DISABILITY & DEAFNESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
A BIBLIOGRAPHY.

5. HISTORICAL ITEMS 1751-1970
(materials written in, and/or concerned with, this period)

NOTE: The annotations given below must not be regarded as a substitute for reading
the actual works listed! The views of textual commentators cannot substitute for the
original texts on which they are commenting! All translations should be regarded with
some caution!

For the present Internet version, many accents and diacritical marks have been omitted,
as they still tend to be misrepresented either by the available coding systems or by
differences of screen or print software across the world.

ABBATE-PACHA O (1882) Nouvelles observations physiologiques de subjectivité chez
Incidently mentions (p.23) that “Ici, au Caire, nous avons aussi depuis peu d'années une
école d'aveugles, sous l'habile direction de mon ami Onsy-Bey. C'est une établissement où on
apprend quelques métiers, un peu à lire et écrire, ainsi que quelques notions de géographie.”
(Cf FATTAH, below)

327 pp.

ABDALLAH A, BADRAN A & GALAL S (1964) Effect of Bilharziasis on the mental
power and scholastic achievement of school children. J. Egyptian Public Health Association
39: 135-.

ABDEL-SALAM, ABDEL-GHAFAR, & AL-AATHAMY F (1969) [Standardization of the
Draw-a-Man test on Lebanese Children (Abstract).] Beirut: Beirut Arab University. 28 pp.
(Arabic, with English summary).

′ABD AL-WAHHAB, Fu'ad [1964] Al-Tadlik al-riyadi [Handbook of Massage.] Alexandria:

ABD-EL WASSIE, Abd-el Wahab (1970) Education in Saudi Arabia. Basingstoke:
Macmillan. xvi + 76 pp.
“Education of the Handicapped” pp. 50-53, includes notes on development of specialised
institutes and teacher training.

′AJBAN J (1948) Arabic: [The world of the blind and psychology.] Egyptian J. Psychology 4
(1) #.

AJMAL, Muhammad (1986) Muslim Contributions to Psychotherapy and other essays.
Islamabad: National Institute of Psychology.
These essays were written over 20 years by a man who became one of Pakistan's most senior psychologists, also serving as a university vice chancellor and Federal Education Secretary. He endured the conflicts of “a man who has been reared in the Western intellectual tradition” and has “owed allegiance to one Western god after another” (p. 1), while becoming aware that the cultural roots and traditions of his own country, and of the historical Islamic world, had many truths and strengths to offer to the psychological understanding of the human condition. That contribution had been largely ignored, or reduced to anecdotes and decorative snippets. Ajmal reflects on what the Muslim savants and Sufi teachers wrote, how their teaching can be understood in the later 20th century, and how far they address universal concerns of continuing relevance to the widespread modern disabilities of mind, soul and spirit. Ajmal's professional interest in cognitive development also brought a theme of children's perceptions of life, truth and relationship into several essays.


AMIN M (1948) Arabic: [The mentally retarded and the State's duties toward them.] Alexandria: Dar Nashr El-Thakafa.
(Annotated in Racy's bibliography, q.v.)

Carefully drawn pictures of childhood in village Egypt. Ch. 10 (pp. 202-213) reflects on “Indigenous learning and teaching”, and describes the daily activities in Islamic village schools of Silwa - where three of the six teachers were blind men. In Appendix XII, on ability testing of village children, a few “mentally deficient” individuals are noted, whom the villagers regard as holy fools.

Listing Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen.


Tracing history of psychiatry in the region, notes (pp. 574-575) establishment of state mental hospitals near Damascus in 1929, near Aleppo (1956); also comments on facilities in Lebanon, with brief mention of mental retardation.
BADAWI S (1946) *Arabic*: [Mental abnormality in school children.] *Egyptian J. Psychology* 2: No.1, 120-.
(Annotated in Racy's bibliography, q.v.)

Based on analysis of more than 1,400 drawings.

Long in Palestine, the author discusses 'Sickness' (151-155). Suggests reasons why less “born cripples and deformed children” are seen than in the West. High rate (95%) of ophthalmic disease in boys attending a mission school.

Includes historical review of Ophthamia, and a few paragraphs (pp. 7-8) on the condition of blind people.

[Rickets in Beirut.]

AL-BARRI, Zakariya Ahmad (1964) *Ahkam al-aulad fi 'l-islam* [Study of Islamic law concerning children.] Cairo. 102 pp.


Brief reports on work by Pastor Ernst J. Christoffel.

Brief item on school for blind and disabled people at Beirut. Material in Moon script was used by blind readers. Notes a “kindred school at Damascus”. See SCOTT, and TRISTRAM, below.


BLOCH [J?] [I? may be Iwan?] (1900) Beiträge zur Geschichte und geographischen Pathologie des Aussatzes. Die Bedeutung einiger Nachrichten über den Aussatz in Persien.
Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift 26: 150-152.

This collection of studies, from medieval to modern, and extending the Middle East as far west as Algiers, usefully covers a long historical background to Middle Eastern disability and charitable relief. Disabled, chronically diseased, or elderly infirm people are assumed to be present among 'the poor' and to be 'deserving of charity', and are mentioned as such in several chapters, though with very little specific discussion. The index lists 'insane asylums', 'madness', and 'poor' (with many aspects), but not 'disabled', 'blind' or 'disease' (and 'illness' in one chapter only). Nor is 'invalid' listed, though used four times in Ener's chapter, e.g. pp. 190, 192, “elderly or invalid”, where disability is clearly envisaged. (See COLE, below).

Borsai studied the traditional music of two groups, the rural cultivators (fellah) and the Coptic Christians, whose social isolation might preserve distant echoes of ancient Egyptian music. Of the Copts she notes (pp. 79-80) the probable origin of their liturgical melodies in Jewish liturgical music (from the 1st/2nd century era when Christianity reached the Jews at Alexandria, and was based in readings of the Jewish scriptures in Greek). The Coptic music transcribed here in 1966-67 derives from Tewfik Youssef, a blind cantor from the Coptic Orthodox monastery at Deit el Moharraq (Upper Egypt). (See next item; also HICKMANN, 1949; 1954, under 'Antiquity').

See previous item. Further details appear on the blind cantor Tewfîq Youssef (p. 30), who was born in 1917 near the Monastery el-Moharraq. When the music was recorded, Tewfîq was at Abu Kir, “chargé par l'Institut Copte de l'enseignement de certaines hymnes compliquées aux séminaristes, par tradition orale.”

In volume I are glimpses of the Damascus leper hospital (p.45), use of kohl (88-89), ophthalmic problems (222, 281), animals in health and under abuse (253-263), a crippled child (284) and some patients to whom Mrs Burton gave basic health care (311-314).

Describes the opening by F Garati of a deaf school at Istanbul in 1889, and its functioning until it closed in 1926. A blind school was added in 1890, but closed seven years later.


High goitre prevalence in Northern Iraq among school children and hospital inpatients.


Part editorial, partly quoting Miss Chapman's letter about the school she established at Jerusalem for deaf boys from all over Palestine, after working for decades in South Asia.

Based on experience at Waled Leprosarium near Damascus.

