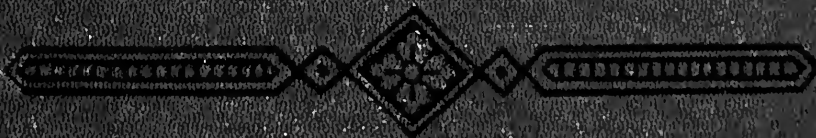


ALGERIA AS IT IS



GASKELL

78699

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ALGERIA

'No man,' saith Lipsius in an epistle to Phil. Lanotius, a noble friend of his, now ready to make a voyage, 'can be such a stock or stone, whom that pleasant speculation of countries, cities, towns, rivers will not affect'

BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*

ALGERIA AS IT IS

BY

GEORGE GASKELL

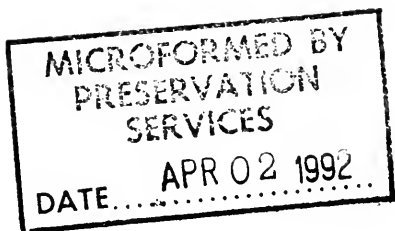
AUTHOR OF

'DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES OF ITALIAN TOWNS' 'THE TRAITOR, A DRAMA'

'POLITICAL MOVEMENT IN AUSTRIA IN 1848 AND 1849'

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN'

ETC.



LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1875

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279
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TO

MY BELOVED WIFE

THE INSEPARABLE COMPANION OF MY JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE
WHO IS ASSOCIATED WITH ALL THAT MAKES ITS PATH HAPPY

I OFFER THESE RECOLLECTIONS OF ONE OF ITS
PLEASANTEST EPISODES

P R E F A C E.



THE AUTHOR of the following pages has often asked himself, how it happens that narratives of travels are in general so dry and dull, whilst travelling itself is so delightful and instructive.

To visit foreign lands is not all that is necessary to enable the tourist to draw a pen-and-ink picture of the scenery, and to describe the manners and customs of the inhabitants. Taste and feeling must be at the base of all.

If some knowledge is required to form a correct opinion of art, as it is displayed in the architecture and adornments of a town, how much more refined and delicate is the sentiment which teaches us to appreciate the beauties of nature, where we must *feel* what we see. Few are gifted with this faculty of perception. It is however possible to possess all these requirements, and yet write a tedious book ; for it is not enough to receive impressions ourselves, we must be able to communicate them agreeably to others, taste and judgment accom-

panying the pen in a pleasing and animated style of writing.

A description ought to place the scene so clearly before the mind's eye that the reader may, as it were, see it. A book which does this may be compared to a mirror that gives back faithfully all that is reflected in it. One which does not is like a bad glass whose misty surface either shows objects indistinctly or distorts them to the sight. Many authors who have distinguished themselves in other branches of literature have failed in this.

In the chapters on the excursions, the writer has deviated from the custom of travellers who relate all that happens to them and all they do, although such personalities interest nobody but themselves. He has endeavoured to take a broad view of what comes under the notice of the reader—omitting trifling details unless they serve to illustrate the subject—in the hope of conveying a better idea of the whole.

How far he has succeeded in representing *Algeria as it is*, must be left to the public to determine ; but if feeling pleasure in describing what he has seen, writing *con amore*, and an artist's enthusiasm for the beautiful land in which he has passed many happy days, enter into the elements of success, the author modestly hopes that this attempt to impart to narrative some of the charms of travelling will not be unwelcome to the reader.

HISTORICAL NOTICE.¹



To investigate the origin of nations and races is an interesting subject of research.

If, at a recent period when under the dominion of the Arabs and Turks, little light was thrown on the modern history of Algeria, in far deeper obscurity is involved all that relates to the primitive inhabitants of Northern Africa. Sallust the historian, who was pro-consul or governor of the Roman possessions there, nearly two thousand years ago, tells us that they were the Gætulians and Lybians—afterwards called Berbers—a rude and simple people who were without laws and had no particular form of government.

After the death of Hercules in Spain, his army, which was composed of many nationalities, disorganised by the death of their chief, and by the disputes of the numerous rival pretenders who aspired to the command, soon dispersed. Amongst them were many Medes and Persians who crossed over to Africa, and settled on the beautiful coast opposite to Spain and Italy. Here, by frequent intermarriages with the Gætulians, the races became amalgamated. As these tribes often changed one part of the country for another, in search of pasturage

for their flocks, they called themselves Numidians, that is nomades, or wandering shepherds.

Later on, many Phenicians established themselves on the African shores, till B.C. 860, Dido, sister of the king of Tyre, founded Carthage, which continued to prosper in the midst of constant contention with the people whose territory she had invaded. Jarbas, king of the Gætulians and of the heterogeneous hordes who had been brought together, vainly endeavoured to unite his fortunes to those of the tyrannical princess who had built Carthage.

At this time was laid the foundation of the future grandeur of the republic. Almost the whole of Northern Africa was subjected to its sway; the Berbers alone, shut up in their mountain fastnesses, preserved their independence. The Carthaginians dedicated themselves particularly to commercial pursuits, and by degrees became masters of the sea. The possession of Sicily, however, brought them into collision with the Romans, and gave rise to the obstinate struggles known in history as the Punic Wars. At length, after long and sanguinary conflicts, Carthage fell, B.C. 45, under the invincible arms of Rome. Once masters of the land, including some of the adjoining parts of Numidia, the Romans organised a system of government which should secure to them the country they had conquered. Having first seized on all the strategical points, they proceeded to form settlements or colonies, so as to introduce a Roman population on the soil of Africa. The Berbers had often taken part in the wars between the Carthaginians and the Romans, fighting sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, according to the advantages offered by either party. After the destruction of Carthage several of their chiefs reigned with the title of king, under the protectorate of the Romans. The most celebrated of

these was Jugurtha, who, conjointly with his cousins Hiempsal and Adherbal, inherited the kingdom from his uncle Micipsa. Jugurtha caused Hiempsal to be assassinated, and robbed Adherbal of his sceptre. The Romans having interfered in the dispute, ordered that Numidia should be equally divided between the two surviving princes. The commissioners sent to define these limits, being bribed by Jugurtha, assigned the coast to him, and gave the interior which was less fertile to young Adherbal. Jugurtha, still dissatisfied with this partition, where the advantage was altogether on his side, attacked and took Cirta—Constantine—and having made the unfortunate Adherbal prisoner, he put him to a cruel death.

The Romans flew to revenge the son of their former ally, and, by a stratagem, succeeded in capturing Jugurtha, whose obstinate resistance had prolonged the war. Bocchus, his father-in-law, king of Mauritania, who had betrayed him, received Numidia as a recompense for his treachery. The Eastern part was divided between Hiempsal II. and Mandrestal, two Numidian princes, and the Roman republic; and, as this last portion included the coast—for it extended to the former possessions of Carthage—it formed a rich annexation to the proconsulate province of Africa. Juba I., who succeeded his father Hiempsal, unfortunately took arms against Cæsar, and, being vanquished, he put an end to his life. The kingdom was then united to the Roman empire B.C. 47. Sallust was at this time sent to Africa as proconsul, but the historian did not distinguish himself in the administration of justice. Shortly afterwards young Juba II., who on the death of his father had been taken to Rome, now married to Selene, daughter of Cleopatra and Antony, returned to reign over his native country, where the family of Bocchus was extinct, and Massessylia was

given to him under the name of Cæsarian Mauritania, reaching from the river Moulouïa to the river Ampsaga (Oued-el-Kebir, or Roumel, east of Djidjelly), to which was added Gætulia, the less fertile region of the high table-lands in the interior of the country. This new monarch abandoned Siga, which till then had been the capital of Western Mauritania, and established his throne at Jol, founded by the Carthaginians, and gave to his new capital the name of Julia Cæsarea, the remains of which are still to be seen. During a prosperous reign of forty-five years this king occupied himself chiefly with the arts and sciences, and so greatly was he esteemed for the encouragement he gave to their advancement that the Athenians erected statues to him, and his own subjects raised altars to his memory. Ptolemy, his son, did not follow in the glorious steps of his father. He, however, powerfully contributed to crush the rebellion of Tacfarinas, a Moorish adventurer who excited the whole of Numidia to revolt. In concert with the Proconsul Dolabella, Ptolemy vanquished and slew this rebel. But the magnificence displayed by the king having irritated the vanity of Caligula, that tyrant caused him to be assassinated, and Cæsarian Mauritania was again annexed to the Roman empire. This period witnessed the greatest developement of art on the soil of Africa. The prosperity of the country had attained its height; now were built those monuments whose remains twelve centuries of barbarous devastation were not able to efface. Tiberius issued a decree which forbade Africa being chosen as a place of exile, 'for,' said the Emperor, 'those who leave Rome in Italy find a second Rome in Africa.' The extravagance of some private people was so great that Nero, becoming jealous of this luxury, ordered their property to be confiscated. The tyranny of the Romans, the crimes com-

mitted by their delegates, and the ravages of insurgents wasted the resources of the land ; but even these evils could not wrest the fertile plains of Numidia and Mauritania from the eternal city, which drew a great part of its subsistence from them. The tribes who inhabited the highlands of the interior imagining—in consequence of the conspiracies excited by the partisans of Vitellius—that the moment for declaring their independence had arrived, flew to arms, but being subdued by Maximus Galerius, heir presumptive to the Imperial throne, a new subdivision of their territory followed.

Christianity might have softened the manners of the fierce inhabitants of Northern Africa, but the attempt to spread it only brought out the energy of their character, and made more evident the tenacity with which they held to their own religion. The persecutions against the Christians were conducted with great barbarity for more than a century, during which many martyrs proved their constancy by dying for the cause of truth.

Firmus, one of the great chiefs of the Moors, having called together the barbarous tribes of the mountainous region which was afterwards known by the name of the province of Titteri, raised the standard of revolt against the governor Romanus, whose exactions had driven the people to despair. Firmus organised a powerful force and seized upon Julia Cæsarea, which he destroyed ; but soon after, being captured by Theodose, the Moorish chieftain strangled himself, and his body was sent to Sétif as a proof of his death. His brother Gildon, who had remained faithful to the Romans, was invested by them with the title of governor of the African provinces. He oppressed his own countrymen and, after a reign of unheard-of cruelty and debauchery, wishing to assert his independence, perished in the attempt ; for, being pursued, he at last found no other refuge but suicide to

escape from the army of Honorius. The Roman governors at this time diminished the power of Rome wherever they represented it. Count Boniface, a man of merit in some respects, who succeeded Gildon, in order to revenge himself for loss of favour at court betrayed his country, and through his instrumentality the Vandals of Spain, led by Genseric, invaded the three Mauritaniae which had been promised them, establishing their headquarters at Bougie, and after driving out Boniface, who had introduced them to Africa, they destroyed Carthage and the principal cities. Genseric who, having sacked Rome, had returned laden with the spoils of Italy, was now the real emperor of the West; his navy was formidable, but piracy seems to have been the only avocation for which his barbarous subjects had inclination or capacity, and their descendants had never anything so much at heart as to promote it; for, following up what had its origin at this period, they became the corsairs who committed the piratical depredations when Algeria was afterwards under the dominion of the Turks. Gelimer, A.D. 534, having occupied the throne of his uncle Hilderic, the ally of Justinian Emperor of Constantinople, the latter sent Belisarius into Africa at the head of 35,000 men, who subdued the country and took Gelimer prisoner. Thus fell the empire of the Vandals.

The Numidians, led by Jabbas, a chief of the tribes of Mount Aurès, now attacked the Grecian Romans. They seconded the revolt of Stoza, a Greek: and, after his defeat, welcomed him to their mountain-retreats, where they were pursued but never conquered. The Exarchs, who governed the provinces for the Byzantine Emperor, were obliged to be constantly at war with the Berbers, Moors, and Numidians, who had resolved to drive out of the land all the inhabitants who were of European descent or had European customs. The

Greek soldiers who had revolted, finding fierce auxiliaries in the native chiefs, devastation was for a long time the only tactics of both parties, and the population was so greatly diminished that Numidia became almost a desert.

The successive incursions of the hordes of the Atlas had confined the Byzantine Greeks to the narrow strip of sea-coast when the Arab Mussulmans in several expeditions invaded the North of Africa ; but not without many battles and dreadful carnage did the Greek generals and the Moors allow the Mahometans to establish themselves in the country—called by these last invaders Moghreb, or land of the West—for they everywhere met with a formidable resistance. Queen Kaïna, a Berber princess who reigned on Mount Aurès A.D. 709, devastated the whole coast, razed all buildings to the ground, and destroyed the stately trees. According to some authorities, these palaces and trees formed an uninterrupted continuation of magnificent edifices and groves from Tripoli to Tangiers. Her object in causing this extensive ruin was to disgust the Asiatics with the prospect of having nothing but a waste to possess. These attempts however failed, when opposed to the constancy which is inspired by a spirit of proselytism ; and, after dreadful massacres, Tarick, lieutenant of Mousa, dictated the law of the Coran as far as Ceuta A.D 711, which Count Julian still held for the Goths of Spain. This Christian chief, to revenge himself for an injury done to his daughter by King Roderic, made a treaty with the Arabs, and introduced them into Spain. Multitudes of Moors followed their conquerors in this expedition, and the name of Moors was given to the Mussulmans who from that time occupied the provinces they had subjected.

After this, the Caliphs appointed commandants to

rule in their African territory. Ibrahim—one of the family of the Aghlabides—being named governor of Kaïrwan by Haroun-el-Raschid, usurped the sceptre. From this dynasty succeeded eleven monarchs, who reigned during 108 years. These kings took Sicily, and were distinguished for their splendour and their crimes. Finally they were dethroned by the Fatimites, who, coming invested with all the magnificence of the East, now threw splendour over the West. When the Fatimite Caliph, Moëz-el-Din, conquered Egypt, he fixed the seat of government there, and chose a Berber chief to rule over his African possessions. After a time the descendants of this delegate declared themselves independent, and established a dynasty which lasted 200 years, but it was greatly shaken towards the close of its existence by Roger king of Sicily.

The Almohadan Emir of Marocco—carried on the stream of an invasion which flowed from West to East, now came to join these small states to his vast empire. The Almohades—the second branch of the dynasty of the Marocco Caliphs—whose capital was Tlemcen A.D. 1148, possessed in their turn the whole of central Moghreb; but their transitory power was soon replaced by that of the Ziantes A.D. 1270, and by the Hafsytes, who were now appointed to command. These rulers often threw off their allegiance, and succeeded or failed in attempting to make themselves masters of Algiers as fortune decided for or against them; but, even when successful, they were not always able to keep what they had acquired. Thus the whole country became a scene of incessant war, which devastated the land and caused great anarchy.

