

# The Unvarying East



## **Gorgias Historic Travels in the Cradle of Civilization**

27

Gorgias Historic Travels in the Cradle of Civilization is a series of reprints of historic travelogues from travelers to regions of high antiquity: North Africa, Western and West-Central Asia. Glimpses into a forgotten world, these journals show us many of the roots of our own present-day civilization.

# The Unvarying East

Modern Scenes and Ancient Scriptures

E. J. Hardy



gorgias press

2010

Gorgias Press LLC, 180 Centennial Ave., Piscataway, NJ, 08854, USA

www.gorgiaspress.com

Copyright © 2010 by Gorgias Press LLC

Originally published in 1912

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise without the prior written permission of Gorgias Press LLC.

2010

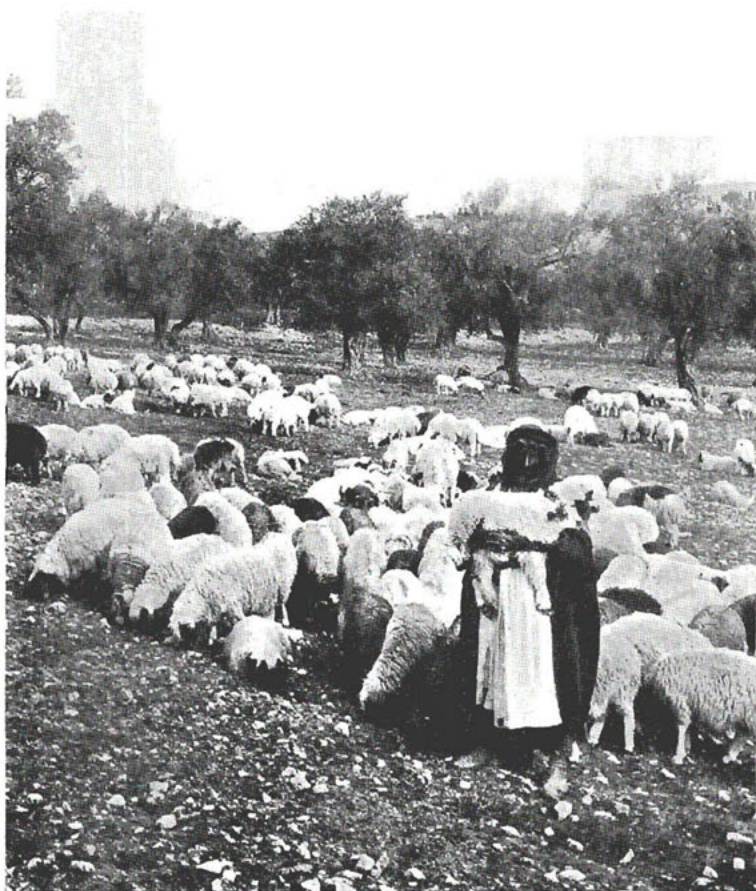


**ISBN 978-1-60724-318-2**

**ISSN 1935-3200**

This is a facsimile reprint of the book published under the same title by  
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1912.

Printed in the United States of America



*Photo by*

CARRYING A SICK LAMB.

*American Colony, Jerusalem.*

Frontispiece (see p. 246).



“We can hardly do anything, I doubt if we *can* do anything, for people to be compared with helping them to understand the Bible.”  
—ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE.





I DEDICATE THIS BOOK  
TO  
SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS  
WHO WOULD LEARN IN ORDER  
TO TEACH



## PREFACE

THIS latest indulgence of mine in the bad habit of writing books should be excused, because whatever else "The Unvarying East" is it is not long-winded. It is intended for those who have not opportunities of travelling or time to read large volumes on Eastern manners and customs. It is true that people nowadays are more inclined to read about great books, including the Bible, than to read great books themselves, but it is also true that he who only knows the Bible does not the Bible know.

The ignorance of the Bible that prevails is so great that I am not surprised at an experience related by Sir Ernest Shackleton. To a little waiting-maid who brought to him tea one morning he said, "'What a rainy day, Mary! It's almost like the Flood.'" 'The Flood, sir?' said the little maid. She looked at me with a puzzled smile. 'Yes,' said I. 'The Flood—Noah, you know—the Ark—Mount Ararat.' She shook her head, and murmured apologetically, 'I ain't had no time to read the papers lately, sir.'"



## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	13
I. AGRICULTURE . . . . .	21
II. BEASTS AND BIRDS . . . . .	35
III. BUSINESS . . . . .	45
IV. CELEBRATED CITIES . . . . .	55
V. CHILDREN . . . . .	65
VI. CLOTHES AND ORNAMENTS . . . . .	73
VII. CLIMATE AND WEATHER . . . . .	83
VIII. COMMANDMENTS AND LAWS . . . . .	91
IX. CUSTOMS . . . . .	99
X. DEATH AND BURIAL . . . . .	109
XI. DISEASE . . . . .	117
XII. DRINKING . . . . .	129
XIII. DWELLINGS . . . . .	135
XIV. EATING . . . . .	145
XV. EGYPT . . . . .	157

# Contents

CHAP.		PAGE
XVI.	FIRE AND FUEL . . . . .	167
XVII.	HOLY PLACES . . . . .	173
XVIII.	MARRIAGE . . . . .	181
XIX.	MODES OF EXPRESSION . . . . .	191
XX.	PITS AND WATERS . . . . .	197
XXI.	PLANTS AND TREES . . . . .	205
XXII.	PUNISHMENT . . . . .	217
XXIII.	SERPENTS AND INSECTS . . . . .	225
XXIV.	SERVANTS . . . . .	231
XXV.	SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP . . . . .	241
XXVI.	WAR . . . . .	249
XXVII.	WORSHIP . . . . .	257
	INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS. . . . .	269
	INDEX OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES . . . . .	277

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CARRYING A SICK LAMB . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
"UNEQUALLY YOKED" . . . . .	25
WATER-WHEEL FOR IRRIGATION . . . . .	27
SIFTING GRAIN . . . . .	29
GLEANNING . . . . .	30
WATERING ASS FROM SKIN BOTTLE . . . . .	39
COURTYARD OF SIMON THE TANNER'S HOUSE . . . . .	62
SITTING AT WORK . . . . .	52
GIRLS WEARING CRESCENTS OF COINS . . . . .	81
FISHING-BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE . . . . .	89
LEPERS . . . . .	121
CARRYING HIS BED . . . . .	127
A WATER-SELLER WITH SKIN BOTTLE . . . . .	131
AN ARAB REPAST, EATEN WITH FINGERS . . . . .	151

## List of Illustrations

	FACING	PAGE
BREADMAKERS . . . . .	.	152
FUEL . . . . .	.	170
THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE . . . . .	.	178
WEDDING PROCESSION . . . . .	.	188
A POTTER AT WORK . . . . .	.	195
JACOB'S WELL, HARAN . . . . .	.	199
COMING FROM THE WELL . . . . .	.	200
THE JORDAN . . . . .	.	202
EASTERN PRISON . . . . .	.	221
WOMAN GRINDING AT A MILL . . . . .	.	237



## **INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

THE best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself, and the next best is residence in the East. The Bible was written in the East, by Easterns, and, in the first instance, for Easterns. When Mark Twain was in Palestine he wrote: "One must travel to learn. Every day, now, old scriptural phrases, that never possessed any significance for me before, take to themselves a meaning." This was my own experience. Hardly a day passed when I visited the Holy Land, or was stationed as Chaplain to the British Forces in China, in Egypt, or even in Malta, that I did not see a living, walking illustration of something mentioned in the Scriptures. A millionaire would render sermons more easy to listen to if he founded travelling scholarships which would enable Divinity students and ministers of the Gospel to spend a certain time in Bible countries. The acquisition of knowledge of Eastern ways gives us, if not a Fifth Gospel, certainly a setting of the four we have, in newer and more clearly cut type.

Whoever wrote the different parts of Genesis, or whenever they were written, the antiquity and

## Introduction

Eastern character of the book is proved by the fact that it contains stories, such as that of the Creation, of the talking serpent, of the confusion of languages, which have parallels on the monuments and in the traditions of most Eastern nations. It is, for instance, a widespread tradition that woman was made out of a crooked rib of man, which breaks if you try to straighten it and remains crooked if you leave it alone. Thirty-nine years ago a Babylonian version of the Flood was discovered, and quite recently a cuneiform fragment came to light which gives an account of the same event very similar to that recorded in the Bible. It describes the building of a great ship, the going into it of beasts and of birds, the end of the Flood, and many other details. On bricks to be seen in the British Museum may be traced some of the names which we read in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. Chedorlaomer, for instance, is the Hebrew transliteration of Kudur Lagamar. Lagamar was the name of one of the Chaldean deities, and the whole name means Lagamar's son. The inscriptions or, as they may be called, "stone books," that have been deciphered on the Egyptian and other monuments have greatly helped Bible study. Take one example. In 1 Kings xiv. 25 we read: "And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the King's house." On a pillar of the Egyptian temple of Karnak a king, thought

## Introduction

to be Shishak, is depicted killing captives, and the features of the captives are Jewish.