CHEMALI B (1910) Naissance et premier âge au Liban. *Anthropos* (Vienna) 5; 734, 1072 + plates.


CHILDREN of the Realm of Silence (n.d.) Marsovan, Turkey: King School for the Deaf.
(See FC GAGE, and JK GREENE, both below).

[See Bethesda Blindenheim, above; SCHMIDT-KÖNIG, below.]

Brief, supercilious account of some traditional rural methods.


Born in modest circumstances at a small town of Upper Egypt, Rifa‘ah Rafi‘ al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) became a great landlord and “a pillar of the establishment in Ottoman Egypt under the khedives” (p. 223); yet he remained “remarkably sympathetic to the poor” and to the blind, disabled and elderly among them. Cole examines al-Tahtawi's writings, which argued for both state measures, philanthropic associations, and private charitable establishments for the care of “children who are picked up off the streets, for orphans, for the elderly who are advanced in age, for the blind, for idiots, for the insane, and for the handicapped who are disabled” (228).

CONDOR, Josiah (1824) Syria and Asia Minor. J. Duncan. pp. 53-54. Arriving at Damascus with some other Europeans, Condor paid a visit to “Ahmet Bey, the son of Abdallah, the late Pasha.” The Bey complained of hearing loss, by which “he had now become so deaf that he could not enjoy conversation...” and believed the problem was getting worse. An appointment was made, and the Bey's ears were examined and washed: “having cleared out an immense quantity of hardened wax and cotton, the ringing in his ears immediately ceased”. This was followed by some discomfort, as he now heard too much noise. Yet the Bey was clearly delighted to regain his hearing.


Detailed description of a large mosque and educational centre and the waqf foundation funding it, of which the building operation began in 1774, opposite the site of Al-Azhar, Cairo. Public recitation of the Qur'an continued from early morning to nightfall. Daily and annual disbursements are listed to “5 blind men as muezzins and muballighun”. Among the provisions for utilising any surplus from the wakf, after the original donor and his dependents had died, “two thirds of the surplus from the waqf was to go to the blind residents of al-Azhar and the zAwiya of the blind next to it.” (See also LANE 1890; LARREY).

EL-DA'EM A (1946) Arabic: [The deaf-mute child.] Egyptian J. Psychology 2 (1) 108-.

(Annotated in Racy's bibliography, q.v.)

DAMER, Mary GESD (1841) Diary of a Tour in Greece, Turkey, Egypt and the Holy Land. London: Colburn.

In Volume II, describing a difficult journey from Jerusalem to Gaza, Damer gave some detail of one of the guides, a “deaf and dumb” man, whose “pantomimic manner was quite successful in expressing to us whatever he wished: in short it served us better than Arabic” (p. 42). Incidents are related in which this deaf servant's personal character and quickness of perception also impressed the Englishwoman (pp. 44-45, 58).
Among many child care, orphan and educational projects, brief references are made to work with deaf and blind children. In 1902, “the Girls' School at Urfa [Sanliurfa, Turkey] began instruction for the blind under Mary Haroutunian”, who had received training in London; while in 1910, “the Anatolia Girls' School at Marsovan [Merzifon] organized the first class for deaf children” (p. 97). (See GREENE, 1916, below). At Alexandropol [now Gyumri, Armenia] a special school was opened c. 1922 for children blinded by trachoma (p. 159); during the 1920s, Near East Relief was serving 200 blind and 60 deaf children, and a braille code was developed for use with Armenian children (pp. 191-192, 284). Special schools were transferred to the Greek government in 1930. See also pp. 250, 254-255, 259-260, where physical disability and artificial limbs appear.

DAVIDSON JH (1875) A visit to a Turkish lunatic asylum. *J. Mental Science* 21: 408-414.

Brief note about a private school for deaf children run by a Greek lady, Madame Semely Tsotsou, also responsible for training 15 Egyptian teachers. With photographs.

Ferdi Garati [or De Grati] reported on the day school he had started in 1891. Having taken training in Italy, he himself ran the oral class, while the manual department was under “M. Pascal Pekmezian, an Armenian, whose parents are deaf-mutes, and who studied at the National Institute in Paris, of which he holds his diploma as professor.”


II: 388-389 briefly reviews work by missionaries for blind people in Persia, Turkey, Syria and Egypt.

Study based on c. 700 Draw-a-Man tests in regular classrooms by children aged from 5 to 10 years in Lebanon and Egypt.

Study of American, Arab, Armenian and Jewish children aged 5 to 10 in Beirut.


DENNIS W & NAJARIAN, Pergrouhi S (1957) Infant development under environmental
handicap. Psychological Monographs 71 (7) 1-13 (No. 436). Ability testing of creche infants and 4½-6 year olds from an understaffed foundling home compared with matched group from ordinary families of Beirut.

DE SOUZA-ARAUJO HC (1929) Leprosy Survey Made in Fourety Countries (1924-1927). Rio de Janiero: Oswald Cruz institute. 400 pp. ('Fourty' spelt so). Reports a voyage around the leprosy world, with observations and references from most of the countries visited. India and Burma (228-62); Iraq (263-65); Palestine (265-69); Egypt (269-73); Turkey (291-93). Most of the material is medical, but some useful social and historical data appears.

DICKSON HRP (1949) The Arab of the Desert. A glimpse into Badawin life in Kuwait and Sau'di Arabia. London: George Allen & Unwin. 648 pp. Field notes 1929-1936, some 50 years after DOUGHTY (q.v.). Notes on blind people (pp. 30, 142, 289), disabling diseases and medicines (pp. 159-60, 175-78, 505-14), child rearing (pp. 172-80), contrasting responses to disabled people (pp. 289, 500).


DOUGHTY, Charles (1921) Travels in Arabia Deserta. 2nd edition. 2 volumes. Cambridge University Press. xiv + 690, xxxvii + 623 pp., + maps. Detailed account of Syrian/Arabian travels between 1875 & 1878, and of life, survival and death among Bedouin and settled populations. Frequent mention of disease (e.g. I: 254-58, 314-16; 617-18; II: 4-5), for which Doughty sometimes offered treatment; and of people with disabilities, especially visual impairment (e.g. I: 42, 527, 547-48; II: 308, 343, 347-48, 358, 380-81, 383, 408-13, 441) and mental problems (e.g. I: 498; II: 14, 276, 287-88, 293, 298, 384, 437), but also some deaf or physically disabled people (e.g. I: 222; II: 8, 30, 48-49, 67, 82, 302, 328, 358, 410, 466). Not all are listed clearly, in the extensive index. [Doughty's views about the people among whom he lived and travelled were sometimes perceptive, sometimes affectionate or compassionate, and sometimes coloured by the knowledge that some of them thought it would be good to kill him for the sake of religion.]

Lebanese Medical J. 13: 50-53.
Notes the quickening pace of life, westernisation and transition to nuclear family patterns.

Much the same counselling problems as are found in the 1990s.

Belief in the Evil Eye and use of protective amulets were common in Arab lands. (See note with BÜRGE, under 'Antiquity'). Connection was also made between the evil eye and hunchbacks or visually impaired people.


