

CHAPTER V - THE STREETS OF THE CITY

When Jerusalem had been half buried in snow for two or three days, I remarked to a friend that I was prepared henceforward to justify all the Christmas cards. The cards that spangle Bethlehem with frost are generally regarded by the learned merely as vulgar lies. At best they are regarded as popular fictions, like that which made the shepherds in the Nativity Play talk a broad dialect of Somerset. In the deepest sense of course this democratic tradition is truer than most history. But even in the cruder and more concrete sense the tradition about the December snow is not quite so false as is suggested. It is not a mere local illusion for Englishmen to picture the Holy Child in a snowstorm, as it would be for the Londoners to picture him in a London fog. There can be snow in Jerusalem, and there might be snow in Bethlehem; and when we penetrate to the idea behind the image, we find it is not only possible but probable. In Palestine, at least in these mountainous parts of Palestine, men have the same general sentiment about the seasons as in the West or the North. Snow is a rarity, but winter is a reality. Whether we regard it as the divine purpose of a mystery or the human purpose of a myth, the purpose of putting such a feast in winter would be just the same in Bethlehem as it would be in Balham. Any one thinking of the Holy Child as born in December would mean by it exactly what we mean by it; that Christ is not merely a summer sun of the prosperous but a winter fire for the unfortunate.

In other words, the semi-tropical nature of the place, like its vulgarity and desecration, can be, and are, enormously exaggerated. But it is always hard to correct the exaggeration without exaggerating the correction. It would be absurd seriously to deny that Jerusalem is an Eastern town; but we may say it was Westernised without being modernised. Anyhow, it was medievalised before it was modernised. And in the same way it would be absurd to deny that Jerusalem is a Southern town, in the sense of being normally out of the way of snowstorms, but the truth can be suggested by saying that it has always known the quality of snow, but not the quantity. And the quantity of snow that fell on this occasion would have been something striking and even sensational in Sussex or Kent. And yet another way of putting the proportions of the thing would be to say that Jerusalem has been besieged more often and by more different kinds of people than any town upon the globe; that it has been besieged by Jews and Assyrians, Egyptians and Babylonians, Greeks and Romans, Persians and Saracens, Frenchmen and Englishmen; but perhaps never before in all its agony of ages has it ever really been besieged by winter. In this case it was not only snowed on, it was snowed up.

For some days the city was really in a state of siege. If the snow had held for a sufficient number of days it might have been in a state of famine. The railway failed between Jerusalem and the nearest station. The roads were impassable between Jerusalem and the nearest village, or even the nearest suburb. In some places the snow drifted deep enough to bury a man, and in some places, alas, it did actually bury little children; poor little Arabs whose bodies were stiff where they had fallen. Many mules were overwhelmed as if by floods, and countless trees struck down as if by lightning. Even when the snow began at last to melt it only threatened to turn the besieged fortress into a sort of island. A river that men could not ford flowed between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Even a man walking about the ordinary streets could easily step up to his knees or up to his waist. Snow stood about like a new system of natural barricades reared in some new type of revolution. I have already remarked that what struck me most about the city was the city wall; but now a new white wall stood all round the city; and one that neither friend nor foe could pass.

But a state of siege, whatever its inconveniences, is exceedingly convenient for a critic and observer of the town. It concentrated all that impression of being something compact and what, with less tragic attendant circumstances, one might call cosy. It fixed the whole picture in a frame even more absolute than the city wall; and it turned the eyes of all spectators inwards. Above all, by its very abnormality it accentuated the normal divisions and differences of the place; and made it more possible to distinguish and describe them like *dramatis personae*. The parts they played in the crisis of the snow were very like the parts they played in the general crisis of the state. And the very cut and colour of the figures, turban and tarbouch, khaki and burnous and gabardine, seemed to stand out more sharply against that blank background of white.

