russian Ambassador, with whom I had deposited my passport, and whose influence was very great, remarking that as an European, I could not subject myself to any foreign power without the consent of my Ambassador, but that I was ready to obey the order and considered it an honour to appear before that high assembly. When the passage alluded to was placed before me, and my interpretation of it desired, I declared openly that the exposition of the Mullah Ababi was false, adding, that in Europe, the youngest scholars, who were at all conversant with the Bible would understand how to give a better explanation of the text. My interpretation of the passage was as follows: „Thou shalt take no usury from thy brother whoever he may be!“ for the Bible says: „Take thou no usury of him or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee,“ [1] and further it says: „Unto a stranger thou mayest give interest, but thou shalt not lend upon usury.“ — The assembly received this exposition with satisfaction. I then remarked that in Europe it was the custom to draw up a protocol in writing respecting such discussions; to which they replied that the whole affair was not worth the trouble. The whole discussion, which lasted about half an hour, was interpreted by the dragoman Mullah Jacob. When the meeting was dissolved, I was asked if I knew the Baron von Rothschild; they had heard that there was a family in Europe of that name which were very rich and much esteemed by all European monarchs. If this family were really so powerful, why did they not come to the relief of their fellow-believers? — I answered that I only knew personally the Baron von Rothschild, who, in the year 1845, lived in Vienna. Besides, in Europe it was not known in what a wretched condition our brethren lived here: for there their lot was a much better one. — With this, the meeting broke up.

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[1] Leviticus c. XXV. 36.

The palace of the Shah, the chief buildings, and the palaces of the Ambassadors of Russia and England occupy a particular portion of the town, which is separated from the rest by a moat, over which is a drawbridge, and in this manner it is protected from all disturbance. The palace of the Shah is built in the Arabian style, and has large and strong gates, reminding one of the entrance of our prisons. One of these gates is towards the town, and the other towards the palaces of the Ambassadors: both lead into the fore-court of the palace of the Shah. On entering two large ante-rooms are to be seen, one of which is the throne room. Twice a year the Shah comes here at the Bairam festival, in order to receive homage. Through a screen of glass the true believers see their monarch. The throne itself is hewn out of a block of marble, and is about 15 feet in length and 10 in breadth; and it is supported by twelve marble statues of females, grouped at the four corners. The throne is approached by several steps, and is ornamented with costly jewels, and wrought with great art. It is maintained that it has been used by all the Shahs of Persia. The crown room is closed the whole of the year, except on days of audience; but strangers are allowed to see it, and it was thus I obtained entrance there. In the second room, the portraits of all the monarchs of Persia are painted on the walls. In another apartment are said to be the portraits of all the oldest kings of the country; but of this I can say nothing, as I did not see them.

The city of Teheran carries on a considerable trade. Like all other important towns, the streets are paved, but they look miserably desolate, as, according to Eastern custom, no house has windows towards the street. The shops, bazaars, and markets make a splendid impression. The population consists not only of Persians, but also of Jews and Christians.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Hamadan.

After a three months' stay in the chief town Teheran, where I had several unpleasant affairs with the above-mentioned apostate, — which, however, were not attended with any bad results for me, — I began my journey to Hamadan.

The road thither is through a wilderness, partly broken by high hills, and relieved by thick bushes and dwarf trees. The journey occupies 12 days.

By the advice of the Russian consul, I assumed the Russian national costume; for Russia exercises in this country an almost magical power. Two Russians travelled by the same caravan, and I joined them. On the fourth day of our journey we got separated: suddenly a great disturbance took place, and we heard the sound of firing. All ran to arms; but, unfortunately, we were already surrounded by a band of robbers, and taken prisoners. These Arameam bandits (descendants of the Chaldeans) charged ten of their people to conduct us into the mountains, while the remainder continued the combat against the caravan. They first led us to a plain, which was not far from the scene of action. The Persians who were made prisoners with us, took advantage of a favourable moment, when our guards were at a little distance from each other, and escaped, and joined the caravan. Eight of our guards pursued them, and the two Russians and I were left alone with two bandits. They had not even taken the time and trouble to disarm us. On an agreed signal, we suddenly started off, taking the op-

posite direction to the one taken by the other fugitives. Our two guards rushed after us, but we turned round, killed one, and made the other prisoner, and carried him with us to the caravan. There the combat had continued without any decision, and they were occupied in discussions, which finally resulted in an exchange of prisoners, and the payment of a very large ransom on our parts. After this was settled, at midnight, twelve hours from the commencement of the attack, we were able to continue our journey.

By this occurrence, the two Russians and myself gained much in the opinion of our fellow-travellers; as our prisoner had much lessened the difficulty of coming to terms with the robbers. On the following day also we were several times attacked by straggling parties of robbers, but our danger was but trifling. On the whole road there is no caravanserai established, and for shelter therefore we made use of some of the many caves which are to be found here.

In the train of the caravan we had a great number of mules, bearing in carefully-closed coffins the bodies of rich Persians, for the purpose (as has already been mentioned) of interment near the tomb of the founder of their sect in Meshed Ali. One evening we had taken shelter from the pelting rain in a cave, leaving the coffins at its entrance. Suddenly a mass of rock and a quantity of rubbish became loose, and rolling down from the top of the cave, blocked up the entrance. We considered ourselves as irrecoverably lost, but after a long and anxious search we discovered another outlet; the coffins however were buried in the rubbish.

After two days' journey farther on we arrived at a stream, which forms the boundary between Persia and Media. As there was neither boat nor bridge, by which it could be crossed, we were obliged to make up our minds to wade through it. Thence to Hamadan, the journey continued without any occurrence worthy of note.

Hamadan, the former summer-residence of the Persian Shah, is a town of great importance to the kingdom on

account of its trade. The Jewish community, which consists of about 500 families,[1] have three synagogues and three Mullahs. The Nassi of the community is Mullah Eliahu. The second Mullah, of the name of Aaron, a man advanced in years, had once an old wall thrown down, and found two urns, one of which was filled with gold and the other with silver coins. On making inquiry concerning it, I was told that this circumstance was not of rare occurrence. This reminded me of a passage in Medrash Rabba by Rabbi Simon, son of Jochaias (book 3, chap. 17) and in the Jalkot (book 3, chap. 5) to be compared with the words of Moses.[2] What is mentioned in these passages on the concealment of money, prevails in the East up to the present day.

Within the walls, near the extreme end of the town, stands a beautiful large building containing an apartment lined with polished Delft-ware. There are here two tombs, separated from each other only by a small passage; and above them are covered catafalques. The inscriptions are in Hebrew letters, but only two names can be deciphered: on the one to the left the name of Esther, and on the other that of Mordecai. The building is the property of the Jewish community, and the keys are in their possession. At the commencement of each month, and at the Purim festival, pilgrimages are made to these tombs, and the book of Esther is read there. When, during the reading, certain passages occur, in which these two personages are particularly mentioned, all those present knock loudly on the catafalques, as if to say: „Here they rest, the preserves of our fathers; here they rest, and we read to-day their glorious history."[3]

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[1] Benjamin of Tudela p. 61 speaks of 50,000 Jews, he likewise mentions the tombs of Esther and Mordecai, of which we make mention farther on.

[2] Leviticus c. XIV. 34. 40. 45.

[3] *Ritter's Erdkunde*, book 3, vol. 9, West-Asia, p. 124 & 125, says of these tombs: Near the Mosque is a space with tombs, among which is said to be that of Esther and Mordecai. It is built of brick, and

When any calamity threatens the town, or when the Jewish community fears any approaching danger, lambs are sacrificed before the door of this house, and their flesh divided among the poor. One day I was told that such a sacrifice was about to be offered up, in order to turn aside some danger, which threatened one of the community. I endeavoured to make these superstitious misled people understand that, by such a proceeding, they only committed idolatry, and that our religion expressly forbade every sacrifice, with the exception of that offered in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. I was happy enough to prevent the ceremony for this time, and to be the cause of the intended expenses being given to the poor.

The Persian Jews believe that Hamadan is the ancient town of Susa, as the tombs of Esther and Mordecai are found here. This, however, I do not believe. The former kings of Persia had their summer-residence in Hamadan, and their winter-residence in Susa (in Persian Sustar), which town is 15 days' journey from the former, and the climate is milder. The ruins of the buildings, which date from the reigns of the former kings, confirm this opinion.

Four days' journey from Hamadan lies Karmanshah, where reside about 40 Jewish families. The Mullah of this community, a very avaricious man, takes a most unworthy

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has two chambers, of which the one serves as ante-room to the other, and appears modern in comparison to the rest of the building. (Ritter further quotes the copies of the Hebrew inscriptions by Sir Gore Ousely and R. Porter, which, however, contradict each other). In the first chamber only lie old funeral-furniture, — such as lamps, biers &c. Through an opening, only $1^1/_2$ foot in height and breadth, one manages to creep into the second chamber, in which are two wooden stands shaped like sarcophagi. These are said to be the tombs of those celebrated persons.

I only found one apartment, in which, at a few steps from the entrance, is the tomb of Mordecai; and but a short space from this, rises from the ground an eminence of about one foot in height, and this is the tomb of Esther. The two tombs are not separated by a wall.

advantage of the superstition of the Persians by making for them amulets and talismans. I represented this very plainly to him, but only seemed to displease him.

The town is fortified and very large, and carries on a considerable trade. Very costly carpets are made here. Large morasses and a long chain of mountains surround the town.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Persia, its culture, customs, and habits. Return to Bagdad.

Persia is one of the richest and most fertile countries on the Globe. It produces all that is necessary for the wants of the inhabitants, and the cheapness of all its productions, as well as of general living, is almost incredible. Industry flourishes, and the trade is extensive and renowned. Numerous caravans pass through the country, and magnificent tissues, carpets, shawls &c. are made here, the splendor and beauty of which are everywhere admired. I have seen costly pearls and precious stones, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, here in more abundance than in any other country in the world. They form the chief articles of trade, which is principally in the hands of the Jews.

The present inhabitants of the ancient cities of Cyrus are divided into three classes: Mussulmans, Armenians, and Jews. The first belong, as already mentioned, to the sect of Ali. Even the other Mahomedans must give place before the grandeur and power of this Prophet. I remarked that the followers of this sect, while reciting their prayers on their knees, at the same time make use of a small stone,

or a little piece of wood or splinter of bone with which they touch their fore-head. This custom appears to be in remembrance of former religious ceremonies, dating from the times of idolatry.

The superstitions of the East likewise exercise great power over the inhabitants of Persia; for they exorcise evil spirits. Not only the Mussulmans, but the Jews likewise indulge in this superstitious practice. For instance, every sick person is in their eyes possessed by an evil spirit, and exorcisms are the proper remedies to be employed to ensure recovery. This is done in the following manner: Seven dishes, filled with different kinds of food, are placed in the public bathing house, the doors of which are locked during the night. If, on the following morning, one of the seven dishes is found to have been touched, it is considered a proof that the evil spirits have accepted the food, left the sick person, and the patient will recover. Should the food, however, remain untouched, the sick person is considered incurable. — I thought it my duty to remonstrate with my brethren in the faith on this preposterous notion, on which they said in reply: „Who other than evil spirits could touch the food in a house so securely closed?“ — I answered laughing that perhaps a mouse might have eaten it. Although my opinions had much weight with them, yet it was not possible for me to deprive them entirely of this superstition.

Notwithstanding all this bigotry, the Persians, in general, are very well informed. They are a handsome, powerful, brave people, and of great stature. Their pride is immense, and their hostility without bounds against every stranger not belonging to their nation or their faith. They spit in his face, just as they have the dirty custom of spitting on the walls of their dwellings.

The dress of the men consists of a long upper-garment, without any collar, with long narrow sleeves; wide European trousers, and a garment (kaftan), which they call Antero, which reaches down to the feet fitting close to the

body, and open at the sides. The covering for the head is a high sheepskin cap. They wear their beards long, and dyed red; while their hair, which is shaved off on the top of the head, hangs down on each side of the temples.

The women wear a garment of silk or linen, reaching down to the waist, and open in front; immensely wide trousers finish the dress. They ornament their necks, hands, and feet with jewels, and when they go out, they wear a white veil. The Jewish inhabitants of Persia dress in the same fashion with the exception that the women are obliged to wear black veils instead of white ones when they appear in public. The Persian women are very industrious and clever; each has her own work, and it is by the women that those wonderful shawls and embroideries are made.

The Persians know nothing of tobaco, but both men and women smoke tombaco. They drink a great deal of tea, and in eating use their fingers. The interior of their houses is ornamented with carpets and mirrors.

In every town is to be found a building surrounded by a wall in which is a tomb of some disciple or relation of Ali. These buildings form a place of refuge to every one who has to fear the arm of justice; for all who have succeeded in reaching one of them are safe under public protection.[1] The Jews and Christians enjoy the privileges in the house of the Achund which is likewise an asylum for the guilty and persecuted. They are there received, and kept in safety. — The judges alone have the right and power to cause any one to be taken from one court of justice to another. If an accused is declared not guilty, he is perfectly free, and enjoys the fullest protection; if, however he is condemned to imprisonment, he remains at the public place of refuge until the time of his punishment has expired, or until the death of the Achund, after which he is perfectly at liberty.

Among the Persian Mussulmans exists the peculiar

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[1] Number c. XXXV. 11. 25.

custom that, when a divorced couple wish to be reunited, the wife must first marry another man, and then be divorced from him, before she is allowed to be united again to her first husband.

The apostacy of a Jew to the Mussulman religion is made the occasion of a public festival. After the convert has gone through the prescribed purifications, he is conducted, magnificently attired, into the mosque, where the Achund receives him, and bestows on him a new name. He is then placed on a horse richly caparisoned, and led in triumph with music round the town, on which occasion every one greets him, and presents him with gifts.

In the month of November or December in each year, the followers of the sect of Ali assemble daily during the whole month for two or three hours, in order to celebrate solemnly the anniversary of the death of the founder of their religion, whom they believe to have been killed by a Jew. For the last three days of this festival (Katel), songs of lamentation are chanted. If, during this time, a Jew ventured to show himself in the streets, he would be exposed to instant death.

The Christians in Persia live under a similar yoke as the Jews. The latter, however, enjoy greater freedom in trade. Neither Jews nor Christians are allowed to keep any slaves.

My fellow-worshippers in Persia have repeatedly entreated me to publish in Europe a description of their actual condition; I have promised to do this; and state it fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The condition of the Jews in Persia.

All Jews in Persia declare unanimously that they are descendants of the first exiles from the kingdom of Israel. Although a small number belonging to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin are to be found among them, it is still without doubt that the greater number of them descend from the ten tribes.[1] A remarkable proof of this is, — that they possess no Talmud. They date from the time of the first Temple, from the first centuries of the dispersion of the Jews. Although they are able to read and pray in Hebrew, and some Mullahs (from Hamadan and Yezd) possess copies of the Talmud, together with the Shulchan Aruch, and prayer-books, still they have only had these books within the last few years from Bagdad.

The women exist in a smaller number in Persia than in other countries of Asia; they are also more respected. There are a great many unmarried men; for when a young man wishes to marry, he must purchase his wife by offering to her father a certain sum, and these expenses often exceed the means of the young people. Very peculiar marriages often originate in consequence of this circumstance. If, for instance, two fathers, each having a son and daughter, decide on a union between the two families, they arrange

[1] *Ritter's Erdkunde* book 3, vol. 9, West-Asia, p. 42, agrees with this assertion.

a double marriage, in order to spare the purchase money, and avoid the expenses of the outfit of the daughter.

When a marriage is celebrated, the bridegroom, several days before the wedding, arranges a feast for his friends. On the marriage day, he proceeds with them to his bride's house, where the Mullah bestows his priestly blessing upon the young couple. Afterwards, the husband, with his relations and friends, returns to his own dwelling; where again, accompanied by music, a feast is held according to the custom of the natives. About ten o'clock in the evening he proceeds with the wedding guests to the dwelling of the young wife; who is conducted by some of them from the parental roof, and, as soon as she appears on the threshold, she is surrounded by the relations of the husband. Accompanied by their relations and friends, and the whole train, the young man then repairs to his new home. — The men generally marry between the ages of 25 and 35, and the girls are generally from 20 to 22 years of age.

Once again I refer to the peculiar custom concerning the superstition mentioned in the former chapter, that every sick person is looked upon as possessed, and a cure is attempted in the manner already related. On my remonstrances with respect to this folly, I was told that this custom had been followed for a long time.[1]

Among the Persian Jews are some who are very rich, and this wealth is the source of so many dangers, that they are obliged to conceal their treasures like crimes. — I comprise their oppressions under the following heads:

1) Throughout Persia the Jews are obliged to live in a part of the town separated from the other inhabitants; for they are considered as unclean creatures, who bring contamination with their intercourse and presence.

2) They have no right to carry on trade in stuff goods.

3) Even in the streets of their own quarter of the town they are not allowed to keep any open shop. —

[1] Deuteronomy c. XVIII. 11.

They may only sell there spices and drugs, or carry on the trade of a jeweller, in which they have attained great perfection.

4) Under the pretext of their being unclean, they are treated with the greatest severity, and should they enter a street, inhabited by Mussulmans, they are pelted by the boys and mob with stones and dirt.

5) For the same reason they are forbidden to go out when it rains; for it is said the rain would wash dirt off them, which would sully the feet of the Mussulmans.

6) If a Jew is recognised as such in the streets, he is subjected to the greatest insults. The passers by-spit in his face, and sometimes beat him so unmercifully, that he falls to the ground, and is obliged to be carried home.

7) If a Persian kills a Jew, and the family of the deceased can bring forward two Mussulmans as witnesses to the fact, the murderer is punished by a fine of 12 tumauns (600 piastres); but if two such witnesses cannot be produced, the crime remains unpunished, even though it has been publicly committed, and is well known.

8) The flesh of the animals slaughtered according to Hebrew custom, but as Trefe declared, must not be sold to any Mussulmans. The slaughterers are compelled to bury the meat, for even the Christians do not venture to buy it, fearing the mockery and insult of the Persians.

9) If a Jew enters a shop to buy anything, he is forbidden to inspect the goods, but must stand at a respectful distance and ask the price. Should his hand incautiously touch the goods, he must take them at any price the seller chooses to ask for them.

10) Sometimes the Persians intrude into the dwellings of the Jews and take possession of whatever pleases them. Should the owner make the least opposition in defence of his property, he incurs the danger of atoning for it with his life.

11) Upon the least dispute between a Jew and a Persian, the former is immediately dragged before the Achund,

and, if the complainant can bring forward two witnesses, the Jew is condemned to pay a heavy fine. Is he too poor to pay this penalty in money, he must pay it in his person. He is stripped to the waist, bound to a stake, and receives forty blows with a stick. Should the sufferer utter the least cry of pain during this proceeding, the blows already given are not counted, and the punishment is begun afresh.

12) In the same manner the Jewish children, when they get into a quarrel with those of the Mussulmans, are immediately led before the Achund, and punished with blows.

13) A Jew who travels in Persia is taxed in every inn and every caravanserai he enters. If he hesitates to satisfy any demands that may happen to be made on him, they fall upon him, and maltreat him until he yields to their terms.

14) If, as already mentioned, a Jew shows himself in the street during the three days of the Katel (feast of mourning for the death of the Persian founder of the religion of Ali) he is sure to be murdered.

15) Daily and hourly new suspicions are raised against the Jews, in order to obtain excuses for fresh extortions; the desire of gain is always the chief incitement to fanaticism.

These points give a clear insight into the wretched condition in which the Jews languish in a country where, not so very long since, a woman of their people was wife of the ruler, and one of her brethren was first minister.[1] The only compensation which they find for these persecutions, insults, and oppressions, is the great confidence which is reposed in them in commercial matters. Their integrity in trade is recognised by the Persians to such a degree that a Jew, who fails, finds refuge with the Achund against all prosecutions, and thus gains time to settle with his creditors.

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[1] Even Benjamin of Tudela p. 76 speaks of the oppression of the Jews in Persia. — Rabbi Petachia p. 176 describes these persecutions more minutely.

The Jewish doctors are likewise much sought after, and exercise great influence over the first people of the kingdom, which they nobly turn to the advantage of their oppressed brethren. Thus are fulfilled the sublime words of the scriptures when it is written: „And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their ennemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my convenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.“ [1]

The Christians in Persia are nearly as much oppressed as the Jews. Some time since they addressed themselves to the Pope with a prayer for protection, but this appeal was of no avail.

After my return from Africa, and after I had published in Paris in the year 1858 my travels under the title of *„Cinq ans de voyage en Orient de 1846—1851,“* I turned to the fulfilment of the request made to me, and addressed a petition to the Sultan, the Emperor of the French, and the Queen of England, imploring protection for my unhappy brethren in the faith in Persia.

The memorial to the Sultan is as follows:

To His Imperial Highness the Grand-Sultan of the Sublime Ottoman Porte.

Sire!

May Your Imperial Highness condescend to look with gracious compassion on this page, which an obscure traveller, but one of the most faithful subjects of Your Majesty, ventures to lay at the feet of the most just and magnanimous of Princes, whose reign will be blessed by so many nations.

The undersigned, who has traced these lines, has imposed on himself the task of exploring the countries con-

[1] Leviticus c. XXVI. 44.

fided to the paternal government of Your Imperial Highness, and, among the large population of the Great Ottoman Empire, he has endeavoured in person and on the spot to ascertain the social and religious condition of the last remnants of a nation, which, since the remotest antiquity, has been known by its misfortunes, its resignation under every trial, and its unshaken faith. His numerous researches, and his earnest investigations, relative to the fate of the ten tribes of Israel oblige him to make known the results of his labours, of his observations, and of his frequently perilous journies. For several years he lived the life of his fellow-believers, faithful subjects of Your Imperial Highness, and in honour and truth he must confess, that he often mingled his tears with theirs, for he had no power to bid them dry them. The only consolation which he was able to offer to his brethren, oppressed beneath a burden of misfortune, was the promise to raise the voice of truth in their behalf, and endeavour that this voice should reach Your Imperial Highness.

Providence has deigned to support my humble and unceasing efforts. Inspired by Providence, Your Imperial Highness condescended to promote the happiness of Your people by new legal regulations, which will powerfully contribute to create for my brethren in the faith a more equal and endurable social condition. But what length of time may still elapse before the benefits of the new law, which can but promote the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire, may pierce to those barren regions, far distant from the capital, and with which it has had until now such rare communications! — When will the day of justice and humanity dawn for my brethren, who, scattered in the mountainous and almost inaccessible regions of Kurdistan, live, as it were, a vegetable life on the extreme boundaries of the kingdom, chained to the earth in the most complete ignorance surrounded by Kurdish tribes, whose turbulent will knows no bounds, and whose rudeness, cruelty, and rapacity, keep the Israelites in a state of degrading abasement.

The paternal heart of Your Imperial Highness was filled with the gracious, compassionate endeavour to promote the happiness of Your faithful subjects. We place our hope on the firm and all powerful will of Your Imperial Highness, and on the supreme justice of the Eternal, who has protected Your Majesty in all Your undertakings, and Who makes all those to prosper who walk in the path of righteousness for the good of humanity.

After having traced a faithful picture of the condition of his brethren in the faith before the promulgation of the Hati-Houmajum, after having visited the kingdom of Persia, where the unheard of debasement and oppression of the Israelites for centuries remind one of the ancient Egyptian bondage and Babylonian persecution, the undersigned author has compiled an account thereof in the work which he has the extreme honour of laying at the feet of the most human and glorious of Sultans.

Some shades in this faithful picture are gloomy; they deserve to be known and appreciated according to their real value. (Kurdistan, p. 61, 64—66; Persia, p. 160, 226.)

The undersigned author speaks only in his own name; he fulfils a heartfelt duty and a sacred promise in raising his supplicating voice in behalf of so many human beings, whose eyes are unceasingly turned towards the august dwelling of Your Imperial Highness, towards the greatest of Sultans, who, admired by the world, represents upon Earth that Providence, which inspires and guides him.

If the humble pilgrim, who soon again will resume his wanderings and continue his researches, should have the unutterable happiness of attracting the gracious notice of Your Majesty on the precarious condition of his brethren in Kurdistan, his highest wishes will be gratified. His words are too weak for the proper expression of all his feelings; he is only able to lift up his prayers to the Most High, Who sees all, and may He grant to Your Imperial Highness continual happiness.

Paris, June 12th 1856. **J. J. Benjamin II.**

The petitions to the Emperor of the French and to the Queen of England are the same as the abvoe with the exception of necessary alterations. The one to the Emperor of the French bears the same date as that of the Sultan; that to the Queen of England was dated and presented on the 22nd February 1857.

The petition to the Sultan I sent through Mr. Lœb Kaufmann, leather merchant at Galata in Constantinople; the one to the Emperor of the French I presented myself at the Tuileries, and the one to the Queen of England I delivered at the office of the English Embassy at Paris.

The original of the above petition written in French is as follows:

A Son Hautesse Impériale le Grand Sultan de la Sublime Porte Ottomane.

Sire!

Que Votre Hautesse daigne jeter un regard d'auguste compassion sur le pli qu'un voyageur obscur, mais un des plus fidèles sujets de Votre Majesté, ose déposer aux pieds du plus magnanime, du plus équitable des Princes, dont le règne sera béni par tant de nations.