Some entries concern disability or deafness in the Middle East, directly or indirectly, e.g. Amputees at Persepolis; Deaf people at the Ottoman court; Judaism; Middle East and the Rise of Islam; Religion; and in some brief biographies, e.g. Abu'l-'Ala al-Ma'arri; Abu'l Aswad ad-Duwalli; Bashshar ibn Burd; Didymus the Blind; 'Ata Ibn Abi Rabah; Taha Hussein; Al-Jahiz; Ibn Al-Athir; Ibn Sirin; Ibn Umm Maktum; Katada ibn Di`ama as-Sadusi; Al-Khalil; Emperor Michael IV; Muwaffak ad-Din Muzaffar; Thalab. Volume 5 comprises source texts and graphic illustrations on disability (in English translation), some being from ancient Sumer or Mesopotamia (5: 3-13); passages from the scriptures of the major religions (e.g. the Torah, Avesta, and Christian texts); early modern Ottoman travel excerpts; and other relevant Middle Eastern sources.


Notes on efficacy of splints for fractures, and other medical matters, pp. 218-221.


FAHMI M (1951) *Arabic*: [Stuttering.] *Egyptian J. Psychology* 6 (3) 399-.
(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)


FAHMY M (1953) *Arabic*: [Delayed speech in children.] *Egyptian J. Psychology* 8 (3) 327-.
(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

FARRELL, Gabriel (1950) A report and recommendations regarding the blind in Iran,


GADEN H (1907) Etats musulmans de l'Afrique centrale et leurs rapports avec la Mecque et Constantinople, Questions diplomatiques et coloniales 24: 436-447. See p. 444. Several rulers of Ouaddai (Wadai, now in Chad), sent a tribute every few years to Istanbul, consisting of ivory, feathers, various fabrics, slaves, and some eunuchs. However, “c'est surtout sous le sultan Youssef (1874-1898) que les envois d'eunuques se multiplièrent: ils furent presque annuels. Abdoul Hamid eut même d'autres exigences; il demanda une fois des sourds-muets. Youssef en fit chercher dans ses Etats et envoya ceux qu'il put se procurer.” Sultan Abdul Hamid II was accustomed to having deaf servants at his court, as had many of his Ottoman predecessors.

GAGE, Frances C (1915) Teaching the deaf in Turkey. Volta Review 17: 302. Note on deaf school at Marsovan [Merzifon], said to be the only one in Turkey (But see BUSSE, above; also “Children of the Silence” above, and JK GREENE, below).


AL GHANIM, Abd Allah Muhammad (1965) Report on the conditions of the blind in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the area of the Middle East. Riyadh: Ministry of Education, Department of Special Education.


GIRGIS, Sabry (1948) Arabic: [Psychiatric clinics for children and adolescents.] Egyptian J. Psychology 4 (1) 53-. (Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)
GIRGIS S (1955) Arabic: [A Statistical Study of Scholastic Retardation Among Elementary Students in Cairo.] Cairo: Sahifat al-Tarbiya. Study among 3412 students. (Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

GIRGIS S & TAHER Y (1957) Arabic: [A statistical study of epilepsy among elementary school students.] J. Egyptian Medical Association 40 (6) 85-.
Survey among 15,519 schoolchildren. (Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

Based on a listing (not shown) of “some 120 miraculous cures from Coptic texts”, Godron takes a mildly sceptical view, noting that many of the ailments are of a rather unclear, possibly psychosomatic nature.

Visits to 40 social welfare institutions and organisations, e.g. orphanages, old people's homes, dispensaries, nursing school, in several cities: their histories and functioning. Annexes (pp. 217-237) give lists of registered welfare associations. In No.13, 66-71 concern activities for and by blind people.

Substantially referenced studies, with village women's accounts. See e.g. beliefs about 'changelings' pp. 102-104. Granqvist was concerned to throw modern light on literature from earlier times.


One paragraph (p. 166) has “a department for the deaf” opened in 1910 under a Greek woman, Miss Philadelphefs[*], at the Anatolia Girls School, Marsovan. This work was named the King Memorial School for the Deaf, after Martha A King. Teaching methods were imported from America, and in 1914 there were 15 pupils. (See “Children of the Realm of Silence”, and Frances GAGE, both above). A paragraph (p. 180) speaks of a school for blind children at Urfa [Sanliurfa], said to be the first in Turkey, opened by Mary Haroutunian, who had been teaching in a day school under Miss Shattuck. Mary lost her sight, was sent to London for training, and returned to teach blind children. In 1914 the school had 32 students. [* The name was misspelt thus by Greene, and was further mangled to 'Philadelphefs' in the
earlier web version of the present bibliography. By way of reparation: the person who began teaching deaf girls at Marsovan c. 1910 was Miss Galene Philadelpheus, who had spent two years at the Clarke School for the Deaf, North Hampton, Mass., US, in preparation for her work teaching deaf children. A modern historical book by SA Levinsky & D Steindl-Rast, 1911, *A Bridge of Dreams*, Steiner Books, p. 228, has a striking pen-portrait of Galene Philadelpheus in the US, c. 1920, a few years after the sad events which terminated the work with deaf girls at Marsovan.]


 pp. 174-176 quotes various negative reports of goitre in Egypt, until the 1924 note by DOLBEY & OMAR (see above).


Among the reconstruction of memories of growing up in Persia in the mid-20th century, with histories of many relatives and local characters going much further back, and cultures rural and urban, there is a blind woman, locally renowned for her midwifery skills. This was Zivar, who delivered the baby Shusha Guppy in 1940, commemorated in her own chapter “The Blind Midwife” (pp. 58-64), as recounted by Guppy's Aunt Ashraf. Zivar had become old and blind, but still practised the age-old traditional skills, “so experienced that she did everything by touch. She ran her hand over a pregnant woman's tummy and predicted exactly what day, even what hour on that day, the baby would be born ... you knew that, in her hands, both mother and child would be safe” (p. 59). [Guppy admits that by the time she would write of it, long after Zivar's death, the reputation of this blind old woman had become legendary and much embellished (p. 64). Traditional midwifery skills were rapidly being replaced, in urban areas, by modern methods with imported knowledge. Yet the account of Zivar, continuing skilfully to deliver some babies 'as a favour' even when retired and blind, is credible. As the only named and located 'blind old woman' in the present bibliography, she may stand as a representative for several million unknown Middle Eastern women, down the centuries, who practised domestic and neighbourhood skills while having severe visual impairment. See also KORDI, below, for a blind childhood in Iran.]


Mainly an account of the work of the kindergarten teacher Jabar Baghcheban (1885-1966), who began Iran's first formal educational work for deaf children in 1924 at Tabriz and who later founded a school at Teheran, and contributed original methods and approaches to teaching deaf children.


Haj embarked on his studies after working as “an itinerant teacher for the blind in a Galilean Arab community”, helping visually impaired children to enrol in ordinary village schools. He found some blind children already casually integrated in remote schools. This caused him to look further into the cultural roots of this unexpected tolerance. See HAJ (1970), under 'Antiquity'.