The first fact of course was a fact of contrast. When I said that the city struck me in its historic aspect as being at least as much a memory of the Crusaders as of the Saracens, I did not of course mean to deny the incidental contrasts between this Southern civilisation and the civilisation of Europe, especially northern Europe. The immediate difference was obvious enough when the gold and the gaudy vegetation of so comparatively Asiatic a city were struck by this strange blast out of the North. It was a queer spectacle to see a great green palm bowed down under a white load of snow; and it was a stranger and sadder spectacle to see the people accustomed to live under such palm-trees bowed down under such unearthly storms. Yet the very manner in which they bore it is perhaps the first fact to be noted among all the facts that make up the puzzling problem of Jerusalem. Odd as it may sound you can see that the true Orientals are not familiar with snow by the very fact that they accept it. They accept it as we should accept being swallowed by an earthquake; because we do not know the answer to an earthquake. The men from the desert do not know the answer to

the snow, it seems to them unanswerable. But Christians fight with snow in a double sense; they fight with snow as they fight with snowballs. A Moslem left to himself would no more play with a snowball than make a toy of a thunderbolt. And this is really a type of the true problem that was raised by the very presence of the English soldier in the street, even if he was only shovelling away the snow.

It would be far from a bad thing, I fancy, if the rights and wrongs of these Bible countries could occasionally be translated into Bible language. And I suggest this here, not in the least because it is a religious language, but merely because it is a simple language. It may be a good thing, and in many ways it certainly is a good thing, that the races native to the Near East, to Egypt or Arabia, should come in contact with Western culture; but it will be unfortunate if this only means coming in contact with Western pedantry and even Western hypocrisy. As it is there is only too much danger that the local complaints against the government may be exactly like the official explanations of the government; that is, mere strings of long words with very little meaning involved. In short, if people are to learn to talk English it will be a refreshing finishing touch to their culture if they learn to talk plain English. Of this it would be hard to find a better working model than what may be called scriptural English. It would be a very good thing for everybody concerned if any really unjust or unpopular official were described only in terms taken from the denunciations of Jezebel and Herod. It would especially be a good thing for the official. If it were true it would be appropriate, and if it were untrue it would be absurd. When people are really oppressed, their condition can generally be described in very plain terms connected with very plain things; with bread, with land, with taxes and children and churches. If imperialists and capitalists do thus oppress them, as they most certainly often do, then the condition of those more powerful persons can also be described in few and simple words; such as crime and sin and death and hell. But when complaints are made, as they are sometimes in Palestine and still more in Egypt, in the elaborate and long-winded style of a leading article, the sympathetic European is apt to remember how very little confidence he has ever felt in his own leading articles. If an Arab comes to me and says, "The stranger from across the sea has taxed me, and taken the corn-sheaves from the field of my fathers," I do really feel that he towers over me and my perishing industrial civilisation with a terrible appeal to eternal things. I feel he is a figure more enduring than a statue, like the figure of Naboth or of Nathan. But when that simple son of the desert opens his mouth and says, "The self-determination of proletarian class-conscious solidarity as it functions for international reconstruction," and so on, why then I must confess to the weakness of feeling my sympathies instantly and strangely chilled. I merely feel inclined to tell him that I can talk that sort of pidgin English better than he can. If he modelled himself on the great rebels and revolutionists of the Bible, it would at least be a considerable improvement in his literary style. But as a matter of fact something much more solid is involved than literary style. There is

a logic and justice in the distinction, even in the world of ideas. That most people with much more education than the Arab, and therefore much less excuse than the Arab, entirely ignore that distinction, is merely a result of their ignoring ideas, and being satisfied with long words. They like democracy because it is a long word; that is the only thing they do like about it.

People are entitled to self-government; that is, to such government as is self-made. They are not necessarily entitled to a special and elaborate machinery that somebody else has made. It is their right to make it for themselves, but it is also their duty to think of it for themselves. Self-government of a simple kind has existed in numberless simple societies, and I shall always think it a horrible responsibility to interfere with it. But representative government, or theoretically representative government, of an exceedingly complicated kind, may exist in certain complicated societies without their being bound to transfer it to others, or even to admire it for themselves. At any rate, for good or evil, they have invented it themselves. And there is a moral distinction, which is perfectly rational and democratic, between such inventions and the self-evident rights which no man can claim to have invented. If the Arab says to me, "I don't care a curse for Europe; I demand bread," the reproach is to me both true and terrible. But if he says, "I don't care a curse for Europe; I demand French cookery, Italian confectionery, English audit ale," and so on, I think he is rather an unreasonable Arab. After all, we invented these things; in auctore auctoritas.