Celui qui ose tracer ces mots s'est imposé la mission d'explorer les contrées que l'Éternel a confié au gouvernement paternel de Votre Hautesse Impériale, et ce fut au milieu des populations nombreuses de votre empire Ottoman qu'il s'efforçait de constater personnellement et sur les lieux mêmes l'état social et réligieux des derniers débris d'un peuple connu depuis la plus haute antiquité par ses désastres, comme par sa resignation à toute épreuve et par sa foi inébranlable; et ses recherches multipliées et ses investigations sérieuses sur le sort des dix tribus d'Israël lui font un devoir de faire connaître le résultat de ses labeurs, de ses veilles et de ses excursions souvent périlleuses. Pendant plusieurs années il a vécu de la vie de ses coreligionnaires sujets fidèles de Votre Hautesse Impériale, et pour rendre hommage à la vérité, il a souvent mêlé ses larmes avec les leurs, car il n'avait pas la puissance de les sécher. L'unique consolation qu'il a pu offrir à ses confrères courbés sous le poids du malheur, ce fut ma promesse d'élever la voix de la vérité et de la faire parvenir à Votre Majesté Impériale.

La Providence elle-même a daigné seconder mes humbles et mes constants efforts. Inspiré par elle Votre Hautesse Impériale daigna assurer le bonheur de ses peuples par des nouvelles prescriptions légales qui contribueront puissamment à créer pour mes coreligionnaires un état social normal, plus supportable. Mais combien de temps s'écoulera encore

avant que les bienfaits de la nouvelle loi, qui ne peuvent que faire prospérer l'empire Ottoman, pénétreront dans quelques contrées incultes et éloignées de la métropole, avec quelle elles n'ont pu avoir jusqu'à présent que des communications assez rares. Quand luira le jour de justice et d'humanité pour mes confrères dispersés dans les contrées montagneuses et inaccessibles pour ainsi dire du Kourdistan, où sur les confins extrêmes de l'Empire ils végètent dispersés, attachés au sol, dans l'ignorance la plus complète de leur existence, entourés par des tribus Kourdes, dont l'indépendance turbulente ne connaît pas souvent de frein, et dont la rudesse, l'âpreté et l'esprit de rapines retiennent les Israëlites dans un état dégradant d'abaissement. Le coeur paternel de Votre Majesté Impériale fut touché d'une auguste compassion pour faire le bonheur de ses fidèles sujets; nous espérons dans la ferme et tout puissante volonté de Votre Hautesse Impériale ainsi que dans la suprême justice de l'Éternel, qui a protégé Votre Majesté dans toutes Ses entreprises et qui fait prospérer tous ceux qui marchent dans la voie du bien pour l'humanité.

Après avoir tracé un tableau fidèle de l'état de ses coreligionnaires avant la promulgation du Hati-Houmajoum, après avoir visité l'empire Perse, où l'abaissement et l'oppression des Israëlites sont inouïs et séculaires, où ils rappellent l'antique servitude de l'Égypte et les persécutions de Babylon, l'auteur soussigné en a fait un récit contenu dans l'ouvrage qu'il a l'insigne honneur de déposer aux pieds du plus humain et du plus glorieux des Sultans.

Quelques traits dans ce tableau véridique sont sombres; ils méritent d'être connus et appréciés à leur juste valeur (Kourdistan, p. 61, 64—66, la Perse, p. 160 et 226).

L'auteur soussigné ne parle qu'en son nom. Il accomplit un devoir de coeur et il remplit une sainte promesse en élevant sa voix suppliante en faveur de tant d'hommes qui tournent sans cesse leurs regards vers la demeure auguste de Votre Hautesse Impériale; vers le plus grand des Sultans admiré par l'Univers et qui remplace sur cette terre la Providence qui l'inspire et qui le guide.

Si l'humble pélerin, qui reprendra incessamment son bâton de voyageur pour continuer ses explorations, avait l'insigne bonheur d'attirer le regard auguste de Votre Majesté sur le sort précaire de ses confrères du Kourdistan, il serait au comble de ses voeux. Ses paroles sont trop faibles pour exprimer convenablement tout ce qu'il en ressentirait; il ne peut qu'élever ses prières vers l'Unique Maître, qui voit tout, et qui daignera accorder à Votre Hautesse Impériale un bonheur constant.

Paris, le 12 Juin 1856.

J. J. Benjamin II.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Concluding reflections.

In my childhood I had often heard of the ten tribes of Israel, who were said to have been banished to a dark, mountainous country, which was never cheered by the rays of the sun, or trodden by the foot of a stranger. It was said they had their own government there, and that under their own kings they rigidly adhered in these distant and unknown regions to the worship of Israel in the promised land. They were reputed to lead a marvellous life, whilst we, the descendants of the two banished tribes of Judah and Benjamin, were obliged to languish in exile under the yoke of fanaticism.

As I grew up, I devoted myself to the study of the Bible, and I learnt from Holy Writ that the other tribes of Israel had always been more corrupt than the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and I said to myself: „God is just and merciful, why does He permit those to be happy who least deserve it?“ — From this moment I began to doubt the traditions of my people, especially as I could nowhere find in our holy books a satisfactory answer to this question, or obtain from them any explanation. The only alternative therefore, was to travel and make my own observations; and this idea occupied me continually.

When, in after years, this idea was acted on, I found the sought-for explanation, and was led to the following conclusions:

The fate which has befallen us, the children of Judah and Benjamin, is similar to that of the other tribes of Israel.

Just as we have been driven out of one land, and have had to find a new refuge in another, so have the other ten tribes been obliged to wander from one country to another, to seek new places of shelter from their persecutions and sufferings. As it has been with ourselves, here oppression and insult, there milder treatment and greater freedom, so has it been with them too. They have their Canarinz, just as we have our Shobatnik. In a word, we have all had to suffer the same hardships, and all had to bear the same misfortunes. The one great difference between us and the ten tribes is, that, at the present time, when the day of enlightenment begins to dawn over Europe, and fanaticism is compelled to give place to justice and tolerance, we are each day treated more and more according to the sacred principles of humanity, and nations and legislators acknowledge that we have equal rights with those of the followers of other religions; whilst the children of the ten tribes of Israel, scattered among the barbarous nations of the East, continue to live in ignorance century after century, and up to the present day groan unheeded and debased as Parias under the yoke of their oppressors.

All that tradition has related regarding their governments and kings is reduced to the facts we have related in their proper places. These wandering tribes dwelling in the deserts of Arabia have their own sheiks and the ignorant have considered these as mighty kings and rulers in our sense of the word. Just in the same manner, the tribes dwelling in the mountains of Afghanistan have their own rulers, and sometimes carry on sanguinary and successful war with the neighbouring tribes. All this has given rise to the report, so long current among us, relative to the might and greatness of the banished children of Israel.

I know not whence they could obtain their knowledge of cabala, and their belief in hidden and supernatural powers. We know that at the time of the first Temple there was neither cabala nor Shemoth Hachsedoshim (names of angels and holy spirits), if it be not the unspeakable name of Je-

hovah (Shem); because Shemoth we take to be the swords with which our fathers fought against the enemy under Saul and David, and for all sacred forms of prayer there was only Criath-Shema. The cabalistic treatises, on the contrary, date from the time of the second Temple, and their form is in part the work of the latter great assemblies. How and whence then were the ten tribes able to obtain such an extraordinary knowledge? This is all the more inexplicable, since I myself found them so ignorant that they were not even able to read. True it is, however, that they were banished to these barren mountains, to these almost inaccessible regions. The distance is great, and the difficulties extreme to find them out; but they are still within the bounds of possibility. The river Sambąthion — of which both the Jews in Asia and Africa speak — is said to drag in its course stones and pieces of rock, and to emit lava like a volcano, in order to prevent the approach and entrance of strangers to those parts; this I have not seen, but I have discovered the traces of the ten tribes of Israel.

At the present day, thanks to brave seamen and their voyages of discovery, we have gained accurate and certain knowledge of the remotest parts of the world. By the progress of education, geographical knowledge is universally extended, and by new discoveries the most distant parts are, in a manner brought near to us, so that the Antipodes are able to greet each other.

There must be many countries still unknown, even Alonzo da Ercilla says in his poems (vol. II, canto 27): The earth is covered with zones which are unknown to man; the field of discovery which is before us inexhaustible; and the sphere of our knowledge extends farther and farther towards the discovery of new truths.

Before quitting the East, the cradle of mankind, the land of mystery, and before taking leave of my brethren in the faith scattered there, who have been groaning for centuries under the yoke of barbarous and despotic nations, I will add here a few general remarks respecting travelling in these countries.

An European traveller, accustomed to cultivated countries, to intercourse with civilised people and to the conveniences of life, will, on entering the East, feel as if he had been transplanted into quite another world, into a world which it exceeds my power to describe. At every step he is surrounded by dangers, hardships, and privations of every kind, which increase the farther he goes. But a Jewish traveller finds himself placed in very different circumstances. The kindness, the confidence, the love and attention with which he is everywhere received in these countries by his brethren in the faith, make him forget the many sufferings and hardships of his journey. All kinds of privileges are allowed him, and the respect which is shewn him amounts almost to general veneration.

Above all, it was the pious faith of my brethren, their careful observance of our forms of worship, even to the most minute particulars, and their veneration for it, which made the deepest impression on me. Their piety is indeed well fitted to edify an European Jew, the remembrance of it forms an encouragement for the future, and it was indeed difficult for me to bid farewell to these faithful brethren. Two points deserve especial mention; they are these: the learning and the benevolence, the mode of life and traditional hospitality of my brethren in the East.

If the scholars of the East distinguish themselves in general by a deeper and more thorough knowledge, it is caused chiefly by their dwelling at the fountain head of all human wisdom: in their researches they have ever the sacred springs before their eyes, and thereby become animated by an unshaken faith; so that in this latter case even those, who are less wellread, may serve as examples to others.

The learned men, and particularly those who come from the Holy Land or from Europe, are treated with the greatest veneration, with even more than is shewn to their own scholars. In the flowery language of the East, they say that they are crowns, which have come to ornament their heads.

He, who is not acquainted with Oriental customs, can hardly form an idea of the consideration with which a traveller is there received and treated. As soon as he has been introduced to the Nassi, all hasten to show him every possible honour which his rank may demand. All his wants are anticipated; lodging, food, raiment, in short all that he may need is given to him, without the smallest compensation being required in return. Feasts and entertainments are arranged in his honour, as long as he remains in any place. And not only during his stay among them is this attention paid to him, but on leaving, it is extended to him in a still greater degree. As soon as the guest prepares for departure, the master of the house considers it as his first duty to furnish him everything necessary for the journey. The days are counted as to how long he will be on the way until he arrives at another place, and his provisions are arranged accordingly, so that he may want for nothing. Care is taken that he may be able to join a caravan, the expenses are paid, and not one of his brethren in the faith would fail to present him with some useful gift, the nature of which is always regulated by his rank.

But it is not only to their own people that the Jews of the East grant such a generous reception. Every traveller, every tourist, of whatever religion he may be, everywhere receives from them the same assistance and protection, every possible information he may require as to the manner and difficulties of his journey, the providing of guides or any other help. This generous hospitality is extended to every one without exception, notwithstanding the numerous travellers who pass through the East; it is considered as a sacred duty, and carried out in a truly patriarchal manner.

If a caravan is attacked, and a traveller falls into cap-

tivity, he may, on this misfortune being known, surely reckon that they will not delay to liberate him: the ransom is collected for him, and this often amounts to a considerable sum.

From this one may judge how easy and convenient travelling through the East may be made, easier than in other countries, notwithstanding the difficulties of the journey, and the many dangers to which travellers are exposed. As the East is the fountain head of sacred knowledge, how earnestly do I advise my learned and enterprising brethren to draw from this holy source. For the light of knowledge which they would there diffuse and promulgate, they would find a reception worthy of them, and a comfortable life.

But travelling in the East is made considerably easier for the Jews than for others, by one great advantage, which they alone possess. This is a knowledge of the Hebrew language. It is a powerful bond, the sole mysterious means which enables them to enter everywhere, and to overcome every difficulty. Among these numerous tribes, where so many different languages are written and spoken, the Jewish traveller is sure of finding in every place at least some persons to whom he can make himself understood, and on whose assertions he can place the most implicit reliance.

It can be unhesitatingly asserted, that the characteristic habits and customs followed by the Jews of the East in the present day are those mentioned in the Bible as being peculiar to the ten tribes; whilst the habits and customs of the European Jews resemble those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. I refer, in conclusion, to two passages in the Bible, which seem to bear upon this; the first of which proves the hospitality of the ten tribes in contrast to the tribe of Benjamin.[1] The second passage reminds one of the generosity of the ten tribes towards their hostile brethren.[2]

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[1] Judges c. XIX. 14—22.

[2] II. Chronicles c. XXVIII. 8—16.

Both these quotations show forth in the brightest colours the national virtues of the *Eastern* Jews, and these virtues remain unchanged even to the present day.

Finally I add a few more customs practised by our brethren in the East:

1) After the performance of divine service in the synagogue, two persons stand at the entrance holding roses or some sweet smelling fruit in their hands, and these they offer to each passer-by, who, before touching them, utters the appropriate blessing.

2) When one Israelite visits another, at the entrance of the house, before leaving, he is sprinkled with rose water, and likewise receives enough of the same to wash his face, beard, and hands.

3) The morning salutation is the same as with us; after mid-day one is greeted with the words: „Peace be with you!" To several persons together, one says: „God be with you!" to which they answer: „God bless you!"

4) An Israelite, who travels with a caravan, does not put on his Taleth, or his phylacteries (garments for prayer), but every morning and evening he reads Criath-Shema (a portion of the Pentateuch which treats of the unity of the Godhead).

5) Those Jews living in the mountains of Kurdistan do not wear Zizith *(Schaufäden)* the whole day as we do, but only in the synagogue.

6) Divorces are conducted as with us, but with respect to betrothals, this difference exists, that every father may receive for his daughter up to her twelfth year the coin of betrothal. This circumstance often causes much that is disagreeable; for later should the husband not please the young wife, she can refuse to remain with him, and is allowed by law to leave him without a letter of divorce.

7) Sometimes marriages are celebrated by proxy; by sending to the bride by a messenger the coin of betrothal; but at the marriage it must be given again by the hand of the bridegroom.

8) If a man dies without leaving children, the brother of the deceased marries the widow.

9) If any one wishes to have two wives, he must give satisfactory reasons for it; for instance, that by the first wife he has no children, or only girls. Those, who are not Jews, can marry two wives without giving any such reason.

10) Many who marry a second wife, pledge themselves only to give her food, but no clothing, these she must provide herself.

11) If a man stops in some place for any length of time, he engages for himself a wife during the period of his stay; but does not take her away with him.

12) Little chickens are eaten which are not yet fledged. The inhabitants of those parts know much better than we do what birds and fishes it is permitted to eat.

13) After midnight, a singer comes into the courtyard of the Nassi on the Sabbath and festival nights, and sings until break of day. This is also the case when a stranger, whom they wish to honour, is staying among them.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Return to Constantinople.

I had seen enough of the East to obtain a knowledge of the country and its inhabitants, and above all else to obtain an insight into the condition of the Jews dwelling there, and I hastened now to quit this land of prejudice and oppression.

Ten days' journey led me through a desert country and over rocky hills. Solitary guard houses are placed along the road, in order to protect the traffic and the caravans

passing through, as well as to guard the frontiers of the country from the frequent invasions of the nomadic hordes from Babylon. These public guards are, however, more to be feared than the robbers; for they themselves attack the caravans.

For instance, the village of Solata on the extreme boundary of the country is a regular nest of bandits. Surrounded by all these dangers I was indebted to a former fellow-believer, the chief military doctor of the province, J. Beer, for friendly advice and much kindness. At his suggestion I assumed the garb of a priest. He then introduced me to the commander in chief of the guards, who, at my request, gave other letters of introduction to the several under-officers on the route I should travel. By these means, my journey was without danger, as I was brought under safe protection to the frontier. Without any further disasters I reached Bagdad. There I had the misfortune to break my leg by a fall from a horse, and was obliged to remain there for twenty-one days, until I recovered.

On Wednesday, the 12th of Jar (14th of April) 1851 I left Bagdad in order to return to Constantinople. I had joined a caravan which took the road through the desert, — a journey which is calculated to last about fifty days: I gave myself out again for a physician. The caravan numbered 200 well armed men, and on leaving, we were joined by another company of 250, and later by another of 100 persons; so that we were now about 600 strong.

After being harrassed by continual attacks from the many hordes of robbers through whose territories we passed, on the 27th of Jar (29th of April) we arrived at Kirkuk, where we joined company with an other caravan of 600 persons, and now continued our journey 1200 strong. Up to the 8th Sivan (June) we had to endure slight skirmishes almost daily, but without any important loss; and on this day we joined a third caravan of 800 persons, and were now superior in numbers to any band of robbers we might meet, and were thus able to continue our journey with a

feeling of greater security. Notwithstanding our great numbers, we were, however, attacked the very next day, and were at first obliged to retreat with a loss of ten dead and fifteen wounded; but on the following day we overpowered the bandits, pursued them, and took from them 35 camels and 200 sheep.

On the 9th of Sivan (19th of June), three days' journey from Karput, we found an enormously large serpent called by the Arabs Al-Hasse-Kalil, lying in the middle of the road. We killed it, and I should have much liked to take the skin of the gigantic reptile with me, if my fellow-travellers had not opposed it. On the same day we also met a lion, which we scared away.

From Karput, privations and attacks began to trouble us in even a greater degree. Thus on the 9th of Tamus (9th of July) we were again attacked, and the combat lasted for three days and three nights. From the 14th to the 20th Tamus we continued our journey unmolested. On the latter day we were, however, suddenly assailed by a double force; a fierce and bloody struggle took place, in the course of which the caravan was blown up and pillaged. When night approached, I took shelter to save myself in a palm tree, and the next day I joined some of my companions. I had the good fortune to find again one of my camels, so that I was not quite deprived of all I possessed, and with it, I was lucky enough to save several objects which had been confided to my care. Three days after this circumstance we arrived at Sivas, whence I proceeded by another caravan to the harbour-town of Samsun on the Blak Sea. Thence I embarked for Constantinople, where I arrived on the 10th of Aw (8th of August), after a voyage of 36 hours.

End of the Oriental journey.

Departure for Africa.

Urged by a desire for repose after the fatigues and hardships of such long and difficult journies, I determined to remain for a time at Rumelia, which plan, however, I was unable to carry out.

After having collected the remains of my property, I travelled through Servia and Hungary and came to Vienna, passed through Austria, a great part of Italy, and arrived at Rome. Thence I proceeded to Livorno, embarked for Marseille, went on to Cartesan in Spain, and thence to Oran in Algeria. From Oran I travelled by sea over the whole north coast of Africa as far as Tripolis, and returned by land.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JOURNIES IN AFRICA.

Habits, customs and condition of the Jews.

I. Egypt.

I begin the account of my African travels with Alexandria in Egypt, as I have already mentioned this place in my first journey.

Although there are many and great wonders in Egypt, I pass over them here, as the land of pyramids has often been described by learned travellers, and is sufficiently well known in scientific and geographical points of view; here I speak only of my brethren in the faith.

Two Jewish communities exist in Alexandria, of which one is formed by natives, the other by Italians. The African community consists of about 500 families, the Italian of about 150 families.[1] Both, however, are superintended by the same Chacham. His name is Rabbi Salomo Chasan, a native of Zephat, a rich and learned man, who stands in high repute not only with our people, but likewise with the Viceroy and the Consuls of the European powers. Each community has its own synagogue; that of the African is a large ancient stone building, and beside it stand several other buildings, in which Jewish travellers are received and

[1] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 107, speaks of 3000 Jews in Alexandria.

lodged. The Italian Synagogue is in another street; it is a simple house, one story high. The African community is now building a new Synagogue near the town, a very large and magnificent edifice, and they assert that this identical spot was likewise inhabited by Jews centuries ago. The Synagogue is placed in a wonderfully beautiful garden, — the most beautiful perhaps in Alexandria or even in the whole of Egypt, — planted with palms, dates, pomegranates, ethrock (the fruit of Hadar), and many of the most rare and beautiful flowers.

Of the condition and occupations of the Jews in Egypt I will speak later, and will now only mention a peculiar custom, which appeared to me very remarkable. — In Alexandria, in the house of an African Jew of some importance, whom I once visited on the Sabbath, I found in a room a large stuffed divan, over which one single large coverlet was spread. Under this one coverlet sleep in peaceful harmony the several married members of the family with their wives, each pair occupying a different corner of the divan, — the father and mother, the grown up son with his wife, the daughter and her husband &c. — On my smiling and inquiring if such a peculiar and objectionable custom was general, I received an answer in the affirmative. — During my stay in Alexandria, I lodged with a banker, Chaim Musero, who lived quite in the European style, and whose house was also arranged in the European fashion.

The town itself, its flourishing trade, its beautiful European style of building, its broad streets and markets, as well as the magnificent plantations surrounding it, are all so generally known that I should not like to venture a description of them.

From Alexandria I proceeded by an Arabian ship to the village of Mackmadia on the Nile, situated at a day's journey from Alexandria, and connected with it by a canal. Near Mackmadia the canal is closed by two large gates; all ships coming from Alexandria are unladen before these gates, and their cargoes placed in other

barks which take them on farther. The village of Mackmadia is a dirty spot, inhabited by about 400 Arabs, — all, both men and women, most base and depraved. They formerly lived in Alexandria, but when Ibrahim Pacha rebuilt the town in the European style, he turned them out of the old streets, and they then founded in Mackmadia a colony of their own.

Thence I again proceeded by an Arabian ship to Cairo; the journey lasted six days. The voyage on the Nile is in every respect most agreeable; the landscape charming; almost every hour villages and towns are passed, and everything that is necessary can be procured. I found particularly little chickens, called by the Arabs Jetch-Srir, very cheap here: these chickens are bred in great numbers, are hatched in ovens, and are very fat. The ovens arranged for this purpose are almost hermetically sealed, and are always divided into compartments; the Arabs who turn the eggs in the oven, and who have the charge of these things at the establishments, are very pale and wasted owing to the excessive heat which it is necessary to keep up for the hatching of the eggs: I was told that these people never lived to old age. — Large gardens are laid out at the mouth of the Nile, in which a great quantity of cucumbers (Arabic dilla), melons (batich), and pumpkins (kishua) are grown. — One day I went to a village in order to buy some bread, there was none to be had: an Arab asked me to wait a few minutes, and he would get some for me. He took quickly some flour and water and made some dough, shaped it into the form of a cake, and placed it in the sun: in a few minutes the cake was ready. This reminded me of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, — for the Bible tells us that they took their dough upon their shoulders, and baked it in the sun. (An account of the Medrash Rabba.)

On the sixth day we arrived at Baluck, the harbour of Cairo. There is a steam-boat from Mackmadia to Baluck, and by this the journey only lasts eighteen hours; but I

went by another ship, as I wished to see something of the vicinity and its inhabitants. From Buluck to Cairo is a distance of an hour's journey through beautiful gardens; the landscape is intersected by many canals for the purpose of irrigation. The inundations of the Nile are celebrated by a festival. The inhabitants arrange parties of pleasure on the water; the sounds of merry music are heard, and joy reigns around; for a fruitful prosperous year is expected, because there, for want of rain, it is the Nile alone that irrigates the soil.

In Cairo also there are two Jewish communities; one African, and one Italian. The first numbers about 6000 families, and the latter from 200 to 250 families.[1] In the year 1846 the two communities sent for a Chacham, Eliahu Israel, from Jerusalem, as their Chacham had died. The new Chacham had two wives, as had also my host with whom I lodged in Cairo, Mailum Moses Mosero, a money-changer, and the father of my former host in Alexandria. The two communities together have eight synagogues, of which one is called the Synagogue of Rambam (Maimonides). It contains several apartments for the reception of travellers. The town is large and thickly populated; but the streets are narrow and very dirty, although, on account of the intense heat, they are besprinkled with water three times a day.