12
Based on the 100th birthday celebration for Ragheb Moftah (21 Dec. 1998), the article reviews his life's work of “documenting the musical heritage of the Coptic Church”. (See RAGHEB MOFTAH & ROY, under 'Antiquity').

Discusses literary and biographical evidence on the efforts of reformers in the Islamic world to move from the traditional toward scientific approaches to public health and biomedicine in the 19th and 20th centuries, using the example of eye disease and treatment in Egypt.

HAMZA M (1954) Arabic: [Vocational rehabilitation of the physically disabled.] *Egyptian Yearbook of Psychology* 1: 119-.
(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)


HARFOUCHE JK (1966) *Growth and Illness Patterns of Lebanese Infants (Birth-18 months)*. Beirut: Khayat.
Study of growth patterns in 365 infants.


Extensively referenced work, with brief mention of blind students at a mosque in Dasuk (pp. 20-21) and Al-Azhar, Cairo (25-27), and other blind or deaf schools (372, 390, 441) in the 19th century. Work with deaf students may have begun in 1874.

Dr Hirsch drew on several centuries of books, reports and journal papers up to the mid-1880s to give a formidable worldwide picture of diseases and their consequences. Volume I on
“Acute Infective” diseases has less connection with disabling conditions, though Smallpox (pp. 123-153) certainly blinded hundreds of thousands of people. Volume II starts with an account of Leprosy from antiquity and various current aetiological theories (pp. 1-58), with some remarks on Arabia, Persia and Syria (p. 14). Endemic Goitre and Cretinism is surveyed (pp. 121-202), with a few remarks on Asia Minor; but Hirsch believed Arabia and Syria “quite free from endemic goitre and cretinism” (p. 145) [which is certainly untrue now]. Gout occupies pp. 648-665. In Volume III, “Neuroses” appear (pp. 510-546), including the geographical distribution of epilepsy, with Middle Eastern references (pp. 535, 538). Elephantiasis, carefully distinguished from leprosy, is discussed at length (pp. 710-726), with various Middle East references, followed by Rickets (pp. 732-742) reported infrequently e.g. in Beirut and in Egypt (735-736).


[Blindness acquired in Egypt.] Volume VI: pp. 553- describes the Chelsea Hospital, begun by Charles II, and continued by other monarchs, to help soldiers wounded in the service of the country, with 472 residential places and aid for non-resident pensioners. On p. 560, a current (1804) list of 20,760 out-pensioners included “Forty-three blind sergeants, at eighteen-pence per diem. Forty corporals, who are blind, at fourteen-pence per diem. Six hundred and seventy privates, who are blind, at twelve-pence per diem. These allowances are made in compassion of their very great sufferings, and their present distrest situation, having lost their sight in Egypt.” [Payment to the 20,000 out-pensioners not in this 'special category' was five-pence per diem.]


HUSSIEN FH & VALSIK JA (1973) Popular medicine and traditional mutilations in Egyptian Nubia. (Parts II & III) Ethomedizin II (3/4) 220-228. Parts II & III concern “Cosmetic Mutilations”, and “Genital Mutilations of Women”. (For Part I, see VALSIK, below). [First author's name is given as Hussien throughout.]

The blind author, who worked initially as a teacher at the Zeitoun blind school, gave some historical background mentioning blind schools begun at Alexandria in 1896 and at Zeitoun in 1901. It was customary for blind Muslims to earn a living by “reading the Koran in private houses, in shops and in the streets” [by ‘reading’, presumably Ibrahim means ‘reciting from memory’]. Also the blind Copts “have been used to chant in the churches, as chanting is a very old custom in the orthodox churches, especially in Egypt. Very few of these blind Copts, except in the large cities, earned enough in this way to secure a comfortable living.” In 1921, Ibrahim learnt to weave carpets, and then began teaching other blind men to read and write, and some handicraft skills. In 1925, he came in contact with “one of the blind sheikhs at El Azhar University”, and discovered that this man had no knowledge of Braille. Ibrahim then began teaching twelve blind people at the Azhar, and the numbers grew to 90 in 1927. He was now teaching blind Muslims at one place, and blind Christians elsewhere. Some suspicions arose when Ibrahim, himself a Christian, used some Bible material while teaching the sheikhs. However he persevered with work in several blind schools and a training workshop at Cairo, for both Muslims and Copts.

“In Cairo” (1909, Feb.) The Silent Worker 21 (no. 5). Notes “the establishment of a school for the deaf in Cairo, where it has for three years had a prosperous existence.”


INSTITUTION for the Blind, Secoures aux Aveugles, Zeitoun, Cairo (Egypt) (1903). Cairo. 9 pp. Pamphlet introducing the Institution and giving details of its foundation in 1901, the people concerned, and work of educating young blind boys. Some Arabic Braille books were being produced.


JOURNAL of a Deputation sent to the East by the Committee of the Malta Protestant College in 1849. (1854) J Nisbet & Co. Part I, pp. 62-63, on El-Azhar, Cairo, notes that, “There are about three hundred in one of the
colleges founded by pious Moslems for the instruction of the blind, whose numbers are considerably greater in Egypt and generally throughout the East, than in Europe, in consequence of the great prevalence of ophthalmia, and other diseases of the eyes. (Footnote: Several gentlemen who have visited the East have been strongly impressed with the importance of measures being taken to introduce into those countries the methods of teaching the blind to read by the use of embossed letters. It is proposed to print in this way portions of the Psalms and Proverbs, and some elementary school-books, on grammar, geography, &c., translated into Arabic, for the use of the native schools;”) [Such materials had been supplied to teachers in Calcutta as early as 1838 or 1839, from the LONDON Society for Teaching the Blind to Read (q.v., below), using the embossed characters devised by Thomas Lucas, while William Moon's embossed system had reached India by 1853. The London Society reported using the Lucas system in Egypt in 1857 or early 1858.]


Born in 1892 in Ram Allah, a Christian-Syrian village, Kaleel recalls his boyhood home, games, playthings, and also his schooling (pp. 51-67).

Growing up in the US, in an impoverished Eastern-European Jewish immigrant family, and with a polio affected leg, Kalekan-Fishman (in retrospective sociological analysis) internalised the pressures of (ethnic majority, class, gender, able-bodied) 'normality' and her failure to match it. As a young woman in 1949 she carried the hurts and coping stratagems of her non-normalities to the embattled new state of Israel, where some previous social aberrations disappeared, but her 'slight limp' fitted neither the 'honoured' disability niche (i.e. wounded soldier) nor the 'belatedly recognised' problem niche (Holocaust survivor); and its physical inconvenience was ignored by planners and designers until the 1990s. In her older years, public expectations of age-related physical decline finally caught up with the realities of her gait and appearance, while Kalekan-Fishman developed more awareness of the multiple personal and social factors that had driven her life.


Cambridge University Press.
Shows classical Arabic medicine permeating beliefs and practices of traditional medicine in rural Syria and Jordan surveyed in late 1970s. Some notes on epilepsy, mental illness, bone-setting. Extensive linking and referencing of historical material.