It does not appear that much of historical interest occurred at this turbulent period, when intestine strife and rebellion prevailed; in fact, the state of the country

during these centuries, and under the subsequent piratical masters of the soil, was not favourable to literature, and the little that has been recorded is of doubtful authenticity. We shall therefore mention only some episodes which belong rather to the history of contemporary nations than to that of the Arabs. A.D. 1270, Louis IX., wishing to liberate and protect the Christians, sent an expedition against Tunis; but, owing to the breaking out of the pest, and the death of the king, the attempt ended in failure. Some years after this Peter III., king of Aragon, despatched a fleet to ravage the coast of Northern Africa, and a few years later his army took Collo, which they abandoned shortly afterwards. In 1309 the Castilians and the Aragonese effected a landing at Ceuta, and captured the town. The Aragonese again appeared on the littoral in 1432, when they sacked Djerba, but did not remain there. In 1481 they obtained possession of Melila which they kept. At the close of the fifteenth century the Moors, driven out of Spain, settled on some points of the African coast, and gave themselves up to piracy. The Spaniards who were disquieted by them, led by Diego de Cordova, made themselves masters of Mers el-Kebir; and, under the conduct of Cardinal Ximenes, they seized upon Oran 1509. In the year following they took Bougie, and possessed themselves of a fortified rock in front of Algiers. The Algerines, menaced by this fort, called to their aid Baba-Aroudj—Barbarossa. This famous corsair, who had just made an unsuccessful attack on Bougie, but whom the capture of Djidjelly consoled for the check sustained, hastened to the assistance of a town he greatly coveted on account of its favourable position. He lost no time in proclaiming himself king; and he maintained his position in spite of the Spaniards, who attacked the city in 1515. An intestine revolt

having called him to Tlemcen, where the Marquis of Comares, governor of Oran, came to surround him, he was obliged to flee with a small number of his followers. Escaping, he was pursued and slain whilst defending himself to the last.

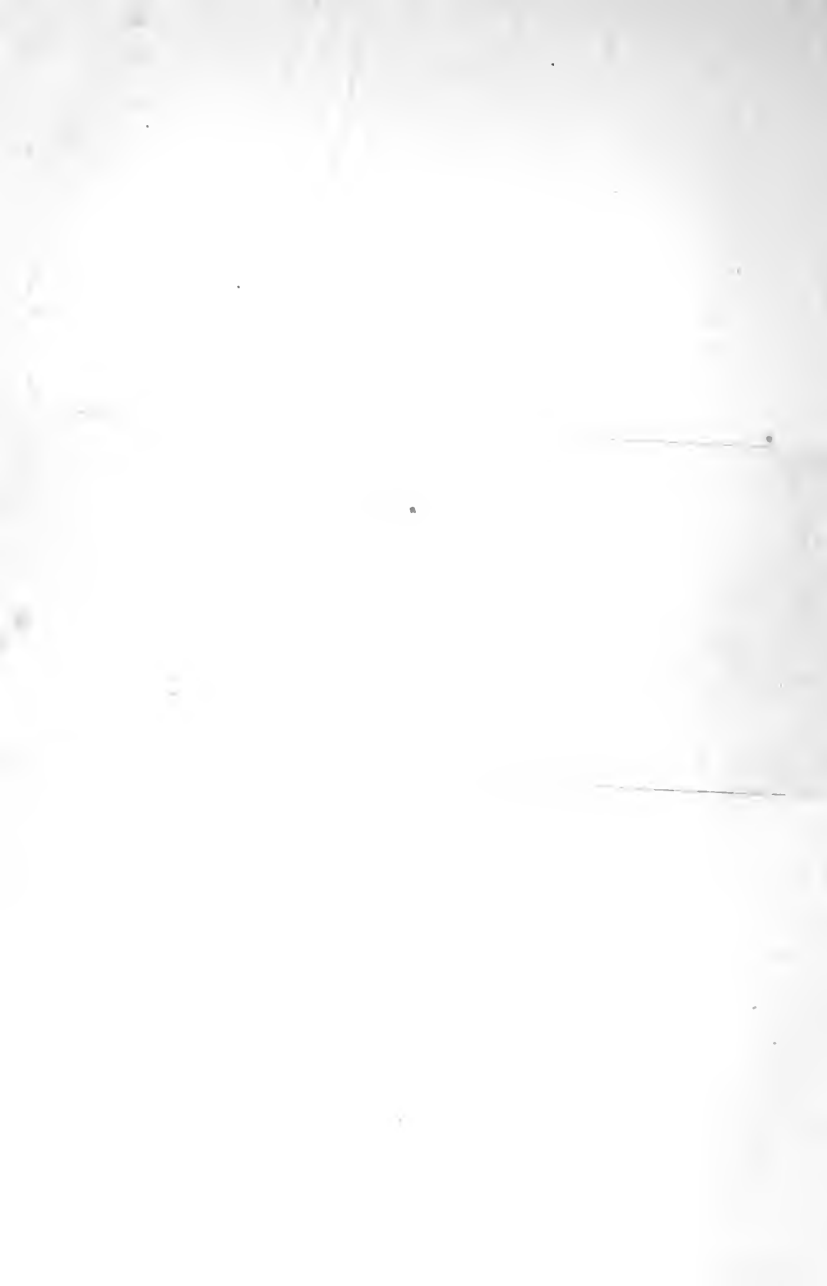
Kaïr-el-Din-Barbarossa, on the death of his brother becoming known, was recognised as King of Algiers 1517, where he was so fortunate as to witness in the same year the failure of the enterprise of Hugo de Moncade and to take from Martin de Vargas the fortress of Peñon which defended the port. This success did not prevent him from doing homage to Selim, Emperor of Constantinople, who however put the eunuch Hassan in his place as Pacha of Algiers. Kaïr-el-Din therefore did not witness the sanguinary defeat of Charles V., October 23, 1551, who landed an army of 24,000 men near the town. After this catastrophe the insolence of the Algerine pirates knew no bounds. Salah Raïs, Hassan Barbarossa, Dragut, and others boasted of being the terror of Christendom, whilst their conquests in Africa continued to progress. Tlemcen, to which they were often called by the dissensions of the Zyantes, Bougie the impregnable, Oran which had been lost, retaken by the Spaniards and again abandoned, had all yielded to their despotism. The imperial city of Fez itself had twice been obliged to submit to Cherifs appointed by them. The kings of Tougourt and of Ouargla had been beaten, and the haughty pachas of the Regency were now able to divide their empire into eighteen provinces. But a new and less complicated administrative partition was soon after established, and the three Beyliks of Oran, Constantine, and Titteri were formed in order that all the smaller states might be included in them. Whilst these events were taking place the seditions of the Koulouglis had been suppressed. In appointing governors to her African

possessions the Ottoman Porte always showed great vacillation, and in many instances her representative had no sooner arrived than he was recalled, again sent back to his post, or another was put in his place. These delegates did not rule alone, for a person chosen by the Janissaries, who received the title of Bey, was invested with joint authority, which became a constant source of rivalry and dispute ; for the beys, being supported by the soldiers who had elected them, always endeavoured to obtain the whole power. Some went so far as to send back to Constantinople the pachas who had come as governors to Algiers, whilst many were assassinated. On the death of Bey Carabdy 1732, no fewer than six aspirants to sovereignty were put to death within the next twenty-four hours ; and, not long before Algeria passed into other hands, four beys were murdered between the years 1808 and 1815. In course of time the beys who, each in his turn, had followed the first who had been chosen by the Janissaries, succeeded in supplanting the representatives sent from Constantinople, and they eventually obtained from the Sultan the formal recognition of their authority when it had been acquired by election. It was under one of these princes—called Deys by the Europeans—named Hassan Pacha, that the quarrel with the French Government began, a quarrel which led to the conquest of the country in 1830.

Our description of *Algeria as it is* will bear testimony to the prosperity of these beautiful provinces since they have belonged to France.

Errata

- Page 50, line 20, *for* marriages *read* marriage
,, 54, ,, 26, *after* art there was meant to be a note of admiration (!)
,, 83, ,, 27, *for* castenet *read* castanet
,, 85, ,, 8, ,, began *read* begun
,, 94, ,, 28, *after* waistcoat there was intended to be a note of admiration (!)
,, 124, ,, 4, *for* decends *read* descends
,, 253, ,, 6 from foot, the *has been omitted before* littoral
,, 325, *add* Ben, son



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ALGERIA AS IT IS.

CHAPTER I.

*THE QUEEN OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.*²

I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand.—BYRON.

And wand'ring oft the crowded streets along,
The native gestures of the passing throng
Attentive mark.—DU FRESNOY.

AFRICA is usually associated with sandy deserts, hot siroccos, and barren hills; it brings to the mind a land peopled by uncivilised savages with black skins and ugly features.

However wild and uninviting the interior of this great continent may be, the Algerian coast of the Mediterranean is as beautiful as the opposite shores of Italy, with a richer and more wonderful vegetation.

When the traveller from Europe, who has passed two nights at sea, steps on deck in the morning, he sees before him the magnificent city of Algiers, its white Moorish buildings, minarets, mosques, cupolas, and terrace-roofed

² For Notes see end of the volume.

houses, which rise in one unbroken mass up the heights, standing in dazzling brilliancy against the blue sky of Africa.

Unlike Genoa and Naples, which, built round their charming bays, seem to retire from the water, the African Nereid steps boldly into the sea.

The coast and hills, covered with the deep green of Southern vegetation, form a dark background, before which the shining city advances in full relief of light and shade—a picture which, once seen, can never be effaced from the mind.

So must the pirate town have looked years ago, gay and smiling, when Christian slaves pined in captivity, and deeds of horror were done within its walls ; the same blue waves then bore the unfortunate bark to a treacherous shore which now carry it in safety to a friendly port.

On landing in Algiers we are not disappointed with the appearance of the place, as we are in many Eastern cities, which look beautiful only from the deck of the steamer. The lower or French quarter is in the style of a European capital. Facing the sea the esplanade or boulevard, with its houses on lofty arcades, has an imposing effect. At the time of the Regency this part of Algiers was built on, and about, rocks down to the water, where the chebeks of Barbarossa, the terror of Christian nations, lay at anchor. In its original state it would have pleased an artist better than the modern harbour with its classical structures ; for civilisation is often more practical than it is picturesque.

In the European town we find all the comforts we enjoy at home : coaches, omnibuses, cafés, shops, and

restaurants; whilst in the Arab quarter we admire Moorish architecture, and the varied costumes of Arabs, Moors, Turks and other natives; features which are seen together in the new streets and squares. It is this union of civilised life, side by side with all that we associate with the East, that is so striking in Algiers, and the effect is the greater from the contrast being so sudden.

As variety is pleasing, the recently arrived tourist is delighted with what he sees, and well he does to enjoy the novelty of the scene whilst the impression lasts, for it wears off when the spectacle becomes familiar to him. At first it is quite a show to see women in adjars—a kind of kerchief which covers all the face except the eyes—move about like white dominoes, bazaars filled with curious articles and Eastern nick-nacks; Algerian, Tunis, and Marocco wares, all brightness and colour. Moorish cafés, in which people sit cross-legged, gravely smoking long pipes; Moors on platforms, working gold and silver thread on coloured cloth; Arabs playing chess in the streets; and barbers' shops, where the head is shaved oftener than the chin. These and many other strange sights have a particular attraction for the new-comer, who is never tired of looking at the picture.

The names over the shops and bazaars call to mind the stories of our childhood—Ben Ali, Hadl Ahmed, Ben Turki, and the like. Then those of the streets—Bab-el-Oued, Bab-Azoun, and the rest. The places in the neighbourhood have also retained their original appellations—Mustapha, Agha, Bouzareah, and so on. The omnibuses—very numerous in Algiers—which take us to them, have also strange, if not always Arab, names; *le Lion du Désert*, *la Panthère*, *le Sanglier*, are followed

by the Sylphide, la belle Anglaise, belle Africaine, and other pretty girls and savage animals.

A walk, or rather a climb, into the quarter inhabited by the native population—a terra incognita, where all is new and strange—must be interesting to the tourist who comes for the first time to the land of the Arabs.

The streets, so like those in the East, have Egyptian names, such as the Rue de Thèbes, Nil, Sarrasin, Sphinx, &c. We shall walk up some of them, and observe a few of the most prominent characteristics. Many are ascended by steps, very steep and apparently interminable ; others are paved. As we proceed we go through vaulted passages with houses above them, built across the road. In like manner single arches, old and moss-grown, often bridge it over, framing a vista of irregular Moorish buildings.

In the architecture of the old town each story projects beyond that below it, the part which advances being sustained by inclined props resting against the wall, so that the upper stories almost touch those opposite to them. Thus, if we did not catch glimpses of blue sky overhead, we might fancy ourselves walking in an arched way.

The houses, instead of windows, having only little grated peep-holes to the front, would seem blank and lifeless were it not for the busy scene in the street.

In apartments looking on courts behind, the women—who must neither see nor be seen—pass their listless existence, amusing themselves as well as they can. These enclosures are often elegant seclusions, built round with arcades on slender pillars, and have a fountain and flowers in the middle. But what bird would care

to live in a gilded cage! We shall have other opportunities of noticing the privacy of Arab families.

We see some Moorish palaces with ogive windows, in the style the Venetians have imitated; but of these there are not many.

The thoroughfares being nearly closed above, as we have described, the sun penetrates to the pavement only in the small squares, and into some of the streets which are a little wider than the rest; but when it strikes the upper part of the walls, and plays above the superstructures of the quaint old buildings, the light thus strongly contrasted with the almost gloomy shade below causes fine effects which the artist seizes for his picture. And what pictures there are to paint in this Arab quarter! How strange and original are the houses which stand in picturesque groups, with a dome or minaret rising behind! What studies of character in the natives who cluster round the fountains with their copper jugs! What bits of architecture are hidden in dark nooks and blind alleys! What curious shops we see, and still more curious are the things sold in them! What peeps into Arab interiors, through the little arched vestibules with oval doors! What fine forms are seated on the steps, framed like pictures which indeed they make! Sometimes a draped figure stands by in an attitude which, for grace and dignity, might serve as a model for a statue of Junius Brutus. Some sit near what they sell; whilst others, stretched on the ground, enjoy the *dolce far niente* as only a half-naked Arab can do.

