

time immemorial, the appropriate work of women. "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She laveth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." Prov. xxxi. 13, 19.

The unending labour of grinding the daily grist of meal is one that is heard in every household. Two circular flat stones, about eighteen inches in diameter, are placed one

of Jerusalem, our Lord says, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left." In the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, the desolation of old age is illustrated by the figurative words, "the grinders cease because they be few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low."

So necessary is this daily grinding of the food that a special injunction is uttered in Deut. xxiv. 6, "No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge." The labour of grinding was often relieved by song, hence, among the many threatened desolations following the invasions of Nebuchadnezzar, are these words: "I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle." Jer. xxv. 10. This work was performed by persons of the humblest condition. Thus in Exodus xi. 5, we find the



"GRINDING AT THE MILL."

upon the other on the ground, with a cloth beneath them to catch the meal. At this rude mill two women sit and make the upper stone revolve upon the lower by means of an upright handle near the outer edge, continually pouring the grain in the opening in the centre. To this custom allusion is made in the passage, where, foretelling the suddenness and completeness of the destruction

words: "from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill."

At the weekly fair held at Hasbeiya, Dr. Thompson saw fifty pairs of these stones, made of porous lava, for sale. It was a piece of such millstone that a certain woman cast upon the head of Abimelech at Thebez, and "all to break his skull." Judges ix. 53.