Detailed account of efforts to support British physicians in Beirut and Damascus in 1840s. Dr Kerns did much eye work and a few disability operations (see YATES & KERNS, below).


Notes on formal schools, workshops, Braille, and the activities of some blind adults; also on prevention.

Factor analysis of twelve teachers' ratings of c.270 students for various traits. 'Intelligent' was strongly linked with 'thoughtful', 'conscientious', 'persistent' and 'emotionally stable'.

In this global study, pp. 131-37 cover goitre reported in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, French and British Somaliland, with references from 1905 to 1958 (on p. 224).

Includes folk beliefs about necessary conduct during pregnancy to avoid deformities. Some illustrations. European medical practice slowly gained ground from the 1820s onward.

Background of indigenous practitioners e.g. bone-setters, masseuses, itinerant oculists. American missionaries opened first modern hospital at Beirut in 1867; then specialist Eye & Ear Hospital (1909) and Children's and Orthopedic Hospital (1910); while Hospital for Mental Diseases opened in 1898 (see WALDMEIER, below).

KHALIL, Mohamed (1925) The effect of parasitic disease on the intelligence of school children. J. Egyptian Medical Association 8: 547-.
(Annotated in RACY’s bibliography, q.v.)


KHOLY W (1950) *Arabic: [Stuttering and stammering.]* *Egyptian J. Psychology* 6 (1) 1-.
(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)


The author became blind when four years old, in a Kurdish village in Iran. Kordi's childhood and battles for education are described, up to her graduation from Teheran University in 1970.


(See bibliography by RACY, who notes that the book is partly based on El-Koussy's experiences working with emotionally troubled, delinquent or backward children at Cairo).

Data from 2,633 audiometric examinations (1707 male, 926 female), 1964-1967.

(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

(Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

pp. 3-10, notes p. 172, give a very brief historical background of medical and charitable care in Egypt from antiquity to the 1950s. On pp. 8-9, mention is made of “Muhammad Anas”, starting a blind school and developing an Arabic form of Braille, in the 1890s. Presumably this is the man referred to as “Onsy-Bey” by Abbate-Pacha, 1882 (q.v.), and by Fattah, 1954 (q.v.) as “Dr Onsy”, who opened his school in the 1870s.

LANE, Edward William (1890) *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern*
First published 1836. Describes in considerable detail the beliefs and practices of Muslims in Egypt, as observed by Lane and discussed with his local teachers and advisors. One of Lane's Arabic teachers and key informants was nearly blind (pp xii-xiii); eye disease and blindness were common (pp. 2, 3, 23, 47, 139, 236-237). There are numerous mentions of active blind men, e.g. pp. 107, 165, 417-418 476; including description of a college of some 300 blind students and teachers, one of whom became the Sheikh of al-Azhar (pp. 192-193), blind beggars (299, 394, 431); lunatics, idiots and holy fools, who are regarded as being those “whose mind is in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals” (pp. 208-210, 398, 410) and other men with disabilities (pp. 111, 177, 361, 415), also charms and healing (pp. 233-238). Massage and joint manipulation took place in the bathhouse (311-314). In effect, these urban disabled men seem to have been casually integrated in street life and public religious ceremony, their poverty and disadvantage shared with many non-disabled people, with a few specific religious roles for some blind men. (Disabled women are hardly mentioned - presumably they stayed mostly within family dwellings).

In a long section on Goitre, Baron Larrey in Volume 2, pp. 81-85 came to discuss guttural hernia or tumours of the upper trachea, seen first in Egypt: “il se manifeste chez une seule classe d'individus, les aveugles, et le nombre, dans cette contrée, en est si considérable, que les chefs de la religion les emploient à chanter les versets du Coran, aux chapiteaux de leurs minarets, toutes les heures du jour et de la nuit, autant pour marquer ces mesures du temps, que pour prévenir les habitans des devoirs qu'ils ont à remplir envers Dieu ou le gouvernement.” The blind reciters developed bronchoceles after some years of this work. These were often concealed by wearing protective wrapping around the neck. When the tumours grew too big, the blind reciters had to retire from the job, and were given some other occupation. (See also CRECELIUS; LANE, 1890)

LARREY, Baron de (1830) Bronchocele. The Lancet (i) (No. 341) p. 832.
[Extract from Baron de Larrey's “Clinique Chirurgicale”, see previous item.]

Based on survey of c. 250 villages.


Indigenous practitioners and folk remedies.


LIEDER JRT (1828) Visit of the Rev. J.R.T. Lieder to the Faioum. The Missionary Register
Lieder's diary records his journey through Egypt, from Cairo to Benisouef and Medineh, with a Coptic priest as his guide. “The Christians have two schools in Medineh, which contain about eighty children. The schoolmaster of the first is a blind man, as is generally the custom in Egypt: his children, therefore, learn only some prayers and passages of the Bible by heart, and only a few learn to read by the help of a Shammas (deacon).” (p. 340). (The second schoolmaster was nearly blind). “The Areefs [holders of a clerical post of modest status] are, in general, those blind Schoolmasters who teach the children to learn by heart some prayers and passages of the Scriptures, and whose duty it is to instruct them in religion” (p. 341).

LONDON Society for Teaching the Blind to Read (1858) *Twentieth Report, presented April 13th, 1858.*

“Lucas' system of teaching the Blind to read has been extended ... to Egypt also, where blindness so much prevails.” (p. 8). This report in 1858 covered activities of the previous twelve months, i.e. since mid-April 1857. It may be the earliest record of using an organised system of embossed script to teach blind people to read in Egypt (at least, since Didymus used a wood-carved method at Alexandria in the 4th century, see LASCARATOS & MARKETOS 1994, under 'Antiquity').


See pp. 14, 22-23, 35, 45, 94 for proverbs embodying folk views of disability, e.g. “The mother of the mute understands what he says”.


Traces the development of physiognomy from Aristotle through various Arab authors. (See T FAHD, under 'Antiquity').


pp. 637-640, 644, trachoma and blindness in Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Egypt. “Palestine has ... a greater percentage of blind persons among her general population than any other country in the world” i.e. 843 per 100,000 [sic - but the figures 8.43% blind, 19.68% one eye blind, appear later. The former would be 843 per 10,000, not 100,000.]


Supercedes his 1913 publication on trachoma in Egypt. Much information throughout on Egypt, including social conditions.

MacMichael HA (1934) Arab dumb show. Sudan Notes and Records 17: 129.

More than 20 years earlier, in Northern Kordojan [Kordofan], MacMichael noted a “deaf and dumb man” who communicated a short history to him by a series of eloquent signs and gestures, which are here described.


Madden, being guided around the Cairo asylum by a keeper armed with a rhinoceros-hide whip, was shocked to see the chained and half-starved inmates, who survived (or died) with whatever food might be brought in by visitors.


Report by Director, on set-up and first year's operation of Demonstration Centre at Zeitoun, near Cairo; including Home Teaching, personnel training and Braille printing programmes.

El-Mahi, Tigani (1959) Arabic: [The concept of mental health in history.] extracted from the Egyptian Historical Society Review, no. 8, Cairo.