The people are in the attire of another race. Black men in white turbans; Jews in the *chéchia* and grey blue jackets with silver buttons, embroidered vest, red sash,

and full trowsers ; Jewesses in green silk ; Moors in their showy costume, turbaned Turks, and sun-burnt Arabs ; their dark faces and black beards set off by the white burnous. Women in white meet us at every step ; and what soft eyes look over the adjar which leaves so much to the imagination ! In this Arab quarter we scarcely see a man or woman in the Frank dress ; ample robes and graceful drapery supply their place, and contrast with our tight-fitting clothes.

For the uninitiated, the narrow streets of the old Arab town are so mysterious and complicated that the warning of the poet, '*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi, che 'ntrate,*' might be inscribed at the entrance of the labyrinth. It is almost impossible for the stranger not to lose himself. Having advanced a few steps, he sees before him three or four openings into small lanes offered for his choice ; he enters one, but soon finds that it is again crossed like the meshes of a net. Unable to ask in Arabic, after some hesitation he tries to thread his way, which leads him into a blind alley, where he comes upon an Arab family eating their couscoussou *al fresco*. Going back and following the intricacies of the little streets, he is attracted by some beautiful architecture, slight columns and a jet d'eau ; observing which he ventures into a court, where a bevy of secluded ladies scamper off on seeing the 'evil eye' of the Roumi. Again pursuing his tortuous course, he enters a mosque where, ignorant of the customs of the country, he violates the sanctity of the temple by placing his infidel foot on the sacred mat.

In the old town the shops are very small, so diminutive indeed that the vender, sitting or standing in the

middle of what he has to sell, is within reach of every article. The fruit and flower dealers in particular do business in a very confined space. They are almost all *Mzabis*; a race which claims descent from Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. They may be recognised by their *gandoura*—a kind of blouse or frock made of woollen stuff, spotted and striped with red, yellow, and blue, a many-coloured dress which gives the wearers the appearance of harlequins. These men sit or stand in a little square only large enough to allow them to turn themselves. Around and above, up to the ceiling—which is about the man's own height when he stands—are innumerable shelves and tiny drawers for groceries, &c., all of which he can reach without moving from his place even if he were able to do so. Thus barricaded by fruits and flowers—protected by *Pomona* and *Flora*—he waits patiently for the purchasers whom Fate may send him. In the morning he enters his store, like *Jack-in-a-box*, by a trap door, on which he stands during the day. When he wishes to retire for the night he opens it, and disappears from the scene like harlequin in a pantomime.

The shops and trades have many peculiarities which distinguish them from those in the European town; they are of course too many to be described separately. Amongst the most singular are the cook-shops, where all kinds of unsavoury messes which can tempt the passers-by are fried or stewed in kitchens open to the street. Next come the *cafés Maures*; where instead of reading newspapers and troubling themselves about politics, the natives drink coffee, smoke their *chiboucks*, play at *damah*, listen to story-tellers, music and singing, chat or muse, each according to his temperament or humour.

There are no bazaars in the Arab quarter, like those gay exhibitions which are so attractive in the modern part of Algiers, but in their stead we find old curiosity shops, where every imaginable and unimagined article that can be picked up between Tunis and Marocco is to be seen: yatagans; mekahlas; Kabyle ornaments worn by women; dresses; haïks; round Arab looking-glasses; fans; baskets worked with coloured cloth; Biskra straw hats, of the form and height of a sugar-loaf, with a brim as wide as a parasol; skins of wild animals; ostrich eggs, and the like.

To these succeed the shoe-makers, who sit on matted floors, tailor fashion, stitching away at red and yellow Marocco boots, shoes, and slippers. They appear to work hard, but, like all Moors, they prefer short hours. Fortunately the modern manœuvre of strikes is unknown here, or the Arabs would have to go about shoeless, and Moorish ladies might want a finish to their charms. We next see half-a-dozen Arabs embroidering that indispensable part of the national costume the burnous. These also sit on the floor, but not cross-legged, for the great toe of one outstretched foot is brought into requisition to hold the thread, which they always twist round it to facilitate the operation.

It is unnecessary to say more of the shops, although there is much to describe if we were to mention all that is original and singular about them. They become fewer as we ascend, till at last we find ourselves walking between white Moorish buildings, whose little barred loopholes give them the appearance of prisons, which in fact they are.

Arrived at the most elevated point of the Arab

quarter, we come to the Casbah, a famous old fortress which crowns the heights. Looking down upon the ancient town, the flat roofs of the houses seem to form steps descending to the sea. From the Casbah the view of the coast and over the surrounding country is truly magnificent.

CHAPTER II.

COUNTRY ABOUT ALGIERS.

Chi vuol veder quantunque può Natura,
E'l Ciel tra noi, venga a mirar.—PETRARCA.

Ferma un istante il frettoloso passo :
E per po' d'ora l'avide pupille
Su quest' Ocean di portentosi oggetti
Che domini coll' occhio manda intorno
A far di ciò che miri amabil preda.—ALGAROTI.

IF the town is interesting, the country is yet more attractive.

We have said that Algiers from the sea is unique and striking, the heights behind the city forming an imposing background. To extend the picture, it may be added, that, the hills declining westward to a promontory on the coast³ and eastward to Cape Matifou, the panorama, when seen from the deck of an approaching vessel, appears to form a natural crescent—the symbol of the religion of the people.

To the South, in shadowy distance, rise the Atlas mountains, the snow-capped Djurjura crowning the range. Extending to the foot of the hills, which stand before the principal chain, the fertile plain of the Metidja stretches east and west, the highlands of the Sahel being inter-

posed between this open country and the sea. Below these heights is the city of Algiers, the varied and charming scenery of the Sahel making the environs as remarkable for their beauty as the capital is distinguished for its picturesque situation. The general appearance of the country is marked by undulating ground, gentle slopes, bold declivities, abrupt precipices, verdant hills and valleys, rivers, waterfalls, deep ravines, and all the accessories which Nature brings together when she composes her own picture.

The most remarkable feature is the magnificent and novel vegetation. Trees and plants which are exotic with us surprise and delight the eye; the tall and graceful palm, the slender bamboo, the banana, orange, lemon, eucaliptus, ficus, cypress, and the olive, grow in the wild profusion of a tropical region.

The cactus and aloes, which enclose fields and border the highroads, abound on every side. The former, whose trunk is covered with bark, looks like a sturdy tree. The edges of its large dish-shaped leaves are studded with a fruit called Barbary figs, the tops of which are covered by a yellow flower, following instead of preceding the fruit, as it usually does. Of the aloes, which in Algeria attains a prodigious size, a fact not generally known may be mentioned. When it has arrived at maturity, which in Italy, under favourable circumstances, requires twenty to thirty years, and about half that time in Africa, a strong stalk shoots up from the midst of its sword-like leaves in a single summer to the height of six or seven yards, after which it flowers and dies—the fate of many a fair girl, whose life closes just as she bursts into womanhood!

What strikes those who come to Algiers for the first time is the dark green vegetation. This '*vert sombre*' is conspicuous throughout the three provinces, even in winter. The flower-grown grass—which is spread like a variegated carpet over the landscape wherever the invading growth of trees allows patches of ground to be seen—is almost as deep in tint as the foliage of a Northern wood.

The environs of Algiers are indeed beautiful ; 'None can paint like Nature,' nor can a description do justice to her colouring.

Characteristic of these rural scenes are the delightful roads which turn and wind about them, making walks and drives enchanting. There are many of the kind in Europe—in England especially—but the trim hedges of our pretty country lanes convey no idea of the same hawthorn, honeysuckle, wild roses, shrubs, and creepers left to nature, and growing to a size peculiar to the vegetation of Africa. Here the hedges, flourishing under the voluptuous sun of the South, rise high overhead ; out of them grow aromatic lentiscs, and large trees ; ivy, honeysuckle, blue-bells, capucines, and similar flowery climbers entwining themselves amongst their boughs, fall in wreaths over the way, or, reaching from twig to twig, hang in festoons along it ; thus mingling with the leaves of the trees, they seem to produce blue, red, or yellow flowers—the colours of the aspiring parasites. Nothing is more beautiful than the effect produced by the caprices of these erratic flatterers, which rejoice the eye and waft perfume across our path. So thick and high are these hedges, that parts of the road before us are often covered like a leafy bower, which changes to

open side-rows as we advance. The pleasure of a walk is increased by birds singing and warbling in the foliage above us; and not out of harmony are the Kabyles and Arabs we occasionally meet, perched high on camels, or riding lady-fashion on mules and asses—but looking very unlike ladies!

Diverging from the highways are cross-country lanes, like those in our own counties at home—only, as we have already remarked, the charms of the Algerian bye-paths, untouched by the hand of man, are of a wilder kind.

Of a yet more primitive nature are the *chemins Arabes*; these are now so overgrown with brambles and every species of strange vegetation, that it is sometimes scarcely possible to penetrate the underwood, which like a virgin forest obstructs the way. They were the bridle-roads of the natives, before the French soldiers made those which are equal to any in Europe. When it is remembered that formerly not one of them existed, their great extent throughout Algeria, the difficulties which in an almost untrodden land—where the ground was unequal, mountainous, and rocky—had to be overcome, we cannot too much admire the work of the intelligent and laborious military of France; and it is pleasing to see men, whose ostensible business is to kill and destroy, turn to what is useful and beneficial to society. But we have loitered too long on these attractive roads and paths, which intersect the country we have further to describe.

Sometimes it presents the bold character of Swiss scenery, from which a sudden turn opens upon a quiet Devonshire-like landscape, but the stamp of African

vegetation is upon all. In every direction picturesque ruins, standing on conspicuous sites, villas with gardens, and Arab houses are dotted about, the white Moorish architecture being set off by groups of dark-leaved orange, lemon, and cypress trees, from the midst of which it rises bright and shining in the sun.

Overhanging the brow of a hill or precipice we see ridges of shelving red rocks, and on them clumps of olives and cedars, prominent features which add to the general effect. Red and green are in fact often opposed in an Algerian landscape, and the artist who understands contrast and harmony will know how to appreciate their frequent occurrence. We may remark that, the colours being here more decided, it is less difficult to represent them on canvas. This is also the case in Italy ; but there the country is disfigured by high stone walls, which are everywhere built round private property, making it impossible to obtain an extensive view. In Algeria all is open, as it is in England, fields and gardens being separated by hedges, as they are with us.

The heights in the background of Algiers rising amphitheatrically, the sea is almost always in sight as we ascend ; at one time it is seen open and unimpeded by any object, at another glimpses of blue water are caught through the foliage of the trees, like a streak of ultramarine in a picture by one of the old masters. These sea views, opening out as we rise, are amongst the many attractions we owe to the diversified ground of the Sahel. We do not know any town where there are so many interesting places, and where the roads leading to them are so delightful, as those near the Algerian capital.

One of the number is Bouzareah, the highest place above the city. The scene varies as we advance, like the changes which succeed each other in a cosmorama, for every turn opens to new and extensive prospects over land and water. Below lies the rich and undulating country we have been describing, its shady walks and sombre groves marked on the landscape by dark green lines and broad patches. Looking sea-ward, to the right we see Cape Matifou, which points the horn of the crescent-shaped coast. On this promontory are the ruins of the ancient city of Rusciana. From Bouzareah the view extends over the tongue of land which stretches out into the sea, as it appears on a map, the shores and cliffs beyond—towards Dellys—losing themselves in the distance. In the opposite direction the coast-line is not so well seen, owing to some intervening hills. Inland across the beautiful plain of the Metidja, we see Blidah at the foot of the lower range of the Atlas mountains.

Charming as are the environs of Algiers, the colonists seldom visit places not on the highroad. Neither do we in our cross-country rambles ever meet an Englishman in these pleasant lanes and bye-roads, so like those in England, and yet so African.

We cannot help noticing the fact that comparatively few persons appreciate and find great pleasure in the charms of nature. We have remarked that peasants born amidst grand mountain scenery, and artists who copy and study it, love and delight in its attractions more than people in general. Natural or acquired, a taste which enables us to enjoy God's beautiful creation is a pure and unfailing source of happiness, one which elevates the mind and addresses itself to the heart ; no

pleasure is more innocent, none so durable. It has often occurred to us that ministers of religion, who never, or very rarely, allude to the subject, would do well—instead of expatiating on particular points of faith or dogma—sometimes to exhort their hearers to contemplate the works of the Almighty as they are displayed in the grandeur and loveliness of nature. Thus called upon to observe, they might in time learn to admire what they at first looked at with indifference, and the result would often be more edifying than a homily from the pulpit.

As Mustapha is the pleasant place of residence of almost all the English families who pass the winter in Algiers, we shall say a few words about it. Mustapha is an eminence which rises from a bay of the same name, half an hour's ride from the capital. The views of the sea, the coast, and the range of the Atlas mountains are very fine, but Algiers itself is not seen.

On this delectable spot, which seems to have been duly appreciated at the time of the Algerian Regency, is an assemblage of villas with gardens; many are of Moorish architecture—original or imitated—and a few are in the European style, according to the fancy of the builder or owner. The proprietors, in erecting new houses, have shown a proper regard to British taste and the unsociable habits of our countrymen, for Mustapha is the only place in the neighbourhood of the capital where high white walls, glaring in the sun, pen up the enclosure as completely as the most exclusive son of Albion can desire.

Notwithstanding its delightful climate, there is a large class of English whom this beautiful country will

not suit. There are here few resources for those who are used to pass their winters in Italian towns.

In Algiers there is no first-class theatre, no grand opera, no good concerts, no public lectures, no picture-galleries, as there are in Florence—no clubs, no libraries, newspapers, or magazines—no English society for those who desire a more extensive circle of acquaintance than they can find at Mustapha, and who speak no language besides their own well enough to enjoy the company of foreigners, who do not care about shooting, and have no more taste for the beauties of nature than they have for Algerian cigars. Such, in short, as have few resources in themselves will find none in Algeria.

The finest villa here is a Moorish palace, now the residence of the Governor, as it was formerly the country-house of the Dey of Algiers—the irritable prince who, in a moment of ungovernable passion, struck the French Consul—a fatal blow, for it cost the independence of the country, and put an end to the soft delights of Hussein Dey in his charming home at Mustapha.