From Cairo to Ancient-Cairo, which the Jews call Masar-al-Atik, is about an hour's journey. Many ruins are to be found on this road, and the town of Ancient-Cairo itself is also nearly a ruin. Only a few poor Arabs live there, and ten Jewish families, likewise very poor, and supported by their richer brethren in Cairo. There are two Synagogues in the place, of which the first, Al-Karkujan, is fallen into ruins, but the second, Al-Shamjan, although a very ancient building, is still in good condition. Some of the Jews call the latter Synagogue Kenesseth-Eliahu, and assert that Elijah once appeared there. It is supported inside by twelve marble columns, and has two sacred arks of the covenant,

[1] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 98, speaks of 2000 Jews.

one placed over the other. Over the upper one is an inscription in square Hebrew characters, which, however, has become defaced by time and almost illegible. This ark of the covenant is carefully locked, and no one is permitted to go up and open it. I requested the attendant to allow me to do so in order to see what the chest contained; but he refused my request, and told me that he had now held his office for 20 years, but had never himself once gone up, as it was believed that he who did so would die in the same year. He further told me that this chest contained manuscripts written by the renowned Ezra, and that the chest was thus kept carefully closed to protect them from injury. When I heard this, I urged my request the more, but, nothwithstanding all my pleadings and entreaties, I could not succeed in obtaining permission to see the contents of the chest. When I found this, I remarked laughing that doubtless the whole affair was but a fable, invented by some Chacham in order to act upon the credulity of the people: whereupon they called me a reformer, who would not believe in miracles.[1]

As the matter, however, deeply interested me, I made researches and inquiries concerning it, sought in many books for some account of the Pentateuch, but was not able to learn or find out anything about it. At last in 1854, when I was at Tlemsan in Algeria, lodging in the house of a certain Moses Sarbeth, a learned and rich man, who possessed an extensive library, I happened, accidentally one sleepless night, to take up some books in order to study, and in the second part of the Shem Hagdolim at the letter Ajin *(ä)* I found as follows: In the year 5248 Rabbi Obadiah of Bartanura was in Cairo; having left that place for Jerusalem, he wrote a letter to his father, in which he speaks thus: „I was in Ancient-Mizraim, and went into the synagogue of Elijah, where was a Pentateuch kept in a

[1] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 98, likewise mentions these two Synagogues, but he does not, however, speak of the Pentateuch.

chest in the handwriting of Ezra. A traveller from Western countries bribed the attendant, took out the Pentateuch, and went away with it. But when he was at sea, he was shipwrecked and drowned, and the Pentateuch was lost with him: the attendant died in the same year." The author of the Shem Hagdolim adds that when he was in Ancient-Cairo he was likewise told about this Pentateuch; but when he went into the Synagogue they would not show it to him, and the Chachamim of the town had told him in confidence that the above account was correct, and that in the ark of the covenant there was now only an empty chest. I found afterwards in the first volume of the Shem Hagdolim at the same letter *(ä)* as in the second volume, a passage where the author mentions that later in the five books of Moses, printed at Amsterdam with the commentaries Chinach and Dewed Tow, he had found in the part Waichi a remark of Rabbi Menachem Halevi, which asserts that the Rambam (Maimonides) had copied the five book of Moses from the Pentateuch in Ancient-Mizraim, and that this Pentateuch had been brought at the time of the Talmudists from Jerusalem to Ancient-Mizraim. Later the Rambam heard that in Burgundy there was really a Pentateuch written by the hand of Ezra, upon which he went there and examined it, and found that the Parshiot, Pituchot, and Sithumoth quite accorded with those copied by himself in Ancient-Mizraim. The date of this fact was the 28th of Sivan (Jar, May). — Thus the whole tradition of this Pentateuch and its authorship by Ezra is false; but I had obtained the desired explanation, and was glad that I had considered the whole affair from the beginning as a fable.

Without the city of Ancient-Cairo is shewn a Synagogue, which is asserted to have been the house of prayer of Moses, and the Jews call the building after his name.[1] This tradition may possibly be true, as in Exodus IX. 29 we read, that Moses said to King Pharaoh: „As soon as I

[1] Benjamin of Tudela, p. 102, likewise speaks of this Synagogue.

am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord."

Several other ancient and interesting remains are to be found here; for instance, a small palace built of different kinds of stone, which belonged to Joseph; only the upper part of which is decayed. This building is surrounded by a wall, and called by the Arabs Beth-el-Joseph; and from the terrace there is a fine extensive view as far as the desert.

Near this building is a very deep pit, to which there is a descent of 570 steps, hewn out of the earth. It is called by the Arabs Bir-al-Joseph (Joseph's pit), and they assert it is the dungeon into which Joseph was thrown by Potiphar. Two Arab girls with lights accompany those travellers who wish to examine the place, and for this they charge one piastre. Down in the pit is to be found a very fresh clear spring of water, and likewise a catafalque, in which rest, they say, the remains of a servant of Joseph, buried there by order of his master. It was in former times often the case that travellers visiting this pit were murdered and robbed by the Arabs; but this is now prevented by means taken by the authorities for public safety.

The dress of the Egyptian Jews resembles that worn by the Jews in Turkey. Many wear white turbans, and they often dress with great splendour. The women are also attired like those of Turkey; their headdress alone differs from that of the Turkish Jewesses, for they wear a red fez, the tassel of which consists of long single silken threads, hanging down to the feet. At the end of each thread is fastened a silver or some other coin, whereby this headdress is made very heavy. I once had such a fez in my hand, and I should reckon its weight to have been about ten pounds. The long tassels with the coins attached to them cause quite a ringing sound when the women appear in the street. The general language in speaking and writing is Arabic, but many also speak Italian. All are very atten-

tive and generous to strangers. I remarked in the Synagogue that their intonation in the reading of the portion for the week is quite different from that of the German and Portuguese Jews; but it was good, and had a particularly edifying impression.

The houses are handsome, and richly ornamented inside, but they have no windows: light comes from the terrace above. — The rich live almost completely in the European style; and as already mentioned, many young chickens and pigeons, which are uncommonly cheap, are eaten here.

On account of the heat, the water for drinking is very flat; and in order to make it cool and drinkable, they use cooling vessels made out of a kind of bluish earth; these vessels are filled over night, and placed upon the terraces.

From Cairo I embarked for Damietta; the journey lasted eight days on account of the water being low, at high tide it can be accomplished in four days.

The Jews assert that Damietta is Caphtorim mentioned in the Bible. The Targum translates it into Kaputkai, and by this name it is designated by the Talmudists.[1]

In Damietta dwell 50 Jewish families;[2] they have a Synagogue, but no Chacham, only a slaughterer.

Our brethren there are chiefly occupied in the sale of red fezes, dates, tobacco, cotton, silk, and other productions. In this city are the Consuls of the European powers.

Between Cairo and Damietta several scattered Jewish communities are to be found in some of the towns, but they have fallen into such a state of ignorance, as to be unable to repeat a Hebrew prayer. Even the slaughterer cannot read his Dinim (instructions) in the Hebrew language, but he has them in Arabic.

Six hours' journey down the Nile from Damietta is the village of Esba; here the ships wait for a favourable wind,

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[1] Genesis c. X. 14.

[2] Benjamin of Tudela speaks of 200 Jews.

before entering the Mediterranean Sea. — Respecting the general condition of the Jews in Egypt, I will only add that our brethren live happily there under the present Government, and enjoy every privilege. They trade with all countries of Europe, — particularly with England, — and even with the farthest parts of the world. There are many very rich bankers among them. — I believe they owe all the privileges they enjoy to the preponderating influence of the European Consuls.

This country offers every means of safety for travellers.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

II. Trabolus (Tripoli di Berberice).

The town of Tripoli is on the Mediterranean Sea; it is a considerable commercial town and has a large population, composed chiefly of Mussulmans. The Jewish community numbers about 1000 families: it has four Chachamim, who are called Dajanim (Justices of the place). The eldest is named Rabbi Abraham Adadi, the second Rabbi Shalom Agaw, — he is blind; the third Rabbi Joseph Ruben, and the fourth Rabbi Fredjah. They are all very well versed in the Talmud and in the Codex. The community has eight Synagogues, which, since the Turkish Government has been established there, have been enlarged and well arranged. They have also teachers to instruct the children in Hebrew and Italian. The Chaid (Nassi) of the community is Rabbi Shalom Titu, a rich and learned man, who possesses an extensive library (Jeshiva) in his house, and on account of his probity he is held in as much esteem by the Pacha as

he is by the Jews and Christians. He is the partner of another rich merchant named Moses (Arabic Misani), and carries on considerable commercial transactions with Sudan. He imports goods from France and Italy, and the Arabs from Sudan come to him with caravans bringing him dyes and ivory, for which they receive European articles in exchange. These Arabs repose such perfect confidence in him, that they almost exclusively do business with him, and if they do any business with others, they certainly always desire beforehand to have his opinion and advice. He is about forty years of age, has a handsome wife and two sons, of whom the eldest, Eliahu, is fifteen, and the youngest, Isaac, twelve years of age. He has his two sons instructed by European teachers in the Arabic, Hebrew, and Italian languages. He has likewise two daughters, of whom the elder, Asisa, is ten, and the other three years old. His mother, who still lives, is highly respected in his house. His dwelling, which stands in an open space, is charmingly situated: he lives quite in the European style, though the house is arranged according to the customs of the country. He is at the same time very religious, and never goes to his business without having first studied two hours with the young Chachamim, of whom there are several in the town. Every Saturday all the Chachamim assemble in his house, and the whole night is spent in studying the Talmud and sacred history. For the space of two months I lodged with this hospitable and learned man, and I have made the above remarks in acknowledgement of his great kindness.

In the town there were several other respected and well-informed men, whom I likewise feel myself obliged to mention: Rabbi Joseph Chalifi, broker to the French Consul, a very rich man, who also held literary meetings every Saturday; and a third, Rabbi Chaim Sirusi, who had several Chachamim studying in his house, and a beautiful Jeshiwa. This last Rabbi has two wives.

The community has an especial overseer, Rabbi Jacob

Rokaeach, for the relief of the poor, who manages the funds of the community. The support of the poor and of the Chachamim is managed by every merchant giving weekly 5 per Ct. on the gain of his business for this purpose. The overseer for the poor goes every week to the commercial people, examines their books, and takes in cash 5 per Ct. of the profits.

The Jews here are very religious. Every Monday and Thursday the Dajanim settle processes and adjust quarrels. If any one has committed a crime against religion, he is brought before the Cadi or the Chachamim, and punished by a fine or by the bastinado. Every morning and evening most of the inhabitants repair to the Synagogue to perform their devotions, and many men and women fast every new moon. In the newmoon of the month of Ellul (August) almost all the Jews fast until the day of atonement; and there are even women who fast during the whole of the week. At the end of the week there is a large feast prepared, to which all friends and acquaintances are invited, and various kinds of confits and sweetmeats are sent to the houses of those who are not able to come. On the Sabbath and festival days all go to the Synagogue, and they perform their devotions there with greater fervour than I have generally seen elsewhere.

I remarked in the Synagogue that on Friday evenings the prayer Shemona Ezra (silent prayer) is prayed aloud by the reciter; a custom which is not permitted by the law. On inquiring the reason for this, I was told that formerly in their ignorance they had only celebrated the Sabbath-day until a Chacham had instructed them in the observance of Friday evening and, in memory of this, they had determined to have this prayer recited aloud.

Many dress in the same fashion as in Tunis, others in the fashion of Algiers, and many others wear a peculiar costume consisting of a long garment reaching to the knees, a short burnon, white trousers reaching to the knees, and red shoes. The women wear for headdress a red fez, wound round with a silk kerchief, and handsomely ornamented

in different ways. To this is added a long garment, and a wide shawl hanging from the head, thrown gracefully round the upper part of the body. They wear slippers but no stockings, their hands and feet are decked with gold and silver rings, the nails painted red and the eyebrows black.

Many streets are inhabited almost entirely by Jews although they have the privilege of fixing their residence in any part they like. Several families of Italian Jews are to be found among them, but they do not form any especial community of themselves. — Among others is a family of the name of Selva, who has immigrated from Spain, where they were formerly Christians. Our fellow-worshippers live free and happily at Tripoli; they carry on a considerable trade, and are mostly very rich. Many of them hold Government appointments in the Custom-House. Respecting their usages and habits at births, marriages and deaths, I shall speak in conclusion when I name those of all the other African Jews; for their customs are the same throughout.

The climate of Tripoli is very bad; and the inhabitants suffer particularly from severe diseases of the eye. Almost a fifth part of the whole population suffer in this way, and nearly a tenth part are completely blind, so that I never saw so many blind persons as in this place. This disease however seems to confine itself only to the natives, for the Europeans are not affected by it, and can bear the climate better.

At the east and west of the town of Tripoli are several villages which have likewise some Jewish inhabitants. Two hours' journey to the east is the village of Amrus; here there are 50 Jewish families, who have a synagogue and a slaughterer. Two hours' journey farther on is the village of Tisuri, which contains 70 Jewish families. In these two villages and their vicinity there are some remarkably beautiful palmwoods and vineyards. A drink called Lagwi (palm-wine) is extracted from these palm trees; it is sweet, and has a pleasant flavour, but intoxicates very easily; it is sold for 1 piastre the occa. It is prepared in the following way:

the crowns of the finest palm trees are cut off, and the part is covered with a particular kind of plaster. After about fifteen days, when the whole sap of the tree has been thus drawn up, small pieces, to act as taps, are then inserted into the trunk of the tree, and beneath these, vessels are placed, into which the wine runs. I was told that in this manner sometimes 1000 to 1500 piastres worth of wine could be drawn from one tree; but the tree dies in consequence.

A journey of a day and a half from here is the village of Muslata, close to a large chain of mountains, near the coast; here grows a particularly excellent grape. In this little place live about 150 Jewish families, who have a Chacham named Rabbi Moshe; the Nassi of the little community is Mailum Pinchas; they likewise have a synagogue.

Again another day and a half's journey from this place over a sandy mountain lies the village of Zelitna, where are 100 Jewish families. Here good wine is produced, much corn grows, and there are several palms. A journey of a day and a half farther on, after passing through a little desert, one arrives at the village of Mesurata; here live about 100 Jewish families, who have two synagogues. Very few palms are to be found near this village, but good wine and fruits. It lies close to the Mediterranean Sea, and carries on no small trade with Malta.

After a journey by sea of four days I came to the town of Bengasi. Here dwell about 400 Jewish families, who are divided into two communities, of which one is called the community of Tripoli, and the other the community of Bengasi. Each community has its own particular synagogue, but they are both superintended by the same Chacham, Rabbi Isaac Chalfon.

The villages I visited to the west of Tripoli are the following: Eight hours' journey from the town lies Sawia, a village, where very extensive palm plantations are to be found, and from whence quantities of dates are exported. The Jewish community consists of about 40 families, who have a Chacham and a synagogue. — Two days' journey

farther on, through deserts and over mountains is the village of Djebel, extending along two sides of a mountain: hence its name. The inhabitants of this place occupy themselves entirely in agriculture and cattle breeding. There are 100 Jewish families here, whose Nassi is Isaac Medina. In one part of the village stands a synagogue called Grebe, to which pilgrimages are made. The Arabs consider this synagogue sacred, and relate fabulous wonders concerning it; hence it is that all this synagogue contains is perfectly safe from pillage. — An hour's journey from here is a small castle called Birs-al-Askar, in which about 1000 men are stationed, in order to suppress any turbulent movement which might be made. — A journey of a day and a half farther on, through a very flat country in which graze numerous flocks of sheep, brings one to the village of Ghurian, where 120 Jewish families reside, whose Nassi is called Chomani. This village is employed in agricultural pursuits and in the breeding of cattle; many figtrees also are found here. — Two hours' journey from thence is the village of Beneabbas. In these two last mentioned villages the inhabitants have the extraordinary custom of building their houses in the ground, which have the advantage of being agreeably cool in summer and warm in winter.

In all the above mentioned villages the houses are most wretched. In the apartments, mats of palm twigs are spread over the bare floor, and upon these the inhabitants repose; carpets are nowhere to be seen. Their dress is dirty; it consists of a fez bound round with a kerchief, a garment reaching to the knees, and trousers of the same length. They continue to wear the same articles of clothing until they drop into rags; on Saturday, however, they change their linen. They put on a burnon when they go out. The women wear a long robe ornamented with silver coins and medals, and a fez the same as the men. They wrap a woollen

shawl round their head and the upper part of their body; their feet are ornamented with rings, and are bare like those of the men. Their holiday attire is but seldom washed, their every day clothes *never*; it can easily therefore be imagined that they are very dirty.

I took a suitable opportunity to make inquiries of some of my fellow-worshippers, how it was that so little importance was attached to either cleanliness of person or of dress; for besides the disagreeable impression their uncleanliness made on every one, they were moreover acting against the law, as the Bible in several places gives directions respecting the cleansing and washing of apparel. In answer to this, I was told that it was caused by fear of the Arabs, who, if they saw them different would imagine they were rich, and plunder them daily. This excuse seemed plausible.

For two hours early in the morning the women are occupied in grinding the corn, from which they afterwards make bread: one may generally hear them singing at their task. It struck me particularly that the beds of these people were in a remarkably good condition. Their food is very bad; two of their dishes, which are considered delicacies, but which would disgust an European, are the following: Zu-meta and Busi. The first is thus prepared: barley is dried until it is almost scorched, after which it is ground, the flour sifted and mixed with ground carroway seeds. Some water is then poured over this mixture, it is pressed and kneaded in the hand until it becomes dough, and this is eaten with raw onions. They drink water with it, and the dish is much relished. *Busi* is prepared in the following way: water is boiled, and salt and wheat flour poured into it; this is well stirred together, until it becomes a thick, hard dough, which is put into a large dish; a greasy sauce is then made and poured over it. The whole family then seat themselves round the dish, and, as knives and forks are not known, each plunges his hand into the dish, tears off a portion of the dough, dips it several times into the greasy

sauce, and then eats it. The whole proceeding was so disgusting to me, that I really could not look at it, and these two delicacies of the country are enjoyed alike by Jews and Christians, sick and healthy. From this, some idea can be formed of the discomforts a traveller in these countries has to endure.

Besides agricultural pursuits and the breeding of cattle, the cultivation of the wine and the planting of dates, palms, and pomegranates are the principal employments of the Jews in these villages. They likewise employ themselves in weaving, and make woollen covers for sale, blacksmiths and locksmiths are also to be found among them, and makers of peculiar brushes used in dressing woollen cloths. Jews in bad circumstances are very seldom to be found here; many of them are very wealthy, and almost all can obtain a livelihood; for as the Arabs themselves pay no attention to trade, they purchase all they require of the Jews. Those who live near the sea carry on likewise a wine and corn trade. — Although Government permits them perfect freedom, they still suffer much from the fanaticism of the Arabs.

Besides the above mentioned villages, there are others still in which Jews reside; but as I have not seen them, I can say nothing of them.

All the Jews of these villages are under the superintendance of the Chachamim of Tripoli, for all the surrounding neighbourhood belongs to the Pachalik of that town.

CHAPTER XL.

III. Tunis.

From Tripoli, Tunis can be reached by land as well as by water. I chose the latter mode of travelling, as the journey by land is very dangerous, and at the end of September 1853, I embarked in an Arab ship going to Zerbi. With a favourable wind the voyage lasts from two to three days, but we were surprised by a sudden storm, so that for the space of eight days we were beaten to and fro, and at length driven back to Tripoli, where, close to the harbour, our ship was dashed to pieces. The passengers, however, were saved. I remained there during the festival days, and then embarked for the second time, and after a passage of two days arrived safely at Zerbi.

Before entering the town, a quarantine of ten days has to be performed, for which purpose a large building has been erected close to the sea, and in that dirty house the ten days appear to pass to the traveller like ten years.

The town of Zerbi is divided into two parts, of which one is on the coast. In this part are situated the manufactories &c. and business is carried on. The best Taleths to be found in Turkey are made at this place. In this portion of the town live also the European Consuls and the rich Mahomedans. Half an hour's journey from here, and separated from it by a tract of sand, is the other part of Zerbi, and in this part reside the Jewish inhabitants, numbering about five hundred families. They

have several Chachamim, of whom the first Rabbi is called Salomo Matuk, and the second Rabbi, Nisim Semama: the Chachamim are not paid by the community, for they themselves are rich manufacturers. The place has two synagogues, both tolerably large; one of them is attented by Cohanim (priests) only, and is therefore called the Priests' Synagogue. In no town are so many priests to be found as here; they form nearly a third part of the community. The Jews are very religious and well instructed in the Talmud; forming a contrast to those living in Tripoli, who are rather ignorant. Their trade flourishes, and they likewise many of them possess large manufactories, in which Taleths, turbans, woollen and cotton stuffs are prepared. They likewise occupy themselves with cultivating the soil and the wine. Their commercial intercourse is directed particularly towards Malta, and many Europeans likewise come to Tunis for business transactions. Their dwellings are tolerable, but their food is bad; barley bread is eaten, and it is only when a stranger visits a house that wheaten bread is baked in his honour.

Numerous scorpions are found in Zerbi, and many deaths are yearly caused by the sting of these dreadful animals.

The men dress according to the fashion of Tunis, with only the difference that they wear no stockings, but only red shoes. The women dress according to the same fashion, and when they go abroad they wrap themselves in a large woollen shawl, so that nothing can be seen of the face. They also wear neither shoes nor stockings; and if one of them were to do it, she would be thought a woman of no character, who wished to make herself remarkable. The houses are built in the most simple manner possible, of street dirt and stones; inside and outside daubed with lime or chalk. Every one is his own architect, and builds according to his own taste, but it can only be done in winter, as, otherwise, he would be in want of the greatest requisite — street dirt — which is only to be had at that time of the year when the rain falls. A heavy rain penetrates into these slightly

built houses, as they are only furnished with terraces and have no roofs. In the year 1853 in the month of October it rained very heavily for the space of three days; thereby two thirds of the town were destroyed, — almost all the houses injured, — and quite a lake formed itself between the two parts of the town, so that, in order to get from one part to the other, they had to make use of ships and canoes. The warehouses also were much damaged.

Two hours' journey to the South-East of the town is the village of Deged, which contains 50 Jewish families, and has a small synagogue. About half an hour's journey from this place the community has another tolerably large and ancient synagogue, which they call Grebe. To this synagogue they repair to perform their devotions on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, as well as on festival days. This synagogue is considered very sacred; and they relate that a stone was once found here with the inscription: „Up to this place came Joab ben Zeruja — the general of King David.“ I desired to see this stone, but I was told that it was walled in the place where stood the sacred covenant of the ark. The synagogue has no windows, as is the case with all synagogues in all places in Tripoli. I was informed that this arrangement had been made, in order that the Arabs should be prevented from throwing fire into the building from the outside.

Two days' journey by sea from Zerbi is the town of Cabes; here dwell about 100 Jewish families. Their Chacham and Nassi is David Cohen, who has two wives, is very rich, and carries on a great business with the tract of land called Isrit, in the desert, three days' journey from Cabes. In the manufactories of Cabes are made the burnons for the whole territory of Tunis; the Arabs likewise carry on a great trade in cattle. The dress and customs resemble those of Zerbi, only the women have their faces uncovered, and on their feet they wear red shoes but no stockings. The Jews occupy themselves chiefly in agriculture, and with wine and palm plantations. The Arabs employ themselves much in

the breeding of cattle, particularly of sheep and camels. In the year 1853 the rain did here also much damage.

Half an hour's journey from Cabes is a little place called Sara, in which dwell about 50 Jewish families, who employ themselves in the same manner as those living in Cabes. The ruler of the place lives at Tunis, and only comes to this neighbourhood for three months in the summer. With him come the receiver of taxes for the Government of Tunis, Cadi Nathan Shemana, with his son Salomo, and they collect the tributes. The tax-receiver, who has a military escort with him, pitches his tent about an hour's distance from this place, and thither the Arabs of the whole locality repair to pay their dues. In this place there are many warm mineral springs, but they are not used by the inhabitants of the country, their valuable properties not being known: I have bathed in them several times, and experienced their invigorating effects.

I have still to mention a few more places which I have not visited myself, but have heard described. Three days' journey from Cabes lies, in the desert, a tract of country called Isrit, and by the Jews called Erez Hatmarim (country of dates); here likewise grow many palms. There are several towns in this little country. The first is Gaffa, two days' journey farther on is Tozer, again one day's journey farther on Nefta, and another day's journey still farther Gamar, where meet the boundaries of Tunis and Algeria. Jews live in all these places, and have a Chacham in common, named Rabbi Salomo Bursil, a very learned and good man. The Jewish inhabitants, as well as the native Arabs occupy themselves in agricultural pursuits, the breeding of cattle, and the cultivation of dates and palms; but few carry on any trade. — These statements I have heard verbally from natives.

From Cabes to Sfax one can travel by land or water; both ways are, however, very unsafe; the former on account of the Bedouins, and the latter owing to the great ignorance of the captains of the ships. I prefered the voyage by sea,

but we had to undergo many hardships. Several times we were in danger of being dashed on the rocks, and the flow and ebb of the tide caused us much trouble. Our journey lasted ten days, so that at length our provisions were exhausted. We arrived at the little island of Kerkena, eighteen hours' journey in length and four hours' in breadth, between Cabes and Sfax. The island is unfruitful and uncultivated; only wild dates grow there. The Arabs support themselves by fishing, and sell dried fish, with which we satisfied our hunger during the last four days of our voyage. The inhabitants of the island pay no taxes, for they are all soldiers. On the tenth day we arrived at Sfax, and when I first saw the place, it seemed to me as if I was entering a paradise. The streets are paved and clean, the houses very neat and in appearance comfortable, the food good, and well tasted. Nearly 150 Jewish families live here, and they have two synagogues. The Chacham of the community is named Rabbi Saul Chay, the Nassi Rabbi Eliahu Suback. The latter, with whom I lodged, is also tax-collector for the Government, and very rich. Several Italian families also dwell here. — The Jews carry on extensive commercial transactions, and stand in mercantile connexion with Tunis, Malta and Italy, to which they export wool, cotton, corn and olive oil. Their dress resembles that of the Jews of Tunis.