In reference to the prophet Isaiah, Professor Driver remarks : " The deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria has enabled us to watch the movements of the Assyrian kings, almost year by year, through the whole period of his ministry, and the result has been to exhibit this great prophet's character and position with a distinctness and completeness which, antecedently, would assuredly not have been anticipated " (" Isaiah : His Life and Times," p. 4).

A few years ago a young woman about to visit the Holy Land called on an old lady friend who loved her Bible, and read it from beginning to end. She told her that she soon hoped to see Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, and all the places associated with the life of Christ. The old lady put down her work, removed her spectacles, and exclaimed, " Well, now ! I knew all those places were in the Bible, but I never thought of their being on the earth ! " It may interest our readers to know that the Desert of the Exodus, for instance, has an actual existence upon the face of the earth, and that the route of the Exodus is being mapped and studied and photographed by enthusiastic scholars and travellers. It brings the doings of the Children of Israel in the Pentateuch much closer to modern life when we realise that the route of the Exodus is cut in its first section by the Suez Canal.

In his " Higher Criticism and the Monuments,"

## Introduction

Professor Sayce says : “ Those who have been in the East, and have tried to mingle with the native population, know well how utterly impossible it is for the European to look at the world with the same eyes as the Oriental. For a while, indeed, the European may fancy that he and the Oriental understand one another, but sooner or later a time comes when he is suddenly awakened from his dream, and finds himself in the presence of a mind which is as strange to him as would be the mind of an inhabitant of Saturn.”

“ East is East and West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet.”

Accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind ; it is hazy about numbers and quantity. The European is a close reasoner ; the reasoning of the Oriental is of the most slipshod kind. The European demands evidence for his beliefs ; the Eastern is unsceptical and refers the common occurrences of life to the direct intervention of supernatural agency.

In the Holy Land people have lived, and live now, for the sake of protection, in villages, the population of each village varying from four hundred to a thousand persons.

The Bible, however, is by no means only a village book, or one written about large towns, such as those that were rebuked for their vice and luxuries by the prophets. The patriarchs lived in tents, and many of the prophets in deserts. The singers of Israel

## Introduction

drew much of their imagery from country life. And he who would bring his spirit most happily into communion with Jesus Christ must follow Him afield. Our Lord used everything around Him as texts and illustrations of His teaching. Did He see water brought up from Siloam in a golden vessel at the Passover? The incident introduced a discourse on living water. It was when standing or sitting near the great candelabra of the Temple that He said, "I am the Light of the World."

"God likes common people, and that is why He made so many of them." These common people heard Christ gladly because He illustrated His teaching from the common things of life—the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, the ways of animals, the business of the market.

The desultory, fragmentary way in which we often read the Bible hides from us its Eastern and other characteristics. We think of it as a mere collection of texts. After he became celebrated as a writer, Thomas Carlyle visited his parents. At the conclusion of the first evening meal the Bible was put down before the great man and he was asked to read a portion at family prayers. Carlyle began the Book of Job, and became so interested that he read it to the end. When the household had been kept up much after their usual time for retiring, the reader closed the Bible and said, "It's grand!" This is the way to understand the context and setting of the several parts of Scripture. So fast is the East becoming Westernised and modernised

## Introduction

that any one who records what he has seen of the old style of things helps to prevent Biblical allusions from becoming unmeaning.

The texts quoted in the following pages are from the Revised Version.





## **AGRICULTURE**

## CHAPTER I

### AGRICULTURE

IN Palestine there are no hedges or ditches dividing fields, but the gardens, and sometimes the vineyards, are surrounded by walls made of rough stones of different sizes fitted together without the use of mortar and covered with dry thorn-bushes. In Numbers xxii. 24 we read that the angel who opposed Balaam stood between two of these walls. Serpents hide in the hot, dusty crevices of such a fence or wall. So it is said in Ecclesiastes x. 8 : "Whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him." Even if men do not break through these walls, wild boars do in order to eat grapes, as the Psalmist observed (lxxx. 13).

"The slothful will not plough by reason of the winter ; therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing " (Proverbs xx. 4). People plough in Palestine with small ploughs and oxen, so they must do so in winter when the rains have softened the ground.