Lengthy paper by senior Sudanese psychiatrist, annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v. [El-Mahi included the tale of an alcoholic, an opium eater and a hashish user, who reached Isfahan at night and found the gate shut. The alcoholic wished to batter the gate down. The opium eater preferred to sleep outside until morning. The hashish user thought they should all enter through the keyhole.]


[Annotation based on remarks by John RACY, see below.] The distinguished Sudanese psychiatrist and WHO regional advisor, Dr El-Mahi, wrote many papers (see RACY, 1970, pp. 133-138) illustrative of the inner life, personal relations and mental stresses of people in the Arab region. He was not afraid to make observations about the practice of Islam and its teachings in the rapidly changing Arab countries. In this paper, El-Mahi shows social aspects of Islam evolving to meet changed situations.


Brief mention of work with blind people, pp. 24, 51, 79-81, 85, 91. See also notes under Tristram HB, and under Scott FE (below)


In a critical examination of Taha Husayn's autobiography, Malti-Douglas reviews various aspects of blindness in the current and historical Arab world. Husayn's education initially aimed toward the traditional blind male skills of memorising the Qur'an and teaching it with an orthodox approach and exegesis. He studied further at Al-Azhar, where there had long been a school for blind students of Islam, then moved to the new, modernising University of
Cairo where he wrote his thesis on the blind freethinker Abu 'l-`Ala al-Ma`arri (see under ‘Antiquity’). Advanced studies in Europe brought further challenges and secularisation in Husayn's thoughts. His first book was controversial, using source criticism on pre-Islamic poetry and seeming to suggest a possibly heretical view of the Qur’an. In this, and at other points in his life, Husayn may have been influenced by his literary predecessor al-Ma`arri.

MANHEIMER (1900) Les aliénés en Turquie. Archives orientales de médecine et de chirurgie 2: 159-162.


Born in 1873 at Batanoun, Mikhail lost his sight when five years old. He attended the local school, then the Coptic patriarchal college, learning Coptic, memorising psalms and showing early musical talents. In 1891 he had a post as a cantor, and was soon teaching music. At the Zaitoun blind school he taught Coptic and Arabic languages. [In the 1920s, when Ragheb Moftah needed a skilled cantor from whose performance Newlandsmith would write down in musical notation the traditional Coptic hymns, Muallim Mikhail Al-Batanouni was chosen.] Collaboration with Ragheb Moftah continued until Mikhail's death in 1957, and his musical skills and teaching abilities were widely appreciated.


Brief notes about treatment in Syria/Lebanon.

MASSERMAN EWG (1918) Hygiene and disease in Palestine in modern and in Biblical times. Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly, 1918, 56-71. Includes notes on disabilities (pp. 66-71) e.g. leprosy, rickets, infantile paralysis, epilepsy, congenital deformities, visual impairments and idiocy, with some ethnographic comments.


MATTHEWS, Roderic D, & AKRAWI, Matta [1949] Education in Arab countries of the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon. Washington DC: American Council on Education. xxiv + 584 pp. Detailed report based on extensive travels and visits to 471 schools and institutions concerned with education in 1945-46. Minimal provisions were found for disabled children (pp. 255, 499, plate opposite p. 72); but clearly some were casually integrated (p.41).

[McNEILL, Sir John (1829) reported in:] John Leaf (1861) Biographic Portraiture, or, sketches of the lives and characters of a few illustrious persons. London: Blackwood. In Leaf's collection, the chapter on Dr. John Kitto (1804-1854) occupies pp. 260-313. Kitto, an Englishman who lost his hearing in an accident in 1817 and had little speech, pursued book learning avidly and picked up some skills of shoemaking and printing. In 1829, Kitto was persuaded by Anthony Norris Groves to accompany him, as tutor to Groves's young
sons, on a Christian mission to Persia. He was seen by Sir John McNeill, the British Ambassador, at Tabriz: “Kitto was then acting as tutor to the two boys, who were lively and intelligent, and I was struck with the singularity of his position, as the deaf and almost dumb teacher of boys who were very far from being deaf or dumb” (p. 295). McNeill wished to converse with Kitto but could not follow his speech. “With the assistance of his pupils, however, who spoke with great rapidity on their fingers, and appeared to have no difficulty in understanding what he said, I succeeded in engaging him in such conversation as could be carried on” (p. 296). McNeill soon understood that Kitto was well read, and keen to learn about the Middle Eastern cultures. [Apparently, Kitto had first taught the boys Sign Language, and was then able to instruct them effectively on anything else.]

Brief notes on marketable handicraft activities established for blind youths at Alexandria c.1900.

The continuation is noted, from antiquity to the present, of a healing ministry within the Coptic Church, wherein people with various physical and mental impairments are healed by the prayers and actions of holy persons; or by their faith in the efficacy of the saint's relics to evoke the power of God; or via some other theological construction (pp. 97-110). One example of a healing shrine is titled “The Lourdes in the Desert: Saint Menas” (pp. 151-154), situated about 50 miles southwest of Alexandria. (See GODRON, above).


On pp. 35-36, Ménard noted the procedure called “Centonisation”, in which a piece of revered text is to be sung to a specified musical formula, adapted as required, by the blind Coptic cantor. “C'est ainsi, également, que l'on observe souvent le fait d'un chantre aveugle écoutant, incise par incise, un texte qui lui est lu, et le répétant aussitôt, mais cette fois 'habillé' d'une mélodie qui n'est, en somme, que l'application de telle ou telle formule mélodique utilisable pour bien des circonstances.” (See BORSAI, above; HICKMANN, under 'Antiquity').


Reflections from an educated man who lost his sight when 21 years old. The problems of adjusting to his new situation were greatly exacerbated by typical responses of sighted people towards 'the blind'.

Brief article differentiating some views and practices commonly found in Muslim-majority countries, actually based on indigenous traditional beliefs, from the orthodox Islamic teaching based on a few verses in the Qur'an and sayings of the prophet Muhammad.

MONGÉRI L (1877) Project de règlement concernant le régime des asiles d'aliénés dans l'empire Ottoman. Gazette Médicale d'Orient 21: 3-9.


Includes blind people using Moon's embossed literature (mainly portions of the Bible) during the 1860s and 1870s in Egypt (pp.46-48); Beirut, Syria (pp.48-53, 194-208); and Turkey (pp. 53-54).


MUHAMMAD HASAN KHAN [Hakim ud Dowleh] (1908) Grossesse, accouchement et puériculture en Perse. [Thesis].


Various beliefs relating e.g. children's character and future to food taken during pregnancy, ill effects from djinns etc.


At Riadh (Riyadh), then a town of modest size, Palgrave had to treat a man “who had a species of facial palsy” as well as being “nearly deaf, besides having an impediment in his speech.” He decided that “an external application of strychnine with appropriate treatment would produce a good effect”, though aware that a “most cautious” administration of this drug was advisable. However, “after four or five days the individual entirely recovered the use of his tongue, and was able to take part in conversation. The patient's hearing was also very nearly restored ... This produced a great effect in the town.”


See note under SCHMIDT-KÖNIG (below).

Review of mental health services. (Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

Review of mental health services. (Annotated in RACY's bibliography, q.v.)