We shall conclude this chapter on the environs of Algiers, by taking the reader to the *Jardin d'acclimatation*, a short drive from town. In this extensive plantation numerous specimens of the Flora and other marvellous productions of the far South have been brought together. Avenues of the date-palm flourish near alleys of plantanes; long rows of bamboos, arching overhead, form a natural gallery, so deep in shade as almost to exclude the light of day; bananas, with yellow fruit hanging from their branches, cotton, date, and coffee trees, sugar-canes, and many other species of trees and plants from India and America, flower and

thrive in this enclosure.⁴ In a word, all that is under glass, and is kept alive by fire in the North, prospers in this delightful garden through the natural heat of the sun. Ostriches strut about the grounds; whilst the swallows, which left Europe before us, again fly over our heads. Sensible bird! can man in a holiday season do better than follow in the flight where instinct guides thee? A week of the weather we now enjoy in Algiers would bring out many of the trees and flowers in England as nature revives them in spring, whilst a single day of Northern cold would blight what is blooming about us. A few hours make all the difference. It is said that there is not in the world so varied and so complete a collection of the heterogeneous production of the vegetable kingdom as that of which we are speaking.

The temperature of Algeria being a medium between that of the opposite shores of Europe and the more Southern latitudes, from whence proceed most of the plants and trees which are here brought together, they grow and flourish on this neutral ground.

CHAPTER III.

*THE CIVILISATION OF ALGERIA COMPARED WITH THE
STATE OF TUNIS AND MAROCCO.*

Look here upon this picture, and on this.—SHAKESPEARE.

IN Algeria the beauty of the country, where the soil never tires of yielding its fruits, and the delightful climate, are equally enjoyable. No other place unites these privileges of the East with the benefits of civilisation ; where we meet with one, the other is absent.

In every town and village throughout these provinces we find hotels and small inns. The roads, on which diligences run in every direction, are second to none in the world. A railway is open from Algiers to Oran, and another is in course of construction between the capital and Constantine. Telegraphs and post-offices are almost everywhere.

The coast indentures, which served for roadsteads in former days, have been converted into safe harbours. Communication by steam and sailing vessels is established to all parts of the globe ; and legitimate commerce, whose advantages are shared alike by the natives and the colonists, prospers in a port from which the only expeditions undertaken were at one time those of law-

less pirates, and the chief trade that of buying and selling slaves. Above all, where barbarism and oppression reigned over the land, humanity and justice now govern in their stead. In a word, the advancement and intelligence of the nineteenth century have been introduced into this part of uncivilised Africa.

The state of Algeria in the days of the Regency may be inferred from the present condition of Tunis and Marocco, the adjoining countries to the east and west. A French writer,⁵ speaking of Tunis 'as *it is*,' says: 'The streets having no names, the houses no numbers, and all parts of the town forming labyrinths, with ten times as many blind alleys as there are thoroughfares, great practice is necessary not to lose oneself in the inextricable network, unless we are within a few yards of the quarter most frequented by Europeans. If this is the case by day, it may be conjectured how difficult it is to find our way at night in the unlighted streets. A traveller on first arriving must provide himself with a guide, when he wishes to penetrate into the remote arteries of the city.'

To this description of the town we may add that, whatever attractions the country possesses, they cannot be seen without personal risk, for it is not safe to venture alone outside the gates; and for an excursion to a distance an escort is absolutely necessary, to protect the traveller from brigands, who, when in sufficient numbers, assault and plunder even the caravans.

The civilisation of our Western neighbours may be imagined from the following specimen. The circumstance was related in the 'Gibraltar Guardian,' and the account was afterwards copied into the Spanish news-

papers, from which we translate it back into its original English, not having met with the journal in which it first appeared.

‘To the south of the city of Marocco, the tribe of the Beni-Mussa had always refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Emperors. The late Sultan Sidi Mohamed, shortly before his death, succeeded in subduing them, and caused forty-eight of the prisoners, belonging to the vanquished tribe, to be decapitated, sending their heads as a trophy of victory to Rabat, accompanied by an imperative order that they should be salted, and then exposed during three days on the gates of the city, after which they were to be sent to Fez.

‘The horrible present arrived at Rabat on the 26th of October, 1872, and, in obedience to the command of his majesty, the Jewish butchers were desired to perform the operation. As it was their Sabbath, they refused to obey the mandate. This was followed by threats, and soon after the Pacha of Rabat, Sidi Abdelan el Susi, ordered his soldiers to enter the houses of the Jews, and drag them out by force, when they were beaten with sticks, and obliged to salt the heads, which were then exposed to public view.’

Affairs have not improved under the new sultan, whose ideas of clemency had been so highly extolled before he came to the throne. The following—which is not bad for a beginning—shows that Muly-Hassan, like his predecessor, has a predilection for severed heads and for the number eight.

When the insurrection of the Chaouïa broke out, some dignitaries of state suggested to his majesty, that before appealing to the sword, it would be merciful and

prudent to try to induce the revolted tribe to lay down their arms.

‘What,’ exclaimed the sovereign in a rage, ‘am I not Sultan?—If I am, I must be obeyed, and I shall punish rebels *whoever they may be*’—a hint to the Pachas for their officious meddling.

Having been successful in suppressing the revolt, the first thing he did after his victory was to order eighty-eight heads to be struck off.

This barbarous custom of beheading prisoners taken in battle continues to distinguish the opening of the Emperor’s reign.

Amongst the more intelligent of the natives of Algeria some, who remember the wretchedness and degradation from which civilisation has relieved them, mark the contrast which the despotism in the adjacent states presents to the government of this colony, and rejoice in the happiness they now enjoy.

Si Mohammed el Aïd, a personage of distinction, Superior of the Order of Tedjine, returning recently from a pilgrimage to Mecca, chose the overland route, that he might have an opportunity of observing the condition of the countries through which he should travel. When he arrived in his native Algeria, he was met by a party of his countrymen who came to welcome his return. These he addressed in an impressive speech, the first words of which were: ‘Under the rule of the Mussulmans I have seen but injustice, oppression, and ignorance; here only, amongst the French, do I find security for life and equal justice for everyone.’

This tribute to European enlightenment and humanity is the more remarkable as coming from a Marabout,

Mahometan priests being in general—as we shall have occasion to observe—the most intolerant and fanatical of all the indigenous population.

Professor Blackie in his Imperial Gazetteer remarks ‘that before the conquest in 1830 little more was known of Algeria than of the rest of Africa.’ Semi-civilised nations, or their rulers, seem to be exclusive as a matter of policy. Whatever be the reason, the want of intercourse with the rest of the world has had the effect of drawing the veil of prejudice over the eyes of the Algerians so effectually that even now, after nearly half a century of good government, and with the results of civilisation before them, there are not many who are willing to acknowledge that any improvement has taken place.

Under the Regency, when property was confiscated to satisfy the rapacity of the Pachas, when their myrmidons—each in his degree—tyrannised over the whole population; in those days of venality and persecution, badly as the people were treated whose religion was the same as that of the Turks, their condition was a happy one when compared with that of the Jews. Having spoken of these good old times with many of the natives, and having heard nothing but the song of praise, we one day asked a Jew, who was old enough to remember the kicks, stripes, and humiliations he had gone through, what *he* thought of his emancipation; but even the aged Israelite’s national prejudice was stronger than his gratitude, for he told us that he found no difference between the past and present of Algeria.

CHAPTER IV.

NATIVE INHABITANTS.

L'Arabe nomade est campé, dans une vaste plaine,
 Autour de lui rien ne trouble le silence :
 Sa maison est une pièce d'étoffe tendue.—*Vers d'un Marabout.*

As man in his primeval dower array'd
 The image of his glorious Sire display'd,
 Even so, by Vestal Nature guarded, here
 The traces of primeval man appear ;
 The native dignity no forms debase,
 The eye sublime, and surly lion grace.—WORDSWORTH.

IN a work on Algeria some account of the native population will not be out of place.

Arabs and Kabyles inhabiting the same country, their dress not being very different, their religion almost the same, and the disparity in their language and social life not being at first remarked by strangers, they may be supposed, by those who do not know their history, and who have not had opportunities of observing their manners and customs, to be one and the same people. They are, however, two distinct races, having in reality little in common with each other ; although both follow the religion of Mahomet, they differ considerably on many points of faith.

Arabs who live in towns are called by the natives 'men of houses,' to distinguish them from the 'men of tents,' dwellers on the Tell and in the Sahara. These are shepherds who, during winter, when rain causes grass to spring up on those sandy plains, spread their canvas where this temporary vegetation feeds their flocks and herds. In summer they return to the Tell, where the high table-lands supply excellent pasturage.

Some, who are less migratory, live in huts, or in small villages spread over many parts of the country, dedicating themselves to agriculture. These tribes are dissimilar only so far as their respective modes of life influence their characters.

Of the indigenous population residing in cities, it may be remarked that the mixture of many elements—Arabs, Turks, Couloughis or Arab-Turks, and the Moors properly so called—has resulted in the loss of individuality and energy of character. This degeneracy, as far as it relates to the Arabs, is, however, confined to those on the littoral.

The Kabyles alone have undergone no change. Settled at the foot of the Atlas during a period of 2,500 years, these rude Lybians, as the Romans called them, have preserved the manly bearing of a people never enervated by bondage or civilisation. Sallust described them as 'a race of men who possess a robust and healthy constitution, which can resist great fatigue, men who succumb only to age, or when they perish under the teeth of wild animals.' Another writer of the same period, speaking of the Kabyles, says: 'They sleep on the bare ground, and at all seasons wear a simple dress, a kind of tunic made of coarse woollen stuff, in

which they envelop themselves ;' this description has held good to the present day.

The Arabs of the desert called Bedouins, and those who inhabit the high table-lands of the Tell, are models of nomadic life. The Kabyle, on the contrary, loves above all his domestic hearth, his hut, and his village. An indefatigable labourer, he ploughs, sows, and gathers. In winter he turns joiner, blacksmith &c., and he—the ingenious artisan—it is, who makes the yatagans, guns, vases, trays, and many other articles which are sold in the bazaars as Kabyle work. Summer and winter, in bad weather and in good, his life is a scene of unremitting toil.

These Kabyles, or Berbers, are a warlike and valiant people, who were not conquered by the Romans, or by any succeeding invaders before the French, nor did the tribes of the Djurjura submit to them till twenty-three years after the conquest of the rest of Algeria. The Kabyles have retained many customs which they derived from the early Christians: their Sunday is the same day as ours, whereas Friday is the Sabbath of the Arabs and Moors. The Kabyles take only one wife, and treat her well, although Mahomet allows the husband four legitimate wives at the same time.

Women married to Arabs of the lower class, those on the littoral in particular, are made to do all the hard work, whilst the husband passes his time as idly as he possibly can; these, and other differences in religion and morals, are distinctions held to by the Kabyles when Islamism was introduced into the country, and they have retained them ever since. There appears, in fact, to be only one point of identity between the

Kabyles and the Arabs—the reciprocal hatred they bear to each other, and the detestation in which they both hold Christians and Jews. For the Moors, whom the Kabyles regard as an effeminate and indolent race, further degenerated by their town occupations, they have a great contempt. These Kabyles are to be seen in considerable numbers in the streets and squares of Algiers, dressed in a simple burnous, often more remarkable for the graceful folds of its drapery than for its cleanliness. Many of them are good-looking men, with fine countenances of the Berber type. The Arabs are also tall sinewy fellows, with handsome intelligent faces, brown complexions, expressive dark eyes, aquiline noses, regular teeth, strong pointed beards, and black hair, when it is allowed to grow.

The personal courage of the Kabyles and the Arabs of the Tell and the Sahara is a fact never doubted even by those who attribute to them more bad qualities than they really possess. Monsieur Béchade, in his '*Chasse en Algérie*,' remarks that 'this energetic side of the North African character comes out in full relief when the Arabs stand face to face with ferocious wild beasts, to whom nature has given formidable arms and a savage disposition. The panther, whose claws are keener than the point of a dagger, the lion, whose powerful jaw crushes a man's head in a second, have no terrors for them. If discipline and civilisation have subjugated the Bedouins, they have maintained their supremacy over the terrible denizens of the forest.' More might be said of the Arabs, but we wish to avoid too much detail.

Very different in character and pursuits are the Moors, called '*Hadars*'—men of houses—by the other natives.

They are a mixed race, being descendants of the various people who at different periods have invaded or emigrated to these shores from the remotest times.

In 711, when the Arabs, after vanquishing this part of Africa, crossed over to Spain, many of the inhabitants accompanied their conquerors to that country, and were henceforth called Moors—from Mauritania—by the Europeans; driven out of Spain at the close of the fifteenth century, they returned to Africa.

The Moors were the pirates whose exploits, depredations, and presumption led at last to the invasion and occupation of the country. In the present day the shops and bazaars, in which we see so many tempting articles from Algiers, Tunis, and Marocco, are kept principally by them. Here, surrounded by their gay wares, they sit apparently indifferent as to customers, to whom however they are obsequious when it is their interest to be so, but they can be unpolite and even insolent on occasions, and are almost always insincere. The Moors of Algiers are more strikingly dressed than any other class, and may be called Oriental dandies.

Personally, mixture of many elements has affected their physical appearance, for they have not the marked and manly features which distinguish the Kabyles and Arabs; their eyes want that keen fiery look, the nose—which in the other two is aquiline and well defined—is in them as varied in shape as it is amongst Europeans; above all, the peculiar and expressive lips are not remarkable in these degenerate sons of Ismael, who have neither the personal pride nor dignity of character so observable in the Berber and the Arab. Their countenance is usually pale, the face oval, and often fat; on

the whole, with some exceptions, they have rather an effeminate look: possessing no distinguishing type of feature, the Moors might be taken for Europeans if, instead of the most showy costume in Algeria, they were dressed in our colourless clothes.⁶

CHAPTER V.

NATIVE INHABITANTS—continued.

A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
 For ever flushing round a summer sky ;
 But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest
 Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

THOMSON'S Castle of Indolence.

A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage-bell ;
 But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell !

Childe Harold.

As Algeria was under the dominion of the Turks at the time it was conquered, many of them remained after it became a province of France. These are mostly well-to-do portly gentlemen, who have villas and harems in the neighbourhood of the town. They are remarkably clean in their persons, neat in their dress, and are easily distinguished by their turbans. As we said in the last chapter, the Moors, and we may add the Turks, are more effeminate than the Kabyles, or the Arabs of the Tell and the Sahara.

