

THE LEARNED MEN.

MOLLAHS OF THE INDIAN FRONTIER AND THEIR INFLUENCE.

Expounders of the Mohammedan Law. Given Credit For Supernatural Powers. Jealous of the Dignity of Their Positions. How a Village Got a Sacred Shrine.

During the spring of 1887 I accompanied a surveying party which set out from Peshawar to penetrate the country north of the Khyber and examine such routes as would be available in the event of the pass being held by a powerful enemy. During that time I had many opportunities of studying the manners and methods of the mollahs—those remarkable men who use their influence over their fanatical followers to drive them to revolt against the encroachments of the British.

The visitor to the towns of the independent tribes will often see a venerable, white bearded old man, followed by a crowd of young Pathans, who show every sign of respect for their leader. In his right hand the venerable figure carries a staff and in his left a large volume of the law according to Mohammed. When the procession reaches a public place, the leader seats himself; his disciples stand round or sit at his feet, and the general public assemble at a little distance to hear the gems of wisdom that fall from the holy man's lips, or to rear at the world-wide "chestnuts," not always of the most decorous character, which he sometimes unloads sufficiently to tell. Such a man is a mollah, one of a class that exercises an influence over the inhabitants of the Afghan hills so passionate and wide that to Europeans it is beyond belief.

The mollahs are collectively known as the ulma, or learned. They are the schoolmasters, lawyers, judges, as well as the priests, many of them being men of great ability and scholarship, and as they are all passionately devoted to their order it cannot be said that their influence is altogether evil. They are great peace-makers in a land where fighting is the breath of a man's nostrils. I once saw one of them in Lalpooah rush between two bodies of Mahomduns who were drawn up to attack each other, and, by passionate prayers to them to remember their common God and their common country, make those desperate men forget their purpose and go away as quietly as frightened schoolboys.

The position of mollah is conferred on such candidates as have undergone a special course of study in the intricate Mohammedan law and successfully passed an examination therein. The principal part of the ceremony consists of the most saintly mollah present investing the novice with the wide flowing gown of white cotton and the peculiarly shaped turban.

The mollahs marry and live like the laity in most particulars, though some of them assume the most ridiculous austerity, frowning on the simplest amusements and even condemning all music, except the warlike drum and trumpet, as being effeminate. To such men the merry fiddle or the sighing lute is as the horns of the evil one.

One rich source of revenue with the priesthood is its fine collection of charms and incantations. It is no uncommon sight to see an ancient Afriid or Mohomd sitting with a mollah and vigorously repeating a charm or performing a subtle incantation to enable him to fix the affections of some fair lady who is not enamored of his gray hairs.

A mollah's most sensitive point is the dignity of his office. When that is outraged, there is trouble in the land. He calls the brethren to a council. They suspend all the rites of public worship, denounce their enemy as a dog and an infidel, cover him and his people with their maledictions and practically excommunicate him. If this does not bring the unhappy man to his senses, the mollahs don their sacred robes, and, carrying the green standard of the prophet, go up and down throughout the land proclaiming the Mohammedan warcry and calling on the faithful to avenge the honor of the apostle of the prophet. To those who flock to their side they promise eternal bliss; to those who ignore their appeals, everlasting torture. The mollah's voice is not raised in vain. He soon has a frantic army following the green flag, willing to go anywhere and do anything its leader pleases.

When a mollah dies, the place of his death becomes a sacred shrine at which miracles are worked. There is not a village throughout the whole Pathan country which has not its holy spot to which the sick, the halt and the blind resort for relief. In this connection a curious story is told of one of the sections of Bernervals.

It had long been a source of grief to the inhabitants of the village that no holy man had ever been good enough to die among them. The consequent absence of a miracle working shrine had degraded them in the eyes of their neighbors, who looked on them as a set of wretches so abandoned that no saint would end his days in their midst. The men of the village determined to put an end to this degrading suspicion in a characteristic oriental method. There was living in a distant town a mollah with the highest reputation for holiness. A deputation from the benighted village waited on this mollah and implored him to shed the light of his countenance on them for a few days. The priest was so flattered at this testimony to his piety that he gladly consented. He was entertained on his arrival to a considerable feast. When the banquet had ended, the chief rose and solemnly informed their guest of the sad condition of the villagers through no holy man ever having died in their midst, adding that they intended to end so unfortunate a state of things by killing their visitor. As his soul would at once pass to paradise, and as the scene of his death would become a miracle working shrine, they did not consider he had anything to complain of.—St. James Gazette.

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FANCY DANCES, including Highland Fling, Flig Dance, Strathspey, Spanish Dance, Sailors Hornpipe, May Pole and Villagers Dance. Skirt Dance, Aulacua, etc. For this season only these dances \$5 each, being one third of price. Rooms in Masonic Building.

Muskets.

While the introduction of portable firearms into Europe is of comparatively recent date, their use was frequent among the Mohammedans of eastern Asia at a very early period. La Brocquiere, who made a journey to Jerusalem in the middle of the fifteenth century, and who traveled extensively in the east, mentions the firing of small arquebuses at the great festivals in Damascus.

