

Calendar for Feb. 1908

Moon's Phases. New Moon 24. 4h. 37m. a. m. First Quarter 29. 0h. 28m. a. m. Full moon 17d. 5h. 5m. a. m. Last Quarter 24d. 11h. 24m. p. m.

Table with columns: Day of Week, Sun, Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, High Water, Low Water. Rows for days 1 through 29.

A Visit To The Holy Land.

(By William O'Brien, M.P., in London Tribune.)

European diplomacy passes three-fourths of its time discussing Eastern questions without number, ranging from Morocco to the Yellow Sea. The Chancelleries know all about the Tripoli question, the Macedonian question, the Persian question, and so on into the mysterious depths of Tibet. They have a score of projects on the stocks for conferences, treaties and condominiums to deal with them.

May a passing traveller be allowed to express his wonder that the only Eastern question that Europe has all but forgotten is that to the solution of which for three centuries the Europe of the Crusades devoted its arms and its prayers—the question which will for the mass of civilized mankind, eclipse all others, Eastern or Western, in everlasting import?

The material reason, no doubt, is that the Holy Land has a population too heterogeneous to give trouble to anybody except themselves, has little or no trade except in rosary beads to attract the traveller, and forms such a tangle of the vested interests of all nations in all ages that no individual Power can ever hope to appropriate it for its own.

As I write, the muzzle of a Turkish guard not twenty yards away is pointed at our unfortified bedroom in the New Grand Hotel from the top of the tower of David (or rather of the mediæval fortress built upon its ruins) At the evening hour the Muezzin of the Mosque in the barracks enclosure shouts in my ear from his gallery some sixty feet in the air the victorious cry that the one God is Allah, and that Mohammed is His Prophet.

It is quite true that the Turk exercises his overlordship in the Holy Land tolerantly, not to say coolly, sometimes. Jerusalem knows nothing of the lusts and bloody feasts which endear the Bashibazouks to the unfriendly villages of Armenia. The only time I saw a Turkish whip used was on the shoulders of a Moslem boy who proposed to force his donkey through the Franciscan procession on the way of the Cross.

All Stuffed Up

That's the condition of many sufferers from catarrh, especially in the morning. Great difficulty is experienced in clearing the head and throat. No wonder catarrh causes headache, impairs the taste, smell and hearing, pollutes the breath, deranges the stomach and affects the appetite.

To cure catarrh, treatment must be constitutional—alterative and tonic. It was ill for four months with catarrh in the head and throat. Had a bad cough and raised blood. I had become discouraged when my husband bought a bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla and persuaded me to try it. I advise all to take it. It has cured and built me up." Mrs. Howie Roberts, West Liscomb, N. S.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

Cures catarrh—it soothes and strengthens the mucous membrane and builds up the whole system. The apparent Moslem bonhomie has even its touch of humor. In one of the dim ambulatories of the superb Mosque of Omar outside the railings within which is enshrined the very rock where the Ark of the Covenant once rested (a chunk of rock for which the Jews who wait outside the wall would joyfully give an eye or an arm a piece) the Sheikh who showed us another uncovered a square green marble from which Mohammed is fabled to have ascended to Heaven, and intimated that I had only "to put something" on the stone to follow the Prophet instantly to the empyrean. I humored the joke to the extent of a half-franc.

"Ah!" he said, "you must put something more. A half-franc would only get you half to heaven. It would leave your wife behind." For all the Sheikh's pretty wit and softness for French coins, one had only to watch a circle of Moslem priests worshipping toward Mecca at an adjoining prayer-niche—their bodies swaying in graceful unison, as they fell to their knees, or rose, or flung their shoulders from side to side, the while their dark eyes flashed, and their prayer rose and fell as in the strophes of some solemn battle song—to feel at what short notice the Sheikh's jokes might turn into the gleam of steel, only for the presence of the Turkish soldier, who, with his top-boots banging from his belt, escorted us through the Mosque in his stocking feet. Threadbare stockings they were, by the way, and pitiable enough was the picture of bankruptcy in the Turkish war office presented by our Turkish Tommy Atkins, with a uniform of indistinguishable color, and in the last stages of tatterdemalionhood, and the hungry air of a man who had dined on an orange. But, like the Tommy Atkins of all nations, Hamid was a good-humored dog, who, while we pause to muse on the destiny that placed Solomon's Fountain at the service of the religion of an obscure Arabian conqueror, unceremoniously ducked his head into the basin, and then helped himself to a long drink of the cool waters in which he had washed his face; after which he proceeded to cull for the lady a nosegay of wild cyclamens and petunias growing in the old court of the Gentiles, and pocketed his backbeesh with the deep content of one who had not received as much coin of the realm from his Turkish paymaster for many a day.