Greater gain, even with more work, may have reconciled some of the present generation—such as have heard of the golden times of their ancestors only through the recollections of their own parents—to the new state of things; but a *dolce far niente* kind of existence is still an Oriental's conception of happiness. He delights to while away hours, given up to ideal wanderings of fancy. In his Castle of Indolence, placed amidst beautiful scenes of nature, surrounded by flower-gardens, where sweet-scented acacia and laurel perfume the air, and the waving leaves of the graceful palm-tree form a bower to protect him from the sun; or near the sea-shore, where the murmuring billows lull him into a state of semi-beatitude, he would pass days and years, indifferent to all that takes place beyond the limits of his harem and terrestrial paradise. In Algiers before the conquest, rich Turks and indolent Arabs could enjoy such luxuries of the imagination; and, as a man is always happy when he thinks himself so, who can assert that they were not? Character and temperament are the same in all classes; and, as the necessities of life could then be had for very little, the poor also could smoke away time over a cup of coffee which even now costs but one sou.⁷ European enterprise, an increased population, and commercial activity, causing a rise in the price of provisions, these results are regarded by the natives as the greatest evil which the Christians have brought into Algeria. The Arab, like the Spaniard, looks upon idleness as a kind of philosophical indolence. He toils little himself, and is satisfied if the labours of his family produce sufficient for its subsistence. Well he knows that the fertile soil of Algeria returns a hundredfold what has been confided

to its bosom. He prefers his couscoussou, his moka, and his paper cigar, to the comforts which are to be procured by the sweat of his brow. Civilisation, with all its advantages, is to him a disturbing element, out of harmony with Eastern notions of repose and true pleasure. When an Arab speaks of the happy times that are gone for ever, it is with an Oriental apostrophe to the invaders of his country.

‘ Before the French came here—may God curse their race—a fat ox was sold for twelve francs, a cow cost nine francs, a calf was worth only a douro (a five-franc piece) ; for one franc and thirty centimes we could buy a couple of fowls, for ninety centimes a brace of partridges, and a hare for less. A poor man could live for forty-five centimes a day. For one sou and a half he had half a pound of tobacco, and a loaf, like those of the present day, cost one sou. Oranges, which are now so dear, were formerly sold seven or eight for the same money. At present we have to pay half a franc—five pence—for twelve.’ These are not the only things he regrets ; for, in those blissful days, however much he might be oppressed by Deys and Pachas, he was allowed to bully all who were weaker than himself, and could kick a Jew or a Christian without being annoyed by European notions of right and wrong.

We one day got into a discussion with an Arab on the subject : he complained that he was not permitted to take the law into his own hands, but must consent to the slow and unsatisfactory process of having the merits of a case submitted to a less expeditious tribunal than his own strong arm. He was a stout powerful fellow, who personally represented the right of might. We

were in his castle overlooking the sea. 'What!' exclaimed our host indignantly; 'if a Jew—Allah confound their breed—enter my dwelling and insult its master, shall I not pitch the unbelieving dog over my wall, and see the carcass of the infidel, who bearded a Mussulman in his own house, carried away by the waves? Do you call this civilisation!' A romantic story of those halcyon days was told us by a native of Algiers, whose maternal ancestor came from the land of the Christians.

On the heights near the city may still be seen the ruins of a Moorish building, which was formerly the castle or country-house of Barbarossa,⁸ the pirate king of this part of Algeria. At a later period it became the habitation of the not less notorious corsair Dragut. It must have been a fine mansion some centuries back, for the arches and pillars still standing are in the pure style of Arab architecture. Its position, high above the sea, was evidently chosen for the view it commanded. Perched on this lofty rock, like a vulture in its eyry, the pirate chief could see any unfortunate bark which might appear in the distance, if only as a speck on the horizon, or which should venture nearer to the fatal coast. Then was the order given to the chebeks, which lay in the bay below, to spread their white sails and, like birds of prey, swoop down upon the stranger. It is impossible to think of these times without feeling shame and indignation, not only at the recollection of the atrocities committed by a barbarous people, but that the powerful nations of Christian Europe should, during more than three centuries, have submitted to see their countrymen plundered and carried into captivity, and that they should have further degraded themselves by paying

tribute, in the shape of black mail, to exempt their ships from pillage! It is not surprising that the Algerines boasted they were the terror of Europe, nor can we wonder that they felt contempt for us, who allowed the Crescent to triumph over the Cross, till the French obliterated this stain upon the honour of Christendom. These pirates not only boarded ships at sea, but made descents on the shores of Spain and Italy.

On the night of July 6, 1549, after most of the inhabitants of Rapallo—a little town on the coast of the Liguria—had retired to rest, lights were still seen through the open windows of a house facing the sea. A young couple had been married in the morning, and on this festive occasion the family of the bride gave an entertainment, which was the reason of the illumination. About midnight, when music and the dance had made young hearts beat with pleasure, the scene of rejoicing was suddenly invaded by the apparition of a band of armed men dressed in the costume of the East. They were no heroes of a fancy ball, but savage, lawless brigantiners. We shall not attempt to describe what a contrast a single hour may bring forth. A painful scene followed. Like the Roman ravishers when they fell upon the Sabines, the freebooters first seized and bore away the young and the beautiful; but here no distinction of sex was made, both being good for slavery. At the same time other gangs of turbaned pirates entered all the principal houses in the place. The town, taken by a *coup de main*, was sacked and pillaged; five hundred of the inhabitants—the choice of its youth and beauty—were hurried on board the Arab vessels, which lay concealed by a point of land near Porto Fino. Those

who have been at Rapallo must have remarked a picturesque tower built in the sea, but united to the shore by a drawbridge; this little fort was constructed in consequence of the surprise in 1549, to defend Rapallo from a like catastrophe in future. The captives on the occasion we have spoken of were carried to Algiers. The beautiful bride was purchased by an old Turk, who afterwards married her. In the meantime the first husband—who, having been wounded in defending his wife, had been left for dead at Rapallo, and who had, after his recovery, in vain sought to ascertain her fate—was himself made prisoner when attempting to land near Algiers, where he intended to pass for a convert to Islamism, the better to forward his object of trying to discover his lost love; but he was sold as a slave, and remained some years without learning what had become of the lady; till one day a Christian renegade told him all we have related—and more—for he informed him that the Turk had died, leaving a son, whose mother was the Christian girl stolen at Rapallo. Our Italian was eventually ransomed by his family, and reunited to his long-lost wife, with whom he returned to Italy. The Mussulman who related the adventure to us was a descendant of the old Turk and the Ligurian captive. His family heard nothing of his Christian ancestor after she had returned to Rapallo.

We could not help expressing our indignation at the lawless conduct of the piratical crew, and commenting generally on the exploits of the Algerines of that period.

Our Turk looked grave, stroked his beard, and after a pause replied, that he presumed the perceptions of the Mussulman must be more obtuse than those of the

Christian, for he was unable to see the difference between what his forefathers did in Europe or in Algeria, and the morality of Christians, who at that time made a regular traffic in slaves, landing on another part of the coast of this same Africa, separating wives from their husbands, children from their parents, carrying them off and selling them to a servitude, where they were harder worked and worse used than ever were the captives in Algiers.

No answer suggesting itself to the satirical remarks of our turbaned friend, we remained silent.

It is not on principle only that the Arabs do not like civilisation, they have no admiration even for what they see of its beneficial results. Something must be allowed for the stoicism of their disposition, and another cause of their indifference may be that the changes have been introduced by degrees, so that this semi-barbarous people have become familiar with them little by little, without the sudden contrast which excites surprise.

Whatever be the reason, it is certain that the Arabs care little about the improvements in town or country. The splendid roads, where there was not one throughout the land, and of which they now gladly avail themselves, the modern—and to them wonderful—inventions for agriculture, never elicit one word of praise, or a look of astonishment; above all, the elegance of the capital, the railways, omnibuses, carriages, fine shops; in short, all that contributes to make life more agreeable, is looked at from a *nil admirandum* point of view.

The Touaregs—a people of Berber race—inhabiting the country beyond the Sahara, who sometimes come to Algiers to see the marvels of the metropolis, are perhaps the only tribes which have had the taste and sincerity to

show pleasure at what they see, and to extol the advantages European progress has introduced into Algeria. These children of the desert stare with *naïve* wonder at all they see; and as they are too natural to be reserved, they are as demonstrative in their delight as boys at a fair.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARACTER OF THE NATIVE INHABITANTS.

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.

Merchant of Venice.

— Ich bin besser, als mein Ruf.—SCHILLER.

As there are good and bad people everywhere, it is not easy to define the character of a whole nation. We can only mark and describe the features which are most prominent and striking in the disposition of its inhabitants.

If it be difficult to arrive at a fair and unprejudiced estimate of Europeans, even of those who are our neighbours, differing little in manners, customs, and religion, it is scarcely possible to judge impartially of Orientals in a lower state of civilisation, whose habits, mode of life, religion and language, are entirely different from our own.

The grave Kabyle or Arab, enveloped in his burnous, is to the stranger, who first sees him in Algeria, a being whose bearing and classical style of dress call to mind some antique statue he has seen draped in the flowing robes of a former age. The thoughts and impressions

of the Mussulman must always remain an impenetrable mystery to the traveller, but he feels instinctively that they are hostile to the Roumi.

We must not measure such men by our own standard. With foreigners—even with those who have lived long in the country, and know something of their language—the Arabs are more reserved than they are towards each other.

We have remarked the following good and bad qualities in this little civilised people. They are charitable to the poor: it is true that this is a duty strongly inculcated by their religion; but to practise, and not to neglect the injunction, shows a compassionate and humane disposition. Their manner one to another is kind and even affectionate; this is evident to those who observe them in the streets. When the fast of Rhamadan is over, we see them congratulating and embracing each other with every sign of earnest feeling.

Another good trait, which often shows itself, is gratitude. The Arab never forgets an act of kindness, particularly if it be done to his children; it matters not how trifling it may be—the present of a toy, or a cake—it is not forgotten by the parent, even if the bestower of the favour be a stranger and a Roumi. This means that if, years after, he saw you attacked by man or lion, he would risk his own life to save yours.

The regard paid to age is as evident as it is commendable. Old persons are always treated with attention and deference. No sooner is an aged man seen passing in the street, than the people press forward to kiss his dress as a mark of respect, to which he replies, 'May Allah show thee favour!' It is pleasing to witness

these demonstrations of sympathy, which proceed from a feeling heart.

Sobriety is a command in the Muslim religion, which is enforced by the Prophet having forbidden the use of spirituous drinks, an order in general strictly obeyed. The few who in latter times do not always conform to it are to be found chiefly amongst native soldiers, particularly some of the officers of Spais in the French service.

The Arabs are sober and abstemious, perhaps more so than any other people in the world. Even the lazzaroni in Naples who live on macaroni, and the Italians of the same class in other parts of Italy who dine on polenta, are *bons vivants* compared with the Arabs, who eat their couscoussou once a day, and get through the rest with a bit of bread, a few dates and a cup of coffee. They do not require a quarter of the food consumed by the people in the north of Europe.

These are the town Arabs. The Bedouins subsist on much less; a draught of camel's milk and a handful of meal are often all that they take during the day, particularly when travelling.

Hospitality, although generally practised amongst themselves, is not so often extended to Europeans, certainly not in time of war, as we shall see when we come to speak of Palestro. If one of their own people, poor or rich, enter an Arab tent or gourbi, he is sure to be well received and invited to sit down to table as if he were one of the family; but neither the Arabs nor the Kabyles eat with their guests, for this would be considered unpolite.

The lower classes—in particular the lowest class—

of Kabyles and Arabs, the men who come ragged and half-naked from the interior, are disgustingly dirty. They are seen sitting and lounging about the streets, leaning against walls, or lying in groups in the squares, basking in the sun, where their want of cleanliness affords them occupation enough. Fleas they consider wicked insects which they have a right to kill, but to *the other*—by far the more numerous—the *innominati*, they are leniently disposed ; for they say that this vermin, which gives them the most trouble, is an innocent little thing, without malice or evil intention ! so they let it fall gently to the ground for the benefit of the passing Roumi, who is at first surprised and shocked, on returning home, to find his or her spotless linen invaded by a specimen of nature's fecundity, present for inspection, of whose existence the stranger would before scarcely acknowledge to have heard.

Omnibuses and railway carriages are set apart for Arabs of this order, otherwise their proximity to colonists travelling third class would be extremely undesirable.

The higher ranks or castes of Arabs and Turks are, on the contrary, scrupulously clean. Nothing can exceed the unsullied whiteness of their burnous and turbans, and the neatness of the rest of their dress, or the great attention they pay to their persons.

The filthy habits and almost barbarous state of the poorest Arabs do not prevent these *parias* of Algerian society from being in general quieter, more polite, and better behaved than are our roughs at home. Those, however, who work on the quay, about the custom-house, railway station, and above all the boatmen who row out on the arrival of steamers to bring passengers on shore,

acquire the worst defects of Europeans, whilst they develop their own bad qualities. It is not possible to meet with a more noisy, extortionate, and covetous set than these Europeanised Arabs, who are the first specimen the newly-arrived traveller sees before he puts his foot on shore. We shall not easily forget the bad impression these wild men made on us when we first came to Algiers. Our steamer had scarcely dropped anchor when we were surrounded by boats filled with them. An indescribable scene of confusion followed. Vociferating in guttural Arabic and African French, a host of strange-looking Kabyles scrambled up the ladder. Pushed back by the gendarmes, and pulled down by other invaders who were trying to ascend, only a few gained the deck. One of these, a long lanky fellow, with baggy trousers *à la turc* about his loins, and his gandoura—a sort of nominal shirt—looking in this scanty plumage, with his shaven head, not unlike a native ostrich, seized our hand-bags *viva forza*. We thought the Berber would have carried us off with our baggage, when a stout Nubian interposed his claim to the prey. All were quarrelling and fighting about us, whilst the row in the boats presented another phase of Arab life at home. We never afterwards saw such a turbulent set, for Orientals are in general quiet, grave, and dignified. Like other nations in a comparatively primitive state, we find people in the lower strata of the indigenous population—those who like naughty children know no better—inclined to steal. Under the government of the Turks, robbery and plunder were the avocations of the Arabs of the Sahara, as it is in the present day that of the brigands of Italy and Spain. The first-

named marauders however—on the principle of honour amongst rogues—considered it disgraceful to rob people of their own, or a friendly tribe.

