

AYESHA AT HOME.

BY *LUSIEK ESHO.

When we compare the customs of the Arab women with the customs of us of Turkish birth, we observe a great difference. 1. With regard to salutations. When one meets another the first questions asked if it is morning, are: How have you morninged? How are you? How is your condition? How is your constitution? How is the manager of your household? How is your daughter? And your son? And your mother, and grandmother, and father? And the answers follow in quick succession:—Well, happy, as Allah wills, Praise to Allah, Allah give you peace, Allah satisfy you, etc., etc. etc., in endless round each in turn two or three times over, and to each question belongs its special reply. 2. With regard to the etiquette of calling. If the woman be of the middle class, or lower, she visits her people or her friends by day after she has completed her work. She takes her sewing with her and if it be morning she returns before noon to prepare the meal, or if afternoon she returns before sunset to prepare supper for her lord. But the women of the sheikhs and of the higher class never leave their houses except by night, for the purpose of visiting their relatives or friends, for it is regarded a great disgrace among them to appear by day. Only those of lower station visit these by day. To each visitor is presented coffee and Muscat sweets, or perhaps crisp bread fried in fat, or dates and sugar dainties. If the visitors be of the wealthy, or intimate, and if the visit be after a long interval, she is anointed with rose-water and incense is burned for her, and for all those present. Coffee is always ready with dates and various sweets, or perhaps an infusion of senna in place of tea.

If the woman be aged, even though of the sheikh's family, it is not regarded a disgrace to leave the house by day, though even then such a one is timid and ashamed of her boldness. If the visitor enters and a meal be ready and the women already around the platter, she must partake, for a failure to do so is regarded as a shame and a disgrace, be she never so satisfied, and would indicate enmity and a desire to offend her host. If the newcomer be from a distant place, and a close friend, she may remain, eating and drinking, eight or ten days, whereupon she is permitted to return to her home. So to all, be the hosts ever so rich or ever so poor.

The rich who have no work to do, spend much time in sleep, but the poorer are ceaselessly occupied with household duties, among

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which not the least is the bringing of water on their backs from the spring. Clothing to be washed is taken to the spring, and for soap they are vigorously rubbed in with mud, except the white clothes of the husband, which are honored with a bit of soap and cold water. Some wash the clothing in sea-water, regarding it as of greater cleansing power. Once a month they bathe at the spring, smearing their bodies first with Rifa mud and palm fiber. The former is cheaper than Katif mud, being about two cents for three pounds. Only the wealthy can afford the Katif mud, as it ranges from four to five cents for the same quantity, and has a sweeter odor, and becomes soft and frothy like butter. If one be afflicted with bowel trouble, this same mud is taken, strained through a cloth, of which resulting water the sick one drinks. Nor is this all the mud can do. After careful sifting, it is rubbed into the hair and wetted, and behold, a beautiful foam appears. The hair is dressed once a week, only on Fridays, when it is copiously smeared with fat or butter, and between each braid anointed with saffron water, and incense oil, or henna and myrtle juice, etc. Then the hair is divided, four braids in either side and eight in the rear, and on each braid are hung amulets and charms. If the woman be the second or third wife, at her turn she arrays herself in the choicest garments, dyes her feet and hands with henna, dons her gold and silver ornaments, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, anklets, nose-ring, and finger-rings, that if possible she may supplant her rivals in her husband's affections.

THE SEQUEL TO THE TRIBUTE.

Our last quarterly published an article which gave well-deserved credit to the native helpers of the Arabian Mission, our colporteurs and assistants. Let us look into their homes. Who is that busy little woman, surrounded by a group of children ranging in age from an infant to a boy of nine? She is the tireless mother, the anxious house-wife who has taken up a trade by which she may be able to help support the family of six. We hear her at sunrise, doing her washing, sewing on a hand-machine or preparing the food for the day, that she may be free later to attend to her sickly children, and to the sewing for which she expects a few cents. For the oil in the cruse is low and the flour but a handful and there are hungry mouths to fill.

Does she get discouraged? We hardly think so when we look at her bright, smiling face, laughing with her children. Whirrrrr goes the hand-machine. Now she bites off a thread, and again she places a

stitch, and in a trice, at the first sign of the visitor she goes preparing coffee, not heeding the protest, for hospitality is one of the greatest virtues in this country. The visitor wants a little practice in the language and again the little woman turns from her task and patiently goes over the difficult places with the student. And is this all?

Before the visitor leaves she tells her to come around on such a day, and she will be ready to introduce her into a new Arab home, and "bring your hymn-book," she says, "for they like singing." At the appointed day we find her ready, baby on one arm, Bible under the other, a hopeful clinging to her skirt. The people welcome her gladly as we enter the women's meeting-room, and after she has introduced her friend to rich and poor, she is asked to read from her book. With her native fluency of speech, and with a heart full of sympathy, acquired in life's hard school, she expounds the Word. I have seen people ask her time and again to come on a certain day when they may not be disturbed by idle questioners. How she rejoices on her way home to have knocked on the hearts of these light-seeking people. Now, surely, this is enough for a helper's wife to do. But, no.

It is about nine at night and she knows the Khatoun (lady) is



PASTOR GERJIS AND FAMILY — BAHREIN.

still studying. Almost noiselessly she slips upstairs to give the student an hour of undisturbed conversation, for the children are asleep and their father is with them. After she descends as noiselessly as she came and the bright light of her love and self-denial has shed its beams into the heart of her fellow-missionary. Brave wives of our colporteurs and helpers at the front, they bear the heat and the burden of the struggle as well as any of us and perhaps more so, for we live in comparative comfort.

God bless every one of them, and may prayers at home go up for them, as well as for the missionaries.



BAZAAR AT AMARA OUT-STATION ON THE TIGRIS, 150 MILES ABOVE BUSRAH.