

AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS  
OF THE  
MODERN EGYPTIANS,

WRITTEN IN EGYPT DURING THE YEARS

1833, 34, AND 35,

PARTLY FROM NOTES MADE DURING A FORMER VISIT TO  
THAT COUNTRY IN THE YEARS 1825, 26, 27, AND 28.

---

BY EDWARD WILLIAM LANE.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

---

LONDON:  
M. A. NATTALI, 23, BEDFORD STREET,  
COVENT GARDEN.

MDCCCXLI.

bit of cotton on the end of a stick ; then to dip it in one of the troughs out of which the dogs drink in the streets of Cairo, and to wipe the eye with it. The patient is thus careful to preserve his hand from the polluted water, when he is about to apply this to another part of his person.

As an imaginary cure for ague, some of the women of Egypt (I mean those of the Moos'lim faith) hang to their necks the finger of a Christian or Jew, cut off a corpse, and dried. This and other practices mentioned before are striking proofs of the degrading effects of superstition, and of its powerful influence over the mind: for, in general, the Moos'lims are scrupulously careful to conform with that precept of their religion which requires them to abstain from everything polluting or unclean.

When a child is unable to walk, after having attained the age when it is usual to begin to do so, it is a common custom for the mother to bind its feet together with a palm-leaf tied in three knots, and to place it at the door of a mosque during the period when the congregation are engaged in performing the Friday-prayers: when the prayers are ended, she asks the first, second, and third persons who come out of the mosque to untie each a knot of the palm-leaf; and then carries the child home, confident that this ceremony will soon have the effect of enabling the little-one to walk.

There are several pretended antidotes for poison, and remedies for certain diseases, to which the Egyptians often have recourse, and which may perhaps have some efficacy: but superstition attributes to them incredible virtues. The bezoar-stone\* is used as an antidote for poison, by rubbing it in a cup

\* *Hhag'ar el-benzaisser.*

with a little water : the cup is then filled with water, which the patient drinks. In the same manner, and for the same purpose, a cup made of the horn of the rhinoceros\* is used : a piece of the same material (the horn) is rubbed in it.—As a cure for the jaundice, many persons in Cairo drink the water of a well in this city, called *beer el-yaracka'n*, or “the well of the jaundice.” It is the property of an old woman, who reaps considerable advantage from it : for it has two mouths, under one of which is a dry receptacle for anything that may be thrown down ; and the old woman desires the persons who come to use the medicinal water to drop through this mouth whatever she happens to be in need of ; as sugar, coffee, &c.

The Moos'lims have recourse to many superstitious practices to determine them when they are in doubt as to any action which they contemplate, whether they shall do it or not. Some apply, for an answer, to a table called a *za'ir'geh*. There is a table of this kind ascribed to Idree's, or Enoch. It is divided into a hundred little squares ; in each of which is written some Arabic letter. The person who consults it repeats, three times, the opening chapter of the Ckoor-a'n, and the 58th verse of the Soo'rat el-An'a'm (or 6th chapter)—“With Him are the keys of the secret things : none knoweth them but Him : He knoweth whatever is on the dry ground or in the sea : there falleth no leaf but He knoweth it ; neither is there a single grain in the dark parts of the earth, nor a green thing nor a dry thing, but it is [written] in a perspicuous book.”—Having done this, without looking directly at the table, he places his finger upon it : he then looks to see upon what letter his finger

\* *Ckur'n khurtee't.*