And of this problem there is a sort of working model in the presence of the snow in Palestine, especially in the light of the old proverb about the impossibility of snow in Egypt. Palestine is wilder, less wealthy and modernised, more religious and therefore more realistic. The issue between the things only a European can do, and the things no European has the right to do, is much sharper and clearer than the confusions of verbosity. On the one hand the things the English can do are more real things, like clearing away the snow; for the very reason that the English are not here, so to speak, building on a French pavement but on the bare rocks of the Eastern wilds, the contact with Islam and Israel is more simple and direct. And on the other side the discontents and revolts are more real. So far from intending to suggest that the Egyptians have no complaints, I am very far from meaning that they have no wrongs. But curiously enough the wrongs seem to me more real than the complaints. The real case against our Egyptian adventure was stated long ago by Randolph Churchill, when he denounced "a bondholder's war"; it is in the whole business of collecting debts due to cosmopolitan finance. But a stranger in Egypt hears little denunciation of cosmopolitan finance, and a great deal of drivel in the way of cosmopolitan idealism. When the Palestinians say that usurers menace their land they mean the land they dig; an old actuality and not a new abstraction. Their revolt may be right or wrong, but it is real; and what applies to their revolt applies to their

religion. There may well be doubts about whether Egypt is a nation, but there is no doubt that Jerusalem is a city, and the nations have come to its light.

The problem of the snow proved indeed the text for a tale touching the practical politics of the city. The English soldiers cleared the snow away; the Arabs sat down satisfied or stoical with the snow blocking their own doors or loading their own roofs. But the Jews, as the story went, were at length persuaded to clear away the snow in front of them, and then demanded a handsome salary for having recovered the use of their own front doors. The story is not quite fair; and yet it is not so unfair as it seems. Any rational Anti-Semite will agree that such tales, even when they are true, do not always signify an avaricious tradition in Semitism, but sometimes the healthier and more human suggestion of Bolshevism. The Jews do demand high wages, but it is not always because they are in the old sense money-grabbers, but rather in the new sense money-grabbers (as an enemy would put it) men sincerely and bitterly convinced of their right to the surplus of capitalism. There is the same problem in the Jewish colonies in the country districts; in the Jewish explanation of the employment of Arab and Syrian labour. The Jews argue that this occurs, not because they wish to remain idle capitalists, but because they insist on being properly paid proletarians. With all this I shall deal, however, when I treat of the Jewish problem itself. The point for the moment is that the episode of the snow did in a superficial way suggest the parts played by the three parties and the tales told about them. To begin with, it is right to say that the English do a great many things, as they clear away the snow, simply because nobody else would do them. They did save the oriental inhabitants from some of the worst consequences of the calamity. Probably they sometimes save the inhabitants from something which the inhabitants do not regard as a calamity. It is the danger of all such foreign efficiency that it often saves men who do not want to be saved. But they do in many cases do things from which Moslems profit, but which Moslems by themselves would not propose, let alone perform. And this has a general significance even in our first survey, for it suggests a truth easy to abuse, but I think impossible to ignore. I mean that there is something non-political about Moslem morality. Perverse as it may appear, I suspect that most of their political movements result from their non-political morality. They become politicians because they know they are not political; and feel their simple and more or less healthy life is at a disadvantage, in face of the political supremacy of the English and the political subtlety of the Jews.

For instance, the tradition of Turkish rule is simply a joke. All the stories about it are jokes, and often very good jokes. My own favourite incident is that which is still commemorated in the English cathedral by an enormous hole in the floor. The Turks dug up the pavement looking for concealed English artillery; because they had been told that the bishop had given his blessing to two canons. The