In Sfax the ebb and flow of the tide is very strong; it lasts daily 12 hours, from midnight until midday, and the water recedes about an hour's journey, so that the ships stand dry. From here one can go by sea to Mehedia, Micknin, Monastir and Susa; but, as I had endured so many discomforts during my last sea journey, I joined a caravan, and determined to try the land-route. The Chacham of Sfax travelled with me. The road is through deserts and over mountains, and lasts five days.

Halfway is a valley, about an hour's journey in breadth, the soil of which is quite white, as if covered by a crust of salt; the Arabs call it Geh-Melch (valley of salt). The

Jews of the vicinity assert that this is the spot mentioned in Psalm LX, 2, and say that Joab ben Zeroja came up to this spot with his army, as the Psalm relates. I asked for some proofs of this assertion; upon which my travelling companion, Chacham Saul, explained to me that about an hour's distance from here was a village called Elgemme, where the caravans halt, and here there was a large, ancient, stone building with a Hebrew inscription, the purport of which was as follows: „Ad Khan Higia Joab ben Zeroja" (that is to say: „Up to this place came Joab the son of Zeruiah"). I was incredulous, and replied that anybody might have written that inscription, but to this he remarked that the inscription was in ancient characters. — I had become so full of curiosity, that the time appeared too long before I came to the place where I could make my own researches. Immediately on my arrival in the village in question, I hired an Arab, to whom I gave 2 rajals (6 piastres), to act as guide and show me everything worth seeing; my travelling companion accompanied me. We arrived at the ancient building. It is round, in the middle of it is a large courtyard, which I ascertained to be about 320 feet long, and the same in breadth. The portal of the door is about 30 feet high, and 16 wide. The building itself has five stories, and is about 120 feet in height. In each story are 60 chambers, with a window in each. The breadth of the rooms with the two side walls is about 60 feet. Under the rooms of the first story are large caves, which are entered from the interior, and among them is one which extends as far as Mehedia, a distance of 12 hours' journey. The stones of the building are enormously large and thick. The upper story is nearly in ruins, as the Arabs have broken away the stones to build their own houses. On the outside of the second story, on the northern side, is the inscription. I clambered through the window on to a stone in the wall which somewhat projected, and my Arab guide held me firm from the inside of the room, while I read the inscription. My travelling companion remained in the room, and I called

out to him each letter that was hewn in the stone, and he wrote it down. The form of the characters is not square, but resembles that of the Sefardim (Portuguese Jews). The letters were as follows: *Ha, Nun* (final), *Thet, Waw, Daleth Mem, Nun* (initial), *Waw, Thet, Samech, Pe, Kaph, Nun* (final), *Mem, Pe, Nun* (initial), *Waw, Thet, Daleth, Mem, Nun* (initial), *Chaph, Waw, Nun* (initial), *Zadi, Kaph.* Many of the letters I could not at all decipher. In German the letters are as follows: *H, N, T, W, D, M, N, W, T, S, P, K, N, M, P, N, W, T, D, M, N, K, W, N, Z, K.* I could make nothing out of it, at least nothing like what my travelling companion had mentioned; perhaps in the dangerous position I occupied on the wall it may be that I overlooked something. I therefore only note down the letters of the inscription in order to make other travellers attentive to the fact, and to induce them to make further researches. — I believe that the tradition related to me is incorrect, and that the building dates from the Romans; the inscription may have originated later in some unknown way. In many parts of the building I found the names of European travellers, who had visited this place, and to these names I added mine.

In two and a half days I arrived at Susa. We were obliged to hurry our journey so much as to travel by night as well as by day; and this reminded me of the words of Jacob, who exclaimed: „In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.“ [1]

Susa is a large fortress, lying close to the sea; it possesses a strong garrison. The Jews are divided into two communities: African and Italian. The first numbers about 250, and the Italian about 150 families; both have the same Chacham, whose name is Rabbi Nathan Bursil. The Cadi is called by the Arabs Chogi, and by the Jews Isaac; he is the son of the first Chacham at Tunis, Rabbi Jeshua Basis,

[1] Genesis c. XXXI. 40.

and son-in-law to the Cadi at Tunis, Josef Semana. The superintendent of the Italian community is Rabbi Jehuda Halevi of Gibraltar. Each community has a synagogue; that of the Africans is a large old stone building, that of the Italians a small house, one story high. For the most part our brethren here are very well instructed; they speak Arabic and Italian. Their dwellings and food are tolerably good, and they are generally rich and some even wealthy. They carry on a flourishing trade in wool, and a still greater one in olive oil, which is exported in great quantities. Many Christians live also in this town, and they are engaged in similar branches of trade. Both Jews and Christians enjoy every privilege under this Government.

Two days' journey from here is the town of Nabal, a dirty place, completely surrounded by mountains. Here dwell about 100 Jewish families. Their Chacham and Nassi Rabbi Chay Algez, is chiefly with the Bey in Tunis; he is a very clever man, and endeavours to foretell the future by algebraic calculations, and he has a decided believer in the Bey. The community has one synagogue. But few Jews here are engaged in trade; they mostly devote themselves to agricultural pursuits. They speak Arabic.

A journey of one day from hence brings one to Hammamet (bath). There are most beautiful baths and lovely plantations in this place, and I spent several days here to refresh myself. Half a day's journey from this delightful spot is Tunis.

Near the town of Tunis are still to be seen the ruins of the ancient city of Hannibal, the rival of Rome.

In Tunis there dwell about 15,000 Jews belonging to the African, and about 1000 belonging to the Italian community. The African community has nine Dajanim, of which the first is the already named Jeshua Basis. He is a clever and learned man, and has still a very sharp eye notwithstanding his 80 years. He is rich and benevolent, and fills his office without any emolument. The second Rabbi, Nathan Bursil, is nearly as old as his colleague; he

is tall, and has a distinguished and noble appearence, he is also rich, learned, and charitable. The third Rabbi, Joseph Bursil, brother to the above mentioned, is about 50 years of age; he is a particularly learned Orientalist, and the author of the work „*Sara de Joseph*“ (Livorno 1852). I lodged for some time in his house, he has a Jeshiwa and several pupils, to whom he gives instruction gratis: he himself studies almost day and night, only allowing himself a few hours for sleep. The fourth Dajan is Rabbi Abraham Cohen; the fifth Rabbi Abraham Askanansi, the sixth Rabbi Moshe Gafid, the seventh Rabbi Gay; the other two I cannot name, as I do not know them. The community possesses four large synagogues and above fifty smaller ones. There are more than 800 very well instructed Talmudists in the town, and the other Jews are also not badly informed.

The Italian community has three especial Dajanim. The first is Rabbi David Bunan, the second Rabbi David Kartusu, and the third Rabbi Joseph Lambrusu. They have one large and two smaller synagogues.

I need not speak of the widely spreading trade of the city of Tunis which extends over all the countries of Europe; for this is a matter generally known. The fez manufactories are here very celebrated, as well as those of dyes, which are both mostly carried on by Jews. Among the Jewish inhabitants are some very rich, some even millionaires; many of them occupy appointments under Government. For instance, the Cadi Rabbi Joseph Belaiz, president of the Jewish community, is decorated with the Nissan (order); Cadi Nisim Semama is Chancellor of the Exchequer; Cadi Salomo Bursil likewise fills some appointment, and there are many others I am not able to enumerate. All these men dress in the European style, with the exception of wearing the red fez. The Jews of Tunis are benevolent and upright men; the Government allows them every privilege, but they still suffer from the fanaticism of the Arabs. Their houses are generally two stories high and very clean; their courtyards are not unfrequently paved with marble,

and their mode of life is good. They mostly reside together in one particular quarter of the town, although they are permitted to dwell elsewhere if they like. The Jewish quarter is called Chara; it has gates which are closed every evening at 10 o' clock, and opened every morning at 5 o' clock.

The town of Tunis is very dirty, and even after a slight rain, the mud is over one's shoes. It is surrounded by a wall and by a boggy ditch, which, in summer, diffuses a particularly offensive smell. The neighbourhood is exceedingly fruitful. The gardens round the town are beautiful, planted with the most splendid fruit trees and tropical plants, and ornamented with fountains &c. In these gardens are built charming country houses, many of which belong to our brethren.

The men wear wide cloth trousers, stockings, and shoes, an embroidered vest, and over this a burnon. They shave their heads; the unmarried men wear a small black cap, and the married ones a turban with a black fez. The women wear a folded garment and wide trousers of silk or satin, which are quite tight from the knee, and ornamented with rich embroideries of gold and silver. Over all this they put on a kind of silk tunic, without sleeves, reaching as far as the knee, composed generally of two different coloured kinds of stuff. They cover their head with a fez, round which is wound a silk kerchief, with the ends hanging down. They likewise wear stockings and shoes. Upon their trousers, in particular, great extravagance is lavished; and I was told that they often cost the rich from 400 to 500 reals. The married women wear round their waist a kind of girdle. In the street they wrap themselves in a wide silk or fine woollen shawl; but leave their face uncovered, and hold up their garments as high as the knee, in order to display the embroidery on their trousers. They are generally very beautiful, rather stout, and in their beauty resemble their sisters in Bagdad; except that the women in that town are more noble looking and graceful, while the ladies of Tunis are more corpulent. The

Bagdad ladies are very industrious, while it is quite the contrary with those in Tunis. In Tunis as well as in Bagdad the girls marry from the age of thirteen.

I here mention a peculiar and most remarkable custom of the country. Among the native women, Arabs as well as Jews and Christians, exists a firm belief in evil spirits and ghosts, and the most different kinds of events are attributed to their influence. If, for instance, a woman falls ill, and on the third day is not better, she believes herself persecuted by Satan or one of his imps, and, according to firm and general belief, there is no earthly remedy for the cure of her complaint; the woman can only regain her health by an union with the evil one, — a complete marriage. With respect to this, the most curious ceremonies are observed. The sick person invites her female relations and acquaintances to a feast; seven different dishes are cooked and served up; the women seat themselves round the table, but the sick person remains lying in her bed. Music must not fail at this entertainment; a band of musicians (tamburine and kettle drummers) therefore is invited, but only on condition that they are all blind. When the party of women are seated round the table, the eldest of them takes an empty dirty spoon, fills it with a portion of each of the seven dishes, and carries it to the cloaca in the courtyard; this is the portion for the evil one, then the women themselves devour the rest. The musicians make a horrible noise with their drums and tambourines, singing and howling particular songs at the same time. At the conclusion of the meal, the women begin to dance and to jump, and get at last into such a state of excitement, that by degrees they even disencumber themselves of their garments. The patient is taken from her bed, drawn into the whirl of the dancers, deprived of her clothing, and in thus made to dance with the others in this wild frenzy. They shriek, scream, sing, till there is really quite a satanic noise; at last they all fall down exhausted, and roll about on the floor in a state bordering on convulsions. At this moment is believed that the

evil one is united to the patient. After this mad ceremony the sick person *must* recover. If she does not, it is believed that the devil despises her, and gives her up. In many cases a recovery really does take place, occasioned probably by the rapid circulation of the blood and the profuse perspiration caused by these mental and bodily exertions. If the woman recovers, she wears later, at the pretended order of the devil, a party-coloured tunic. They go so far in this nonsense as even to attribute a certain religion to the evil one and call him either a Mahomedan, Jew, or Christian.

The greater part of the women suffer from this insane idea, but they carefully and rigidly conceal these ceremonies from the eyes of the men. Notwithstanding this, I sought for and once found an opportunity of witnessing such an affair myself. In Tunis there lived a Jewish tailor from Poland, who had a native woman for his wife. On visiting him one day, I found him most depressed. On inquiring the cause of this, he told me his wife was ill, and that he must solemnize the devil's ceremony with her, and for this he had no money. I scolded him, and asked him how he, as a native European, could permit or countenance such folly? To this he answered that he was compelled to do so on account of her family, otherwise they would suppose he wished to kill his wife. After reflecting a little, I advised him to let the ceremony take place, and that we should conceal ourselves, and take part in it as witnesses. He should allow the women to be in peace until their wild dancing began, and then suddenly appear among them. The man followed my advice, but armed himself with a stick and appearing at the right moment upon the dancing women, he began to lay about with it. With shrieks the company separated, and in the most remarkable costumes, some scarcely half dressed, they rushed out of the house. He then gave some hard blows to his wife, laid her on her bed, and left her. My advice proved good, for in the space of two days the woman had perfectly recovered, and was never again tormented by the evil one.

But for some length of time I dared not show myself abroad; for this story and the part I had taken in it became known, and the women were much enraged against me.

Another time I was invited to a party, at which a number of women were present. One of the natives asked me if I should like to see such a bit of fun as I have above described, for that he would try and arrange such an amusement for me. He then went to the musicians and told them to begin the appropriate songs and music used at the devil's marriage ceremony. They began accordingly, and after a short time the women, excited by the sound of that wild music and singing, began to scream, sing and dance. One of the quieter ones begged us to put an end to the affair, and we ordered the musicians to cease. Had we not done this, we certainly should have had the whole spectacle played before us, for the women seemed, as if they were suddenly all bewitched. When all again became quiet, they quitted the party full of shame.

The Chachamim of the town have often troubled themselves to put an end to this absurd custom, but all their efforts have hitherto been in vain.

Belief in witches and witchcraft is also general; and even some of the women offer themselves publicly in the streets to practise witchcraft, and any one who desires to hear his future foretold or to see her magic art, calls one of these women into his house, and lets her make her experiments. I was curious to see something of this, and was at the same time anxious to prove to the people that the whole affair was absurd. Accidentally, one day just such a hag passed the house where I was on a visit, and I begged that the woman might be called in, and allowed to show her sorceries. This request was granted, but unwillingly. The woman entered, and was asked to show her art. She took a vessel, went silently to the well in the courtyard, and murmuring all the time some unintelligible words, filled it with water; she then came to me, and desired me to wash my chest and my hands in the water,

and then to drink it. I did what she asked, with the exception of the last item; whereupon the old witch foretold great success to her charms. She then took seven different kinds of pulse, wheat, maize, peas &c., and seven kinds of green stuff, put all together into a pot, poured water into it, and placed the pot on the fire. The mixture soon began to boil and bubble, and this bubbling forms the asserted spirit-voices, which, of course, are only intelligible to witches. The sorceress then began to tell me out of the bubbling pot the most wonderful things about my present, past and future, and Heaven knows what else besides. When she had finished, I told her that it was all false, and that in Europe such things were much better understood. The woman, full of curiosity, asked me to tell her then how it was managed there. I told her no pot was needed for that purpose, but that she would hear a distinct voice, and *feel* the charm. I then took my stick, fought about with it in the air with loud mutterings, and then let it descend upon her with some good hard blows. Screaming and swearing she ran out of the house, and I threw her sorcery-pot after her. The people, in whose house this had taken place, were seized with terror, and did not even venture to touch the pot, or to go near the place where it fell. I myself was obliged to clear away the fragments and contents, in order to prove there was nothing to fear. When they saw this, and found that at the end of three days no bad consequences ensued, they promised me to give up their belief in all witchcraft, by means of which money was continually being extorted from them.

One day's journey to the west of Tunis lies the town of *Bunsard* on the sea; nearly 150 Jewish families reside here, among whom are a great number of Italian Jews. They have one synagogue, and their Chacham is called Rabbi Salomo. They carry on a flourishing trade, and the commercial people among them are very rich, and at the same

time well informed. There is in the town an extensive fishery, established by the Bey, and its produce (salted and dried fish, and liver-oil) forms an important article of export trade.

The Arabs of the town belong partly to a peculiar sect, which is called Ousawi, and which is subdivided into several parties; each party taking some chosen animal as a symbol, and being called after it. Thus, there are Ousawi of lions, bears, camels, and ostriches. The followers of these sects accompany the pilgrims coming from and going to Mecca in and out of the town, a matter which is always attended with much solemnity, music, and pomp. At these festive processions the Ousawi get into such an excited state of religious fanaticism that they appear to have lost their reason. They behave like the wild animals they have taken for their symbol; they roar like a lion, growl like a bear, and I was told that they even took their food after the manner of these animals; thus the lion- and bear-Ousawi would eat raw flesh, and even tear and swallow live chickens, while the ostrich-Ousawi gulp down stones and glass, until blood flows from their mouths; and the camel-Ousawi devour thorns and thistles. Their animal ferocity in this condition goes so far, that they are obliged to be led about in chains; though the Sheik, who commands each party, possesses such great power over them that by simply touching them on the shoulder he is able to quiet them.

The Chacham of the town related to me these facts, but as I was somewhat incredulous, I asked several Arabs concerning it, and by them the accounts were confirmed; during my stay there, however, I did not see anything of it.

One day's journey from *Bunsard* in a southern direction is the town of *Erswil*, and two days' journey farther on *Matar*; again at a day and a half's journey *Bizerta*, and another day and a half's journey from thence *Tistur*, and two and a half days' journey still farther is *Rukaf*. From

this last town, a road of eight days' journey in length through the desert leads to the above mentioned date country *Isrit.* — Another road from *Rukaf* leads in four days' journey through the desert to *Bona* (Arabic Anabi). Jews live in all these places, and although they are affluent, they are for the most part ignorant. From Bunsard I returned to Tunis, and went by steam boat to Bona; we were a day and a half on the way. On the frontier between Tunis and Algeria there is a little village in the African territory where there are considerable coral fisheries.

CHAPTER XLI.

IV. Algeria.

On entering Bona, it seemed to me as if I had entered paradise after a sojourn in hell. The sight of a town built in the European style, and of civilised men was truly refreshing. One great discomfort, however, the Europeans have to endure here, and that is the fever, which, although not of a dangerous kind, rages among them.

In the town live about 150 Jewish families, whose Chacham, a native of Morocco, is a man of no great learning. The community has a very large ancient synagogue called Grebe, in which, on the north wall, the place of the ark of the covenant is formed by a small room to which one ascends by several steps: in this room are the Pentateuchs. This little room has a particularly sacred character. One day I remarked several Mussulman women enter it, seat themselves for some time on the floor, and, after having offered a gift, retire. I asked the cause of this; for it seemed to

me strange that Mussulman women should visit a synagogue in such a manner; and, in reply I heard the following story. — Several hundred years ago, at very high tide in stormy weather, a plank was driven very near ashore; some Mussulmans tried to fish it out, but it receded; and the same thing happened when some Christians endeavoured to draw it out: some Jews, however, having come and made the attempt, the plank was driven to land, and there remained. Fastened on this plank they found a Pentateuch, and this they conveyed to the synagogue, and displayed it there. From this miracle arose the belief in the holiness of the room where the Pentateuch was preserved, and whenever a woman, either Mussulman or Christian, is not well, she has only to come here, to pray and make offerings in order to recover. — I expressed my disbelief in the miraculous power of this sanctuary, and explained the history of the fishing out of the plank and the Pentateuch from the sea quite simply; for, if the story was true, perhaps some Jew might have suffered shipwreck and might have fastened the Pentateuch to a plank in order that it might not be lost; but, that it should have happened that Jews had drawn it up, when Mussulmans and Christians had failed to do it, I declared to be either an accident, or that the sea must have become calmer during the time. After such an inference they considered me an unbeliever, and scolded me as such.

The distance between Bona to Constantine can be accomplished on horseback in three days.

I went by steamer to Philippeville, and thence in twelve hours to Constantine.

The town of Constantine is built on the top of a mountain; it is a considerable fortress, and surrounded by strong walls. Outside the walls, a natural moat, 200 feet deep and 40 feet broad, surrounds the town, and at a further distance a chain of mountains encircles the whole. In the upper part of the town reside the Europeans, and this is also the commercial part, whilst in the lower part live the

Africans, and most of the Jews. There are about 1000 Jewish families in the town, and they possess three synagogues. Besides having a native Chacham, Rabbi Isaac Tuwiana, the community is superintended by a chief Rabbi, Rabbi Ephraim Netter, appointed by the French Government. The president of the community is Rabbi Salomo Narboni; he is a descendant of the banished Spanish Jewish families, about 70 years old, and very rich. The Jews carry on a considerable trade with the neighbouring Arab towns and villages, and for the most part are very wealthy.

Among the natives, Jews as well as Mussulmans and Christians, exists also a superstitious custom when any illness occurs; for here it is likewise believed, that, if any one is ill, he is pursued by an evil spirit. In order to appease and banish this spirit, a black cock is killed, and with its blood the chest and crown of the head, the eyebrows, and hands of the patient are besmeared. The cock is then cooked, and afterwards thrown into some well outside the town as an offering to the evil spirit. It is firmly believed that after this the patient will certainly recover.

At a distance of two days' journey, south east of Constantine, is *Batna*, one day's journey farther on *Biskera*, a day and a half farther is *Cidagua*, and one day's journey from there is *Ginge*. Near the latter place is the boundary between Algeria and Tunis, and from thence one reaches Isrit. Little Jewish communities dwell in all these places, but there is nothing worthy of note to say concerning them.

One and a half days' journey north west of Constantine is the town of *Setif*, which has only been recently built. About 100 Jewish families, who have come from Cabyla, have settled here. Their president is David, a son-in-law of Narboni in Constantine. The second superintendent is Eliahu Mammi, with whom I lodged. The little community has built for itself a beautiful new synagogue; but altogether they are very ignorant, and live according to the customs adopted by them in Cabyla. Although their houses are built in the European style, still in the interior they more

resemble the tents in which they used to dwell among the Cabyles. They dress in a very simple manner, wearing a long garment reaching down to the ancles, and over this they hang a burnon. They cover their heads with a fez, upon which is a small turban. The women dress in a manner quite as simple. Care has of late been bestowed on the instruction of the children.

Not far from Setif begins the country of the Cabyles. On my inquiring of the Jews of Setif, if there were many fellow-worshippers among the Cabylian tribes, I received an assurance in the affirmative; according to their assertions there is a considerable Jewish tribe at Cabyla, whom the Arabs call Bene-Mussa (children of Moses), tall, brave warriors. — May not these be the Bene-Moshe of whom my fellow-worshippers speak? — It was also told me that there was likewise an Arab tribe of the name of Emare, whom the other Mahomedans call Chums. They are followers of Mahomedanism and are called Chums (five) because, as it was told me, after they have washed themselves according to the directions of the law before divine service, they make some mysterious sign with their five fingers pressed together, for which reason they are hated and despised by the other Mahomedans. The tribe of the Chum Arabs is very hospitable, and when a traveller comes to them, he is sure of a friendly shelter from one of them, and they even bring him a companion from among the widows of the tribe.

Two days' journey from Setif is the town of *Bu-Sada*, and three days' journey to the south is *Luguard*; this was conquered by the French in the year 1852, on which occasion very many Jews, who were among the Arab warriors, perished. Eight days' journey southward from this last place is *Beni-Mezab*, the Arab inhabitants of which form an independant tribe; — Ali, the Persian founder of religion, is honoured by them as a prophet. A tolerably large community dwells in the town, but they are under great oppression. I spoke with several Arabs from Beni-Mezab, and they told me that the Jews dwelling

among them were mostly professional men, and that but few carried on any trade.

Near this town begins the great desert of *Sahara*. A journey of twenty days through the desert brings one to *Sudan*, in the middle of Timbuctoo; only one small market town is to be found half way on the road. Caravans go there but very seldom, for if one does venture to do so, it generally goes to its own destruction.

I had intended to undertake a journey to Timbuctoo, but my limited means prevented me from carrying out this project.

I travelled from Setif to *Bugia* (Arabic Busaje) on horseback; a three days' journey through deserts and over great mountains. Thence I departed by steamer for Algeria.

It was in March 1854 that I arrived in Algeria. It is not necessary for me to speak of this town, its harbour, and the extensive trade and commerce which have there been developed; all this is sufficiently well known, and has often been described. About 1000 Jewish families reside there. The chief Rabbi appointed by the French Government is A. M. Weill. He is the chief superintendent of all the Jews in Algeria, and a very learned and benevolent man. The secretary of the community is R. Simon, an European, and likewise very well informed. The second chief Rabbi is Rabbi Jacob Smasi, an African. The Dajanim are Rabbi Sadia Amur, Rabbi David Mati, his brother Saul Mati, and Rabbi Salomo Delila; all well versed in the Talmud and Codex. The community possesses two large and ten small synagogues. — Much care is bestowed upon the school instruction of the children in the Hebrew and French languages.

In this town I remained nearly six months, and published there my two works: „*Une année de séjour aux Indes orientales*“ (printed by Dubos frères), and „*Nesiad Israel*“ (printed by Chaim Cohen Shulal). During my stay there I found a most hospitable reception in the house of Isaac Stora, a very rich manufacturer, descended from the banished Jews

of Spain. He has taken his name from the former residence of his parents, Stora (near Skigada). On the ancient place of burial belonging to the community are to be found the tombs of two celebrated Rabbis, Rabbi Isaac bar Shesheth, author of „*Riwas*", and Simon ben Cemath, author of „*Tashbaz*". The family of the latter is called Duran by the native Jews.

