

90 Theodor Cook & Son, Cairo, Egypt.




16 / ii / 05.

My dear Goldfisher,

I have delayed a while answering your letter because I wished to try to find the information you desired about the size of the Arabic speaking population. But my efforts have been fruitless; no one will attempt even a rough estimate; all say that the question is impossible. You know how weak Orientals are in all matters of numbers. I had a good example only the other day. I asked a young Maronite, a translator at the War Office, how many had walked in the funeral procession of Mustafa Kamil. He said ten to fifteen thousand. Now I saw the procession myself and there certainly were not more than 2000, if even that.

I was much distressed to hear that your health had continued to be so bad and that the American lectures still troubled you. I would gladly have undertaken the translation if that had been in any way

The Journal of Goldfisher has an attempt at an estimate of the population of the world.

study it regularly and give myself to it. I realize the
↓ cannot get with the sense meant through their
colloquial and also I need it really to understand the
popular story literature in which I am much interested.
You know I am going to find Galland's US
of the 1001 Nights. So I have been able to find very
little time at the library and have had to put much
time to Willmore's Narrative of Egyptian habits and to
wondering about Cairo. I find the passions of the
masses very responsive to my evident interest in
questions. They evidently think it quite wonderful for
an unbeliever to know the things I do.  But I do not think you quite realize how hard it is
to have most intercourse with the natives. When you
were here they received you as one of their own and
you stayed at the Lyhar. All that is impossible
for me and I cannot even live in the native quarters
as my wife is with me. So I need much more
time and patience, and in the end I fear I shall

carry away a very imperfect power of speaking
Arabic. But learn to speak Arabic I must do it at
necessary part of my preparation as a scholar.

possible, but my situation has put
it out of the question. I trust most
sincerely that you will soon get
them off your hands. When do
you go to America?

In my own walk here I am
doing all I can to get in touch
with the ideas of the people. I
have met your old friend Sultan
Effendi Muhammad a good deal
but what I have got from him
has been mostly negative. He &
his like are nervously anxious
to put a good face on Islam &
make it out to be a very
rationalistic religion. I think
this religious position must be much
that of Ibn Khablatun. But the
anthropologist, Yakuza, has helped
me a great deal and also Prof.
Aburimjon of the Law School.
Thus I have been able to see a
desire dhikra - they are strictly
private now - and also to take
part in the mourning for al-
Fusaym. I even walked in that
procession down the Mesky.

I fear I have given and must
give more time to the colloquial
than you approve. I cannot
pick up a language; I must

in May probably we shall go north
into Valstine, taking in Jerusalem,
Damascus, Beyrout and their
neighbourhoods. Then Constantinople
Budapest, the Rhine and probably
Oxford for the Congress of the history
of Belgium. I must be in Hartford
by the beginning of October.

I am very sorry that your
letter to me sent to Glasgow, must
have been lost. It never reached
me; it would have meant much
to me to have had it at that time.
Now I am getting over the whole
thing.

Mrs Macdonald writes me to say
that she is looking forward to
seeing you again and Mr Goldy
really in Budapest. I need hardly
say how heartily I join her in
this. If I can do anything for
you in Cairo, please let me
know.

Our very best greetings to you
both. And I am always

Yours most sincerely,
Duncan B. Macdonald.