bishop had indeed recently appointed two canons to the service of the Church, but he had not secreted them under the floor of the chancel. There was another agreeable incident when the Turkish authorities, by an impulsive movement of religious toleration, sent for a Greek priest to bury Greek soldiers, and told him to take his choice in a heap of corpses of all creeds and colours. But at once the most curious and the most common touch of comedy is the perpetual social introduction to solid and smiling citizens who have been nearly hanged by the Turks. The fortunate gentleman seems still to be regarding his escape with a broad grin. If you were introduced to a polite Frenchman who had come straight from the guillotine, or to an affable American who had only just vacated the electrical chair, you would feel a faint curiosity about the whole story. If a friend introduced somebody, saying, "My friend Robinson; his sentence has been commuted to penal servitude," or "My Uncle William, just come from Dartmoor Prison," your mind and perhaps your lips would faintly form the syllables "What for?" But evidently, under Turkish rule, being hanged was like being knocked down by a cab; it might happen to anybody. This is a parenthesis, since I am only dealing here with the superficial experience of the streets, especially in the snow. But it will be well to safeguard it by saying that this unpolitical carelessness and comprehensiveness of the indiscriminate Turk had its tragic as well as its comic side. It was by no means everybody that escaped hanging; and there was a tree growing outside the Jaffa Gate at which men might still shudder as they pass it in the sunlight. It was what a modern revolutionary poet has called bitterly the Tree of Man's Making; and what a medieval revolutionary poet called the fruit tree in the orchard of the king. It was the gibbet; and lives have dropped from it like leaves from a tree in autumn. Yet even on the sterner side, we can trace the truth about the Moslem fatalism which seems so alien to political actuality. There was a popular legend or proverb that this terrible tree was in some way bound up with the power of the Turk, and perhaps the Moslem over a great part of the earth. There is nothing more strange about that Moslem fatalism than a certain gloomy magnanimity which can invoke omens and oracles against itself. It is astonishing how often the Turks seem to have accepted a legend or prophecy about their own ultimate failure. De Quincey mentions one of them in the blow that half broke the Palladium of Byzantium. It is said that the Moslems themselves predict the entry of a Christian king of Jerusalem through the Golden Gate. Perhaps that is why they have blocked up the fatal gate; but in any case they dealt in that fashion with the fatal tree. They elaborately bound and riveted it with iron, as if accepting the popular prophecy which declared that so long as it stood the Turkish Empire would stand. It was as if the wicked man of Scripture had daily watered a green bay-tree, to make sure that it should flourish.

In the last chapter I have attempted to suggest a background of the battlemented walls with the low gates and narrow windows which seem to relieve the liveliest of the coloured groups against the neutral tints of the North, and how this was

intensified when the neutral tints were touched with the positive hue of snow. In the same merely impressionist spirit I would here attempt to sketch some of the externals of the actors in such a scene, though it is hard to do justice to such a picture even in the superficial matter of the picturesque. Indeed it is hard to be sufficiently superficial; for in the East nearly every external is a symbol. The greater part of it is the gorgeous rag-heap of Arabian humanity, and even about that one could lecture on almost every coloured rag. We hear much of the gaudy colours of the East; but the most striking thing about them is that they are delicate colours. It is rare to see a red that is merely like a pillar-box, or a blue that is Reckitt's blue; the red is sure to have the enrichment of tawny wine or blood oranges, and the blue of peacocks or the sea. In short these people are artistic in the sense that used to be called aesthetic; and it is a nameless instinct that preserves these nameless tints. Like all such instincts, it can be blunted by a bullying rationalism; like all such children, these people do not know why they prefer the better, and can therefore be persuaded by sophists that they prefer the worst. But there are other elements emerging from the coloured crowd, which are more significant, and therefore more stubborn. A stranger entirely ignorant of that world would feel something like a chill to the blood when he first saw the black figures of the veiled Moslem women, sinister figures without faces. It is as if in that world every woman were a widow. When he realised that these were not the masked mutes at a very grisly funeral, but merely ladies literally obeying a convention of wearing veils in public, he would probably have a reaction of laughter. He would be disposed to say flippantly that it must be, a dull life, not only for the women but the men; and that a man might well want five wives if he had to marry them before he could even look at them. But he will be wise not to be satisfied with such flippancy, for the complete veiling of the Moslem women of Jerusalem, though not a finer thing than the freedom of the Christian woman of Bethlehem, is almost certainly a finer thing than the more coquettish compromise of the other Moslem women of Cairo. It simply means that the Moslem religion is here more sincerely observed; and this in turn is part of something that a sympathetic person will soon feel in Jerusalem, if he has come from these more commercial cities of the East; a spiritual tone decidedly more delicate and dignified, like the clear air about the mountain city. Whatever the human vices involved, it is not altogether for nothing that this is the holy town of three great religions. When all is said, he will feel that there are some tricks that could not be played, some trades that could not be plied, some shops that could not be opened, within a stone's throw of the Sepulchre. This indefinable seriousness has its own fantasies of fanaticism or formalism; but if these are vices they are not vulgarities. There is no stronger example of this than the real Jews of Jerusalem, especially those from the ghettos of eastern Europe. They can be immediately picked out by the peculiar wisps of hair worn on each side of the face, like something between curls and whiskers. Sometimes they look strangely effeminate, like some rococo burlesque of the ringlets of an Early Victorian