In 'Algeria as it is' we can travel unmolested from the littoral to the oases in the desert; but the pilfering propensities of town Arabs—who, when the French arrived, were as inveterate thieves as Captain Cook found the savages of the South Sea Islands—remain the same as before, only they are now restrained by the law. At first nothing astonished them more than our sharply defined notions of *meum and tuum*, and the severity of the punishment which followed an act of dishonesty.

Speaking of respect for the law, or fear of chastisement, we may remark that cases of assault and robbery, such as make the environs of some European capitals unsafe after dark, are seldom heard of in the neighbourhood of Algiers. Whether this be owing to the inoffensive disposition of the natives, or whether it is to be attributed to the excellence of the police—partly Arab and partly French—is not of so much importance as the fact itself. As for thieving, it might be an interesting phrenological question, whether this and lying are not natural tendencies in the human heart. In other words, whether acquisitiveness and self-preservation, unchecked by the influence of education and moral teaching, are not instinctive in children and people in a primitive state.

Professional thieves of the European stamp, such as the pick-pocket fraternity, do not exist among the Arabs.

The Algerines in general are honest, and many make probity a point of honour, as well as of conscience, being both too proud and too reasonable to overcharge for what they sell: this is particularly the case with

Arabs and Mussulmans. The Moors and Jews, like our own shop-keepers, try to get as much as they can.

As we shall have to remark in the next chapter, the Arabs do not treat their wives well, which is another peculiarity of uncivilised life ; we may add that, like the Spaniards—who seem to have taken both good and bad from their African invaders—they ill-treat domestic animals, particularly the poor ass. Even the patient camel, when it finds the burden greater than it can bear, utters a shrill, plaintive cry ; and, as this useful help-mate costs many duros and carries a heavy load, the warning is not unheeded ; but the little ass, who has had the misfortune to be born, and the greater bad luck to be born in Africa, makes no sign, but submits like a martyr to the ill-usage of the son of Adam till, worn out by labour, many blows, and scanty food, his carcass is at last thrown to the jackal, or to some other wild beast, who has the good fortune to be of no service to man. The race of asses, either degenerated through over-work or some other cause, is here in Algeria—where both animal and vegetable life is in general large and strong—small and delicate. They do not appear to have diminished in quantity in like proportion, for droves of these under-sized creatures, ridden by long Arabs with short sticks, riders better able to carry the ass than it is to carry them, are always trotting about the streets, bearing, besides these lazy fellows, bags of sand or some other heavy load. From morning to night they earn for a hard master his daily bread, or rather his daily cous-coussou. Each of these luckless donkeys has one ensanguined spot near his tail, a red spot which never heals, for it is constantly goaded with the stick ; on they

trot and run, no one interfering, however many may compassionate the poor ass. All this cruelty is practised without the least excitement on the part of the brute who rides and drives the beast. The Arab sits gravely in his place, monotonously—probably unconscious of his barbarity—dealing his blows on the loins of his dumb victim, with as much indifference as if it were made of wood, and had no more *feeling* than the man on its back.

It would be well if a society, like that in England, for the prevention of cruelty to animals, were introduced into this colony; one which, empowered by law, would be consistent in its action, and would stay the horrors of vivisection, horrors which are practised in the name of humanity. If animals *must* be tortured for our good, they ought to be the doctors and professors of anatomy, who should be offered up at the shrine of science. To dissect alive some of these philanthropists—whose organisations, being like that of their species—would produce better results than cutting up living dogs and horses!

Very different from the condition of the unfortunate ass is that of the horse; a precept and a promise of Mahomet has secured for this beautiful quadruped a privileged existence amongst Mussulmans.

‘Happiness in this world and in the next, remission of sins, and the help of God, shall be the lot of him who keeps and treats a horse well,’ says the Prophet.

Whether this blessing was intended as an encouragement and admonition to be merciful towards the brute creation in general, or whether it was designed as a special injunction in favour of the horse, the Arabs take it literally and go no farther.

CHAPTER VII.

ARAB WOMEN.

For man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women.—BYRON.

IF Arab men are tall and spare, the women are in general under the middle height. Many, from their sedentary life, are inclined to stoutness. Before they reach the '*mezzo del camin*' they are often pretty, with large soft eyes; the face—rather pale from being much under the cover of the adjar—is oval. As to figure, it is not easy to form an opinion, for the loose haïk or burnous and ample trowsers conceal the form.

The dress of an Arab woman of the lower class is more simple than elegant: it consists of a habaya—a kind of linen chemise with wide sleeves—tied round the waist with a cord, like the habit of a capuchin. In the street all this is covered by a haïk, which does not however hide her bare legs adorned with silver or copper anklets. She wears large earrings which are almost hidden under the mass of hair twisted about them, whilst a profusion of necklaces, amulets, coral and glass beads, fall over her tattooed neck and bosom. These

things belong to the wife personally, being settled on her by a marriage stipulation in case of abandonment or divorce. Thus she puts them on as often as possible, for the display of such finery is one of the few pleasures she enjoys, so the most is made of it. Sometimes she dyes her hands, and always her nails, with the orange tint of henna, and is fond of the scent called souak. She, like her Moorish sisters, also attempts to improve upon nature by blackening the lashes of her large eyes with koheul.

The adjar worn in Algiers and other large towns, was unknown before the time of Mahomet, who introduced it to serve his own personal jealousy; thus the distrustful disposition of one man has condemned all Muslim women to pass through life with a kerchief over the face. This law of the Prophet is one of many which has contributed to degrade woman in her social position.

Whenever they—the young at least—can remove the *jalousie*, which not only conceals their charms, but prevents them from breathing the air of heaven freely, they take it off; thus we often meet women unveiled in the country, when no Arab is near. If they see one approaching they immediately replace the veil, but they are not equally particular when they meet a Roumi, so that many opportunities of seeing their faces are offered, even in the neighbourhood of Algiers and Oran. In the Kabylie the adjar is not worn; for the Kabyle—who makes a companion of his wife, and treats her as his equal—is not so suspicious as the Arab.

Young Arab and Moorish women, we may remark, cover the face because they are ordered to do so; the old find it convenient policy, for, like charity, it hides many defects. Thus old women are in general very strict in

wearing the adjar themselves, and are as little indulgent to young ones who are caught without it as the jealous husband himself; the reason being envy in the one case and mistrust in the other.

Some of the sex allow one eye only to be seen. These, instead of the usual adjar, draw their drapery—which covers them from head to foot—over the face, leaving a little hole for the solitary optic to peep through. We have often, in our rambles in the country about Algiers, met with women thus muffled up—and still more frequently in out-of-the-way places farther off, who on noticing our apparent speculation on the countenance which offered only one black eye to guide us in our conjectures, suddenly let the curtain fall, as they laughingly showed us a face which had no cause to fear being exposed; this was done with a merry look which seemed to say ‘How do you like it? does it please you?’

In the same way we have seen girls in the Arab quarter of Algiers, on arriving at their own homes, take off the adjar on the threshold, to allow us a single glance, as they closed the door on us, and on our curiosity.

We have found Arab women more amiable to us Roumis than are Arab men. The great cause of dislike to Christians on the part of the latter is—as we shall have to remark in the chapter on religion—because we do not acknowledge Mahomet to be the prophet of God. This cause of aversion does not affect females in the same degree. Being unable to read, they cannot be supposed to know much of their Coran, and as their fathers and husbands let them go out as little as possible, they can scarcely be bigoted or intolerant; neither do

they love their tyrant lords so much as to hate us solely because their husbands do.

M. Achille Fillias, speaking of the condition of the women, says: 'When an Arab woman marries, she is sure only that she will be a slave; but who can tell how many domestic tortures—which no eye can see, and into whose mysteries the law never ventures to penetrate—she will have to endure.

'When an Arab has got together a sufficient number of duros to enable him to take a wife, he enquires in the neighbourhood for a person likely to suit him. What is wanted is not always the houri of his early dreams, one whom his fancy had then adorned with all the fond illusions of the heart. What he seeks is a woman to make his bread and his burnous, one who can feed and dress him. Having discovered what he requires, he goes to the girl's father, with whom the bargain is concluded. After a discussion, during which the buyer depreciates and the seller extols the qualities of the bride, the wedding takes place.'

Almost all marriages among the lower class of Arabs are of the kind described.

In our country excursions we constantly see men sitting in a circle before their gourbi, smoking, sipping coffee, and lazily enjoying their ease without caring for the labour which increases the pleasure of repose, whilst in the fields around the women are hard at work, like domestic animals toiling for their masters.

The wife always occupies an inferior position with regard to her husband; not permitted to eat at the same time, she serves at table, and remains standing whilst he enjoys what she has cooked. An Arab woman's duties

include all that a slave has to perform for a master ; not only does she prepare his food and make his dress, but she weaves the canvas which constructs his tent ; thus she is cook, tailor, and architect at the same time.

As a rule an Arab marries without having seen the face of his bride. No doubt some find out by accident whether it be pretty or ugly ; and they are occasionally favoured by stratagem on the part of the woman herself, for a girl, conscious of her own attractions, may contrive to make an imprudence of her adjar responsible for what was her own intention. If neither chance nor design befriend them, they must be satisfied with the information given by their parents, who are always allowed to see their future daughters-in-law.

Generally speaking, an Arab marries early. After ill-treating his wife a few years he usually sends her adrift, and takes another, whose condition is no better than was that of the one he repudiated. Divorce is very common, for it is known statistically that there are nearly as many separations as there are marriages. Marriages with Mussulmans is rather a civil than a religious ceremony, the couple being united in presence of the *cadi* or mayor. Some of the more intelligent and less bigoted Arabs, who have observed how much better is the social position of the wife amongst the civilised classes of Europeans, have their daughters married according to the French law. A marriage thus contracted is ever afterwards under the jurisdiction of France. If these examples were more frequent, the improved condition of Arab women would be the result. But, as instructing the lower orders is the first step towards civilising them, nothing would so soon, and so effectually

remedy the evil as the introduction of compulsory education.

The wives of Arab chiefs, and of rich Arabs in general, if they enjoy immunity from labour, have even less liberty than their sisters in humble life. The demon of ennui is ever present to these secluded ladies, who are taught to believe that it is a crime to allow their faces to be seen except by their husbands and nearest relations. The *adjar* is not worn in the house; but, if a visitor calls, the female part of the family scampers off into the inner apartments. Their only occupation is to paint themselves, dress fine, look in the mirror, cover their persons with jewellery, and pass much time in the bath. Friday, the Arab Sunday, is almost the only day in which an Arab woman of quality leaves her dwelling. She then—accompanied by her female attendants—goes to visit the cemetery, where, shrouded in a cloud of white drapery, many of them seen together look like phantoms wandering about the tombstones.

Such being the condition of Arab females of each class, it is not surprising that when they compare it with the liberty and good treatment enjoyed by Europeans—and which with the quicksightedness of their sex they do not fail to perceive—they acquire a keener sense of their own degradation. They know besides that in Algeria itself, their sisters in the *Kabylie* share the same freedom as the unveiled Europeans.

How then should Arab wives—who see other women happy in the society of their husbands—not feel that they owe little respect and less love to their masters, who cast them off at any time, according to their caprice?

This contrast in the social state of European, as

compared with that of Arab and Moorish women, is not less apparent to the men; and the example we set before their wives and daughters is not the least amongst the many causes of the ill-will they bear us.

Those who do not know the Arab character can form no conception of their reserve and jealousy in regard to their women.

Although it is polite in speaking to the head of a family to enquire with almost affectionate interest after his male relations, on no account must the wife or the other females be mentioned; any allusion to them would be considered as an offence, or even an insult.

In contrast to this dark picture of the condition of an Arab woman, particularly the married companion of one of the lower class—we cannot say of a working man—is the comparatively happy domestic life of a Kabyle wife; no rival shares her husband's heart, she is his wife in the best sense of the word. Treated with affection and respect, she takes her meals with the family, and is present even when there are guests in the house. In summer when her household duties permit, she assists her husband in his work, taking part with him in the labours of the field. During winter her principal occupation is making haïks and burnous.

The Kabyle women are handsomer than either the Arab or Moorish females. Enjoying more liberty than these, they like to show themselves in public, and are especially fond of fêtes, music, singing, and dancing.

Moorish women, domestically speaking, occupy a middle degree between the Arab and the Kabyle. With less personal freedom than the latter, they are exempt from ill-treatment, and have less hard work than the

former. They seldom leave the house ; never during the year after marriage, which is by no means a succession of honeymoons. When it is necessary for them to go out on some errand, a servant or *duña* always accompanies them. Precocious marriages, seclusion, and sedentary habits affect their good looks, so that they are seldom pretty when they have passed their twentieth year.

A Moorish woman at home, *en négligé*, is rather primitively dressed ; but she puts on a very elegant costume when she makes a more elaborate toilet, although she knows that nobody will see it but her husband, her nearest relations, and the servants.

A coloured jacket embroidered with gold or silver is worn over a white muslin chemisette. A pair of wide cashmere trowsers of blue, yellow, or green colour, beautifully worked, meet the vest at the waist, where a handsome silken sash or girdle is folded round them. Sometimes a scarf or other drapery fastened in front, is made to fall gracefully over the lower part of the person behind, forming a train on the floor, leaving however one leg—adorned with a massive silver anklet—uncovered ; whilst the points of the feet are tipped with tiny Marocco slippers.

The ornaments worn by Moorish women are remarkable rather for singularity than for good taste ; their passion for trinketry exceeds even that of Arab females for this kind of personal decoration ; or perhaps it appears so because a greater number of the former have the means to indulge in it ; but the stock of gewgaws in the husbands' bazaars would soon be exhausted if they were disposed to gratify their wives in all they desire to

possess. Half-a-dozen bracelets on each arm are the fewest they wear, whilst the rich deck themselves with pearls, diamonds, and precious stones.

We have once or twice seen some emancipated ladies, who had thrown aside the adjar and freed themselves from social restrictions, taking a carriage drive ; and as we have been permitted to see their faces and gala-costume at the same time, they may serve for models in regard to dress, but not for morals, in a general description, as well as those we should see if we were allowed to penetrate the domestic mysteries of a Moorish family.⁹ Such as cannot afford an expensive *parure*, cover, if they do not adorn, their persons with all procurable pieces of old or even modern coins—gold or silver—which fall in long necklaces, as low as the waist. Amongst Turkish money we have seen the effigies of Queen Victoria and his Holiness the Pope. The jingle made at every movement by these bits of metal is music to the ear of a Moorish lady.

