

A STRANGE PEOPLE

Red Heads of Asiatic Turkey
Last of the Baal Worshipers.

HAVE SOME QUEER CUSTOMS.

All Men Wear Red Caps and Around Their Throats Red Knotted Cords and Allow Their Wives to Beat Them—All Babies Are Salted When Born.

Strange people are the Red Heads of Asiatic Turkey. They are the last of the Baal worshipers. The men wear red caps; hence their name Red Heads. They also wear red knotted cords around their necks. The cord is put on during babyhood and is never removed. It is interred with the body after death. They shave their heads except for a patch on the top, and here they allow the hair to grow long and plait it into pigtail, which hang about their ears. They are tall, wiry fellows, with enormous appetites for both food and drink.

The women, who do not veil themselves and who dress simply in loose fitting garments, are thin and spare, but wonderfully strong. In their homes they wear breeches as well as skirts. There is no wife beating among the Red Heads, but plenty of husband beating. The husbands take their frequent chastisements meekly and patiently. They employ themselves, both the women and the men, in agriculture and theft. They produce a couple of crops, tobacco and durra. The rest of their time is given up to looting the Turk's crops and cattle.

In the center of every village there is a small circle called off, and in this space there is planted the special religious emblem, an evergreen oak. No one except the father priest of the village enters the inclosed ground, which is decorated with small flags, strings of coins and bright colored beads. Around and about the circle the Red Heads celebrate the only religious festival known to them, "the gathering of the new moon," which takes place every month. Directly a new moon makes its appearance the people are called together by a lay priest beating a barrel shaped drum stuck end up on the ground.

Fires are lit, the cooking utensils placed thereon and the sheep killed by the priest, who sprinkles a little of the animal's blood on the oak, and the carcasses flayed and cut up into joints and the latter cooked over the fires, before which millet and wheat cakes are by this time baking on huge flags. In the meantime tables on trestles are set up and laid with wooden plates, horn spoons and steel knives and forks, and soon the feasting begins. The women wait on the men, who gorge steadily for about an hour and then, while their wives and daughters are clearing up the little they have left, indulge in dancing, drinking and general merriment.

No religious formality marks the feast, no blessing or benediction or grace. Indeed, not at birth or burial or marriage do these survivors of the ancient Baal worshipers employ any formula or observe anything in the nature of a religious ceremony. They have no Bible, no prayer book, no liturgy, no place of worship. Their one and only sanctuary is the sacred tree enclosure, their only religious symbol the evergreen oak.

When a baby is born it is warmly clothed, placed on a large wooden platter and taken to the priest, who, in front of the sacred tree, strips it and salts it. Probably this accounts for the few Red Heads that now survive, it being said that their numbers have dwindled to a mere seven or eight thousand. For the service the priest is always given a shudder from the sheep which it is usual to kill on such occasions and which forms the principal item in the birth feast. Other duties that the priest has to carry out are the cutting of three horizontal cuts with a dagger just above the level of the eyebrows on the forehead of the dead and the settling of all disputes.

When a couple becomes engaged the woman spends most of her time cooking dainty and tasty dishes and trotting round with them to her lover's home, followed by her father with wine and spirits. Breach of promise is almost unknown, for the youth who jilts has his throat cut. An erring husband is hanged on some remote tree by the red cord he wears round his neck, and the body is left as a warning to others. An erring wife mysteriously disappears, and no questions are asked. A man who deserts his wife also is hanged, while the woman who deserts her husband is compelled to return to him.

There is a secret ceremony of initiation which every Red Head is compelled to undergo on attaining his seventeenth birthday. It involves seclusion for seven days and going without food and drink for three days. At the termination of this preliminary test the youth is taught certain passwords and grips by which he may recognize his brethren, and a red circle is tattooed on his breast. The strange people live on terms of friendship with the whole of their neighbors, with the exception of the Turks, whom they hate and treat accordingly. — J. C. Bristow-Noble in London Globe.

Gave Him Pause.
"Will you marry me?"
"If mother says so, all right."
"Hum! Is mother going to decide all our questions for us in case this marriage takes place?"—Kansas City Journal.

When a man is no longer anxious to do better than well he is done for.—B. R. Haydon.

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NOT BLEACHED.

RED CROSS IN NEED OF "HOME" NURSES

(By United Press)

Washington, Sept. 14—America's public health nurses have gone to war in such numbers that the Red Cross today announced a plan to recruit their ranks in this country to meet the urgent need for them in homes.

A scholarship fund has been established through the Red Cross bureau of town and country nursing. Any graduate nurse who wishes to study for public health nursing work need only apply to the Red Cross.

The children's bureau of the department of labor has pointed out that unless the supply of public health nurses is kept up during the war the health of the country's children will be menaced. It recommended that public health nursing be officially recognized as war service.

That is virtually what the Red Cross has done.

The public health nursing course for graduate nurses is one year. Several of the larger city chapters have volunteered to pay the expenses of graduate nurses who wish to take the one-year course.

The special training required for this work includes the study of rural social problems, public health nursing, municipal health problems, foods and dietetics for social workers, sociology, and work in connection with the care of dependent families.

The work of the nurse includes not only bedside nursing at farm homes removed from the cities, but work in hygiene in connection with country schools. Special attention is given also to the general welfare work among the farming communities and in towns under 25,000 population.

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