woman. Sometimes they look considerably more like the horns of a devil; and one need not be an Anti-Semite to say that the face is often made to match. But though they may be ugly, or even horrible, they are not vulgar like the Jews at Brighton; they trail behind them too many primeval traditions and laborious loyalties, along with their grand though often greasy robes of bronze or purple velvet. They often wear on their heads that odd turban of fur worn by the Rabbis in the pictures of Rembrandt. And indeed that great name is not irrelevant; for the whole truth at the back of Zionism is in the difference between the picture of a Jew by Rembrandt and a picture of a Jew by Sargent. For Rembrandt the Rabbi was, in a special and double sense, a distinguished figure. He was something distinct from the world of the artist, who drew a Rabbi as he would a Brahmin. But Sargent had to treat his sitters as solid citizens of England or America; and consequently his pictures are direct provocations to a pogrom. But the light that Rembrandt loved falls not irreverently on the strange hairy haloes that can still be seen on the shaven heads of the Jews of Jerusalem. And I should be sorry for any pogrom that brought down any of their grey wisps or whiskers in sorrow to the grave.

The whole scene indeed, seriousness apart, might be regarded as a fantasia for barbers; for the different ways of dressing the hair would alone serve as symbols of different races and religions. Thus the Greek priests of the Orthodox Church, bearded and robed in black with black towers upon their heads, have for some strange reason their hair bound up behind like a woman's. In any case they have in their pomp a touch of the bearded bulls of Assyrian sculpture; and this strange fashion of curling if not oiling the Assyrian bull gives the newcomer an indescribable and illogical impression of the unnatural sublimity of archaic art. In the Apocalypse somewhere there is an inspiringly unintelligible allusion to men coming on the earth, whose hair is like the hair of women and their teeth like the teeth of lions. I have never been bitten by an Orthodox clergyman, and cannot say whether his teeth are at all leonine; though I have seen seven of them together enjoying their lunch at an hotel with decorum and dispatch. But the twisting of the hair in the womanish fashion does for us touch that note of the abnormal which the mystic meant to convey in his poetry, and which others feel rather as a recoil into humour. The best and last touch to this topsy-turvydom was given when a lady, observing one of these reverend gentlemen who for some reason did not carry this curious coiffure, exclaimed, in a tone of heartrending surprise and distress, "Oh, he's bobbed his hair!"

Here again of course even a superficial glance at the pageant of the street should not be content with its comedy. There is an intellectual interest in the external pomp and air of placid power in these ordinary Orthodox parish priests; especially if we compare them with the comparatively prosaic and jog-trot good nature of the Roman monks, called in this country the Latins. Mingling in the

same crowd with these black-robed pontiffs can be seen shaven men in brown habits who seem in comparison to be both busy and obscure. These are the sons of St. Francis, who came to the East with a grand simplicity and thought to finish the Crusades with a smile. The spectator will be wise to accept this first contrast that strikes the eye with an impartial intellectual interest; it has nothing to do with personal character, of course, and many Greek priests are as simple in their tastes as they are charming in their manners; while any Roman priests can find as much ritual as they may happen to want in other aspects of their own religion. But it is broadly true that Roman and Greek Catholicism are contrasted in this way in this country; and the contrast is the flat contrary to all our customary associations in the West. In the East it is Roman Catholicism that stands for much that we associate with Protestantism. It is Roman Catholicism that is by comparison plain and practical and scornful of superstition and concerned for social work. It is Greek Catholicism that is stiff with gold and gorgeous with ceremonial, with its hold on ancient history and its inheritance of imperial tradition. In the cant of our own society, we may say it is the Roman who rationalises and the Greek who Romanises. It is the Roman Catholic who is impatient with Russian and Greek childishness, and perpetually appealing for common sense. It is the Greek who defends such childishness as childlike faith and would rebuke such common sense as common scepticism. I do not speak of the theological tenets or even the deeper emotions involved, but only, as I have said, of contrasts visible even in the street. And the whole difference is sufficiently suggested in two phrases I heard within a few days. A distinguished Anglo-Catholic, who has himself much sympathy with the Greek Orthodox traditions, said to me, "After all, the Romans were the first Puritans." And I heard that a Franciscan, being told that this Englishman and perhaps the English generally were disposed to make an alliance with the Greek Church, had only said by way of comment, "And a good thing too, the Greeks might do something at last."