The houses of the Jews are built in the European style, and are very neat and clean. Some of them live in the European, others in the African style. Some of the men dress after the fashion of Tunis, and many of the young men wear European attire. The women and girls wear a long silk dress without any sleeves, and ornamented on the breast with gold embroidery. The girls cover their heads with a small pointed cap, on which is fastened gold medallions, and from the peak hangs down a gold or silken tassel. The women wear a fez, which by many of them is wound round with gold and pearls, while others have only a silk kerchief; the hair hangs down in one long braid, twisted round with a blue ribbon.

Among the natives of this town is likewise prevalent a superstitious belief in sorcery, witchcraft, and incantations. In cases of illness they go with an Arab sorceress to a spring which rises near the town, and there, with encantations, they kill a black cock, by cutting its throat with a gold coin, and then with its blood they besmear the chest, forehead &c. of the patient. After this, the sorceress lights a fire, throws different perfumes into it, and then besprinkles this also, as well as the patient, with the blood of the slaughtered cock. After this ceremony the patient is said to recover. All these conjurations only take place on Wednesdays from 8 o'clock in the morning until midday. I myself went once to the place appointed for the purpose, and found upwards of 200 men and women occupied in these ceremonies. The Jewish women have the cock killed for them by their own slaughterer, and take the blood with them in a glass vessel. These ceremonies are called Bechor.

Six hours' journey from Algiers by omnibus is the town of *Blidah*; about 100 Jewish families live here, they have two synagogues, but no Chacham. It struck me as remarkable that the Jews in this town are unable to pronounce the Hebrew Kuph (hard K): they pronounce it like Uph. They live mostly in the African manner, are in general very rich, and carry on a flourishing trade.

Eight hours' journey by omnibus from Blidah is *Medeah*, there reside 300 Jewish families; they have four synagogues and a Chacham named Rabbi Jeshua, who occupies himself with the cabala, and wears only quite white garments. He is tolerably well versed in the Talmud, and has two wives. — I lodged in the town with the Merchant Rabbi Moshe Ajes, a very rich man.

After a journey on horseback of a day and a half I arrived at *Miljanah*; there reside about 400 Jewish families, who have three synagogues and a Chacham, Rabbi Jacob from Morocco. The town is situated on the summit of a high mountain, and is encircled by a chain of mountain which is the most important in Algeria. The mountain air is particularly fresh and healthy, and in the town there is an abundance of good fresh water. Although the houses are built in the European style, their interior arrangements, as well as the mode of life of the inhabitants are quite in accordance with the customs of the natives.

A further ride of the mountains brought me to *Nittelchad*. This town lies in a beautiful valley: it is still in its infancy, and the French are building a fortress there. About 20 Jewish families reside here; they have no Chacham, but possess a small synagogue; their dwellings and mode of life are quite African.

A further journey of a day and a half on horseback brought me to *Tijerad*. This town is built on a little hill, and is still in an unfinished state; here also the French are making fortifications. The Jewish community consists of 100 families, who have a synagogue and a Chacham, Rabbi Abraham, a native of Oran, and with him I lodged. The

Jews have imigrated here from Cabyla, and like those of Setif have remained faithful to their former customs and habits. Here also superstition is as prevalent as in other towns. If any person is ill, a cock is killed and its flesh is cooked, which is then called kuskus; it is eaten at a small entertainment to which acquaintances are invited. The remains as well as the feathers of the cock, are then thrown into a well, and this is supposed to be an effectual magical charm to cure illness. — Another magic remedy for illness much employed is the following: They take a bottle or flask of oil, and at night, in order to prevent any one from seeing it, they go into the street, and pour the oil at nine different places on the thresholds of their neighbours' houses; this custom is called Chania.

After another two days' journey on horseback I came to *Maskara*; here reside about 150 Jewish families; they have two synagogues and a Chacham, Rabbi Salomo. I lodged with the merchant Usana, the superintendent of the community, and a very influential man of business.

At a journey of a day and a half south from this place lies the town of *Mostaganem*, and it is just as far to Oran. The first mentioned town is situated about half an hour's journey from the sea, and about 300 Jewish families live there. Their Chacham is Rabbi Aron from Tlemsan; they have also two synagogues. The superintendent of the community is Rabbi Abu. In this town live two very rich Jewish merchants, Salomo Zerphati, a very benevolent man, and Abraham Kinovi, an avaricious millionaire. In Mostaganem I lodged with the merchant Baduch-ben-Chaim, an important manufacturer, who bestowed on me the kindest attention during an illness.

From the latter town, *Oran* can be reached by carriage in twelve hours, and by steamer in eight hours. Oran lies close to the sea, and is built partly in a valley, and partly on the side of a mountain: the importance and extent of its trade are universally known. About 500 Jewish families dwell there and they possess five synagogues. The chief

Rabbi appointed by the French government is Rabbi David Cohen; the Dajanim are native Africans, Rabbi Jeshua, Rabbi Amaram etc. The president of the Consistorium is Abraham-ben-Jesu, whose brother, Rabbi Chaim, is a very learned man, and well versed in Hebrew, Arabic, and French; both are very charitable. — The Jews here live and dwell partly in the European and partly in the African style. — Near the town is a high mountain, Djebel Djudi, where are still to be found ancient fortifications of the time of the Romans. I lodged with a rich druggist named Michluw Assass. Many Jews from Morocco, particularly from the town of Tetuan, have settled in Oran, and a great number of Spaniards (Christians) have likewise settled themselves here, as in eight hours one can cross over to Spain. Arabic, French, and Spanish are spoken in the town. A steamer comes to Oran every five days from Algiers, and every ten days from Marseilles; and this last goes on to Gibraltar.

From *Oran*, Tlemsan can be reached by omnibus in twelve hours. Here dwell 500 Jewish families, who have three synagogues. The Dajanim are: Rabbi Mirod, and Rabbi Samuel; the superintendent is Rabbi Jacob, and the second superintendent is Maimon Serbeth. In the Jewish burial ground are the remains of Rabbi Ephraim Aluncava, who came here among other banished Jews from Spain; but admission into the town being denied them, they settled outside the walls. Rabbi Ephraim was a very skillful doctor, and by his learning and unselfishness he was the cause of his exiled brethren being allowed to enter and dwell in the town. It happened thus: The daughter of the Cadi was dangerously ill, and given over by all the doctors. Then Rabbi Ephraim entreated the distressed father to allow him to give his help as a last resource, — and in ten days the patient was restored to health. As the sole recompense for this he implored the Cadi to permit his brethren to dwell in the town, — and this request was granted. I went to the burial ground in order to find on his tombstone the date of his death; although the inscription was

much defaced, I could still decipher the following: „Bisnat Rb. Niftar Rb.“ i. e. in the year 5202, according to Biblical calculation (1442), did the Rabbi die. In the Shem Hagdolim (Wilna 1853) fol. 16 I found a paragraph about him as follows: „Rabbi Ephraim Aluncava was a great Rabbi in the town of Tlemsan in Algeria, and author of the work Shaar Kewoth Adonai.“ The Jews of the town and neighbourhood venerate the tomb of the Rabbi, and make pilgrimages to it, at which time they take food with them, and after prayers partake of part of it at the tomb, and the remains are divided at home among the family; this custom is called Said debe Raw (repast of the Rabbi). Some of them also take some earth from the grave with them, and wear it round their necks; for, according to their belief, this would preserve them in all diseases. The house and synagogue of the Rabbi Ephraim are still in existence, and annually Jews assemble there for devout prayer, after which a feast is arranged.

The town has a very healthy site, and carries on a very flourishing trade. Jews dwell in the neighbouring mountains among the Arabs, but I did not visit them. In Tlemsan I lodged with the merchant Moses Serbeth, a rich manufacturer, who possesses a capital Hebrew library.

One day's journey from here is the town of *Madroma*, which is inhabited by Arabs, and very dirty. The Jewish community consists of 50 families, and possess a synagogue and a slaughterer; although very rich, they are still ignorant, and live according to the customs of the Cabyles.

Six hours' journey farther is the town of *Ghazuwat*, called by the French Nimur. The vessels coming from Algiers on their way to Gibraltar anchor here, and take in cargoes. Fifty Jewish families live here, and they have a small synagogue; their slaughterer is Rabbi Moshe Levy Askanasi, by birth a Pole, and his wife is from Oran, out of the family of Tuwel. The Jews carry on a flourishing trade, are mostly very rich, and the greater part of them live in the European style.

Thence I returned to Tlemsan, in order to repair to Morocco. One and a half days' journey from Tlemsan is *Magnia,* where the territories of Algeria and Morocco unite. Not far from this place, on Algerian soil, is a silver mine, which is well worked, and yields abundantly.

On the whole it can be asserted without hesitation that the Jews in Algeria live in a happy condition under the French Government. In most places they have Chachamim and teachers paid by Government, and the instruction of the young is well conducted. The young are well satisfied with the French Government, but the older members with whom I spoke on the subject, fancy that since the French have taken possession of the country, religious feeling has been on the decline, and that commercial transactions are not so profitable as when the Arabs were in power. To this I replied, quoting the words of Salomon, that „Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices and strife,"[1] and that it was therefore better to live under the orderly civilised Government of the French, rather than under the fanaticism and oppression of the Arabs.

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[1] Proverbs c. XVII. 1.

CHAPTER XLII.

V. Morocco.

In coming to Morocco from Algeria, the same feelings are experienced, only in a contrary form and in a still greater degree, as those which I described when entering Algeria from Tunis. One comes from a paradise into a desert, and as soon as the soil of civilised Algeria is exchanged for Morocco, dangers of every kind begin.

From Magnia, the French frontier town, one passes through a desert to *Ushda*. The distance between these two places is about six hours' journey. To the south of Ushda are the mountains of Bene Isnaz, inhabited by robbers and bandits, who not only plunder the caravans passing through the vicinity, but even oftentimes attack the town of Ushda, and pillage it. No European can form an idea of the fearfully dirty state of this town, otherwise it is large, and surrounded by gardens. About 70 to 80 families dwell here; and they have two Chachamim and a synagogue. This latter is in the most deplorable condition, which is, however, to be excused on account of the condition of affairs here; for were it in any other state, it would be pillaged and destroyed by the Arabs. The Nassi of the community is Isaac Sarbeth, a very rich man, and in order to give some idea of the oppression of the Jews, I will describe his dwelling. In a courtyard surrounded by a wall, stood a small dirty little house; it certainly had a door, but there were no windows to be seen from the outside. In the interior there were several apartments, but all bare and dark; not a bed, not a chair, not a piece of household

furniture was to be seen; only a mattrass made of palm leaves. On my inquiring the reason for this dwelling being so poverty struck and wretched, I was told by the possessor that he did not dare venture to arrange it better for fear of plunder. — If an Arab enters a house, the Jews must speak as humbly to him as if he were a prince. If he takes away with him anything that happens to please him, not a remark, not a murmur must be heard, otherwise the intruder would immediately draw his knife, and there is neither judge nor law for the protection of the plundered and oppressed.

Immediately on entering this country, I saw that the journey through it must and would be attended with great dangers; but as I had made up my mind to reconnoitre it, I arrayed myself in the garb of the country, joined a caravan, and made a journey of twenty-five days into the interior over *Temessuin, Teza, Fez, Tetuan* to *Gibraltar,* whence I returned to Algiers. I am unable to describe all the hardships and dangers with which this journey was attended, although I was well acquainted with the language of the country and the customs of the people. Neither Jew nor Christian can be sure of his life for a single moment. At the least offence, which the inhabitants try to provoke, a stranger is immediately taken before the authorities, fined, and maltreated, as false witnesses and evidence can be found without much search. And this takes place not only in affairs of religion, but in any fictitious cause they may choose to invent; they dispose just as they like, without either right or justice, of the lives and property of those of another faith.

As a proof of this, I will here relate the history of an unhappy Jewish maiden, and may this history also serve as a proof that among the daughters of an oppressed and exiled people there are still women who are worthy to be placed by the side of a Huldah and Deborah in the old heroic time of our forefathers; may it likewise prove the piety of the Jews of Morocco, and be a bright example to the educated women of our people in Europe.

In Tansa, a town of Morocco, lived a Jew named Salomon Chatwil, happy and contented in the possession of an excellent wife and several blooming daughters. But the darling and pride, not only of her parents but of all who knew her, was Zuleika, who in the year 5591 (1831) the date of our history, saw spring return for the twelfth time. — Nature desired to create her masterpiece when she created Zuleika. Never had the glowing sun of Africa shone upon more perfect beauty. The most exquisite symmetry of form, the most fair and dazzling complexion contrasted with the delicate and fresh bloom of her cheek, and to these charms was added a profusion of beautiful glossy hair, — while the most lovely eyes were softened by long silken eyelashes. In addition to this, Zuleika was gifted with an intelligent mind, and the mildest and most graceful manners. All the charms excited the envy of the neighbouring Mussulmans. „It is a sin," said they, „that such a pearl should be in the possession of the Jews, and it would be a crime to leave them such a jewel."

With the assertion, — corroborated by false Mussulman witnesses, — that Zuleika had the wish to embrace the Islam faith, they entered the peaceful dwelling of her father, took possession of the beautiful maiden, and carried her to Fez, where they placed their gift, a costly and welcome gift, at the disposal of the heir-apparent of the throne, the son of the Emperor of Morocco.

Even his sated eye had never beheld such beauty; and as if dazzled, he remained standing before her. Heart and hand and all the dignity of an Empress he offered for her possession, annexing only one condition, — that she should adopt his faith. Calmly and decidedly she rejected this offer, and in vain were all the powers of persuasion and promises of the nobles of the court. Her answer was: „The whole world and all its charms and treasures is nothing compared to God and His holy law. He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Creator and Master of all creatures;

every one is subject to His power both before his birth and after his death. He delivered our forefathers from Egypt, and made us the guardians of His holy law. To this law I submit myself, and I am ready to die for its sake; and, if the Lord requires it, I offer myself willingly as a sacrifice. If ye laid all the treasures of the world at my feet, I would not swerve one hair's breadth from these my words; do with me therefore according to your will."

The prince who saw his proposals thus rejected, endeavoured to obtain by severity what had been refused to persuasion. He ordered Zuleika to be taken to a dungeon; and when it was thought that suffering and privation had sufficiently weakened her youthful strength, Jewish women, who had adopted the Islam faith, were sent to visit her, in order that by promises of every kind, and the example of their own life, they should induce Zuleika to forsake her faith. These women discharged their commission to the letter. All the pomp that could charm a sensual southern disposition, all the representations which a subtile heart could invent, all the terrors which were sufficient to terrify the bravest man were all displayed. — But in vain; every attempt failed to touch the firm and resigned heart of Zuleika. She answered in her usual calm and pious manner: „You wish to persuade me? Earthly life is but like a passing shadow; it is but a fleeting moment compared to eternity: rather, then, one short hour in misery and suffering and eternal bliss, than a life of joy and luxury, to which must follow endless remorse in the world to come. Every one must die, even the highest and most mighty must become food for worms. The Lord of Hosts only is eternal; willingly do I submit myself to His decree. You say that the slightest wish of my heart shall be gratified, well then, I pray to God that He may give me power and strength in His service, and that I may be worthy to be called a daughter of the Jewish people! — Let it soon be over."

One last attempt the prince would make; he summoned the Chachamim of the city, and told them that the lives of

all the Jewish inhabitants were in danger if they did not succeed in inducing Zuleika to become willing to fulfil his wishes. Trembling for their own lives and those of their brethren, the Chachamim proceeded to the dungeon. They reminded the tortured girl of the example of Esther, by whose influence her people were so much benefited; but Zuleika silenced them also with the words: „Esther was not called upon to give up the sacred faith of her fathers, but I am to forsake it. If you consider this right, well then, give your daughter to the prince; I will fulfil the law if it be God's will, with my death."

Such an unheard of resistance to the power of the prince could only be expiated by death: the order for beheading her was therefore given. The most lovely of maidens, in the beauty of virtue and the bloom of youth, was conducted to the place of execution.

But the executioner had received orders to try also his powers of persuasion as a last resource in a manner which only an executioner could understand, and he only could accomplish. On the scaffold he gave his victim several thrusts with his sword in her neck, and called upon her to be obedient. „Kafir ben Kafir!" cried the courageous maiden, „spare thy trouble;" and exclaiming: „Hear oh Israel, God alone is our Lord, He alone!" her head fell beneath the heavy blows of the executioner.

With the jet of blood that rose towards heaven vanished the rage of the prince; he felt remorse, and willingly would he have called back life into that beautiful inanimate form. Powerless might of the mighty! They are able to destroy the instrument, but when once destroyed, they can never again awake its melody.

The body of Zuleika was given for burial to the Nassi of the community, Raphael Zerphati. — A monument was erected on the grave, which up to the present day is regarded as a sacred spot by Jews and Mussulmans; and even now that oath is considered sacred which is sworn by the memory of Zuleika.

The prince granted an annual allowance to the parents of his victim; two of the sisters became insane from grief for the fate of Zuleika. In the year 1854 I made the acquaintance of her family, and have spoken with those who were eye witnesses of her execution. — By many African Chachamim has Zuleika's heroism and piety been made the subject of poetry, and I have the copies of some of the poems, which came under my notice.

Draw near, mothers and daughters of my people, draw near, and learn the greatness of her who dwelt here. See what was done by an ignorant, uneducated — as you would call her — African maiden, who knew nothing of the pomps and vanities of European culture, — who perhaps was not even able to write. Whether you have so educated your daughters and strengthened them in the sacred laws that they are worthy to be called Zuleika's sisters, whether in civilised Europe many such as Zuleika exist? — I know not; — ask and answer yourselves.

Notwithstanding these oppressions, in Morocco, Fez, Tetuan, Tansa, Suera, and in many other towns of the kingdom are to be found a great many Jews, more than 100,000 souls, and even, according to the assertion of the people of the country, not far short of 200,000 souls. They are all very religious; their Chachamim are all well versed in the Talmud, but occupy themselves much with cabalistic matters, and even make a business out of it by copying amulets. The Arab Marabouts likewise carry on this trade. Altogether the Jews are tolerably well informed, with the exception of those dwelling on a tract of land of Tifelel, on the road to Timbuctoo, where the crown prince is now reigning as Viceroy; there the Jews are very ignorant. In many places they possess considerable places of business, and there are many rich Jews among them; but, nevertheless, they live very unhappily. I should be guilty of repe-

tition if I endeavoured to pourtray their condition; I therefore refer to my accounts relative to the Jews in Persia; for in Morocco, as in Persia, persecution, oppression, hatred, and fanaticism surround our fellow-worshippers on all sides.

But the oppression here goes even still further than in Persia; for while there the Jews are permitted to walk abroad in the costume of the country, they are here obliged to make themselves known by wearing a black fez. It is just the same with respect to the Christians; they in Persia, were allowed some privileges not accorded to the Jews, but here they are treated alike. For instance, when Jews or Christians pass a mosque, they are compelled to take off their shoes and uncover their heads, and mischievous boys scatter pieces of broken glass in the mud of the street in order to wound their feet. If an European ventured to show himself in the street in his native attire, his life would not be safe for one hour; he would be received by a shower of stones, and the cry of „Giaur!" It is really surprising that a country, situated so near Europe, and carrying on such large and important commercial transactions with it, should dare to be so savage and barbarous towards strangers and natives. It is only in the large harbour towns that the consuls take care that the Europeans find some protection and justice; but in the interior the oppression is all the greater.

If all the great powers of Europe together would endeavour to oppose such barbarism in the places nearest to them, they would do great things for themselves, for science, and for the oppressed.

After having remained there long enough to enable me to form some idea of the state of the country, the great difficulties induced me to return to Algeria, whence, after a short stay, I proceeded to Marseilles in France.

CHAPTER XLIII.

General reflections respecting the Jews of North-Africa.

Their customs and habits. — Ceremonies at the observance of the Sabbath and festival days, and at births, marriages and deaths.

Most Jews go on week days, morning and evening, to the synagogues, and perform their devotions in the usual manner. On Sabbath and festival days all assemble in the temple, where divine service is solemnly performed; and it is very edifying to be present at it. It is divided into several parts, and whoever has a beautiful sonorous voice reads aloud several paragraphs out of the prayer until Istabach, when the reciter goes to the altar, and reads until the Pentateuch is taken out. Piutim are only said on the first Easter evening, on New Year's day, and on the feast of atonement. The chants are very fine, and make a solemn impression on the hearer. The ritual used in Asia as well as in Africa is the Portuguese, and the chants are those peculiar to the country.

The taking forth the Pentateuch is always accompanied by chants. At the reading of the appointed portion of the Pentateuch, it is here the custom, as well as in Asia, that the youngest of those called, if he is able to read well, reads his portion aloud. In many places it is the custom that the one who is called forward to read the Thora, when he retires from the altar, presses the hands of his relations, kisses them on the forehead, shoulder, and hand, and is congratulated and honoured by the members of the community in the same manner.

When any one belonging to the community marries, two Pentateuchs are displayed in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and one of these is ornamented with jewels. At the conclusion of the weekly lesson, the bridegroom is called up. He steps with his Pentateuch before the altar, and reads the history of Abraham when he sent out his servant Eleazar to seek a wife for his son Isaac.[1] When he has read a verse aloud, several children appointed for the purpose translate it into the language of the country, and repeat it with ceremonies and beautiful chants. This is considered to be a particular honour, and the children take much trouble to merit by industry such a distinction.

Even the little children wear Taleth in the synagogue during divine service; but out of the synagogue there are even grown up people who, as in Kurdistan, wear no Zizith. This is the case in Morocco, as well as in the villages of Algeria; as, in general, this custom is not strictly adhered to. In Africa as well as in Asia the women do not come into the synagogue; they are only present at circumcisions, but there are some old women who attend divine service on festival days. Generally in both parts of the Globe (Asia and Africa) there is very seldom a woman to be found who can read or write; this has reference not only to the Jews, but to all the natives.

The Sabbaths and festival days in Africa, as well as Asia, are very strictly observed and kept sacred by the Jews, not only with respect to divine service, but likewise as to business, amusements &c. During my stay there, I scarcely ever found that business was carried on the Sabbath, or that work of any kind was done, if it was so, it must have been in a case of extreme necessity. In many respects, however, they are not so strict in the observance of the laws as we are in Europe; for instance, in the baking of the Easter cake, and in the indulgence of many dishes and drinks. Thus the Jews there eat rice, peas, beans &c. and drink rum at the Easter festival.

[1] Genesis c. XXIV. 1—8.

The customs and preparations on Easter eve take place in the same way as with us in Europe; only in Africa they have the following custom, that at the first portion of the reading concerning the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, one of the family circle gets up, and holds the dish, containing the food in remembrance of those times, over the head of each person present for some moments; and if any one is omitted on this occasion, he considers himself very unfortunate. This custom is found particularly in Tunis, while the educated in Algeria do not know it. In Asia another good custom has been introduced at this festival. A boy is habited completely in the garb of a pilgrim. With a pilgrims staff in his hand, and a wallet with bread on his shoulders, he enters the assembled family circle before the reading commences. The master of the house then asks the boy: „Whence dost thou come, oh Pilgrim?“ — „From Mizrajim!“ answers the boy. — „Art thou delivered from the bonds of slavery?“ is the next question. — The boy replies: „Yes, I am free and delivered.“ — „And where goest thou?“ is then asked .„To Jerushalajim,“ answers the pilgrim. Amid great rejoicing and friendly greeting those present then begin the Hagada. The reading of this takes place on the first Easter night in the Hebrew language, and the second night in the language of the country: everywhere the women take part in it. Festive songs and hymns are sung, and the whole ceremony makes not only an agreeable, but likewise a very edifying and inspiring impression. From the third until the sixth day cards are much played, and in this even the Chachamim take part. During the whole of the festival no one thinks of business or work, but the days are spent in religious exercises and in amusements. On the last day of the feast, fresh stems of corn are brought from the field into the houses, and scattered with flowers and fresh green in the rooms, and placed upon the tables, as a symbol of the spring and of the blessing of the new year entering the house. — In Algeria it is the custom to go on this

night to the oldest Chacham, and receive his blessing. — In Oran they have also a peculiar custom. In the night before the first eve of the festival, which is called Lel-el-Ros, in every family nothing else is eaten but boiled lamb's heads. I could find no other reason for this custom, but that I thought it might be in remembrance of the Karban-Pesach, of the offerings on the evening before the festival. In the last night of the feast called Lel-el-Maimun, no meat at all but only milk food is eaten, and on this evening it is the custom to go to one's acquaintances and relations to sup with them. — In Oran and Morocco, besides the flowers and stems of corn, a dish with gold and jewels is placed upon the table, as a symbol of the wealth and blessing it is hoped the new year may bring into the house. In Tetuan in Morocco a vessel full of water, in which live fish swim about, is likewise placed upon the table. The visits which are paid on this last festival night often last until past midnight. When the young people go home, one of them calls out: „Maimun!" to which another answers: „Misoth!" and a third „Fertsh Allah!" — I inquired the meaning of these oft-repeated exclamations, and was told that Maimun and Misoth were the names of two happy persons: and that in remembrance of them, wishing each other a similar happiness, they called out to each other their names; and the third exclamation: „Fertsh Allah!" emplied „God give happiness."

The feast *Shewuoth* (feast of weeks) has likewise its peculiar customs. On the first evening the families assemble in their houses, and by turns one or another of them reads aloud a portion of the Thora &c., and during the pauses, coffee and other refreshments are handed round. In the morning, as already mentioned, they go to the synagogue to pray.