Dyes and perfumes, which are the delight of all women of the East, are in especial favour with the ladies of Algeria. Moorish women in particular, not content with trying to deepen the colour of the darkest of black eyebrows, are dissatisfied that they do not extend and meet in an uninterrupted line across the forehead ; a mistake of nature they correct by the aid of art.

Those who have not been in the land of the Arabs may form a very tolerable idea of the women in the streets, if they figure to themselves some ambulating sacks made of calico, with two holes cut near the top for eyes to look through, whilst at the bottom two shoes

appear, indicating that there lies the propelling power which moves the bags above them !

In strong relief to these shapeless, muffled-up figures, are the tall native Jewesses, with their faces and arms uncovered. When young they are often handsome, although their regular features even then want expression and character. In their attire they are fond of gay colours, in preference green silk embroidered with gold. Their costume bears a great similarity to the engravings in an illustrated bible. This resemblance is particularly striking in those we see at fountains, where the antique form of their jugs, their naked feet in sandals, and long, close-fitting dress complete the picture.

To return to Moorish women. As they very seldom—with the exception of the lower classes—go out of the house, and then, as we have said, only to make some indispensable purchases, it is not surprising that they are scarcely ever seen with their husbands. We have met with only one instance, which we may mention for the rarity of the occurrence.

We were going to a place in the neighbourhood of Algiers, when, besides ourselves, there happened to be only a young woman and her husband in the coach. She was very lively, and seemed disposed to enjoy herself—that is, as much as a daughter of Eve whose charms are concealed from sight, and for whom half the pleasure is lost, can enjoy herself.

She took care that her hair should not altogether hide the richness of her dress. Of course we could see only her eyes, but if the other features were as beautiful, she must have been one of the prettiest girls we have seen. The man could speak French—Arab women sel-

dom can. We told him that, after all, they could not keep the best part of the face from us Roumis. He translated what we said, at which she laughed under her adjar, and then contrived, in pretending to adjust her drapery, to afford us glimpses of her small well-turned head, with its black hair interwoven with coloured silk and rich pearls; a coquetry which seemed to surprise more than to please her lord. When we left the 'bus she said 'ta ta' to us in Arabic.

There are no Arab artists, or very few; if such a *rara avis* has accidentally acquired some knowledge of drawing and painting, his attempts are confined to landscape, which, painted without figures—it being contrary to Mahometan law to represent living creatures, especially man—has a deserted look. This prohibition—which has perhaps been suggested by a mistaken conception of the second commandment: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth,'—is not always observed in regard to inferior animals; thus we see, cut on Arab trays, ostriches and camels twice as large as the trees near them, reminding us of the Chinese patterns on our dinner plates. Their marine pictures, with ships and boats without sailors, appear as if the vessels had been abandoned at sea.

If it be difficult for a painter to find a man to paint, it is almost impossible to meet with a woman.

Accident however threw in our way an exception to the rule, and we shall close these remarks on the women of Algeria by introducing our model to the reader, for she was of a class differing from those we have spoken

of. The one mentioned before may be called a town Moor. Coquettishly dressed and adorned with ornaments, she was as unlike the latter as a fine lady in Europe is to a poor peasant girl. In that republican conveyance, the omnibus, we have met with these different but characteristic types. On the last occasion we were returning from a country excursion, when a young woman, belonging to one of the wandering tribes, who lead a gipsy kind of life in the mountain districts got into the *Belle Africaine*. She well represented the order to which she appertained. Enveloped in the haïk, —her face concealed in the usual way—and wearing loose linen trowsers, we at first saw nothing to distinguish her from the ‘women in white’ we meet in the streets ;—but this girl was a Bedouin. Accustomed to the freedom of the tent and a country life, these people cover the face only when they come to large towns—‘*où il y a de la gêne, il n’y a pas de plaisir.*’ She had no sooner sat down, and noticed that no Arab was present, than she threw back her haïk and removed her adjar. Never had we seen jet black hair set off a face so wildly beautiful. If we were writing in her own figurative language, we should compare the apparition of this admirable countenance to the sun emerging from a cloud! She was the first unveiled African girl we had seen, at least the first that gave us time to see her well.

Often had we wondered whether beauty or ugliness was hidden under the jealous adjar. At last we had before us a reality better than all our speculations had suggested—life, colour, a picturesque dress, and a beautiful woman. A red and yellow kerchief was entwined in broad folds with her raven hair. Under well-defined

brows, which blended softly with the skin—for they were untouched by art—her large eyes had the tender expression so remarkable in the women of the East. When she looked down, we were reminded of the Madonnas the old masters loved to paint in this modest attitude. Looking up, her whole face seemed lighted by the smile which is so well answered by the eye. A profusion of black hair, falling in dishevelled tresses over her half-naked bosom, rested in masses on her white drapery. Her features, of the Arab type, were not too strongly characteristic of the race, and her complexion, which was not darker than a Southern European's, was of that warm peachy tint which artists try to imitate. A strip of red tape round her shoulder caught up her dress on one side, her faultless bust being uncovered on the other. The requirements of an infant at her breast was partly the cause of this simple attire—or rather the want of it—in the mother; but, incompletely as this child of nature was robed, she was scarcely more nude than is a fashionable lady in civilised society, at a ball, concert, or theatre, where she displays charms—not always young—which would lose nothing if left to the imagination.

Flowers bloom early in this luxuriant clime. Although married and a mother, this pretty creature who, with her child, formed a group and a picture, was not fifteen. It was a picture we longed to paint, for we could take back with us nothing more charmingly characteristic of this part of Africa.

We have forgotten to say that her neck was tattooed in many circular lines of fantastic design, which looked like several rows of a blue necklace. She had also a

little tattooed spot on her forehead, counterpoised by a corresponding one on her chin.

On approaching town she again covered her face. In what Arabic we were master of, we proposed to paint her portrait, for these wild tribes know little and care nothing about the Prophet's interdiction, or the prejudices of his followers. Our fear was that the husband might stand in the way, for no Arab would permit his wife to go alone to another person's dwelling, least of all to that of a Christian.

She however consented to our proposal, and offered to accompany us. We liked this better than to trust to her word, for a promise is as often broken in the East as it is in the West ; so we took her with us.

Arrived at our house, we asked what her husband would say if he knew. In reply she pointed to the ground—a mute but eloquent answer—by which we understood that Fatima's master was gone to the world where other houris wait to console the true believers for the loss of those they leave on earth.

'So,' said the young widow, seeing that we had comprehended her meaning, 'he cannot prevent me from having my likeness taken.'

She afterwards came regularly ; and, as she was intelligent, and sat well, we finished two satisfactory pictures from our beautiful Bedouin model, which are amongst the most interesting in our collection of travelling sketches.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JEWS.

Shylock. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you ; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.—
SHAKESPEARE.

OF all the natives of Algeria the Jews have the greatest reason to rejoice at the new state of things.

Obliged, formerly, to live in a separate quarter, they were despised and treated with every indignity ; no protection for property or even life was extended to them. When the Deys wanted money the resources of the unfortunate sons of Israel were applied to ; and, under one pretext or another, their goods and chattels were sold to replenish the empty coffers of his Highness the reigning Pacha.

Before the conquest the Jews wore a black *chéchia* below the turban, as a sign of inferiority, whilst the Arabs sported a red one.

Some idea of the degraded condition of this people, when under the Regency, may be formed from the fact that, if an Arab, setting out on a journey, met a Jew, it was considered a bad omen, unless the presage was averted by the latter being made to approach barefoot,

carrying his shoes in his hand, and passing the Mahometan in the humble attitude which befitted a man of his inferior caste. Nothing has more astonished and disgusted the Arabs than the footing of equality on which this despised race has been placed by the Christians.

Such was the state of the Jews before 1830; and it is only doing them justice to say that they are grateful to the French Government for their emancipation. A striking example of this was given on the introduction of the conscription into the colony in 1873. Instead of looking on this as a calamity, and showing discontent, as the Sicilians and others have done in Italy, the Israelites of Algeria received the announcement with enthusiasm; and testified their satisfaction that they were thought worthy of being enrolled amongst the military of France.

The well-known physiognomy of the Hebrews is not generally so marked here as it is in their brethren in Europe; the nose is not so prominent, and the other features are also less disagreeably suggestive of the moral propensities attributed to them.

Like Jews all the world over, those of Algeria are industrious, enterprising, and intelligent; they are fond of money, but are often satisfied with small profits, to the great disgust of the other traders, whom they sometimes find it good policy to undersell.

Freed from the tyranny of their former oppressors, and protected by a just government, the children of Israel now go on their way rejoicing.

Notwithstanding our favourable notice of this peculiar people, it must be confessed that, like all emancipated

racés, some are presumptuous ; this disposition, which is the unfavourable side of the Jewish character, occasionally showing itself here, as it does much oftener in Europe, where the extremes of poverty and wealth are more frequently met with.

Their costume is handsome, not unlike that of the Greeks ; but many of them have adopted the Frank dress which, though less elegant and dignified, is certainly more convenient.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLACKS.

Fleecy locks and black complexion
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim ;
 Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.—COWPER.

THE Blacks of Algeria, about four thousand in number, are not negroes, properly so called. The greater part come from places not far beyond the Sahara, whereas the negro physiognomy is not met with to the north of Soudan.

Those we see in Algiers have oval faces, and their complexion is many shades removed from black ; their style of countenance is not unlike that of the natives of British India, whom they also resemble in their light gay attire. They are the happiest people we have seen, always in good humour, they are the soul of every festive occasion, giving animation to Arab fêtes which, without their tambourins, fiddles, and their jovial temperament, would be dull entertainments. They are fond of music—a very primitive kind certainly—and delight in dancing and singing. In the cafés we see them forming a little orchestra at one end, whilst Arabs and other natives sit

or recline on benches before them. But it is during the three days of the little fête called Aïd-es-Srir, which follows the fast of Rhamadan, that their services are most called into requisition. No sooner is the month of penitence over than groups of these darkies may be seen in the squares and streets, dressed in fantastic costumes, with all sorts of musical—or rather unmusical—instruments, drums, tamtams, castanets, karakobs, and the like, to which they dance a species of fandango, singing and shouting the whole time like wild Indians.

The Mahometans are satisfied with three days of rejoicing after their abstinence, whilst in Catholic countries ten times that duration of masquerading is thought necessary, as a preparation for the privations of Lent. Nothing seems to astonish and shock the grave Orientals more than the tomfoolery they witness during the Christian carnival.

Before the conquest the Blacks were slaves, and, like the Jews, they were despised and ill-treated; but these kind-hearted people have now conciliated the good-will of their former masters, which is not the case with the Jews, who are, if possible, more hated than ever, on account of the protection they enjoy in common with the other subjects of France.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that of the honest, shining faces of these Blacks, near the grave, taciturn, and dignified Arabs. Being themselves strangers like the Europeans, and indebted to them for their emancipation, they are well pleased to see the French in Algeria. The Blacks, laborious and frugal, are dis-

tinguished above all the other natives for their scrupulous probity and the regularity of their lives.

Some black women wear the *adjar*, particularly the young ones, for their husbands are often as jealous of their sooty charms as Othello was of the fair face of Desdemona.

There is however an order of these women which approaches nearer to the Negro type, for they came originally from the land of thick lips and flat noses; these do not cover the face, which is very ugly. Their avocation is to sell bread and cakes to the Arabs.

As a sequel to this short chapter on the Blacks of Algeria, we may relate a little incident which took place before our house.

One day as we were going out, we heard a black woman suddenly utter a wild scream, as she caught a little girl of about eight or ten years of age in her arms, and pressed it frantically to her bosom, whilst she almost smothered it with kisses; now crying, laughing, and dancing with joy, at one moment she let the child free from her embrace, holding it from her to look at its face through her tears, then kissing it again and again, she placed its little head on her heart.

Such a scene in the street brought a crowd round the woman and child. We learned from one of the spectators that the former lived at some distance from Algiers, and that the little girl, who was her daughter, having fallen ill, had been taken to an hospital in town, an institution of which the mother had vague and very unfavourable conceptions. Seeing and hearing nothing of her child for some time, the poor woman had at last come to mourn it as dead, when, on the very day the

girl left the hôpital to return home—cured and looking more blooming and healthy than ever—the mother and daughter met unexpectedly as we saw them.

A mother's love is indeed the admirable instinct of her nature. Her heart is always the same, under whatever form it beats, and whatever be the colour of the skin that covers it.

CHAPTER X.

RELIGION.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
 Presume Thy bolts to throw,
 And deal damnation round the land
 On each I judge Thy foe.—POPE.

Non enim in sempiternum litigabo neque usque ad finem irascar : quia spiritus a facie mea egredietur, et flatus ego faciam.—*Prophetia Isaiae*, cap. lvii. 16. *Biblia sacra Vulga.*¹⁰

IT HAS been well remarked that 'insurrections in Algeria break out unexpectedly, like the sudden rising of a storm on a summer's day. The chiefs of such revolts are almost invariably the Marabouts, who are assisted by the most fanatical and excitable members of the religious communities known under the name of Kouans—brethren. These insurrections are got up oftener in the name of religion than in that of liberty. The indigenous population is easily reconciled to French supremacy, for the fatalism of the East renders foreign dominion less insupportable than is generally imagined. Believing it to be written in the Book of Fate, they piously resign themselves to whatever may happen. What they hate in their European masters is, that they

do not acknowledge the Prophet—it is not the conqueror, but the Christian they detest.’¹¹

We may add, in confirmation of the preceding observations, that the same aversion was not shown to the oppressive government of the Turks, who, if they were not Algerines, were at least Mahometans.

On what an uncertain event may not the religion of a people depend. Success or disaster in war, the valour and discipline of an army, a happy manœuvre in the field, may gain or lose a battle on the issue of which rests the future belief of a nation ; nay, the courage and conduct of a single man may be the cause of defeat or of victory. The scimitar of Abderaman would have established a new religion if the sword of a Martel had not arrested the advancement of a false creed. Already had the first successors of the Prophet obliged those they conquered to embrace their religion ; and it is strange to reflect that the descendants of these Christians, who had become Mahometans by force and not from conviction, are now as sincere and zealous believers in Islamism as are the most fanatical amongst those who hate the name of Nazarene. If one of the effeminate Merovingian kings of the eighth century had directed the arms of France instead of the warlike Charles Martel, the Saracens, who had already conquered parts of Italy and Spain, might have vanquished the Gauls, and then carried the standard of the Prophet into England and other countries : had this taken place, we should now all be Mahometans !

