

## HEBREW TYPES OF TUNIS.

## Jewish Household Life in this North African City.

A short stay at Tunis on the route from Cario to Algiers will be sufficient for the traveler and yet repay him for the halt, although the ancient Moorish city has not retained its most striking Mussulman characteristics and is fast becoming European under the new regime. It is more than half Jewish already, and it is difficult to credit the statistical statement that the Jewish element is really only in the proportion of one to five of the population. But this unit is the only active, energetic, business-like and "go-ahead" portion of the native community, and so completely prevades it that it creates the impression of being the majority.

From the low, narrow and squalorstricken parts of Tunis, where the Jews were formerly only found, they have migrated into the quarters occupied by the French contingent, and some of them occupy the finest houses and buildings. Many have retained their national costumes and abide by the customs of their forefathers, while differing essentially from the Arabic type of Orientals: their women (at least the young unmarried ones at the age 14, when they reach complete girlhood) offer the most perfect features of a voluptuous and splendid beauty.

In order to conceive a just idea of the life of a Jewish household it is necessary to gain admittance to the intimacy of the family, and to enter their homes, whether they belong to the poorer or the richer classes. In the former the plan and distribution of the apartments are nearly invariable. The houses consist of some five or six narrow chambers opening into an inner court or patio. The walls are freshly whitewashed every Autumn; sometimes a frame of colored tiles surrounds a doorway, or a curtain of bright blue cotton stuff hangs before it, upon which brilliant patches of cloth are scattered, generally representing religious emblems, such as the seven-flamed candlestick. These ornaments relieve the dead monotony of the blank surfaces. The patio is paved in cracked marble slabs taken from some ruined palace, which itself had been erected from the ruins of Carthage. In one angle of the court stands the fountain at which the women are constantly filling their household vessels, unconsciously reproducing the harmonious and picturesque attitudes of Rachel at the well in the Biblical pictures. At all times and seasons the patio is covered with a linen tent, by which shade and coolness are obtained.

Very different is the outward aspect of the abodes of the wealthy and prosperous Israelites. Their houses are not unfrequently built in the Italian style of architecture, with wide marble staircases, walls disappearing under tall mirrors, unpleasantly recalling the garish splendor of a Parisian cafe, and the inevitable patio is surrounded by a colonnade of delicate and artistic marble pillars. But even amid these modern concessions to European luxury the owners perpetuate their antique customs and preserve intact the traditions of their race, both as regards the observance of their religion and certain family details to which they attach all the importance of habit. Thus while paying

an afternoon call in a drawing room, which might be a London or Paris one, one is suddenly amazed at seeing the hostess summon a child, who, at a given sign, lights a candle and fixes it on the drawing room inlaid table by the simple method of dropping a little of the wax as a socket for the taper that has never known candelabra or candlestick.

The wealthy Jewish matrons take no exercise whatever, and lead a life of supine idleness. They spend their days gossiping and playing cards, reclining or squatting on low divans, magnificently dressed and covered with jewels like the inhabitants of a Turkish harem. They become enormously stout and unwieldy, bloated and often anaemic. The opulence of their charms and their excessive weight constitute the most appreciated beauty in the eyes of the admirers of female physical advantages, and are prized far above the delicate and picturesque appearance of the young girls of their race. This is so generally accepted a taste that Jewish maidens are kept on a diet most conducive to rapidly achieve the requisite embonpoint.

In all Eastern localities the baths fill an important place. The Jews of Tunis make as large and frequent use of them as the Arabs; the Christians Sicilians, Maltese, and even Frenchmen have, however, sparingly adopted the custom that the sole European bathing establishment in Tunis in 1886 failed, while all the Moorish public baths were crowded and prosperous. The Jews have their special and distinct baths open all day and every day; there are four or five in Tunis at the present time equally well patronized, especially on Fridays, when a bath is obligatory.

The extraordinary aspect of a woman's bath more than justifies the attempt to visit it. The most characteristic establishment, if not the finest by any means, is situated in the old quarter of the town. It is reached by narrow, dark and tortuous streets, and stands on what was once the site of a Moorish palace, transformed into a "Hammam." The whitewashed facade is pierced by a single doorway covered with arabesques. It leads to a vestibule, the walls of which are hidden under many colored tiles and surrounded by broad wooden seats, carved like the stalls of our cathedral choirs. A second door, which is rapidly opened for, and as rapidly closed upon, the visitor, admits the latter to the baths proper. The first apartment is a patio, roofed with glass and remarkable for its plainness. Around it are a succession of little rooms, furnished with wooden pegs and a mattress. Every scrap of clothing is left in these closets before the patio is again crossed and the hot-air rooms entered. These consist of a series of dark, low vaults, whose domes are supported by massive stone dwarf pillars.

[Concluded next week.]

From this date there will be NO FREE SAMPLE COPIES. All those receiving papers who have not subscribed will please send in their DOLLAR or order the paper stopped.

## LOUIS BROMM, VIRGINIA FAMILY BREAD BAKERY.

Bread, Cakes, —

— Crackers, Pies, &c.

ORNAMENTAL CAKES TO ORDER.

No. 516 E. Marshall Street,

RICHMOND, VA.

Telephone 762. —

Mrs. A. J. PYLE, Proprietress

RICHMOND

STEAM, DYEING, SCOURING

and Carep-Cleaning Works.

No. 315 N. Fifth St.,

RICHMOND, - VA.

THERE IS

Nothing

nicer for a Holiday Present than a fine pair of Opera Glasses. We have an elegant line of them in all the best makes and styles—Le Maire, Le Clerc, Chevalier, and others, in beautiful designs—White and Smoked Pearl, Gold and Silver, &c.

Come and take a look at them.

Correct Fitting of Eye-Glasses & Spectacles

is our specialty. If you buy a pair for a present we will exchange them after the Holidays, should they not fit.

Come and see our new store.

RICHMOND OPTICAL CO.,

115 E. Broad St.

**DON'T** FAIL TO TRY A CUP OF  
HOT COFFEE,  
CHOCOLATE & BOJILLON,  
AT

**J. H. WARE, JR., & CO'S.,**  
427 E. BROAD ST.

Fresh Cream Puffs and Cakes.

SODA AND MINERAL WATERS OF  
ALL KINDS ON DRAUGHT.

Finest Brands of Cigars and Tobaccos.

**C. H. GOLDSMITH,**

Dealer in

Fresh, Salted & Smoked Meats

OF ALL KINDS,

320 North Sixth Street.

Goods Delivered Free.