On the Tissa-Beaw (destruction of the temple), all assemble in the evening in the synagogue, where the Kinoth (lamentations of Jeremiah) and other appropriate lessons are read aloud by the Chacham. After the reading is finished, the history of Chana and her seven sons, who were

compelled to apostatize, and were therefore killed, is read aloud just as it is written in the Medrash Rabba, in the language of the country. The Chacham and the community sing alternately verse by verse different funeral dirges. In Kurdistan they have another custom. The Chacham gets up and says: „My brethren, to-day it is so many years since our holy temple was destroyed, and we have not yet been able to rebuild it!“ At these words all the lights are extinguished, and all throw themselves down with their faces to the earth, and begin to lament and weep. Then one light is lighted, and with songs of lamentation the history of Chana is read aloud in the Kurdish language. In the morning all again assemble in the synagogue, and in many places the men put on their Tephilim on this occasion; the customary prayers are recited, and the Kinoth is delivered; the Pentateuch is covered with black, and ashes are strewn. At the reading of the Hafthora, each verse is translated into the language of the country, and commented on, at which songs of lamentation are sung.

At the feast of *Rosh-ha-Shana* (New Year's feast) all assemble in the synagogue, where prayers are said, and several Piutim are spoken. The reading of the Pentateuch takes place as in Europe; only in Asia and Africa all remain quiet at the sounding of the Shofar, and listen motionless to the sounds of the symbolic trumpet. Divine service is closed in the forenoon with the Musaph-prayer.

On the feast of Aerew-Jom-Kipur (the day before the feast of atonement) one finds in Asia and Africa the use of the Kaparoth in some places very strictly, but in other places not so rigidly observed. In the afternoon of this day the vesper prayer is recited in the synagogue, and the ceremony of the Malkot is performed as with us. In Persia this custom is observed according to the description of the Talmudist in the Messechet Sanhedrin. The person whose turn it is, bares himself to the waist, leans against one of the pillars, and receives his 39 regular hard blows with the Malka, after which he goes into the Tewilla (cold bath).

When it came to my turn, I refused to comply with this custom, and said: „My brethren, I, as an European, shall not submit to these blows, for in my country, another custom is followed: I will not allow myself to be flogged before the day of atonement, as I might become ill from it.“ They laughed at me, disputed for a short time about the matter, and then left me unmolested. — In the morning and evening they go to the synagogue, and many of them on that occasion, put on white garments. Morning service lasts until midday, and then they go home for two hours. Afternoon service continues till near evening. This feast day is very strictly observed.

The feast of *Sukoth* (feast of tabernacles) is also very rigidly kept, and they only eat under the shade of green boughs; almost every one has Lulaw (branches of palm trees), and Ethrok (fruit of Hadar). The feast is celebrated with many solemnities and amusements.

The night before the festival of *Hosheina Raba,* all assemble at home in the family circle, and read as in Europe. In Tripolis between each part, Selichot is spoken, and the Shofar is sounded; much coffee is drunk on the occasion. In the morning they all go to the synagogue, pray, and repeat the Hosheinot. Afterwards every one takes his Hosheina with him, and they strike each other with the Hosheina over the shoulders. Neither rank nor station is on this occasion taken into consideration; the women do it also, and each considers the blows with the Hosheina as an honour.

At the *Simchat-Thora* (joy for the law) in many places the Hakafoth is only performed once. One of the community places himself with the Pentateuch at the altar, and the assembly go round him seven times to the singing of the appointed Piutim.

The *Chanoka* (remembrance of the Macabeans) and *Purim* (feast of Esther) are celebrated as in Europe.

I carefully observed the customs at divine service and at the ceremonies of the festivals, in order as they are quite unknown here, to be able to relate and explain them.

At *the birth of a boy* the following customs are observed: From the day of birth until that of circumcision, an entertainment is given each evening in the house, to which acquaintances and relations are invited. That on the first night is called Seudad Eliahu (repast of Elijah); that on the last night before the circumcision is called Bilada; and all the relations and friends assemble. The Chachamim read for about two hours, after which the entertainment commences from the conclusion of which till towards morning the time is spent in reading, chanting etc. On the morning of the eighth day the circumcision takes place in the synagogue with great solemnities.

At *the birth of a girl* on the evening before the eighth day the Chachamim, relations and friends are invited to an entertainment. The new born child in a little cradle is presented to the first Chacham, who gives it to the second, and the second to the third, and thus it goes on until the child has passed through every hand. Three times is this ceremony repeated amid the singing of Piutim, and each time that those present receive the cradle with the child in their hands, they place in it a piece of money, and this money is destined for the midwife.

The *Barmizwa* (confirmation) is celebrated in the following manner: When a boy is thirteen years of age, some weeks previously the Chacham teaches him an address. On the Sabbath before the Barmizwa, called Tephilim (phylacteries), the relations are invited to an entertainment which lasts until Sunday morning. On the afternoon of this day, the women, dressed in their festive attire, go to all the friends and acquaintances, as well as to the schoolfellows of the boy, and invite them to the feast. When all are assembled, a barber is sent for, who shaves the head of the boy to be confirmed, as well as the heads of his schoolfellows, and every guest at the feast contributes a piece of money, which is given to the barber. After this a merry meal takes place, which often lasts until morning. On Monday morning the synagogue is festively decorated, and the

Chacham with the teacher goes to the boy's house, and adorns him in Taled and Tephilim, and then he is taken with his schoolfellows in procession with singing and bearing of lights to the synagogue. There, during divine service, as soon as the Pentateuch is brought out, the boy is called forward with his father and some near relation; the Chacham bestows on him his blessing, the boy then delivers his address, and the father and relations bestow alms on the poor. When the ceremony is concluded, all present congratulate the boy, and accompany him home, where again an entertainment is prepared. The boy, still arrayed in his Taled and Tephilim, then proceeds, accompanied by his schoolfellows, to all his different female relations to make a visit and each of them undoes a fold of his Tephilim and makes him a present of a piece of money. When all the visits are paid, the boy returns home, lays aside his Taled and Tephilim, and in the afternoon takes a walk with his companions, on which occasion all the money he has received is expended. In the evening, the relations and friends assemble again at the house of the parents of the boy to an entertainment, which lasts until the next morning, and concludes the ceremony. Girls are not confirmed, except in some towns of Algeria, where the custom is now being adopted.

At *marriages*, the following ceremonies take place. The Sabbath before the wedding is observed very solemnly. The evening before the marriage, the relations and friends and the Chachamim assemble in the house of the bride. In the middle of the courtyard is placed a decorated chair, and beside it several other chairs. The Chachamim, the parents and relations then conduct the bride, preceded by lights, to the chair, in which she seats herself. At her side are seated the Chachamim, and then in turn her parents and those of the guests who are entitled to the greatest honour. This takes place amid the singing of Piutim, and lasts about two hours; after which the bride is reconducted to the house, and the company seperates. On the wedding

morning the bridegroom with his friends and the bride with her companions go to the bath. In the afternoon, after the bridegroom has dressed himself in his festive attire and Taled, he is conducted by the Chachamim and those belonging to him to the synagogue, where vesper prayer is recited, after which they conduct him home. At the marriage ceremony a high decorated chair is placed in the courtyard, to which the Chachamim and parents conduct the bride veiled. When she has seated herself in the chair, the bridegroom advances to her right side, the Chacham infolds the young couple in the Taled of the bridegroom, and pronounces the Berachot; after which he gives the wedding rings to the bride and bridegroom. The songs of the assembled guests add to the impression made by the ceremony. The Ketuba (marriage contract) is then read aloud, and the marriage is finished. When it is concluded, the young pair are conducted to the house, the company separates to reassemble again in the evening for an entertainment. While this is going on, the young couple are conducted into a separate room and left alone. After some time the bridegroom returns to the company, and, if in all things his wife answers his expectations he receives the congratulations of the relations and assembled guests. Then at the merry meal, amid music and singing, the night is spent until break of day. The young couple remain in the parents house for seven days after the marriage, and each evening these entertainments are repeated. On the Sabbath after the wedding the bridegroom, amid songs, and accompanied by many persons, repairs to the synagogue: the bride remains at home. All the relations are summoned, and at the reading of the lesson for the week, they and the bridegroom bestow considerable gifts on the Chachamim and the poor. With songs, and accompanied by the same train as before, the bridegroom returns to the house of the bride, where one last grand feast is prepared, which with joy and merry making lasts until the following morning.

In Persia they have another custom. There likewise for seven days after the wedding the Chachamim, relations,

and friends assemble in the bride's house. The young couple, richly dressed, are seated on a dais erected on one side of the room, and two gilded wax lights burn beside them. For some hours the guests sing Piutim, partake of a meal, and then separate; and this is repeated every day for the rest of the week.

At *funerals*, an old biblical custom is followed which is mentioned in Jeremiah. c. IX. 17, 18. As soon as any one dies, the Mekononot (hired female mourners) are called, who seat themselves near the dead, and begin to chant in a whining voice the songs of lamentation in the language of the country. The ceremonies used are those mentioned in the Talmud, Messechet Moed Kattan. The women related to the deceased utter loud wailing cries, tear their hair, and scratch their faces until the blood comes, which is expressly forbidden by Moses in Deuteronomy c. XIV. 1; and Leviticus c. XXI. 5. The Chachamim have given themselves much trouble to put aside this custom, but have not yet succeeded. The songs of lamentation are regulated by the rank of the deceased, and at each funeral different songs are used. — In Persia the Chachamim sing the songs of lamentation, but there the women neither tear their hair nor disfigure their faces. — This lasts for about three hours, after which the body is buried. — In Persia the songs of lamentation only commence after the body has been prepared for interment; but in Africa these preparations are made afterwards. In proceeding to the burial ground the Chachamim walk first, singing the first twelve verses of the 91st Psalm. In the whole of Asia and Africa the body is not clothed in the Taled. — In Morocco it is even customary for the women and children related to the deceased to assemble often, long after the funeral has taken place, to join in songs of lamentation for the dead, and to tear their hair.[1]

[1] Rabbi Petachia, p. 169 mentions just such a custom as existing in the country of Kasria, where mothers teach their daughters the songs of lamentation. This appears to be an old custom; for even Jeremiah c. IX. 17. 18. mentions it.

After having described these customs from birth to death, I conclude with the words of Salomon, who says in Ecclesiastes c. VII, 1. 2: „A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.“ And fervently do I wish that the words of the Prophet Isaiah may be fulfilled which are written Isaiah XXV, 8. 9: „He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord: we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!'“

The Portuguese conquests and discoveries with respect to the Jews. [1]

By Dr. M. Kayserling.

João I, Henry the Navigator, Alfonzo the African, João de Menezes, Azambuja, Vasco de Gama, Columbus, Albuquerque, Cabral, Cortez, Pizarro — what names are these of mighty men! What histories and heroic deeds are associated with these adventurers and conquerors! With what rapture and delight does the boy listen to the relation of their discoveries and their battles by sea and by land. No people in Europe was animated by such a spirit of enterprise as the Portuguese; to the discoveries of their Infants and admirals they owe their power, and Portugal acquired

[1] In conclusion we give the following well written article by Dr. *M. Kayserling*, which is to be found in *Frankel's „Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums“*, Decembre 1858.

possessions in the greatness of which the world forgot the little mother country, and she, at last, forgot herself.

Had these glorious and heroic mean, had the discoveries which raised the little spot on the sea coast into a mighty power, no relation with *that* people, who now, as then, were scattered everywhere, and in those times nowhere found a home? In the long long chain which Portuguese navigators laid round the coast of Africa, the last golden ring of which remained fixed in the paradise of India, in this chain did not the Jews also form a link? Nobody has most likely ever doubted this, and yet no one has attempted to bring these events, which, apparently, are placed so far *from* the history of the Jews, into connection *with* the Jews and their history. But what advantage from such a treatment of general history arises to Jewish science, how, by such explanations, the world must clearly see that the Jews have not been created merely for suffering and endurance, but likewise everywhere and under all circumstances have proved themselves active and useful, helpful and efficient, needs no further discussion.

With this object I wish in these pages to endeavour to treat and illustrate the Portuguese discoveries and conquests with respect to the Jews.

Under João I the discoveries and conquests had their beginning on African soil. Ceuta, the first strong city of Mauritania, splendid and populous, was taken, — that which had been for many years the object of the longing wishes of the Portuguese Infants, thirsting for deeds of glory, was attained. Ceuta was the key to the lands of Islam, the terror of the Mahomedans, and the point of outlet for further conquests on the African coast. At the storming of this town, among those with the Armada, at whose departure all Lisbon flocked to the harbour, were likewise — Jews. One of these Jewish sailors fell in action.[1]

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[1] *Chronica do Conde D. Pedro*, in the *Collecção de livros Ineditos de Historia Portugueza (Lisboa 1790) I. fol. 259: Moreo hum Judeo,*

Some years later Larash (El Araish) was taken. On this occasion the Portuguese took as prisoners of war four Moors, and two Jews.[1]

The youthful Infant Henry, surnamed by history „the Navigator and Geographer", assisted in person at these first African campaigns. To render himself and his native land illustrious by the discoveries of new countries, to obtain larger possessions for Portugal, to furnish new resources and advantages for trade, — this was the noble aim which the enlightened navigator had set before himself. With enthusiasm, perseverance, and energy he devoted himself to astronomy; — and Jews from their experience and knowledge gave the first assistance to his undertaking. From Jews he received the first statements of the places traversed by them in the course of their commercial transactions, — places hitherto unknown to him, — and from their accounts his supposition amounted to certainty, that a communication between Europe and India could be found; and every Jewish traveller coming from a far country found the kindest reception at the observatory of this courteous prince.

The island of Madeira with its unchanging spring, the home of the ancestor of the celebrated Belmonte, was discovered by him.[2]

Storms and revolts at home withdrew for a time the Portuguese from these undertakings.

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que era com os nossos etc. The Jews in Portugal were thus early engaged in sea service, and the statement of Shalshelet Hakabbala that Sal. Jachia was a leader of horsemen thus gains belief; and, in fact, for no other reason has this statement been declared a „mere fable", but only because it was related by the „*Lügenkette*" (set of liars). Would any one believe Shalshelet if he, for instance, stated that under Alphonzo VII, and Alphonzo VIII of Castille Jews took part in the treaties of the Cortes, — which every one knows at the present day represented our chambers of Deputies — and even subscribed the Fueros?

1 *Chronica do Conde D. Pedro 405.*

2 Compare my Sephardin: *Romantische Poesien der Juden in Spanien,* 289. Leipzig 1859.

Alfonzo V lived and was active in Africa; his spirit was there when even he was in person in Portugal. He turned all his activity and the best resources of the country to Moorish Africa, and obtained for himself the surname of „the African."

João II took greater interest in the discoveries along the west coast of Africa than in the conquests. Certainly with the tribute money which the banished Jews from Spain were obliged to pay, he wished to continue the campaigns which his father had so gloriously led; at least, he gave this as a reason when he was reproached by some in council, that it was not pious or christian like to receive foreign Jews into the country for the sake of money and gain. From the Jews passing over the frontier enormous sums flowed into the state treasury. João did not take the field, nor did his fleet sail towards the coast of Africa; but the little children torn by force from the unhappy Jews were sent to those islands which had been so recently discovered, whose only inhabitants were not human beings, but lizards and crocodiles. The cruzades so artfully taken from the Jews were found after the death of João perfect and untouched in the public treasury; for his undertaking against Africa had not been carried out.

By the zeal with which João, the grasping and avaricious monarch, betook himself to the work of discovery, he made powerful preparations for his successor, who, by the discoveries in Africa, has secured for himself and Portugal undying fame. By Jews he caused investigations to be made on land, in order to find out by their clever research and their sharpsighted wisdom the means of being able to steer with greater safety on the boundless element, and to find with greater certainty under an unknown sky the dark but eagerly sought for goal.[1]

João sent a knight of his court, Pedro de Cavilhão, to Jerusalem, in order to make minute inquiries there relative

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[1] Schäfer, History of Portugal (Hamburg 1850) III. 165.

to the Priest-King John. Cavilhão sought through Calicut, Goa, and the chief towns of India; and at last, having arrived at Sofala, was, without having obtained his object, on the point of returning to Portugal, when he ascertained at Cairo the arrival of two Jews from his country. These men were Joseph of Lamego,[1] by trade a shoemaker, and Rabbi Abraham of Beja.[2] They delivered (1487) to the knight

[1] So called after his birthplace or probable place of residence Lamego. A word respecting the book of the oldest Cortes *(Cortes de Lamego)*, which was transferred to this town, may here opportunely find its place, particularly as the mistaken opinion, founded on ignorance, still exists, that the history and law-books of the Portuguese are generally silent respecting the Jews. In these Cortes §. 12 thus treats of the Jews: „*Qui non sunt de Mauris et de infidelibus Judeis, sed Portugalenses, qui liberaverint personam Regis, aut ejus perdonem (?)*†) *aut ejus filium, vel generum in bello, sint Nobiles.*" For centuries the assembly was considered to have taken place, and the resolutions that were passed thereupon were naturally considered legal. The learned chancellor Antonio do Carmo Velho de Barboza, in his „*Exame critico das Cortes de Lamego*" (Porto 1845) was the first to prove in a decisive manner that these Cortes did not exist, and that the „*Libro de Cortes*" preserved in three different documents, was forged and interpolated, and only appeared in the 17th century, perhaps at the same time with some letters of Spanish Jews. It is an historical fact, and Barboza has forgotten to mention it, that the position of the Jews at that time in which the Cortes were held at Lamego, was not such that the passage cited against them should have been published. This passage was inserted in order that it should appear ancient; for the fabricator could not imagine that the Jews, who in his century were banished and burnt, could once have lived under a happier star in Portugal.

[2] Barros, Mariz, Faria and others call him Abraham de Beja, Castanhed: *Morador em Beja.* Schäfer simply calls him Rabbi Abraham. l. c. III. 155.

Barros, Asia (Lisboa 1778) Dec. 1. Lib. 3. C. 5: E estando pera se vir a este Reyno com recado destas cousas que tinha sabido, soube que andavam alli dous Judeos de Hespanha em sua busca, com os quaes se vio mui secretamente, a hum chamauam Rabi Habrão, natural de Béja — Castanhed: Morador em Béja — e a outro Josepe,

†) Pendo, a Portuguese word with Latin termination: *pendão*, flag or leader.

letters from his king. Joseph, who formerly had been in Bagdad, and who on his return had related to the monarch all that he had heard there about Ormuz, the world renowned mart of the spices and drugs of India, had been commanded by the king, in company with the aforesaid Rabbi Abraham, to search for the wandering Cavilhão, and to deliver to him the injunction, that he should give Joseph a report of the success of his mission, but that he himself should travel with the Rabbi Abraham to Ormuz, in order to make himself there acquainted with the conditions of India. Cavilhão rendered punctual obedience to João's orders: he travelled with the Rabbi to Ormuz, and by a caravan proceeding to Aleppo sent Joseph back to Portugal,[1]

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capateiro de Lamego; o qual Josepe havia pouco tempo que viera daquellas partes ; e como soube ça no Reyno o grande desejo que el Rey tinha da informação das cousas da India, foi-lho dar conta como estivera em a cidade de Babylonia, a que ora chamam Bagodad, situada no rio Eufrates, e que alli ouvira fallar do trato da Ileha chamada Ormuz, que estava na boca da mar da Persia, em a qual havia huma Cidade a mais celebre de todas aquellas partes, por a elle concorrerem todalas especiarias e riquezas da India, as quaes per cafilas de camelos vinham ter as Cidades de Aleppo e Damasco. El Rey, ao tempo que soube estas, e outras cousas deste Judeo era ja Pero de Covilhão partido, ordenou se o mandar em busca delle, e assi o outro chamado R. Habrão, o Josepe pera lhe trazer recado das cartas, que per elles mandaua a Pero de Covilhão, e Habrão pera ir com elle ver a Ilha de Ormuz e dahi se informar das cousas da India. Em as quaes cantar El Rey encommendaua muito a Pero de Covilhão que se ainda não tinha achado o Preste João, que não receasse o trabalho té se ver com elle e lhe dar sua carta e recado; e que em quanto a esto fosse, per aquello Judeo Josepe lhe escrevesse tudo o que tinha e sabido . . . .

[1] Schäfer, l. c. III. 155, in his description suddenly ceases to mention Joseph, and lets Abraham, instead of Joseph return to Portugal with the statements. Garcia de Resende, *Chronica del Rey D. Joam II (Lisboa 1752)*, Fol. 29b. without thinking of the Jews, concludes his account with the words: „*Cavilhão . . . . não ousu tornar.*“ In accordance with Portuguese sources of information, Barrios likewise speaks of these Jews. In his *Historia Universal Judayco*, 7, he says: „*El Rey Don Juan Segundo de Portugal por el leal advitrio de los Judios,*

where, some time afterwards, he was rejoined by his travelling companion Abraham, who had been sent out with him by the king. They had returned; — but it was only to wander forth to Africa in company with other brethren of their faith banished by João.

Just as Joseph the shoemaker and Abraham the Rabbi had been by their travels of service to the king in his intention of subduing foreign countries to the rule of his sceptre, other Jews were engaged at home in mathematical researches, which being afterwards applied to later discoveries, were found to be of no inconsiderable service.

In order to lessen the danger of losing one's self far from the coast on an unknown sea, João gave commands to the most celebrated mathematicians of the kingdom, that they should consult together to contrive the means of being able with greater certainty to show the course the ship should keep in the open sea, and be able to find out where they were, if they should happen to be far from a known coast. After great deliberation and research, the use of the astrolabe, which until then had only been in requisition for astronomical purposes, was applied to navigation; and this discovery is for the greater part, if not entirely, the work of Portuguese Jews.

With Martin Behaim, the celebrated knight and navigator from Nuremberg, sat also in consultation, together with a Moses and an Abraham, on account of his mathematical acquirements called Rabbi Abraham Estrolico[1] (the astro-

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descubrio à la India Oriental, y por esso hizo confiança de Rabi Abraham de Beja y de Joseph Zarpatero de Lamego, quando los embio por tierra à las orillas del Mar Roxo, de donde Pedro de Covillam se embarco com Rabi Abraham para Hormuz, y Joseph de Lamego torno al referido Rey con el aviso de lo que hasta entonces se havia descubierto." — After Barrios Basnage also, *Histoire des Juifs*, IX. 729. It is not improbable that one of the Jews named Abraham, mentioned in the course of this treatise as being near Safi or Azamor, may have been this same Abraham de Beja.

[1] Many of our readers may, at the mention of this Abraham Estrolico, be reminded of R. Abraham Zacuto, the author of „Juchasin", and

loger), — according to a decree given in Torres Vedras June 9th 1493, this last mentioned Rabbi was made by the king to pay 10 gold Espardims;[1] — likewise Joseph and Rodrigo, the Jewish physicians in ordinary to João. Joseph and Rodrigo, who were likewise engaged in the making of the terrestrial globe for the aforesaid Pedro de Cavilhão,[2] have acquired importance in the history of Portuguese discoveries. Who knows but for the dissuasion of Joseph, if the Genoese discoverer of the new world would not have prevailed upon the king — who found in the words of the noble Columbus „more pride and conceit, than truth and certainty" — to have credited his assertions, and to have granted him a few ships in order to attempt the discovery of his island? But João referred him, as Barros[3] relates,

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the well known astrologer of Manuel; of him we will speak another time. But as we are not quite sure if Zacuto who certainly was already in Portugal in 1493, was likewise in the service of João, I feel no hesitation in considering this Abraham as a different person from Zacuto. In fact, from the 70th year of the 15th century, very many learned Jews bearing only the name of Abraham, have appeared in the course of the Portuguese history. An Abram Judai *fisyquo e peliguem* (a furrior?) lived in Elvas and was appointed by Alfonzo V, July 27th 1475 to be Rabbi of his community. Another is mentioned in 1482 as an inhabitant of Braganza. A third in 1484 as Rabbi in Lisbon; and a fourth as a physician in Braganza, Aveiro, and Setubal.

1 *Torre do Tombo, Corp. Chronic. Pars 1. Mac. 2. Doc.* 18 in the *Memor. d. litteratur. Portugueza (Lisboa 1812) VIII, 166. d. Espardim* is a gold coin of the value of 300 reis.

2 Mariz, Dial. IV. Cap. X. p. 315.

3 *Barros, Asia, Dec. 1. L. 3. C. 11: Com ludo a força de suas importunações, mandou que estivesse com D. Diego Ortiz, Bispo di Ceuta e com maestre Rodrigo e maestre Joseph, a quem elle commetia estas cousas da Cosmografia e seus descubrimentos, e todos nouveram por vaidade as palavras de christovão Colom por todo ser fundado em imaginações e cousas de Ilha Cypango de Marco Paulo....* Likewise compare Murr diplomatic history of the Portuguese knight Martin Behaim (Nuremberg 1778) 61 ff. D. Pedro de Meneses, count of Villa-Real, likewise advised the king „not to listen to the dreams of Columbus", and appealed at the same time to Joseph and Rodrigo.

to the Bishop of Ceuta, and to his learned men Joseph and Rodrigo, to whom he left it to investigate such-like cosmographic discoveries. Joseph and Rodrigo considered the request of Columbus to be foolish, and were of opinion that it was all founded upon his discontent respecting the island Cipango of Marco Polo. The navigator was dismissed with a refusal, and — the neighbouring country reaped the fruit of his great discoveries.