Anyhow the first impression is that the Greek is more gorgeous in black than the Roman in colours. But the Greek of course can also appear in colours, especially in those eternal forms of frozen yet fiery colours which we call jewels. I have seen the Greek Patriarch, that magnificent old gentleman, walking down the street like an emperor in the Arabian Nights, hung all over with historic jewels as thick as beads or buttons, with a gigantic cross of solid emeralds that might have been given him by the green genii of the sea, if any of the genii are Christians. These things are toys, but I am entirely in favour of toys; and rubies and emeralds are almost as intoxicating as that sort of lustrous coloured paper they put inside Christmas crackers. This beauty has been best achieved in the North in the glory of coloured glass; and I have seen great Gothic windows in which one could really believe that the robes of martyrs were giant rubies or the starry sky a single enormous sapphire. But the colours of the West are transparent, the colours of the East opaque. I have spoken of the Arabian Nights, and there is really a touch

of them even in the Christian churches, perhaps increased with a tradition of early Christian secrecy. There are glimpses of gorgeously tiled walls, of blue curtains and green doors and golden inner chambers, that are just like the entrance to an Eastern tale. The Orthodox are at least more oriental in the sense of being more ornamental; more flat and decorative. The Romans are more Western, I might even say more modern, in the sense of having more realism even in their ritualism. The Greek cross is a cross; the Roman cross is a crucifix.

But these are deeper matters; I am only trying to suggest a sort of silhouette of the crowd like the similar silhouette of the city, a profile or outline of the heads and hats, like the profile of the towers and spires. The tower that makes the Greek priest look like a walking catafalque is by no means alone among the horns thus fantastically exalted. There is the peaked hood of the Armenian priest, for instance; the stately survival of that strange Monophysite heresy which perpetuated itself in pomp and pride mainly through the sublime accident of the Crusades. That black cone also rises above the crowd with something of the immemorial majesty of a pyramid; and rightly so, for it is typical of the prehistoric poetry by which these places live that some say it is a surviving memory of Ararat and the Ark.

Again the high white headgear of the Bethlehem women, or to speak more strictly of the Bethlehem wives, has already been noted in another connection; but it is well to remark it again among the colours of the crowd, because this at least has a significance essential to all criticism of such a crowd. Most travellers from the West regard such an Eastern city far too much as a Moslem city, like the lady whom Mr. Maurice Baring met who travelled all over Russia, and thought all the churches were mosques. But in truth it is very hard to generalise about Jerusalem, precisely because it contains everything, and its contrasts are real contrasts. And anybody who doubts that its Christianity is Christian, a thing fighting for our own culture and morals on the borders of Asia, need only consider the concrete fact of these women of Bethlehem and their costume. There is no need to sneer in any unsympathetic fashion at all the domestic institutions of Islam; the sexes are never quite so stupid as some feminists represent; and I dare say a woman often has her own way in a harem as well as in a household. But the broad difference does remain. And if there be one thing, I think, that can safely be said about all Asia and all oriental tribes, it is this; that if a married woman wears any distinctive mark, it is always meant to prevent her from receiving the admiration or even the notice of strange men. Often it is only made to disguise her; sometimes it is made to disfigure her. It may be the masking of the face as among the Moslems; it may be the shaving of the head as among the Jews; it may, I believe, be the blackening of the teeth and other queer expedients among the people of the Far East. But is never meant to make her look magnificent in public; and the Bethlehem wife is made to look magnificent in

public. She not only shows all the beauty of her face; and she is often very beautiful. She also wears a towering erection which is as unmistakably meant to give her consequence as the triple tiara of the Pope. A woman wearing such a crown, and wearing it without a veil, does stand, and can only conceivably stand, for what we call the Western view of women, but should rather call the Christian view of women. This is the sort of dignity which must of necessity come from some vague memory of chivalry. The woman may or may not be, as the legend says, a lineal descendant of a Crusader. But whether or no she is his daughter, she is certainly his heiress.