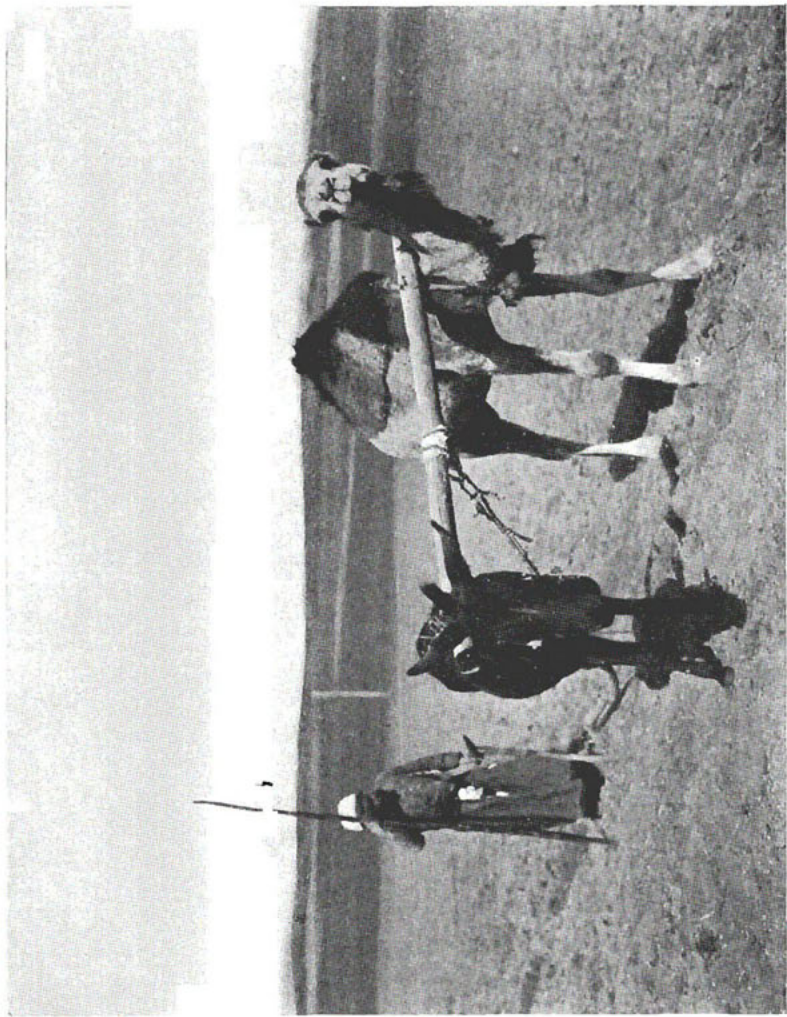
The plough used now is the same kind as that in use thousands of years ago. It is so light that

## The Unvarying East

a man going to work carries it on his shoulder. It has only one handle, and this the ploughman holds in his right hand and presses down to prevent the plough getting out of the furrow. If he looked back he could not do this ; so the words of our Lord are strictly accurate : “ No man, having put his hand [not “ hands ”] to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God ” (Luke ix. 62).

When we know the kind of plough referred to we understand the words “ They shall beat their swords into ploughshares ” (Isaiah ii. 4). This means that they shall beat their swords into rims of metal and place them around the shares of their small wooden ploughs.

A goad is an indispensable accompaniment of a plough. The pointed upper end serves, instead of rein or whip, to guide and urge on the oxen. The other end has on it a kind of chisel, and this is used to clean off from the share earth and weeds. “ The words of the wise are as goads ” (Ecclesiastes xii. 11). This means that they guide or keep in the right path (furrow). “ It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks ” (Acts xxvi. 14) is a proverbial expression taken from the action of an unruly ox, which, when pricked by the goad, kicks back and wounds himself. It was to sharpen the chisel end of goads that the Philistines allowed the Israelites to have files (1 Samuel xiii. 21). And yet six hundred Philistines found that a goad could be a formidable weapon, for with a goad Shamgar slew that number of them (Judges iii. 31).



*Photo by*

**"UNEQUALLY YOKED."**

*[American Colony, Jerusalem.]*



## Agriculture

In Amos ix. 13 we read: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." This is often realised now. The seed late sown yields a harvest, and the time for treading of grapes is sometimes prolonged into the rainy season, when the husbandman begins to sow his seed.

Elijah "found Elisha the son of Shaphat plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth" (1 Kings xix. 19). I never knew exactly the meaning of this until I used to see in the East six, eight, or twelve small wooden ploughs drawn one after another in the same part of the ground to be ploughed. In this way the men enjoy each other's society, and are more secure should robbers attack them, as they attacked the ploughmen of Job (i. 15). The oxen, too, work better in company. Elisha's plough was the twelfth in order.