The application of the astrolabe to the purposes of navigation is the work of the Jews.[1] How important this invention became for all later discoveries it is not in our power to judge. It lessened the difficulties, and facilitated the trade of the Portuguese with the African tribes: Navigation thereby made rapid and powerful progress, and — not João, but Joseph and Rodrigo have obtained for themselves for ever a place of honour in history, and science always remembers them with respect, although the king rewarded them with ingratitude, and banished them from the country together with their brethren in the fa h.

In the days of Manuel the Portuguese nation endeavoured to elevate itself, and the enthusiasm for voyages and discoveries seized most powerfully on the most energetic, active, and enterprising men. Vasco de Gama set sail, Diaz joined him, Meneses fought victoriously in Africa, Manuel wished to lead in person an army against the Moors, and the old Azambuja, that subtile limping old man, reaped on Moorish soil the most glorious triumphs of victory.

His triumphs and conquests we will now follow; and will next proceed with him to the ancient coasting town of Safi.

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[1] *Barros, l. c. Dec. 1. L. 4. Cap. 2. Telles. Sylvius, De Rebus gestis Joannis II. (Hagae 1712), 99: Ut minore cum errandi periculo ignotum mare nauigari posset, Roderico et Josepho, medicis suis, nec non Martino Bohemo, ea aetate peritissimis mathematicis, iniunxit Joannes II. etc. Matthaei, De insulis novi orbis (Francof. 1590), 80: ...praeclaro sano invento ad usum rei maritimae opera peritissimorum mathematicorum Rotheri et Josephi etc. Maffei, Histor. Indicar. (Venet.) 51.*

This town, which is called by the Moors Azafi, and, according to the accounts of Arabian writers, was built by the natives in times of remote antiquity, consisted at the time when Azambuja approached it of many scattered villages and hamlets, and had more than 4000 dwellings, of which 400 were inhabited by Jews.[1] Through the Jewish population, Safi had become an important place of trade, and Christian, as well as Moorish merchants, imported by land and by water the most different productions and goods: gold and silver, honey, wax, butter and skins. The Portuguese took advantage of disputes in the family of the Regent of Morocco, and with the assistance of the Jews succeeded in getting the family into their power.

Accompanied by only a few persons, Azambuja proceeded to Safi. Scarcely had he entered the place, when he was informed by a Jew living there, a certain Rabbi Abraham, who served him as interpreter,[2] that some of the inhabitants of the town were conspiring against the life of him, who had come as a mediator among them. This assertion of the Rabbi was confirmed by others, so that the general in the moment of danger thought it expedient to return for the present to Castello-Real, from whence he came. On the 6th August 1507, furnished with new instructions from his king he again entered Safi, accompanied by Garcia de Melo, who had been appointed to assist him. But

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1 *Damião de Goes, Chronica do Rei D. Manuel (Lisboa 1749), Fol. 186: allem de quatro centas casas que nella auia de Judeus. Leo Africanus, De totius Africae descriptione (Tiguri 1559), 120* believes: *„Azaphi . . . quamplurimos olim habuit Judaeos, qui et varias exercebant artes.*

2 *Dam. de Goes, l. c. 187: porque soube per via do hum Judeu, per nome Rabi Abrahão que era sua lingoa que alguns dos dacidade andauam pera o matar, o que de feito era verdade* &c. Likewise *Osorius, De rebus Emmanuelis (Coloniae 1597), 138b: Ibi vero cum indicio Abrahami Judaei cognovisset* &c. *Ribeiro dos Santos* may also have had in his mind the Abraham in question when he wrote *Memor. d. litt. Portugueza, VIII. 223: „Outro Abraham feito Rabi dos Judeos de Çafim.“*

now none of the contending parties would enter into any negociation with Azambuja. Azambuja reflected on the means of subduing the town to the rule of the Portuguese sceptre, and devised one as ignoble as it wat efficacious: — he sowed dissension, as the chronicler expresses himself, between the two chiefs of the parties who were waging war against each other, excited mutual distrust, and thus, by artifice, took possession of the town.

Garcia de Melo, Azambuja's companion and attendant, lay ill in bed; a Jewish doctor, who had access to both the contending chiefs, was summoned from the town to attend him. The Portuguese generals sought to win him over to their purpose, and the Jew allowed himself to be used as a mediator. They induced him to deliver letters to each of the two leaders, but in such manner that the one should know nothing of the letter of the other. Both were informed that their lives were in danger from their opponents; both were advised to intrust themselves to the Portuguese generals; and to each was the assurance given, that he, as a vassal of Manuel, should govern in conjunction with the governor named by the king. No one but those persons engaged in this serious game knew of this strategetic artifice. As often as the doctor visited the still suffering de Melo, he placed his hand under the coverlet of the bed as if to feel the pulse of his patient; but, in reality, instead of the pulse, he took hold of the letters written by de Melo in the interim, and then retired as quickly as possible. This stratagem succeeded; each of the leaders fell into the snare which had been prepared for him, and — Safi fell.[1]

This manner of conquering towns and gaining countries does not stand alone in history; in every war similar cases occur, and Portuguese and French, German and English have no scruples of conscience in opening a way in wartime by cunning artifice, and in making cunning and violence pass for military science and military law. Yet but few

[1] *Dam. de Goes l. c. 188, Osorius l. c. 139 a.*

examples can be cited where Jews, who are always and everywhere the most faithful subjects of their ruler, have been induced to side with the enemy. The Jewish doctor had the welfare of his fellow-citizens and of his brethren in view; he wished to deliver the town from tyrants, and hoped that the Portuguese would take off the yoke which pressed heavily on all the inhabitants. Did he see his hopes fulfilled? History is silent on this point; and yet we believe ourselves justified in conjecturing that he did.

As long as Safi stood under Portuguese rule, the Jews of this town had equal rights and paid the same taxes as the other inhabitants.

Safi remained for a long time the seat of war. The more important it was for the Portuguese to possess this rich commercial[1] town, on account if its extensive trade, from which the Jews as well as the Christians and Moors derived very rich profits, the more often did the Moors make the attempt to wrest it from them. After its capture, the aged Azambuja was appointed sole Governor; but he did not succeed in keeping the rebellious Moors in subjection. In 1511 the whole province of Duccala, the capital of which is the often mentioned Safi, rose up against the foreign conquerors; an army of 5000 cavalry and 600,000 men on foot stood ready for combat. In hurried marches the Portuguese general, the clever Atayde advanced against Safi. He had the gates closed, and gave most positive commands to the sentinels not to allow any human being, whether Moor, Jew, or Christian to depart without especial permission.[2] In a short time Atayde suppressed the revolt, subdued the whole province, and levied a tribute on all the goods imported by the inhabitants whether Moor, Jew, or Christian.

When the inhabitants of Morocco, twenty-eight years

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1 *Dam. de Goes l. c. 291: . . . . . grando trato de mercadorias que nella auia, de que assi os Christiãos como os mouros e Judeus fazião muitos e mui grossos ganhos.*

2 *Goes l. c. 290: E defender aos porteiros e guardas que Mouro, nem Judeu, nem Christião deixassem sair fora sem seu mandado.*

later, again took to arms, and desired to shake off the yoke of the stranger, it was a Jewish general who assisted the Portuguese. In the year 1539 the Xarife of Morocco with an army of 100,000 men appeared before Safi; on which occasion one of the Jews, who had been banished from Spain, and had wandered to Fez, gave a brilliant example of Jewish fidelity and Jewish bravery. Samuel Valenciano (Al-Valenci) is the name of this Jewish general. This hero, who on his arrival in Fez[1] had won for himself the love and respect of the reigning monarch of the family of Merines, had before this time, at Ceuta, made his name feared. Later, the Xarifes rose against the Merines, and drove them out of the kingdom. The Princes were deposed, and placed themselves under Portuguese protection. The noble Samuel risked his life and his fortune for the family of the rightful prince; he united with other Alcades who had remained faithful to the Merines, equipped some ships, placed himself at the head of the undertaking, and sailed away to the place where the rebels had caused the Portuguese much damage. Al-Valenci arrived with his ships before Ceuta. He quickly landed his people, waited in the night for a favourable opportunity, and with his little band, for he had not more than 400 men, rushed upon the hostile army, which numbered more than 30,000 warriors. He cut down more than 5000 without losing a single man. Ceuta was struck with terror, and before the morning dawned the Xarife withdrew to Fez.[2] With similar bravery, with mar-

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[1] Samuel is said to have settled later in Azamor.

[2] *Tambien merea ser celebrada la fidelidad y valor de un noble Israelita, llamado Semuel Alualensi, de los desterrados de España: el qual, auiendo passado à Africa fue fauorecido y muy muz amado del Rey de Fez, que en aquel tiempo era de la familia de los Merines. Succedio que los Xarifes se lleuantaron contra los Merines, y los mataron y despojaron del Reyne. Fue tan grande el dolor del grato y fiel Semuel Alualensi, que poniendo su vida, hazienda, y todas sus cosas à manifiesto peligro, se junto con otros Alcaydes criados de los Merines, y armaron algunos nauios, tomando por Capitan al valeroso Alualensi,*

vellous courage, and rare skill Al-Valenci compelled the enemy encamped before Safi to give way, and raised the siege.[1] Azamor is stated to be the later place of residence of this brave Jewish hero; and to Azamor we will accompany the Portuguese conquerors. Azamor, but a few miles distant from Fez, was next to Safi, the chief town of the province of Duccala. Long before the capture of Safi, by the Portuguese, King Manuel, in order to continue the friendship and peace which João had established with the Moors of Azamor, kept some trustworthy Portuguese in this town. At their instigation, and with the assistance of the Jewish Rabbi there, Rabbi Abraham, in 1512,[2] the inhabitants of Azamor, by letters and treaties, and with the consent of their chief, Mulei Zeyan, submitted themselves to the King of Portugal. Mulei Zeyan, who ruled with the greatest tyranny, had several times violated the contracts with Portugal, and Manuel, therefore, determined in 1513 to conquer Azamor. For this purpose he equipped a fleet of more

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para hir contra los Xarifes, que estauan en aquel tiempo sobre la fortaleza de Cepta, y tenian muy afligidos à los Portuguezes vasallos del Rey D. Manuel que la defendian. Llegaron entonces los nauios de nuestro Alualensi al puerto de Cepta, y auiendo desembarcado la gente en tierra, espero tiempo oportuno de la noche, y con qnatocientos Nombres deo sobre el ezercito del Xarife, que eran mas de treynta mil, y mataron mas de cinco mil dellos, sin perder uno solo de los suyos. Luego al otro dia als(z)o el Xarife el cerco y se retiro a Fez. Aboab, Nomologia (Amsterdam 1629) 305 f.

1 *El Tirano Xarife de Marruecos cerco à la ciudad de Safi en el anno de 1539 con cien mil hombres y el valiente Samuel Valenciano Judio de Azamor, y Almirante de guerreros Vergantines, que formo à su costa, socorria à los cercados Portuguezes, y con admirable industria, y audicia desbarato à los Mahometanos y descerco a la Ciudad. Barrios, Historia Universal Judayca, 8 f.*

2 *Dam. de Goes l. c. 367: Muito antes da tomada de Çafim por el Rey D. Manuel continuar nas pazes e amiza de etc.* (Compare likewise Schäfer l. c. III, 119, who, like ourselves, translates Goes) . . . *per medo dos quaes (cavallecros) o de hum Rabi mor dos Judeos, per nome Rabi Abraham* (why Schäfer does not mention the Rabbi, we do not know) &c.

than 400 ships, and conferred the chief command on his nephew D. Jaime, Duke of Braganza. João de Menezes with several of his sons, and many valorous nobles and gentlemen, joined the great expedition.

On the 23rd of August D. Jaime set sail, and in a few days afterwards came in sight of Azamor. This town was not inferior to Safi in size and importance; it carried on a great trade, and had more than 5000 dwellings, 400 of which were inhabited by Jews.[1]

With a considerable military force, Mulei Zeyan, accompanied by his two sons, advanced against the Portuguese; he himself commanded in person. D. Jaime gave the necessary orders to the fleet, disembarked the guns, and in marching order advanced with the whole army against the Moors, who stood prepared in battle army. The struggle began. The Moorish warriors defended themselves with the courage of lions. Suddenly a loud lamentation arose in the town; their brave commander, who not only with his powerful voice, but with the most energetic actions, had inspired his people to battle, the valiant Cide Mansus, had been struck to the earth by a bomb shell. With him all their courage vanished. They rushed from the town, and in such haste, that more than 80 persons were pressed to death at the gates.

Before the morning dawned was heard from the walls of Azamor, which was sunk in deathlike stillness, a voice exclaiming: „Diego Berio! Diego Berio!" — This cry was addressed to the bravest man of the Portuguese fleet. It was the voice of a friend, of an old acquaintance from his home; it was the cry of the Jew Jacob Adibe, who had been banished from his country. Without delay, Jacob wished to be conducted to the Duke. Diego Berio accompanied his friend. „The city is free!" With these words Jacob

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[1] *Dam. de Goes l. c. 370: em que aueria mais de cinco mil fogos, sem os dos Judeus, que serião quatrocentos*, therefore not five hundred, as Schäfer l. c. III, 120 asserts.

fell on his face to the earth. „Azamor is vacated, oh Duke! Azamor is free! I beg for my life, and for the lives of my brethren and fellow-worshippers.“ D. Jaime raised the suppliant Jew, and promised him protection and support. He then himself sank down, and thanked God for his mercy in allowing him to take this great and noble city, without the loss of those who had come forth with him. Jacob Adibe had received the Duke's promise, and joyfully returned to his own people. The cry of victory rose in the camp of the Portuguese; with flying colours the conquerors entered Azamor, and soon did Portuguese banners wave from the gilded domes of the numerous mosques. Armed troops were placed for the protection of the Jews,[1] and while the first grand mass was being celebrated in the Moorish town, the Jews with their property wandered forth to Sale and to Fez, in order that they might no longer live with people who, as the Moorish Christian Johannes believes,[2] had drawn upon themselves the loss of freedom by the most dreadful crime. The taking of Azamor was followed in the next year by the conquest of Fednest, in which the Portuguese found 1600 houses, of which 100 belonged to

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1 *Damião de Goes, l. c. 372: Despyada assi a cidade, sendo ainda noite, hum Judeu de naçam Portuguez, per nome Jacob Adibe, dos que se foram deste regno, que ahi era morador, chamou derriba do muro Diego Berrio ete O Duque fez aleuantar o Judeu . . . . . e ao Judeo concedeo o que lhe pedio ete . . Entrassem na cidade e com elle o corregedor pera defender os Judeus que os nam roubassem . . . . . Osorius, l. c. 254 b: Antiquam dilusesceret Judaeus quidam, nomine Jacobus Adibius, natione Lusitanus, qui cum reliquis Judaeis in exilium pulsus fuerat, e muris Jacobum* (must be Diegum) *Berrium etc.* Barrios likewise mentions Jacob Adibe *(Historia Universal Judayca 13): Jacob Adibi, en Azamor ciudad de Africa dio las alegres nuevas de como la havian desamparado sus temenosos Moradores a Don Jaime Duque de Bragança, sobrino del Rey D. Manuel.*

2 *Leo Africanus l. c. 129: Judaei vero partim Salae et partim Fessae adierunt regionem. Nec puto aliam ob causam id illis a Deo Opt. Max. fuisse illatum, quam propter horrendum illud Sodomitarum crimen, cui ciuium pars maxima tam fuit addicta, ut juvenem vix non corruptum a se dimitterent.*

the Jews.[1] There they lived as artists, free from all taxes. They only sometimes sent presents to the nobles in order to gain their favour.

Manuel's name in Barbary was soon so feared and honoured, that many Moors, tired of the tyranny of their Masters, became subject to the King of their own free will. Manuel the Happy died. Under João III the might of the Kingdom diminished; the inquisition was introduced — the possession in Africa were again lost.

The Portuguese were driven from Barbary; Jews dwell there up to the present day. Their condition at that time we will discuss on another occasion. To Malabar and its coasts we will next proceed with the Portuguese discoverers; but for the present conclude with the words of a favorite German poet of the day:

Die ganze Welt ist wie ein Buch,
Darin uns aufgeschrieben
In bunten Zeilen manch ein Spruch,
Wie Gott uns treu geblieben.

Conclusion.

With my return to Europe (April 1855) I have to finish the history of my travels. The colours of the picture I have brought before the eyes of my honoured reader may often have been glaring, and gloomy indeed may frequently have appeared to him the conditions with which my book has made him acquainted; — but I have the consciousness of having given my statements according to my own inmost sincere conviction. If perchance I have erred, and everyone is liable to error, it has been unwittingly; *intentionally* I have misrepresented nothing. In the creature I have ever

[1] *Dam. de Goes l. c. 275* corresponding with *Leo Africanus l. c. 70.*

acknowledged the brother, and have always recognised in him the image of God, as great as may have been the state of degeneracy in which I have often found him. No preconceived opinion, either good or bad, has had any weight or influence in the judgment I have formed of all I have seen and heard.

If here and there I have let the mental condition of my people, the Jews, appear dark, is it necessary for me to give the assurance that my heart was not filled with the less affection for them? Is it necessary for me to give the assurance that I only spoke that which was true, and that in every Jewish soul I recognised a true brother, the son of our father Abraham, the joint-heir to the great sacred treasure, the Thora, which God has confided to the people of Israel, and therefore to each one born of a Jewish mother.

May it be permitted to the traveller, who from far distant countries has returned to the land of his birth — that land, which was the home of his children, whilst their father was seeking his way through deserts and over barren mountains, — may it be permitted to the traveller who is nearly prepared to start again for a long and farther journey likewise to call the attention of his European brethren to a subject connected with their own interests. I address myself first to my brethren in Poland, Russia, and the Moldau. Not one of them can uphold with greater enthusiasm than I do that heavenly treasure, our sacred law, as the sole, highest, and most invaluable gift which truly has the power of establishing and insuring salvation and peace on Earth. No one can lay to heart with deeper and truer conviction than I do that precept: „Day and night thou shalt apply thy heart unto wisdom", — or understand more fully the importance of the law, or adhere to it more entirely with heart and soul.

But just for this very law's sake, we dare not close our ears to general knowledge. „Jofe thalmud thora im derech erez," — knowledge of the law must go hand in hand with general knowledge, as our wise men teach us

not in vain; let them then *be* our teachers. Let us follow their precepts; we find there is no field of knowledge in which they were not at home, how could it be otherwise? The Thora is no mystery, no priestcraft; it is the decree of the Almighty loving Father and King of the universe; can there then be a corner in this universe where God's law could receive such injury, that His word should not penetrate thereinto? And now less than ever, when everywhere, and even in the countries I have mentioned, the dark spirit of prejudice is yielding, and the Jew, in a more independent position, enters the ranks of those of other creeds — now, when the power of custom can no longer rule so powerfully, and when door and gate are more open than formerly to seductive temptation, ought we to leave the rising generation ignorant of the knowledge which the mind of man has acquired, and expose our children without protection to the voice of false wisdom and education? Ought we not more carefully than ever to furnish them with all and every instruction and refinement, and show them what is godlike and pure therein, and what is error and man's presumption?

„Jofe thalmud thora im derech erez." Thora and education, such must be in this age the inscription on our standards; then will our children be faithful under the banner of their holy faith, just as they remained steadfast when Grecian refinement and learning had the mastery.

How have I come to address this old precept to my brethren, and how have I been induced to do so? — It is because I am a child of those parts where this important precept has been overlooked, and I have felt and do still feel painfully — I avow it openly — the great deficiency which this want has occasioned. I look round in Germany and France; here likewise, where truth and justice were in advance more than half a century, this precept was forgotten, and it was foolishly believed that one could shut one's self up, as it were, against the progress of European enlightenment. — What was the consequence? That every

one who strove after education was compelled to consider himself as not belonging to the community of Israel; and if in latter days the Lord had not opened the eyes of the faithful Jews, one must have said of these countries: „thora nischkachath", the law was completely forgotten.

But where this principle is cherished, knowledge of the law, adherence to the law, and education grow together in beautiful development out of one soil, and the rising generation remain steadfast to the faith of their fathers, without being inferior to others in mental culture.

May thus our Russian, Polish, and Moldavian brethren learn from Germany and France how much the neglect of the above precept avenges itself, and what glorious fruits spring from its observance! With this wish I take my leave of the Reader.

CHAPTER XLIV.

After having published in 1856 the French edition of my book of travels, I applied to the learned men and Orientalists of France and Germany to give me for the furtherance of the cause of science, some instructions and suggestions for my guidance in my intended second journey, as, on my first journey, the want of such directions was much felt. In consequence of this request, I received the following memoranda, which I here note down, as perhaps they may prove useful to some other traveller, and in order that, in case of my losing the memoranda themselves, I may not be entirely deprived of their benefit.

A. General questions and propositions from Dr. Munk in Paris.

September 14th 1856.

1. General.

a. To procure a complete written calender used by a tribe, and made by them, or, at least, an exact copy of one, or a full account respecting it in which it is clearly stated whether they reckon according to solar or lunar months, and whether the lunar years are regulated astronomically, or according to the changes of the moon.

b. The specification of an era from which the general calculation of time began.

c. Information concerning festival days, their signification and names.

d. Information respecting prayers; if possible, to procure a book of prayer, or at least some authentic copy of it. A translation of the same, particularly into Arabic. Minute investigation of the writing, and the comparison of it with Phoenician, Samaritan, and ancient and modern Hebrew characters. Inquiry whether traces of the Hebrew language appear in their prayers; for instance, how the name of God is pronounced. Accounts respecting the belief in angels, how they are described; respecting the immortality of the soul; respecting their burial grounds, and the making exact copies of epitaphs.

e. Accounts of other written religious books; to procure the originals, or authentic copies, or translations of the same.

f. Report of any existing knowledge of Biblical writings, whether perfect, abridged, or fragmentary. With respect to this to seek especially for manuscripts, or portions of them.

g. Report respecting customs and habits. Search after written laws, and at what time, and by whom the same were given. If possible, the most detailed information respecting the laws of food and purification; at which time are to be kept particularly in mind the names of animals and plants

mentioned in the Pentateuch, as well as the precepts of Holy Writ relative to the Nidda.

h. Report respecting marriage laws and customs; if polygamy is customary, if Chaliza and contracts of marriage are introduced. If possible, to procure original letters of divorce, or authentic copies of them.

2. Special.

a. The Bene-Israel. Minute investigation respecting their descent; if they are primitive Jews, or only converted heathen, as, for instance, the Hagarites were. — Have they, besides the known and already mentioned Malabaric Chronicle, other historical writings, of which exact copies may be made? — Detailed information respecting their history etc.

b. The Jews of China. The most detailed possible account.

c. The Jews of Afghanistan. General information; particularly respecting the language for prayer, and the language of the country, their customs etc.

d. The Jews of Persia. General report. To search for manuscripts in Hebrew characters, and for a Persian translation of the Bible. (Those manuscripts found in Paris were written in Lar in the beginning of the 17th century; one is dated from *Dogrun di al jama raba mothuya.*)

e. The Jews of Kurdistan. General report particularly respecting the language used for prayer; — and if there are no writings in existence respecting the translation of the Bible into the language of the country; respecting marriage contracts, and letters of divorce.

f. The Jews of Arabia. General report, particularly respecting Arabic manuscripts in Hebrew characters, — to procure some; especially manuscripts in Yemen, commentaries on the Bible by Rabbi Tarchum of Jerusalem; Kutiath on the Bible. — Detailed report relative to the Bible in Diabekr, which, according to the Jews there, was written by the hand of Ezra, and is mentioned by the traveller in his

work: „*Cinq années de voyage en Orient*"; also respecting the Pentateuch at Kefil, ascribed to the hand of Ezekiel, and likewise mentioned by the traveller in the same work.

B. Suggestions of Mr. Goldberg in Paris.

July 20th 1856.

a. To undertake a comparison between the names of towns and places in ancient Mesopotamia and Assyria, and to note down these names in Hebrew and Arabic with the greatest accuracy.

b. To search for authentic writings, perfect, as well as fragmentary. They are divided into three classes:

1) *Biblical.* Pentateuchs and ancient Bibles, complete text; some apocryphal books, which existed at the time of the Talmudists: such as Ben Sira, Ben Toglath, Ben Lanath; and perhaps others that are yet unknown, such as some fragments from the writings of Joseph the historian which may perhaps be found in the Targums.
2) *Talmudic.* All Talmudic writings, because there may be among them some still unknown to us; as, for instance, the Talmud Jerushalmi of Seder Kadashim, which was in existence in the time of Maimonides; or the Tosiphta of Bar-Karpara, the fables of the Rabbi Meïr &c.
3) *Geoninic* in the Chaldaic and Arabic writing; this class is very numerous; for instance, the celebrated R. Sharira, his son R. Hai, R. Samuel ben Haphni, R. Hephetz ben Jatzlia &c. Perhaps also writings of the opposers of the Talmudists, i. e. of the Karaites, and opposers of the Bible; for instance, Hevy al Balhi, Ben Sakoni, who lived at the time of Sadia &c.

c. Observation and investigation of natural productions and implements; and minute information respecting their names. Searches after inscriptions, which date perhaps from the most remote periods, and copies of the same.