The truth is that Turkish rule is on its best behavior in Palestine, simply because there alone it is under the inspection of Christendom. Christendom is there also, under the inspection of the Turk, with results that are not edifying. The intestine wars of the Greeks and Latins, the Armenians, Copts and Abyssinians over the partition of the holy places—their constant battles of words, and even blows, in the most awful precincts upon earth over the possession of a particular altar, over the hours for their rival masses and processions, over the particular staircase by which which Galvany is to be mounted, over the age-long question whether this or that sect shall be entitled to light five lamps or only four over the Holy Sepulchre or in the Chapel of the Nativity—are a source of anguish to all tender souls and furnish no end of material for the scoffers, who can see nothing of the tremendous mysteries that glorify these sacred places except the petty human distractions which vulgarize our divinity hours.

The scoffers might as well turn away from the delicious Garden of Gethsemane because of the sores of the lepers who line the way. These family jars do not assume serious proportions often than half a dozen times in a generation. Fifteen Franciscan monks wounded by a shower of stones from the roof of the Greek

convent six or seven years ago for exercising their immemorial right of entry by a particular staircase to the Galvany chapel; a Franciscan monk (the Franciscans, it can be stated with a safe conscience, are always the victims), and the Greeks almost always the aggressors) killed with a revolver shot a few years further back by the canvass of a Greek procession on the threshold of the Stable of Bethlehem, consecrated by the most important event in the world's history; a horrible scuffle a few weeks ago in the same holy place owing to the attempt of a band of Greek priests, not content with their exclusive possession of the Altar of the Nativity, to force their way with blows of brass crosses and croziers through the only corner of the rock-hewn Stable left to the Latins—these constitute the principal casualties which scandal has got to feed upon for the last quarter of a century.

When we remember that five warring churches are left without any written law to dispute the possessions of some fifty sanctuaries, where their professions perforce jostle one another daily in a narrow space, always ill-lighted and often underground, and that remonstrances and explanations have to be exchanged in divers mutually unintelligible tongues, the miracle is that the muscular forms of Christianity do not offend more scandalously assert themselves. There is even a consolation in the thought that the passionate fervor with which Latin and Greek and Armenian alike have clung century after century to the ownership of every altar, lamp, and pinok of dust in the holy places; gives us the best assurance that human tradition can give that these are, indeed, the scenes of stupendous mysteries in comparison with which the battles, sieges and pillages of the pharaohs, Sesostris, Alexander, Pompey, Charlemagne, Omar, Saladin, Napoleon and Mehmet Ali, that have ravaged the face of Palestine are but as the stings of mosquitoes of yesterday. Even a fight for the right of sweeping the steps of a given chapel (and it was the actual cause of the most serious of recent encounters) becomes respectable when some stoma of the sweepings may quite possibly have been touched by the feet of Jesus, or may have mingled with some prophet's or martyr's dust, and when both claimants to the right of wielding the sweeping brush can cite their title-deeds going back to the Crusades, or further. But it is a disgrace to Christendom that there should be no tribunal other than a fat Mussulman Effendi to regulate these venerable disputes according to the measure of his backbeesh, or the influence of a particular Power at Samsoul for the moment.

There would be something comical if it were not still more repulsive, in the idea of the Christian Great Powers taking the Sultan under their tutelage to teach him the principles of good government in Crete and Macedonia, while they are themselves dependent upon a Turkish policeman to maintain law and order among their own subjects in what all the Powers of Christendom alike believe to be the holiest land on earth—the land from which they have received their morals and their everlasting hopes. The fact, at all events, is that Christian civilization at its very fountain-head is in a state of confusion, and Christian diplomacy sits by as contemptuously indifferent as the Mohammedan guard of the Holy Sepulchre, while the processions of all nations cross and clash. It gives one an indescribable tightness in the throat to see a file of Turkish fixed bayonets and tarbooshes drawn up as peace-makers at every great Christian festival of Royal Irish Constabulary at an Irish evocation; and that within the very church which hundreds of thousands of the chivalry of Europe century after century staked their lives to rescue from the Paynim.

