

C-221-5-6

Northern Messenger

KILLAMS MILLS
NB

VOLUME XXXVII. No. 6.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 7, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

Publishers' Note.

While the 'Northern Messenger' continues to have sixteen pages it will be found to form two complete papers. The inner one, headed 'Boys and Girls,' will consist exclusively of juvenile Sunday reading while the outer one will endeavor to supply family reading as heretofore. The paper is so arranged that, if desired, the inner double sheet can be slipped, before cutting, from the outer one and each part be read separately from the other.

Baghdad and Its People.

(By Dr. H. M. Sutton, in 'The Church Missionary Gleaner.')

There are probably few cities in the world so familiar to most people by name as Baghdad is, concerning which so little is actually known by people in general. Everybody is familiar with the name Baghdad from the pages of the 'Arabian Nights,' but comparatively few people know even to what country it belongs. It is one of the chief cities of the Turkish Empire, and, after Constantinople, the second or third in size. Founded by Mansur, the second caliph of the abbaside dynasty, in the year A.D. 765, it remained for five hundred years the seat of the caliphate until the destruction of the city of Halaku, grandson of Jengiz Khan. Hence its name, Daru'l Khilafah, or City of the Caliphs. Under Harun'ul Rashid and his successors Baghdad was renowned as the seat of Arabian philosophy and medicine, and there were probably at that day no better physicians in the world than the Arabs. At the beginning of the tenth century the celebrated physician Al Razi, director of a hospital in Baghdad, wrote a treatise on smallpox and measles. From this and other Arabic medical works of that period it is evident that the present day Arab practitioners of Baghdad are, to say the least, not a step in advance of the medical science and practice of a thousand years ago. Certainly the views now in vogue again amongst the Arabs of the pathology of diseases, with their inevitable influence on the line of treatment inculcated, correspond exactly with the melancholy fact recorded of Professor Al Razi, that he suffered from a disease of the eyes, brought on by eating broad beans!

Early in the sixteenth century Baghdad fell into the hands of the Persians, but was retaken by the Turks in 1638, who have retained their hold upon it ever since.

The greatest calamity that has befallen Baghdad in modern times was the great plague which visited it in 1830, followed by the inundation of the city from the swollen Tigris. The missionary, A. N. Groves, who was in Baghdad at the time, and other writers, have left us awful descriptions of the terrible state of the city under this double visitation, and I have often heard their accounts corroborated by old men still living in Baghdad. The plague occurred in the spring, when the Tigris is always overfull from the melting snows of the mountains of Kurdistan, in the north. At the height of the epidemic, from April 16 to April 21, two thousand people died daily. Then the river

burst its banks, and in one night seven thousand houses fell and fifteen thousand people perished.

Baghdad contains the shrines of some very eminent Mohammedan saints and leaders. There is to be seen in the city the handsome mosque connected with the burial-place of Abduy Qadir al Jilani, who lived in the twelfth century, and whose tomb is visited by pilgrims from India, Morocco, and elsewhere. A little distance outside the city is the fine mosque erected on the burial-place of Abu Hanifah (A.D. 770), the founder of

Many of the Armenians habitually use three languages, speaking Arabic and Turkish in addition to their mother tongue. I have been at the bedside of a patient where, in a company of half a dozen people, we had occasion to use five languages, and on another occasion we were a company of about forty people in a room where no less than fourteen languages were represented. The land of Shinar is thus still the place of the confusion of tongues.

Of a population of about 120,000 nearly one-third are Jews; the Christians of various



ARAB AND WIFE.

the first of the four great sects of the Sunni Mohammedans. Immediately opposite this, on the other side of the Tigris, are seen the magnificent gilded domes and minarets which mark the resting-place of the seventh and ninth of the twelve Imams of the Shiah.

Baghdad, from its thus offering attractions to pilgrims from many parts of the Mohammedan world, as well as from its commercial position, is one of the most polyglot cities in the world. Arabic is the language of the place, but many of the resident Turkish officials never acquire it; the Persian and Indian pilgrims make no long stay in Baghdad, and the large community of Kurdish coolies seldom use any language but their own.

Oriental Churches number about 5,000; while the remaining 80,000 are Mohammedans, about equally divided between Sunnis and Shiah. For so crowded and dirty a city, Baghdad is not an unhealthy place. The heat is intense from May to October, and the houses are built in such a way that it is impossible to live in the rooms during the hot weather. The inhabitants retire below ground to the apartments which go by the name of 'serdab,' and which are very much like the cellars of a good English house. In the intensely dry heat of the summer, with the shade temperature at 110° or 115°, a properly ventilated 'serdab,' kept down to a temperature of 90°, is a fairly comfortable