C. Remark of Dr. Derenbourg in Paris.

September 16th 1856.

It would be desirable that the traveller should take accurate copies of the Hingaritic inscriptions of which there are many in Zana (Osel of the Bible), and in the vicinity; partly to check those, given by Arnaud, and partly to increase and complete the same.

D. Observation of Mr. Landau in Paris.

September 21th 1856.

Question. If any decided assertion exists in the traditions of the people relative to the time of the coming of the Messiah? — and upon what this assertion is founded? Can it possibly be traced back to the Thora?

E. Remarks of Dr. Jost in Frankfurt on the Maine.

a. Investigations respecting the most ancient Geonim, and their writings.

b. Respecting their position in the Caliphat, particularly relative to the Roshe Galuth.

c. Respecting the most ancient Karaites: Joseph ben Noha, Nissim ben Noha, (Hawandi) Benjamin, Joshejaha, Anan, Levy, Japheth, likewise respecting Japhet ben Said, Joseph hamaor, Jacob harkasni.

d. Respecting the dwelling places, and the number of families of the Karaites.

e. Respecting exact manuscripts of the same, particularly those in Arabic.

f. Respecting the sect of the Shabathai Zeby, their customs, divine service, and writings.

F. Remarks of Mr. Geiger in Breslau.

June 22nd 1858.

Among ancient printed works there are many which have become disfigured by later additions; the finding of ancient manuscripts would possibly enable us to restore the original text. Among these I include especially the „Targum Jerushalmi", likewise printed under the name of „Jonathan"; the „Mechiltha", the „Sifre" (on the last two books of the Thora). By obtaining such manuscripts, Mr. Benjamin would greatly benefit the cause of science.

About 300 years since the *Arabic commentary* of *Saadia* on the *Pentateuch* was in existence; it might still be found either in Egypt or Persia.

G. Remarks of Dr. C. J. Magnus in Breslau.

June 16th 1858.

1) From the great importance of the *Chaldaic language* and *literature* for the proper understanding of certain parts of the Assyrian and ancient Babylonian cuniform inscriptions, every contribution to our knowledge on these points must be of the greatest interest.

a. If therefore the supposition of Mr. Benjamin is correct, that in the mountains of Kurdistan, even at the present day, Chaldaic (not perhaps the modern Assyrian, — compare *Rödiger* in the „*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*", Vol. 2, p. 77 ff.) is spoken by the Jews dwelling there, it would be desirable that Mr. Benjamin — for want of written books — should have written down by a Jewish learned man a series of literary tradition as accurately as possible; — such as legends, tales, songs &c.; but under all circumstances with the addition of a vocal accentuation, either Hebrew, Assyrian, or Arabic.

b. For the same reason Mr. Benjamin had better search for good ancient (especially accentuated) manuscripts of the different Targums; — the Jerushalmi Targum on the Pentateuch not to be forgotten.

2) And not less desirable would it be if Mr. Benjamin would turn his attention to *Samaritan literature*, and would take especial trouble to obtain some good manuscripts, not only of the Hebrew Pentateuch in use among the Samaritans written in Samaritan characters, but the Samaritan paraphrase of the same, and other literary works of this people written in the Arabic (or Samaritan?) language, whether exegetical, historical or grammatical.

3) Good manuscript texts, Biblical versions of *Madinchai* and *Maarbai*, and of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, as well as simple and plainly-written Masores either in Bible manuscripts or as independent works, especially the book „Ochla Weoohla", would likewise merit the attention of the traveller.

H. Remarks of Mr. Stenzler in Breslau.

Juni 22nd 1858.

For the more accurate knowledge of the Persian language it were important to have particulars of the different dialects spoken in the different provinces. In order to become perfectly conversant with the pronunciation, which can but in adequately be acquired from a grammar, I should propose that a rather long Persian text should be selected, and its pronunciation in the different provinces, according to the various dialects, should be carefully written down in Latin letters.

I. Remarks of Mr. Schmölders.

1) In Jerusalem at the Haram are to be found two large and two small mosques. The one standing in the middle of the space is the celebrated *Omar-Mosque*, which

is likewise called the Rock-Cathedral. The other large mosque stands in the southern part, and was formerly a Christian church built by Justinian. The two other small mosques join it, and it is a splendid building, and contains seven naves. In the descriptions given by Christian travellers it is often called the *Aksâ*, while some Arabic authors call the Omar-Mosque Aksâ. It would be desirable to ascertain if possible *which* of the two mosques *is* the Aksâ.

2) W. J. Hamilton has given us some accounts respecting the ruins of the former town of Ani (on the Turkish-Russian-Persian boundary, 5 geographical miles east of Kars), which are of the greatest importance to science. Hamilton's statements make a more minute knowledge of these magnificent ruins, the more desirable. Modern travellers do not appear to have visited these ruins at all; therefore a description, as accurate as possible, of these monuments, would be of the greatest value to history as well as art.

3) Layard has drawn attention to the Jezidis dwelling in the vicinity of Mosul. Their peculiar religious opinions and extraordinary worship appear to denote remote heathen antiquity. It would therefore be most interesting, if other travellers would bestow some attention on the religion, doctrines, whorship, and traditions of the Jezidis.

4) D'Herbelot in the „*Bibliothèque Orientale*" has a notice respecting the book „*Gafr*", a work of repute among the Shiite heretics, which would be of great importance in the history of the religion of Islam. Could not (particularly in Kurdistan) more accurate knowledge respecting it, or even the book itself be obtained?

K. Remarks of Mr. R. Gosche.

„*Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde*", p. 149: We wish from ethnographical considerations, that the traveller would not mind taking the additional trouble of collecting in Luristan among the Tadshicks and in the Persian-Indian frontier countries something belonging to the language, whether songs or little phrases. To Luristan we should wish especially to

invite his attention; as also to recommend to the warmest sympathy of geographers, and geographical societies the whole enterprise of his journey.

After having received while in France the above instructions, I proceeded to Holland, and first of all to Rotterdam. There I became acquainted with a rich merchant and the superintendent of the community *L. L. Jacobsohn*, who, with the concurrence of other influential men proposed to me that I should undertake a journey to the East-Indies in the Netherlands (Java), in order to establish there a Jewish community; for although a considerable number of our brethren dwell there, no such community is as yet in existence. Although the journey was not too far for me, still the expenses attending it were considerable; so I laid the matter before the Chief-Rabbis of Rotterdam and the Hague, who then, in the following petition, stated the case to the Jewish Court of Commissioners.

The undersigned Chief-Rabbis of the Israelitish chief synagogues at Rotterdam and the Hague have the honour, in consequence of a request addressed to them by Mr. Israel Joseph Benjamin II, relative to the continuation of his travels in the East in the interest of the Israelites, to send the annexed petition to the Chief Court of Commissioners for the affairs of the Israelites in the Netherlands; and this petition shall not only serve to prove their sincere interest in these travels and their probable results, but likewise warmly to bespeak assistance and sympathy in behalf of the above well-known and celebrated traveller in his intended journey to the possessions of the Netherlands in the East Indies.

Rotterdam and the Hague. Ijar 5617 (Mai 1857).

(signed) *B. S. Berenstein,*
C. R. of the Jew. Com. at the Hague.

Ib. van Ib. Ferares,
C. R. of the Portuguese Jew. Com. at the Hague.

Dr. J. Isaacsohn,
C. R. of Rotterdam.

To the Chief Court of Commissioners
or the affairs of the Israelites in the Netherlands
at the Hague.

Erratum:
(The numbers of page 321 etc. must be 317 etc.)

Memorial.

By every one who has turned his attention to the history of the settlement of our fellow-worshippers in the hospitable Netherlands, the close connection and establishment of our religious confederacy in their transatlantic colonies deserves especial consideration. The first settlement of the Israelites in the Netherlands took place almost at the same time with the discovery of America; and hardly had the Netherlands some time afterwards come into possession of the important colonies in the West-Indies, as they were called, when the enterprising spirit of the Jews of the Netherlands took advantage of this circumstance by extending to those parts their commercial transactions; and how this has forwarded the welfare of the communities, and what general benefit it has conferred upon the colonies, is sufficiently well known.

In later years it became a subject of inquiry why the discernment of the learned men and merchants of former days had omitted to take into consideration the advantages which might have been derived from the still more profitable colonies of the East Indies. Perhaps they hesitated on account of their well known devotion to their ancestral faith and religious observances, precepts, and customs, which, they believed, they would be unable to follow in such remote parts. However, from time to time solitary adventurers, mostly from the lower class, went out either as sailors or in some such position; but they were too much wanting in ability and knowledge, and had too little feeling of religion, to think of establishing anything there of a religious character. From the want of moral and religious education in these adventurers, in every effort to establish anything relative to divine service, one could not calculate either on success or consistency; there was no confidence to be placed in them. It was considered useless to expend a sum of any amount for providing even the most necessary arrange-

ments as a first preparation for the establishment of an Israelitish religious association, for fear of the desecration of those minor usages, which Israelites are bound to observe with particular reverence and care. But within the last few years, when the transmission of means is considerably safer and easier, the wish to plant the ensign of our faith among our fellow-worshippers in those parts has gradually become more earnest. Not only from a scientific and philanthropic, but likewise from a material and commercial motive, and even influenced by pure selfishness, some of our brethren from the Netherlands began to perceive the benefits to be derived from it, and to feel the want of it. These wishes, however, were never carried out, and the matter was never seriously considered nor undertaken with any decision, on account of the difficulty of finding suitable persons capable and worthy of such a mission, to whom it could be intrusted with the prospect of its wished-for success. — But the appearance at this moment in the Netherlands of one who possesses an extensive knowledge of the Israelitish faith and literature, and who has the intention of continuing in a short time those journies in the far East, which he has already made with such extraordinary circumspection and self-sacrifice, in order to add to the discoveries so important for Israelitish history, he has already made, — his presence, besides the interest felt for the success of his most praise-worthy undertaking, and besides the desire to favour his scientific journey, has in a great degree increased that wish to establish a branch of our religious community in those important Eastern transatlantic possessions of the Netherlands. We are likewise animated by the same wish, and are much pleased that this wish for the furtherance of the plan proposed by the noble enterpriser of the journey, according, as it does, so well with science and religion, should have found general willing sympathy and support. As priests, we feel ourselves particularly impelled to forward the wishes of so many members of our community and to offer our assistance towards obtaining the help of our charit-

able Government. The assistance which is granted from the colonial funds for all public scientific, and moral enterprises, induces us to take the liberty of laying claim to it for the enterprise in question; and we could not allow the present favourable opportunity for the possible fulfilment of the hopes, which many of us have so long cherished, to pass by, without earnestly waging their realisation on our respected Government.

For this purpose we take the liberty of bringing before your consideration, as concisely as possible, our opinions respecting the advantages and the necessity of the object in view; and if they should meet your approbation, it will certainly be easy to your profound discernment to suggest to the respected Government the means for the attainment of our wishes.

1. Our inextinguishable feeling for our religion is an inducement important enough to insure the acceptance of our representation. Why should we stand behind other religious communities who contribute so much to the support and extension of their faith? Certainly, the Jewish religion is not, as others, bound to the duty of making proselytes; but still we ought not to be indifferent when so many of our brethren wander about without any place for religious assembly, so that religion becomes partly, if not quite, extinguished among them. We have therefore considered it as a sacred obligation to embrace the present opportunity, as the means of removing this injurious state of things. We certainly could not request from the respected Government the large expenses necessary for the establishment of a synagogue at Java, until the *certainty* of a successful result existed. — But for the mission which Mr. Benjamin is willing to undertake, without either certain assistance or later reward, a free passage and a moderate compensation could well be allowed: for this small outlay it would certainly be worth while to attempt the improvement of the condition of the Israelites, and it might well be granted to us on the principle of equality with other religious sects.

2. The furthering of philanthropic purposes might also be taken into account as a motive for a favourable consideration of our statement; for they are promoted above all under religious guidance. Furtherance of religious feeling and extensive of the knowledge of God are indispensable to a great extent to the morality of society. Among the Europeans dwelling in those countries is especially found the necessity of moral influence and powerful remedies for the restraint of human passions, and the checking of immorality. Government itself appears to comprehend this, and to further, in consequence, the establishment of churches, and to watch over their safety. In the colonies the principle of the division between church and state appears not yet to have been brought into play; and the jurisdiction of the Government has a greater control than in the mother country over instruction and morality. Under its superintendence the clerical authorities exercise direct influence on these important interests of society. Has not the Israelitish community, as bearing a not inconsiderable proportion to the population of the Netherlands, a right to demand the same protection too? Is it anything but fair that the avowers of our faith should possess some authority which would watch over the interests of their religion? For want of such a superintendence, is not the fear well grounded that a baneful influence from other churches there may be exercised over the minds of our fellow-worshippers? If they do not degenerate into complete irreligion, they are still exposed to the seductions of missionaries, who, in their artful dealings, leave no means untried. And when the moral feeling craves for its own religion, but this craving can nowhere find means to satisfy itself, then it becomes all the easier to dispose it towards the prevailing religion of the majority. Experience teaches as daily that missionaries everywhere take advantage of the want of religious knowledge; and they are apt to direct to that weak point their cunning artifices. We have nothing to say to the appointment of teachers; this can only be de-

manded by the community itself. But to regulate this demand, and to waken our fellow-worshippers from this dangerous moral slumber, fairness requires that the Government should weigh all this for the benefit of its subjects, and should finally determine to take advantage of the present opportunity, as the means of endeavouring to improve their wretched condition.

3. But likewise in a philanthropic point of view this undertaking deserves to be recommended. It were superfluous to depict to you the unhappy condition in which most of our fellow-Israelites are to be found. It is not to be concealed that neither industry or public trade flourish among them. The cause of it is not, as is so often asserted, their want of capacity; it is to be found rather in the difficulties which are placed in their way by — yes, we must confess it to our shame — others from among ourselves. — Though we cannot sufficiently acknowledge the noble benevolence of many belonging to other sects, who generously support the furtherance of trade among the Israelites, still, we but too frequently meet with old prejudices, which time alone can surmount. Besides this, the general extension of commercial industry works, on account of the position of the Netherlands, very prejudiciously on the whole of the middleclasses of society, and particularly on the Israelites, among whom, we confess with regret, trade evidently decreases. The necessity for an outlet for the population, which under God's blessing is increasing, is ever becoming a matter of greater importance, and points us to the possessions of the Netherlands beyond seas, with their branches of trade so entirely suited to the characters of the Israelites. However, the Israelites in the Netherlands are so much devoted to their faith, and to their ancestral customs, that they cannot resolve to proceed to a country where no opportunity is given for the exercise of their holy religion. Even the careless desire ardently to rest among their departed brethren; while those who are indifferent on this point, seldom rise in society to a high degree of virtue and

morality. The establishment of an Israelitish community in those parts is the only way to remove the evil, and to cause the wished-for emigration. Such an undertaking is generally commenced with the careful arrangement of an especial place of burial; by this means the fear with which the Israelite quits Europe — viz, that of an early death — is quieted, and himself encouraged to trust still to God's good Providence. Those too who are troubled with the fear of violating and transgressing religious precepts, see, in the erection of a synagogue, at least the possibility of being able to perform their religious duties aright. The Government at the opening of a colony in their Eastern possessions has very properly already recognised the necessity of an ecclesiastical guidance. In consequence of petitions, which have been presented, ecclesiastical authorities have been invited to join the undertaking of the Government; and most honourably have they performed their duties, the beneficial results of which have distinctly shewn themselves in dark days.

For the Israelites also, their guidance has not been less useful and necessary; but the erection of a synagogue is a first consideration; — this alone can place the Jew in the position of being able to live as a religious Israelite, and therefore it is that the erection of a place of worship has always been the first care of every Israelitish community. In the establishment of a church confederacy in the East Indies, a man of religion, tact, and perseverance is requisite; and, according to our conviction, no one could be more fitted for such an undertaking than the well-known traveller Mr. Benjamin. To this man, who is well acquainted with all the difficulties attending such an undertaking, and prepared to surmount them, it will be comparatively easy to take the necessary precautions, and to make every preparation for an establishment, which will satisfy every scruple of conscience on the part of those interested, and arouse the less opulent Israelites from their carelessness and timidity

to develope their physical and mental powers in a country where a better future awaits them.

4. Meanwhile, among the more wealthy class of merchants the desire for the realisation of this plan has become particularly urgent. Confidence is the first requisite for the formation of transatlantic commercial connections on such a basis as to insure a favourable result, and a Netherlander is not one easily induced to feel confidence in a distant country. And even by our fellow-worshippers in other countries, such connections exist for the most part among brothers and relations, or between those who by long service have proved themselves faithful to those who employed them. When such connections exist, distance does not in the least degree loosen the bonds of love, of relationship, or of friendship. For the Jew of the Netherlands, however, a very great difficulty presents itself from the want of all religious society, whereby he can remain faithful to his ancestral belief. Change of religion loosens at the same time the ties of relationship, rouses mistrust in mutual intercourse, and even frequently destroys commercial associations which have been arranged but with much trouble. The establishment of church confederacy is alone able to disperse all fear; and every one will be willing to make a sacrifice in order to preserve, and do their best to complete the arrangements when once made. The extension of commercial intercourse increases prosperity, and must work favourably with regard to the church confederacy in the mother country, by means of the success of its members. This is surely an important reason; and without doubt a sufficient one to induce you, to whom the charge of the Israelitish affairs is confided, actively to forward the plan proposed, and to strive to obtain the co-operation of the respected Government in an effort to promote its success.

5. Our representation is also recommended by the material interests arising from it for the members of our faith. By the constant increase of competition, it becomes each day more difficult for parents and guardians to obtain for

the objects of their love and care good prospects for the future. Experience shows us that many of our European brethren in the faith have in far distant countries succeeded in obtaining good prospects and a high position in the commercial world. The East-Indian colonies, which have not yet been worked enough by the spirit of commerce, would open a smooth path for our young men, who, in the full vigour of life, and possessed with some means, would find there an opportunity for the advantageous employment of their powers and acquirements, and a hopeful prospect of future success. But the pious-minded cannot easily resolve to risk eternal salvation for temporal happiness. Considered in this point of view, the prospect of the erection of a synagogue, and thereby of the satisfying the most important religious wants, would induce parents and guardians to allow their charges to proceed thither. With confidence in the moral principles which have been until now instilled into them, their careful preceptors would no longer hesitate to send them to a far country, where is offered to them, with more certainty than here, a good standing in the commercial world, and where also heavenly food can be obtained in the bosom of the church. And even the greater activity and prudence to which they would be obliged to accustom themselves during the first years of their residence there, would exercise a favourable influence on their piety and morality, and carelessness and indifference, which now occupy their minds for want of employment, would then be changed into earnestness and zeal.

6. Even the simple purpose of this journey, to make still further researches concerning the condition of our brethren in the faith in several parts deserves encouragement and assistance. This certainly may appear at first sight to be of no interest to our Government; but on nearer inspection it is obvious that merely from motives of general philantropy it is fully entitled to the sympathy of the legislature. The experience of later years has oftentimes taught us how many advantages have arisen for mankind

from the mediation of one kingdom with another, and how this mediation with kingdoms, where religious tolerance was unknown, has obtained perfect freedom and equality for all religions for the future. Even the evils arising from religious hatred and fanatic zeal, and degenerating into avarice and blood thirsteness, to which our brethren in the faith were exposed 30 years ago, are checked by the intervention of other Powers, and the sufferings of the unhappy victimes have thereby become less. In a later case of persecution of the Jews, a Government, under which emancipation had never existed, came forward in the interests of humanity, discovered the dreadful means used for persecution, and suppressed the crying wrong. The Netherlanders have likewise often shewn their sympathy for the unhappy fate of those oppressed in other countries and in every place, where religious hatred has been the cause of persecution, they have readily accorded their intercession for the sufferers. Hardly a century ago did the respected Government, in answer to a petition preferred by an Israelitish community in the Netherlands, exercise its mediation with a foreign Government; and with such effect that the command that the Israelites should quit their birth place and homes was revoked. But many of our brethren still groan under the oppression of despotism in the East; and in proof of this the above mentioned traveller furnishes us with extraordinary statements. The credibility of his accounts has been recognised by the most celebrated scholars in France; and they have likewise been confirmed by critical investigation. Our traveller has already, in many places, proved himself a benefactor to his suffering brethren; and it would conduce to the imperishable glory of our Government, if they would extend a helping hand to their unfortunate fellow-creatures, an act which they can the more easily perform, in as much as it is, only desired they should undertake the expenses of the journey, and nothing more. We feel assured that when once a religious community for the Israelites has been established, our wealthy brethren here as well as there

will join in its support by direct as well as by indirect assistance.

7. Further search from the colonies of the Netherlands for our scattered brethren can, under the blessing of God, be likewise productive of beneficial results for the temporal welfare of our brethren there, and probably open new paths for our Netherlandic trade. The history of the times of Charles the Great informs us, that solely through the instrumentality of our brethren in the faith very extensive commercial transactions were negociated with Arabia and Persia. It appears that seeking for sources of trade was the first inducement for the celebrated journey of Benjamin of Tudela. The tediousness of the means of communication, and the cruelty of the middle ages caused this journey to be fruitless, and the enterprises begun were soon frustrated. In the meantime, the enterprising spirit of our fellow-worshippers has shone brightly since the persecutions on the Iberian peninsula and in Germany in the pages of later history, and probably the Netherlands have also in part to thank that spirit of enterprise for their flourishing trade in the beginning of the thirty years war. By the extension of the association of our brethren, commercial connections are now easier to be formed. The wish for pious and well educated Israelites brought many of them from Bagdad and Arabia to the English possessions, where they found a wide field for their enterprising spirit and reaped a *rich* harvest therefrom. By the increase of education and knowledge among our Western brethren, it will be a matter of less difficulty in these days for our young people to derive advantages from these new openings; and when once efforts are commenced for the promotion of their eternal welfare, he, who has proved himself worthy of the confidence of his brethren in the East-Indian possessions of the Netherlands, will be placed in a position of being able to further their temporal welfare also.

We take the liberty of bringing these different points under the consideration of your profound wisdom, and we

flatter ourselves with the hope of obtaining by your mediation the co-operation of the respected Government for the execution of the proposed plan. The ways and means of carrying it out are matters of secondary consideration, — if Government will only favourably receive our present representation. We will only place in the foreground that with the many means of transport at the disposition of Government, the expense of the journey can be but comparatively trifling; and thus nothing stands in the way of its execution. The small expenditure bears no comparison with the advantages promised by the expedition. We believe ourselves justified in especially recommending to you this plan for your kind assistance in your official capacity; and then will be enhanced the glory and dignity of Israel, when once by your assistance, under the flag of the Netherlands, shall wave the banner of Israel's church confederacy in the East-Indies. The reproach of proselytism can in no way be made against you, as the mission only confines itself to the furtherance of religion among our own people; a pure work of piety, acceptable to the God of Israel. It will be called a noble effort, if virtue and probity, prosperity and piety increase in Israel, if by Israel's humanity and benevolence, happy sources are opened for so many idle hands; and if by generous assistance, the industry of many an Israelite is roused, and he sees himself, under the protection of a church confederacy, free from all oppression. Therein will be recognised the fulfilment of the words of the prophet: „W'erastich."

Given by us, the Chief-Rabbis of the Chief-Synagogue of Rotterdam and the Hague.

Rotterdam and the Hague.

Ijar 5617 (Mai 1857).

(signed) *B. S. Berenstein,*
C. R. of the Jew. Com. at the Hague.

Ib. van Ib. Ferares,
C. R. of the Portuguese Jew. Com. at the Hague.

Dr. J. Isaacsohn,
C. R. of Rotterdam.

On the part of the chief committee, the objection was raised to the above petition, that I as a foreigner, could, like any-one else, only go to the Dutch East-Indies if I were able to prove the possession of a certain sum of money. In order to remove this difficulty, I addressed myself to the Professors of Oriental languages at the universities of Leyden and Delfzyl, on whose especial recommendations, permission was granted to me by the Minister to proceed to the Dutch East-Indies, without being called upon to produce the required sum. — But as a definite decision on the part of the Chief-Committee was delayed, I travelled to Frankfurt on the Maine, and learnt there, for the purposes of my second journey, photography and stereoscopy, and likewise provided myself with the necessary apparatus.

As no definite answer arrived from the Hague, I then proceeded to Hanover, where I published the present work. After having arranged my personal and family affairs at home, I hope under the protection of the Almighty, soon to commence my second journey, and with the assistance of the Eternal, once more to investigate those countries, which are the cradles of all science and wisdom, and whose secrets have been all too long shrouded in night and darkness.

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Printed by Wm. Riemschneider. Hanover.

ויכתב ישראל את מוצאיו למסעיו, ואלה לוה מסעיו למוצאיו

Route of J.J. Benjamin's Journey in Asia and Africa.