She may be put last among the local figures I have here described, for the special reason that her case has this rather deeper significance. For it is not possible to remain content with the fact that the crowd offers such varied shapes and colours to the eye, when it also offers much deeper divisions and even dilemmas to the intelligence. The black dress of the Moslem woman and the white dress of the Christian woman are in sober truth as different as black and white. They stand for real principles in a real opposition; and the black and white will not easily disappear in the dull grey of our own compromises. The one tradition will defend what it regards as modesty, and the other what it regards as dignity, with passions far deeper than most of our paltry political appetites. Nor do I see how we can deny such a right of defence, even in the case we consider the less enlightened. It is made all the more difficult by the fact that those who consider themselves the pioneers of enlightenment generally also consider themselves the protectors of native races and aboriginal rights. Whatever view we take of the Moslem Arab, we must at least admit that the greater includes the less. It is manifestly absurd to say we have no right to interfere in his country, but have a right to interfere in his home.

It is the intense interest of Jerusalem that there can thus be two universes in the same street. Indeed there are ten rather than two; and it is a proverb that the fight is not only between Christian and Moslem, but between Christian and Christian. At this moment, it must be admitted, it is almost entirely a fight of Christian and Moslem allied against Jew. But of that I shall have to speak later; the point for the moment is that the varied colours of the streets are a true symbol of the varied colours of the souls. It is perhaps the only modern place where the war waged between ideas has such a visible and vivid heraldry.

And that fact alone may well leave the spectator with one final reflection; for it is a matter in which the modern world may well have to learn something from the motley rabble of this remote Eastern town.

It may be an odd thing to suggest that a crowd in Bond Street or Piccadilly should model itself on this masquerade of religions. It would be facile and fascinating to

turn it into a satire or an extravaganza. Every good and innocent mind would be gratified with the image of a bowler hat in the precise proportions of the Dome of St. Paul's, and surmounted with a little ball and cross, symbolising the loyalty of some Anglican to his mother church. It might even be pleasing to see the street dominated with a more graceful top-hat modelled on the Eiffel Tower, and signifying the wearer's faith in scientific enterprise, or perhaps in its frequent concomitant of political corruption. These would be fair Western parallels to the head-dresses of Jerusalem; modelled on Mount Ararat or Solomon's Temple, and some may insinuate that we are not very likely ever to meet them in the Strand. A man wearing whiskers is not even compelled to plead some sort of excuse or authority for wearing whiskers, as the Jew can for wearing ringlets; and though the Anglican clergyman may indeed be very loyal to his mother church, there might be considerable hesitation if his mother bade him bind his hair. Nevertheless a more historical view of the London and Jerusalem crowds will show as far from impossible to domesticate such symbols; that some day a lady's jewels might mean something like the sacred jewels of the Patriarch, or a lady's furs mean something like the furred turban of the Rabbi. History indeed will show us that we are not so much superior to them as inferior to ourselves.

When the Crusaders came to Palestine, and came riding up that road from Jaffa where the orange plantations glow on either side, they came with motives which may have been mixed and are certainly disputed. There may have been different theories among the Crusaders; there are certainly different theories among the critics of the Crusaders. Many sought God, some gold, some perhaps black magic. But whatever else they were in search of, they were not in search of the picturesque. They were not drawn from a drab civilisation by that mere thirst for colour that draws so many modern artists to the bazaars of the East. In those days there were colours in the West as well as in the East; and a glow in the sunset as well as in the sunrise. Many of the men who rode up that road were dressed to match the most glorious orange garden and to rival the most magnificent oriental king. King Richard cannot have been considered dowdy, even by comparison, when he rode on that high red saddle graven with golden lions, with his great scarlet hat and his vest of silver crescents. That squire of the comparatively unobtrusive household of Joinville, who was clad in scarlet striped with yellow, must surely have been capable (if I may be allowed the expression) of knocking them in the most magnificent Asiatic bazaar. Nor were these external symbols less significant, but rather more significant than the corresponding symbols of the Eastern civilisation. It is true that heraldry began beautifully as an art and afterwards degenerated into a science. But even in being a science it had to possess a significance; and the Western colours were often allegorical where the Eastern were only accidental. To a certain extent this more philosophical ornament was doubtless imitated; and I have remarked elsewhere on the highly heraldic lions which even the Saracens carved over the gate of St. Stephen. But it