St. Paul's words about being unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians vi. 14) were one day vividly impressed upon me when I saw in Egypt a camel, a donkey, and a woman drawing together a wooden, old-time plough, and a man driving them.

In order to understand our Lord's parable of the sower we must remember that in the East a road is generally only a track passing through cultivated land. Dean Stanley found a place that disclosed every feature of the parable. There was the trodden path with no fence to prevent the seed falling on

## The Unvarying East

either side of it. There was the "good" soil. There was the rocky ground of the hillside. There were the larger bushes of thorn.

To such a place a sower went forth to sow (Matthew xiii. 3-9). That is, forth from his village, for all Eastern people live in villages for greater security.

The yield of a hundredfold spoken of by our Lord in the parable is never secured from barley or wheat. Can it be that the same mode of reckoning crops was then what it is now? It is now assumed that one-third of the crop will be eaten by the birds and another by mice and insects, and if thirty-three-fold be secured by the cultivator he tells you that his land has produced a hundredfold.

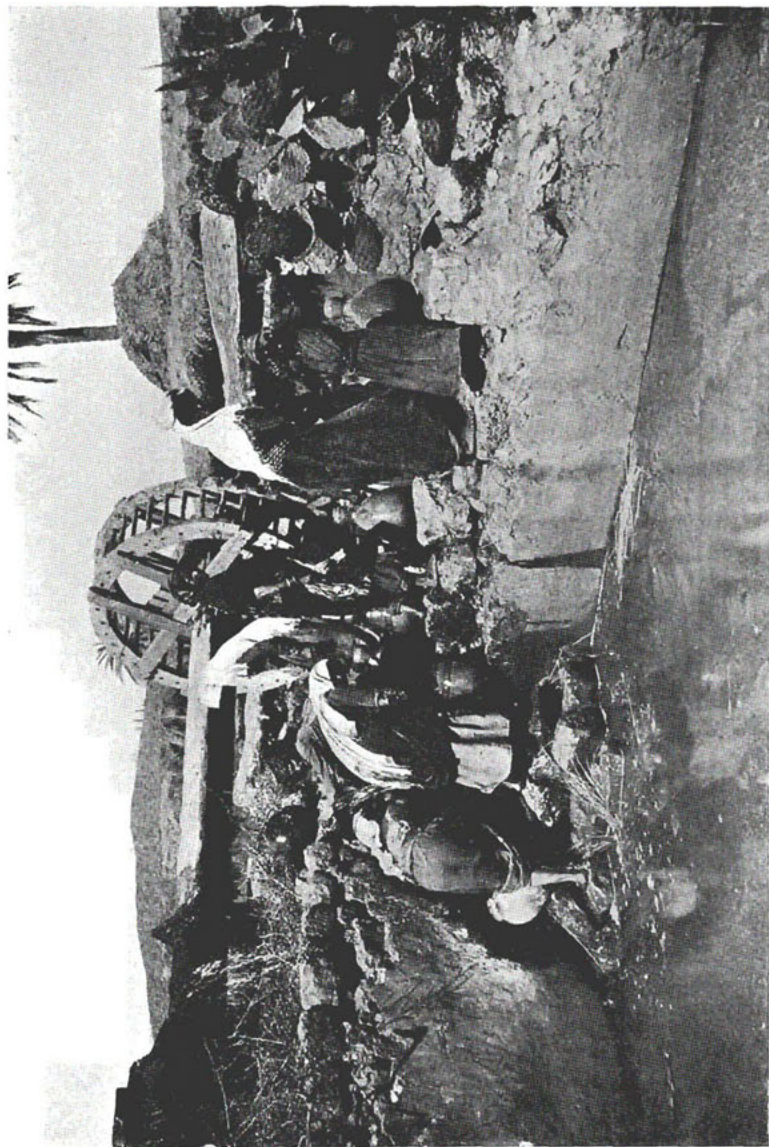
"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm cxxvi. 5). It is a sorrow for poor farmers to have to take for seed grain which would feed their families, and the sowing is sometimes almost useless because of bad ground and unfavourable weather. No experience enables a farmer to know in any given year that what is sown early will prosper best, or whether late sowing may not be better, or whether they both shall be alike good (Ecclesiastes xi. 6). Much depends upon the former and the latter rain. He sows in hope, and as often as not fills his bosom with sheaves from his fields.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters" (Ecclesiastes xi. 1). This refers to the way rice is sown upon land that has been inundated for its reception.

In Deuteronomy xi. 10 Moses tells the Israelites







*Photo by*

WATER-WHEEL FOR IRRIGATION.

*[American Colony, Jerusalem.*