

SALUTATIONS.

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From time immemorial men have had some recognized form of saluting their friends and acquaintances. Though the fashions have sometimes changed, as all fashions do, yet there has ever been some one method, which was regarded as the proper thing for the time being. It is both interesting and instructive to observe the forms of salutation that have prevailed at different times and in various countries. We intend, however, to deal neither with military salutes nor epistolary greetings, but only with salutatory acts and expressions. Some of these are quite grotesque, some rather amusing, some very graceful, and some decidedly awkward.

Among the Hebrews in early times, the form of salutation was very simple and, naturally enough, was cast in a religious mould. It consisted of such expressions as, "The Lord be with thee," or, "The Lord bless thee." At a later stage in their history the form became much more elaborate, for, in addition to these greetings, there were inquiries regarding the health of the person addressed, or regarding that of his family. Generally too, the greeting was accompanied with a number of gestures expressive of different degrees of humility, and sometimes also, with a kiss. The headgear, however, was not removed. Of course, if the person were riding or driving, it was necessary for him to dismount. The same custom prevails among the Jews in the East at the present day.

"Salute no man by the way." Such was the charge which Christ gave to the seventy disciples when sending them

forth to preach the Gospel. At first sight the prohibition strikes us as somewhat peculiar and out of harmony with the character of Christ, and with the business on which the messengers were sent. Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," discusses this point so well, that we cannot do better than quote his words: "This seems to be a departure from the general rule to become all things to all men. Would it not appear very churlish and offensive to refuse the *salam* even of a stranger? It would; and I do not think that the prohibition extended that far; but the disciples were sent upon important and urgent business. They were ambassadors from their Lord and King, and were not to loiter by the way in idle conversation with friends whom they might chance to meet. The same is now required of special messengers. No doubt the customary salutations were formal and tedious as they are now, particularly among Druses and other non-Christian sects, and consumed much valuable time. There is also such an amount of insincerity, flattery and falsehood in the terms of salutation prescribed by etiquette in this land, that our Lord, Who is Truth itself, desired His representatives to dispense with them as far as possible, perhaps tacitly to rebuke them."

But though Christ enjoined His disciples to make haste and not delay when on that special business, we know that neither He nor His followers neglected the ordinary civilities of society—indeed, He even went so far as to reprove Simon the Pharisee for having overlooked the common courtesies of the time. He