is the extraordinary and even exasperating fact that it was not imitated as the most meaningless sort of modern vulgarity is imitated. King Richard's great red hat embroidered with beasts and birds has not overshadowed the earth so much as the billycock, which no one has yet thought of embroidering with any such natural and universal imagery. The cockney tourist is not only more likely to set out with the intention of knocking them, but he has actually knocked them; and Orientals are imitating the tweeds of the tourist more than they imitated the stripes of the squire. It is a curious and perhaps melancholy truth that the world is imitating our worst, our weariness and our dingy decline, when it did not imitate our best and the high moment of our morning.

Perhaps it is only when civilisation becomes a disease that it becomes an infection. Possibly it is only when it becomes a very virulent disease that it becomes an epidemic. Possibly again that is the meaning both of cosmopolitanism and imperialism. Anyhow the tribes sitting by Afric's sunny fountains did not take up the song when Francis of Assisi stood on the very mountain of the Middle Ages, singing the Canticle of the Sun. When Michael Angelo carved a statue in snow, Eskimos did not copy him, despite their large natural quarries or resources. Laplanders never made a model of the Elgin Marbles, with a frieze of reindeers instead of horses; nor did Hottentots try to paint Mumbo Jumbo as Raphael had painted Madonnas. But many a savage king has worn a top-hat, and the barbarian has sometimes been so debased as to add to it a pair of trousers. Explosive bullets and the brutal factory system numbers of advanced natives are anxious to possess. And it was this reflection, arising out of the mere pleasure of the eye in the parti-coloured crowd before me, that brought back my mind to the chief problem and peril of our position in Palestine, on which I touched earlier in this chapter; the peril which is largely at the back both of the just and of the unjust objections to Zionism. It is the fear that the West, in its modern mercantile mood, will send not its best but its worst. The artisan way of putting it, from the point of view of the Arab, is that it will mean not so much the English merchant as the Jewish money-lender. I shall write elsewhere of better types of Jew and the truths they really represent; but the Jewish money-lender is in a curious and complex sense the representative of this unfortunate paradox. He is not only unpopular both in the East and West, but he is unpopular in the West for being Eastern and in the East for being Western. He is accused in Europe of Asiatic crookedness and secrecy, and in Asia of European vulgarity and bounce. I have said a propos of the Arab that the dignity of the oriental is in his long robe; the merely mercantile Jew is the oriental who has lost his long robe, which leads to a dangerous liveliness in the legs. He bustles and hustles too much; and in Palestine some of the unpopularity even of the better sort of Jew is simply due to his restlessness. But there remains a fear that it will not be a question of the better sort of Jew, or of the better sort of British influence. The same ignominious inversion which reproduces everywhere

the factory chimney without the church tower, which spreads a cockney commerce but not a Christian culture, has given many men a vague feeling that the influence of modern civilisation will surround these ragged but coloured groups with something as dreary and discoloured, as unnatural and as desolate as the unfamiliar snow in which they were shivering as I watched them. There seemed a sort of sinister omen in this strange visitation that the north had sent them; in the fact that when the north wind blew at last, it had only scattered on them this silver dust of death.

It may be that this more melancholy mood was intensified by that pale landscape and those impassable ways. I do not dislike snow; on the contrary I delight in it; and if it had drifted as deep in my own country against my own door I should have thought it the triumph of Christmas, and a thing as comic as my own dog and donkey. But the people in the coloured rags did dislike it; and the effects of it were not comic but tragic. The news that came in seemed in that little lonely town like the news of a great war, or even of a great defeat. Men fell to regarding it, as they have fallen too much to regarding the war, merely as an unmixed misery, and here the misery was really unmixed. As the snow began to melt corpses were found in it, homes were hopelessly buried, and even the gradual clearing of the roads only brought him stories of the lonely hamlets lost in the hills. It seemed as if a breath of the aimless destruction that wanders in the world had drifted across us; and no task remained for men but the weary rebuilding of ruins and the numbering of the dead.

Only as I went out of the Jaffa Gate, a man told me that the tree of the hundred deaths, that was the type of the eternal Caliphate of the Crescent, was cast down and lying broken in the snow.