Describes briefly some common gestures or signals indicating e.g. silence, come here, yes,
no, astonishment and disbelief, stop, go out; mentions also some women's codes.

PHILLOTT DC (1914) Colloquial English-Persian Dictionary in the Roman Character, containing all English words in common use with their meanings in modern Persian with numerous examples. Calcutta. See common disability words, e.g. blind, blockhead, cripple, deaf (including hard of hearing), dumb (gung, lal), lame (lang), simpleton; also gesture, sign (including beck, signal; and secret mark).

PHILLOTT DC & AZOO RF (1906) Some Arab folk tales from Hadramaut. J. Asiatic Society Bengal (n.s.) II (9) 399-439. pp. 406-407, an Indian with dislocated hip goes to Arabia for a painful but (reportedly) effective Bedouin manoeuvre: his legs are secured around a bull which has first been fed salty food but starved of water three days. It is then allowed to take water, hugely expanding its sides.


RACY, John C (1970) Psychiatry in the Arab East. Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, Supplement No. 211. Copenhagen: Munksgaard. 171 pp. The first part (pp. 9-33) of this useful work introduces Rac'y's sources in the 1960s and the geographical, historical and cultural parameters of the Arab world, together with remarks on child rearing and personality, based on his long experience as a psychiatrist in the region. The second (pp. 35-79) describes psychiatric institutions, practice, teaching and research, and contributions from folklore, tradition and culture. Part three (pp. 81-171) is a long, critically annotated bibliography, with much material in Arabic and “a large number of references in obscure journals, reports of limited circulation, and even some in manuscript” (p. 83), mostly from the 1920s to mid-1960s. [Citations of 23 relevant items have been copied to the present bibliography; but further materials and Rac'y's detailed annotations should be consulted in his admirable publication.]


RIGLER, Lorenz (1852) *Die Türkei und deren Bewohnern in ihren naturhistorischen, physiologischen und pathologischen Verhältnissen vom Standpunkte Constantinopels*. Vienna.


pp. 237-239, notes on the 'Deaf and Dumb' in Turkey, reporting a small institution at Merzifoun, “in which there are sixteen children, including Armenians, Greeks, and Turks. It was opened in 1912 as an adjunct of the American mission, and was founded by Miss G. Philadelphus, who had previously received two years' training as a teacher of the deaf in America.” (Cf GREENE, above). A photograph shows two deaf attendants at the Sublime Porte, apparently signing to one another. From earlier: “M. Pekmezian, an intelligent deaf-mute, spent a week, some years since, in Derby, studying the methods of teaching there, and said that scores of wealthy families of Turkey paid very heavy fees to the institutions for the deaf in Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, for the education of their children” (p. 238). A small photograph of M. Pekmezian also appears on p. 238.


In July 1852, Rolland visited the Grand Vizier's residence in the Baltaliman valley, north of Istanbul, and noted some amusing incidents with the Vizier's deaf mute servant, communicating in sign language with the Vizier and with fellow servants (pp. 149, 155-56, 158, 161, 164).

RUSSELL, Alex. (1756) *The Natural History of Aleppo, and parts adjacent*. London. viii + 266 pp. + Index (10 pp.)

Detailed account (pp. 190-223) of climate, diseases and treatments from 1742-1747 and 1752-1753; see also pp. 97-100 (local physicians), pp. 136-144 (diseases). Ophthalmia was common. Leprosy was rare.


Largely biomedical report. Practically nothing on Middle Eastern situation.


Mostly medical (German, English, French, Hebrew). Includes some ethnographic material and many articles on leprosy.


In 1908 Pastor Christoffel (1876-1955) founded the Christoffel Blindenmission, which much later would become a major force for education and training of blind people worldwide. He opened a small institution for blind people in 1909 at Malatya, Turkish Kurdistan, and other centres at Tabriz (1925) and Isfahan. The book tells of Christoffel's labours to start, develop and maintain the care, education and handicraft training of blind children and adults, both Muslims and Christians, with the help of a few close relatives and colleagues, amidst many difficulties and war situations. A few deaf or physically disabled children were included (p. 46). Brailled material was prepared in Persian (pp. 49-50), possibly in the later 1920s (dates are mostly absent). Some local people with names and places are located, for example the little Kurdish blind boy Rasul Oemeroghlu, at Cermi in 1914 (pp. 22-26); the Armenian teacher of the blind, Haiganush (p. 31); in 1932, blind Essad Ullah, who became a Christian (55), and a little deaf boy called Gulam Ali, of wild behaviour (56); the deaf boy Rahim, son of a local merchant (81); Mehmed, “one of our Moslem blind young men”, very conscientious in saying the prayers and keeping the fast of Ramadan (81); a blind boy, Ali Gule, who quickly learnt to find his way around the house and garden (84-85).


Some details of mission schools for blind or physically disabled children begun in 1860s at Beirut and Damascus, and 1872 at Tyre. (pp. 23, 43, 49-51) Moon script was first used, then Braille, and handicraft training was given.


The SULTAN and the Hamidié Hospital for Children at Constantinople. *British Medical J.* i (April 16) 1904, pp. 900-901.

On the Children's Hospital founded and maintained by the reclusive Sultan Abdul Hamid II: “a visitor to the wards might almost imagine himself to be in a German hospital.”


In the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq, Thesiger noticed that “The tribesmen were especially kind to the afflicted, and among them a major physical disability was perhaps less of a handicap than in some parts of the world. Also in Dibin was a boy who, though born blind, moved freely about in the village and even went out a short way by himself in a canoe to collect hashish. During the years I was in the Marshes I met several deaf-and-dumb boys and men, who were happy and friendly, and who fitted usefully into the life of the community.” (p. 168) Thesiger gave details of people who had switched gender identity, which was also tolerated without much bother (pp. 169-170).

TICHO A (1926) Ursachen der Erblindung in Palestina. *Klinische Monatsblätter für*
Augenheilkunde 77: 700-704.
Detailed data from a private ophthalmic hospital, with some international comparisons.


Hauran is Druze territory in the south west of Syria.


TRISTRAM HB (1872) The Daughters of Syria. London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday. Reports and comments on schools for disabled children and adults, pp. 268-75. Mr Mott prepared reading materials in Moon type during 1867, and opened a school for blind people at Beirut in 1868. After advocacy by the blind people, a further class began for physically disabled beggars, some of whom were wheeled to school by a deaf man using a low cart. A blind Druse named Ghandoor was employed in printing religious materials in embossed Moon script, which was used also at a similar school at Damascus.

UCER M (1998) Turkish: [The insane in Turkish oral tradition.] Yeni Tip Tarihi
[The United Arab Republic was a brief experiment by Egypt, Syria and Yemen, between 1958 and 1961, to merge their government under this title.]

Published March 1971. Also available on ERIC ED060238. English-language abstract, providing outline of legal status and extent of special education in the United Arab Republic.

UNITED NATIONS. *Third United Nations Social Welfare Seminar for Arab States in the Middle-East, Damascus, 8-20 December 1952, 1953.*

At the time, the sole institution in the region where formal care was given to 'idiots', among the 'insane'. (See also SANDWITH, above; WARNOCK, below).