The first use of muskets in Europe was at the siege of Phege in 1591 by the Spanish soldiers. These arms were so extremely heavy that they could not be used without a rest. They were provided with matchlocks, and were effective at a considerable distance. While on the march the soldiers themselves carried only the ammunition and the rests, and boys, bearing the muskets, followed after, like caddies on a golf course.

Loading these cumbersome arms was a slow operation. They were clumsy and awkward to handle, the ball and powder were carried separately, and the preparation and adjustment of the match took a long time.

Before long, however, improvements began to be made. The guns became lighter in construction, and the soldiers carried their ammunition in broad shoulder belts called bandoliers, to which were suspended a number of little leather covered wooden cases, each of which held a charge of powder. A pouch, in which the bullets were carried loose, and a priming horn hung at the side of the soldier.

As late as the time of Charles I muskets with rests were still in use, and it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that firelocks were successfully employed.—Harper's Round Table.

The Big Brother.

Children early learn to adopt the manners and the speech of the elder brother; the small boy is educated by the one who is at college or in business much more than by his governess or his tutor. Said a wise observer once: "If only you can get your eldest son well started, if he is manly, truthful and of high principles, the others in the family follow right on in the same direction. The judicious father will take great pains with his oldest boy."

In a neighborhood or a school the large boys influence social opinion and set the fashion for the rest. Always there is some larger boy whom the little lad greedily admires, who is his model, whose smile or whose frown makes or unmakes his happiness. The big brother does not know it, but he is in this changeable world the one personage whose scepter never totters, whose popularity never wanes and who never goes out of fashion.

To his sisters he has the opportunity of showing chivalry, kindness and the deference of the stronger to the weaker. To the baby of the household he is little short of a king. The big brother, bless his heart, when he is a nice, obliging, affectionate and generous fellow, is as important a member of society as any one who can be mentioned.

If, as sometimes happens, he is either a bully or a coward, then he is more contemptible than he would be if he had been born in a less fortunate order in the family, for he has, so to speak, broken faith with all that was expected of him.—Harper's Bazar.



A SEA OF FLAME.
On the evening of November, 28th, 1878, a fire broke out in the British ship Melanic, loaded with 500 barrels of petroleum. An awful mass of flames shot up from the main hatch and the vessel quivered from stem to stern with explosion of the barrels. Her seams opened and the blazing petroleum poured out into the river, spreading a belt of fire around her. The master and seamen jumped overboard. Captain Sharp, whose vessel was lying close-by, propelled a small boat through the blazing river and after a severe scorching and imminent peril, saved the seamen from a horrible death.

All over civilization there are thousands of men in more imminent danger than were those seamen. They are threatened with consumption or are already in the clutch of that deadly disease. If they only knew it, help is at hand. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery cures 98 per cent of all cases of consumption. It also cures bronchitis, asthma, throat and nasal troubles and all diseases of the air passages. It is the great blood-maker, flesh-builder, and nerve-tonic. It makes the appetite hearty, the digestion perfect and the liver active. The "Golden Medical Discovery" is the product of that eminent specialist, Dr. R. V. Pierce, who, during the thirty years that he has been chief consulting physician to the great Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, has treated more cases than fifty ordinary physicians treat in a lifetime. Thousands given up by doctors, have testified to complete recovery under this marvelous medicine.

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What is a Gentleman?

The old story about the French marquis who opined that the Almighty would think twice before damning a gentleman of quality, doubtless finds an echo in all genuinely "aristocratic" bosoms, but there is another tale in Evelyn's diary which puts what I believe to be the English position as pointedly as the other does that of the ancient regime: "March 10, 1682.—V. told a friend of mine who accompanied him to the gallows and gave him some advice that he did not value dying of a rush and hoped and believed God would deal with him like a gentleman"—i. e. with courtesy and consideration. Everybody would admit that breeding has not a little to do with gentle instincts, but three generations may be trusted to do as much as 20.—Cornhill Magazine.

A Slight Drawback.

Snodgrass—The world has a place for everybody.
Micawber—Yes; the only trouble is there's generally somebody else in it.—London Answers.

Dumas and His Money.

Dumas the elder was not in the habit of counting his money, but did once, leaving it on the mantel while he left the room for a few minutes. When he returned and was giving some instructions to a servant, he mechanically counted the pieces over again and found a louis missing. "Well," he said, with a sigh, "considering that I never counted my money before, I can't say it pays."

"Sir," said the master of Balliol in his parting address to a distinguished alumnus, "your fellow students think highly of you, the tutors and professors think highly of you, I think highly of you, but no one thinks more highly of you than you do yourself."

WELL KNOWN VIOLINIST

Traveled Extensively Throughout the Provinces—Interesting Statements Concerning His Experience.

STELLARTON, N.S.—James R. Murray, a well known violinist, of this place, who has traveled extensively throughout the Provinces, makes this statement:

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N. B. If you decide to take Hood's Sarsaparilla, do not be induced to buy any substitute. Be sure to get Hood's.

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