

XIII

ONCE MORE IN PALESTINE

THE condition of all Moslem women must necessarily be more or less sad (for under the very best conditions it can never be secure), yet I think that the lot of Moslem women in Palestine compares favorably with that of their sisters in India. There is less absolute cruelty. There are fewer atrocious customs. The lot of widows is easier, and girls are not altogether despised.

Polygamy is lawful, yet this custom is certainly decreasing with education and civilization. The Turks have very seldom more than one wife. My experience of the officials who come from Turkey to hold office in Palestine, both civil and military, tells me that it is now the fashion among enlightened Moslems to follow European ways in the matter of marriage, and I observe that, when men are educated and have travelled, they seldom care for a plurality of wives.

However, among the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Palestine men with more than one wife, both rich and poor, may still be found.

Among the uneducated rich men (and by the term uneducated, I mean those who have not completed