Part I, Popular Medical Practice (pp. 217-220, refs pp. 227-28) has Valsik as first author. (See HUSSIEN, above, for parts II and III).


VAUME, Dr. [may be Dr. D'Vaume] (1886) La lèpre dans le Kurdistan persan. *Bulletin de la société d'anthropologie de Lyon* 5: 158-162.

Chapter 17 reports on the diseases of Egypt. The remarkable frequency of eye disease and loss of vision appear in pp. 218-219.


In 1898, Waldmeier founded the first hospital near Beirut “for the mentally afflicted sufferers of Syria and Palestine” (pp. 263-315). Traditional treatment of people with mental illnesses is described (pp. 271-280).

Account of the work of the Industrial School for Blind Men and Boys at Beirut, founded in 1868 by Mr Mentor Mott of the British Syrian Mission.


WALKER J (1934) Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. Being the relevant parts of the Tibb al-Rukka or Old Wives' Medicine of `Abd al-Rahman Isma`il. London: Luzac. 128 pp. Includes some attempted treatments of various disabling illnesses.

WALLIN, Geo A (1855) Narrative of a journey from Cairo to Jerusalem, via Mount Sinai, translated and communicated by Dr. Shaw. J. Royal Geographical Society of London 25: 260-290. On pp. 278-280, Professor Wallin wrote in detail of meeting two deaf Beduin, in the vicinity of Aqaba. The first used some incoherent speech and signs; the second communicated only by signs. Initially, Wallin's Beduin guide interpreted an alarming story of skirmishing and escape, from the first man. Wallin thought the tale lacked credibility, so the guide “undertook to question the deaf man more closely by signs and sounds” (p. 279). A different story now emerged, focusing on a lost camel. The second deaf man, an elderly fisherman, later returned from a journey, still without the camel, and met Wallin and the others. The missing camel became a cause of heated debate between the two deaf men. The first deaf man accompanied Wallin and his guide around the bay of Aqaba, and retrieved his camel. The events give early examples of detailed (but sometimes inaccurate) communication, in the Middle East, between a hearing man and two deaf men, using various means at their disposal.

WARNOCK, John (1924) Twenty-eight years' lunacy experience in Egypt (1895-1923). J. Mental Science 70: 233-61; 380-410; 579-612. Lengthy experience of the British superintendent of the Abbasiya Lunatic Asylum is described, with details of its slow progress into the 20th century. Arriving in 1895 to find a remote, chaotic and dangerous place of confinement, Warnock, lacking any Arabic, doubted whether he could do anything. Yet by stages, and with endless battles for funding, the Abbasiya was cleaned up, rebuilt, extended and modernised to something recognisable as a mental hospital, with patients' records, daily physical exercise, occupational therapy, the cessation of medieval methods of treatment (and of sewage disposal), and attention to patients' general health and safety. The changes and progress of other mental health services is described, as are the formidable legal, financial and administrative obstacles placed in the way of all progress. Some remarks are included about official and community attitudes, pp. 395-396, 585, 598-599. Some non-Egyptian patients were also present.

WESTERMARCK, Edward (1926) Ritual and Belief in Morocco. 2 volumes. London: MacMillan. 1286 pp. While being outside the normal bounds of the 'Middle East', this work has much material and reference to comparable beliefs and practices across the Islamic world. It contains extensive lists and descriptions of beliefs, rituals, and expected outcomes, observed in 21 visits, totaling seven years in Morocco, between 1898 and 1926. Westermarck planned to write on the origin and development of moral ideas, and “thought it might be useful for me to acquire some first-hand knowledge of some forms of culture which differ from our own” (i.e. from British and
Chapters on Islamic or otherwise religious concepts such as blessedness, *baraka* (pp. I: 35-261), spirits, *jnun* (I: 262-413), the Evil Eye (I: 414-478), witchcraft, homeopathy and transference of evil (I: 570-608), magical influences, omens and dreams (II: 1-57), practices connected with the Muslim and solar calendars (II: 58-207) and with birth, childhood and death (II: 370-560), are sprinkled with physical and mental impairments and disabilities, suffered or possibly cured. The index (II: 561-629) has entries, e.g. under blind(ness), buhali, deafness, ear, epileptic, evil eye, fingers (six on hand), idiots, lameness, left-handed, Jnun, lepers and leprosy, lunatics, madness, mejdub, mejnun, miracles, night-blindness, one-eyed, stupidity, etc. Westermarck's approach had some naive and some 'orientalist' features, but he recorded a mass of material seen or heard in a period when memories of tradition reached back many centuries.


WILSON E (1856) On the nature and treatment of leprosy, ancient and modern, including the Jewish leprosy, leprosy of the middle ages, leprosy of the Crusades, leprosy of the Arabians, and elephantiasis of the Greeks; with a description of the form under which leprosy exists in Britain at the present day. *Lancet* i: 32; 60; 145; 226; 309; 339; 450; 506.


On a journey from Tabriz toward Teheran, the Rev. Wilson described some of the pitiable leprosy sufferers begging at the roadside. Some also lived in a village of about 500 lepers, who provided by themselves by farming. The village was said to have been instituted in the mid-19th century, to reduce contact between people with leprosy and the rest of the population (pp. 140-141). Beggars pretending to have disabilities were also to be found (214).


Detailed differential description and observations of leprosy, with six case histories treated in the 1860s at Beirut or Aleppo. Description of two “leper-houses of Damascus”, and analysis of details of 49 inmates. Remarks on the social situation of lepers.


pp. 140-195 reviews 'Human Diseases', 'Nutrition', 'Health & Medical Services', 'Population & Social Studies', across the Middle East, with more attention to Egypt, northern Sudan, Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, based on extensive tours, official data, and circulation of drafts.


Initial published report of activities of Dr Kerns at Beirut, supported by the Syrian Medical Aid Association. (See KASS, above).

First 12 month report of 4,298 patients treated. Eye patients (1,083, 25%) were most prominent. Kerns also treated 429 cases of rheumatism, 47 of deafness, 18 of paralysis, 5 of hare-lip and 4 of club foot.


Lengthy, detailed reports from the places indicated.


A key figure in this study is Shaykh Umar ʿAbd al-Rahman (pp. 391-393). As a blind young boy (b. 1938) he followed the traditional path of learning the Qur'an by heart. He studied theology at Al-Azhar in the early 1960s, while President Nasser was attempting fundamental reforms in that institution. In 1970 ʿAbd al-Rahman openly criticised Nasser, for which he spent time in jail. He pursued his studies, and held teaching posts in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. By the 1980s he had become the spiritual guide to some radical Islamist groups, and was suspected of active militancy, but apparently his blindness prevented him from being accepted as a leader of armed struggle. In the 1990s he was convicted, in the USA, of conspiracy in acts of terrorism. [Whatever may have been his part in acts of violence, ʿAbd al-Rahman seems to have belonged to the tradition of formidable blind Arab teachers of Islam who, in different eras, were sharply critical of the State and of decadent religious practices.]


Brief note on history of polio back to 1933.