A native Christian of Bethlehem, who accompanied us to the Oharob, who accompanied us to the Oharob to get some rosary beads blessed, was chased with a broom-stick by a Greek monk with eyes of fury when he attempted to take a short cut through the Greek side of the church. In a neighboring oharob, belonging to the Armenians, a band of priests in their poor, shabby vestments were chanting a

high mass in their own discordant shriek. A Turkish infantry soldier was actually stationed on the steps of the altar, his rifle striking the floor, his red cap nailed to his head, discussing (doubtless) the day's news with a brother Moslem, while the chant resounded and the incense smoked! In the very stable where, if twenty centuries of human testimony be worth anything, the Saviour first opened His eyes of flesh upon this overhanging rock, another Moslem soldier stood between the Greek and Latin altars, for the still more humiliating purpose of preventing a second theft of the star of solid silver by which Latin piety marked the spot over which the star that guided the wise men stood still. And to think that the Great Powers had got to do for the cradle of Christianity what they had done for the island of Paphos Goddess, and all these indecencies and disorders would give place to an atmosphere of reverence and Christian peace as easily as the toy Moslem fortifications of Jerusalem, imposing as they look, would crumble at the first salvo of European artillery!

The fault is not really with the holy Moslem methods of policing the holy places, nor with the excesses of Christian devotees. The wound goes deeper to the very heart of the spiritual life of Christendom. The frozen truth is that Christian influence in the Holy Land has so far weakened that Christendom has no longer the meaning it had for the Tancred and the Godfrey de Bouillon and the Coeur de Lions.

Modern Europe will no longer undertake crusades except for trade or pleasure, and neither is to be had in Palestine in sufficient quantity to tempt the material appetite of a world that waxes gross with the grossness of half a dozen swollen Roman Empires. The modern Occidental traveller is not a pilgrim, but a tourist, with a shrewd eye for the comforts of his hotel, and a New Theologist determination not to fret himself to death over dogmatic particulars. Even the tourist is not perceptibly on the increase.

For those who, in the phrase of the Psalmist, "have come to a deep heart" as to the eternal Udd? and inde? problems of this poor life, it is not pleasant to hear that since the English occupation of Egypt the winter gaieties of Cairo, which have come in their train, have proved more powerful an attraction for the average up-to-date Rinaldos on their journey to the Holy Land. It is the old story of the flesh-pots of Egypt prevailing once more. It is the Eccol fonte del risol of the sore-as-Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata" sounding in Rinaldo's ear all over again.

The first we hear of the Early Oharob in the New Testament, is found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This was written from six to eight years after the expulsion of the Jews from Rome under Claudius. Herein Paul describes himself (Rom. xv. 14-16 as "a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles."

This Epistle also shows that the Oharob had already been in existence a good many years. In the last chapter of the Acts is described St. Paul's arrival in Rome. At Puteoli, where he landed from Asia Minor, he already found a Christian mission. During his imprisonment of two years in Rome, he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, the Ephesians, to Philemon and the Philippians. In all of these, evidence is afforded of the existence of a strong anti-Christian propaganda in Rome. Yet while he was there, the Oharob was in the way of becoming the most effective religious teaching body in Rome. Two important traditions testify to the presence in Rome of St. Peter during the reign of the Emperor Claudius. The first is the tradition of the twenty-five years episcopate in Rome; the second that of his victory over Simon Magus. Both are found in Eusebius, the former in the Chronicle, the latter in Oharob History. In a work entitled the Philosophumena it is clearly shown that St. Peter, Simon Magus and St. Paul were in Rome about the same time. As an indication of the strength and fixity of the tradition which brought St. Peter to Rome about the year A. D. 42, the story of his meeting the Jewish philosopher Philo there deserves to be quoted, it is also said, writes Eusebius, "that Philo, in the reign of Claudius, became acquainted at Rome with Peter who was preaching there."

Not is this improbable, he continues, for the customs of the Church now observed were shown by documents, to have existed at that day, i. e., in the Contemplative Life, a work written by Philo.

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