We shall say a few words on the principal points of their religion.

Like us, the Muslims adore and venerate Allah, God,

the Great, the Good, supreme ruler of the universe. They regard Mahomet as a mediator between God and man.

Like some sects of Christians, they do not recognise the divinity of Christ, but revere Him as a prophet sent from God. They say that, before the coming of Mahomet, Christ was the greatest of all prophets.

They believe in the immaculate conception, and that Jesus, inspired by the Almighty, but not partaking of his essence, made revelations to man, which were confirmed by Mahomet.

Prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimages form the basis of the Mahometan religion, which ordains that Mussulmans shall pray five times a day. They look upon Christians, who neglect this duty, as a prayerless people.

The time for prayer is proclaimed from the top of the minaret, where the Marabout Muezzin announces it to the true believers: 'God only is great; there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet. Come to prayer; come to adore; God is great!'

At these words the people fall on their knees, with their faces turned towards the East.

Whilst he prays the Muslim prostrates himself in such a manner that seven parts of his body—the head, the hands, the feet, and the knees—may touch the ground, which he kisses three times. These genuflexions form a part of every act of prayer, which begins with the words of the first chapter of the Coran:—

'Praise be to God, Lord of the universe. Mercy is His prerogative. He is the sovereign Lord of the day of judgment. We worship Thee, O Lord, and we implore

Thy aid. Direct us in the path of virtue ; in the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessing.'

Mussulmans always observe the hour of prayer when it is possible to do so. Travelling by coach, when we have changed horses ; or by rail, on stopping at a station—if only for a few minutes—we see Arabs leave the carriage and repeat their orisons on the roadside. It is the same in town ; in his shop, open to the street, the Mussulman spreads his mat on the floor, falls on his knees, and prays.

Above all the Arab loves to worship God in secluded spots, amidst the beautiful scenes of nature, and on high places, or near the sea—the emblem of eternity.

Before he begins to pray the Muslim lays aside all ornament, and divests himself of the more showy parts of his dress ; such vanities being thought to be unbecoming the humble state in which the creature ought to approach his Creator.

We manage these things differently, if not better ; for we array ourselves in our best suit to go to church.

At Cherchell we one day observed an Arab, after performing his ablutions in the sea, ascend the rocks above it, where, spreading his burnous in lieu of carpet, and taking off the embroidered part of his clothes, with a look of intense devotion he bowed his face to the ground. Rising to his knees, he bent down till he touched the earth with his head. Again and again we saw him repeat these lowly attitudes, supplicating Allah—the same God that we also adore. As we watched the earnest expression of his face we thought not of tenets, dogma, or points of faith ; we felt only sympathy with the religious spirit which seemed to

inspire the Mahometan, for, as he would have said, God is God.

Shall not the humble prayer of this pious Arab ascend to the throne of the Almighty, because his creed is not orthodox, and is not the belief of some pharisee—who thanks God that he is not as other men are—his own faith being one of the many into which religion is divided and subdivided, one of the thousands which infallible and Almighty God permits to be spread over the earth?

Charity is inculcated in almost every page of the Coran. In many places it is said to purify us from bad actions—a precept evidently taken from the New Testament: ‘Charity covereth a multitude of sins.’

One very excellent, and more original, passage says:

‘Abstain from doing wrong; this is charity to thyself.’

Another,

‘Charity extinguishes sin as water puts out fire.’

And again,

‘Give alms, if it be only the half of a date, for God will show mercy only to those who are merciful.’

‘He who bestows alms in secret, without ostentation, shall appease the anger of God.’

‘Charity closes seventy doors against evil.’

‘An angel,’ says the Coran, ‘always stands before the gate of Paradise, exclaiming, He who gives to the poor to-day shall be rewarded to-morrow.’

Throughout the Coran charity is enjoined as an imperative duty. These injunctions and promises are not lost on the Muslims. We have ourselves found them charitable to the indigent and helpless. Even the poor Arabs give alms to those who are poorer than them-

selves. We have remarked this especially in the Moorish quarter at Algiers. The beggars in the new town—many of them, who flock there from all parts of the country, being scarcely objects of charity—they leave to the generosity of the Roumi, whom the passing Mussulman rewards with an approving look.

By charity the Mahometans understand almsgiving. Of charity in the broader sense of the word they know nothing, being just as intolerant as are many sects of Christians towards those who differ from them in opinion.

The Muslims are permitted to pray that infidels may become Mahometans, but they are forbidden to pray that any *other* good may happen to them !

Such expressions as infidels, renegades, apostates, for others ; and true believers, the faithful, &c. for ourselves, are compliments which are applied reciprocally between people who have been taught by their parents a different religion from that of their neighbours, or who have—sometimes from conviction—abandoned it, this being illustrative of the charitable spirit which animates both ! Thus the same word acquires another meaning according to its application. What we call a convert to our religion the Arabs call a renegade from theirs, and *vice versa*.

The Muslims believe in the Old Testament, but hold it to have been greatly altered, as many Christians believe the New Testament to have been tampered with during the early ages of Christianity.

They respect Abraham and the prophets, and have also, in common with the Jews, some ritual laws and customs, such as circumcision, prohibition from eating the flesh of swine, &c.

They place Jesus, whom they call Sidi Aïssa, next after Mahomet, many chapters of the Coran having direct relation to Christ and the Virgin Mary. In fact their religion is a compound of the Hebrew and the Christian faith ; so they hate both ; for the nearer religions approach each other, the greater—as a rule—is the reciprocal detestation of those who profess them !

How often does the Protestant mount the pulpit to abuse the papists, as he delights to call the Roman Catholics ! Inspired by the mild spirit of charity, he denounces millions of his fellow-men in his own and neighbouring nations, and others all over the world, as idolaters, superstition-mongers, and the like.

If we enter a Catholic church, we are informed that not one of the myriads of human beings on the face of the earth can be saved unless they believe exactly what the Church of Rome tells them. The same anathema embraces the past and the future ; all went, or are to go, to a hot place where they will scarcely find a single Catholic Christian, or get one drop of water !

When we were in Florence, a priest who was well up in the mysteries of geology, preaching at the Santa Maria Novella, explained to us the exact spot where this vast furnace is situated. ‘Hell,’ he said, ‘is placed at a depth of 500,000 feet below the surface of the earth’—he added some odd number which we do not remember. ‘In this fire,’ he continued, revelling in Dantesque horrors, and rivalling the poet in describing them, ‘those who are not of our church—and some sinners who are, but who have died without absolution—will burn ; their bodies being so constituted that they can never be consumed.

As at first'—proceeded the charitable inquisitor *con gusto*—'so they will burn on and on through eternity.'

After ascribing all this to a merciful and just God, the learned theologian, who was a dignitary in the church, drove home to dinner in his carriage, not very like one of Christ's disciples certainly, but accompanied by a good conscience, satisfied with his exposition of Christian doctrines.

The Mahometans and Jews, like the Christians, indulge in invective only against those religions which are most like their own. The Chinese, Japanese, and others, whose creeds are very different from theirs, are seldom alluded to, and are never insulted. It is not distance that saves them from abuse, for kindred religions are treated the same wherever their followers may be.

Fasting is also an ordinance strictly enjoined. We have already alluded to the fast of the Rhamadan, a word which signifies purification from sin. This fast, which is more sacred than any other, occurs in the ninth month of the Arab year. During this period of penance the gates of Paradise—say the Arab doctors of divinity—are kept constantly open, so that it is a happy fate to die at this time.

None but the sick are exempt from the rigorous observance of the Rhamadan, and these only on the condition that, when they recover from illness, they shall fast as many days as equal in number those on which they had been allowed to take food. During the thirty days this fast continues Mahometans are not permitted to visit their wives. Not only are they forbidden to eat anything from sunrise to sunset, but, what is worse, they must neither smoke, nor drink coffee; now as the Arab, like the

Spaniard, who took the habit from him, has seldom a cigarette out of his mouth, and drinks ten or twelve cups of coffee a day, this is no small privation ; so that the hungry faster, on this exceptional occasion, becomes savage and quarrelsome, like other animals when deprived of their food ; at this period we see a fight almost every day in the streets—a fair fight English fashion—for the Algerines, unlike the Italians and Spaniards, seldom use knives ; but in every instance native peace-makers interfere to separate the combatants, which is more than is usually done in Christian countries.

The time for eating is thus defined. The faithful are allowed to take nourishment from dusk to dawn, as long as it is impossible to distinguish by light of day a black thread from a white one.

In Algeria, as is the custom in all countries which profess the Mahometan religion, a salvo of artillery announces the beginning of the fast, and throughout the month a cannon fired at sunset gives the signal that it is over for that day.

After so many hours of total abstinence, it may be imagined how welcome to the ears of the hungry population is the report of this gun. The town seems to awake, the scene changes at once from a state of sulky obedience to animation and joy. The minarets are lighted up, whilst from the highest gallery the Muezzin, in a loud and solemn voice, calls the faithful to evening prayers.

After hastily reciting a verse from the Coran everyone begins to eat. Many of the lower classes carry bread, a few dates, or the like, about them. At such a moment

they become demonstrative, and are too excited to stand on ceremony.

We were one day passing an Arab just as the cannon fired.—‘*Entends-tu*’ said he, ‘look ;’ and quick as thought—substituting a pious ejaculation for a prayer—he took from the hood of his burnous a bit of bread, which he bolted down his throat with triumphant satisfaction, leaving us to admire his self-denial and forethought at the same time.

A pilgrimage to Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet, is compulsory once in life, and more than a single visit ought to be made ; many Arabs go there several times ; in fact the oftener the better for the souls of the true believers.

It is not necessary to take off the shoes on entering mosques, unless it be intended to tread on the carpet or matting, which is spread over the greater part of the floor of the temple, and is regarded as sacred. Anyone may walk on the uncovered margin.

The respect with which the Arabs are accustomed to regard the carpet is perhaps the reason why they avoid stepping on it in their shoes, which they leave at the door when they enter our rooms ; or, apart from religious association, this may be considered unpolite.

As we have said in a former chapter, women of the middle and higher classes are not allowed to go out alone : accompanied by their elder female relations and servants, they sometimes visit the cemeteries on Fridays ; attending the mosques is no exception to the rule, for they are not permitted to enter them before they have attained the age of sixty, that is, when they

are old and ugly enough not to cause their husbands any more jealousy.

It is a mistake to suppose that Muslims believe that women have no souls; a passage in the Coran asserts the contrary. We asked a Marabout what the theory is amongst the true believers in regard to women's souls: he told us that they were of an inferior order, and would not be free like those of men; that in heaven also, women will be subject to the will of man. He gave us more information of the kind, not very intelligible, but tending to the point that the slavery of Mahometan females in this world will be carried into the next—poor women!

Every Muslim is allowed to have four wives, and as many concubines as he likes, or can afford to keep. This is the law of the Prophet. Priests—Marabouts—marry like our Protestant clergy. It is however very unusual for a Mahometan to marry a Christian. Such a union is not positively forbidden in the Coran, but it is not generally approved of. A recent and very remarkable instance has taken place: a distinguished Marabout, Abd-Eslam, grand Chérif, a high dignitary in the Moslem Church, having married an English lady. This marriage, which was solemnised at the British Consulate at Tangiers, created a great sensation at the time.

With regard to a future state, there is apparently something very like materialism in Mahomet's heavens, composed of silver, gold, precious stones, &c. ; but it was not his intention to inculcate such a belief; for, as we have already remarked, he copied his religion from ours, as far as he found it convenient, and the Muslim creed is in reality only a mixture of Jewish and Christian doctrines accommodated to Oriental taste and traditions.

The Coran is not very explicit on the dogma of eternal punishment; the generality of Mahometans hold that exclusion from the delights of paradise will of itself be a sufficient chastisement; some believe that there will be a preparatory stage of moral purification—a kind of purgatory—to prepare sinners for the bliss of heaven; few of them conceive hell to be a place of everlasting torture without an object; and is it unreasonable to deny that the Almighty, having a foreknowledge of all that is to take place in the future—who knew the end from the beginning—would have created man, to pass a few years on earth—a mere drop in the sea of Time, and nothing as compared with Eternity—if he were at last to be cast into a place of unending torment?

God is, and ever will be, in a state of eternal and perfect bliss. Could He be perfectly happy if the greater part of those whom His fiat has called into existence—those who have died in the great past, and those who are to die in the unknown future—must exist throughout the same eternity in unmitigated misery?¹² For the most sinful wretch who ever lived his few checkered years on this planet, surely the chastisement would exceed the desert.

La Rochfoucault has observed that ‘there is always something in the misfortunes of others which is not entirely displeasing to ourselves.’

There are men of a morose and cruel disposition who do not confine such sentiments to this life, but enhance the satisfaction they feel in the anticipation of their own salvation by associating with it the damnation of others.¹³ Whilst they assert that God is merciful and just, they

tell us that there will be no after-forgiveness ; that He, who has enjoined us to forgive one another, will consign all the human race—except a few elect—to never-ceasing torture. Thus they hold two conflicting beliefs, inconsistent with each other, and as blasphemous as they are contradictory ; for, as the Almighty is the essence of goodness and mercy, it is blasphemy to set bounds to His clemency, ascribing to Him revenge, an attribute of sinful humanity. Punishment ought to be reformatory in its nature ; nay, to operate good for the future can be its only design ; to punish where there is no opportunity for amendment must be both useless and cruel.

An English divine, writing on this subject, and looking at it from a rational and merciful point of view, has remarked that, ‘Whatever begins in time may end in time ; that there is this essential difference between the eternity of good and evil, the one has known no beginning, having existed from all eternity ; that the other has had a commencement, and may therefore end ; that evil has nothing divine in it, being finite, not infinite in its essence, it can consequently have no inherent or endless vitality.’

Let us humbly hope that whatever be the retribution reserved for us, our weak and imperfect natures will be judged mercifully, and that the Almighty will not condemn those He has permitted to be born in this world to be hopelessly lost in the next.

We shall close this chapter on the religion of the native inhabitants, and give a new turn to the thoughts into which it has led us, by correcting the common, but erroneous impression that the crescent is

exclusively the emblem of Islamism. From remotest antiquity this has been the symbol of the goddess Astarte, who had a temple at Carthage. Thus it is seen on Numidian monoliths, and the traditional custom was transmitted to the Roman period.¹⁴

CHAPTER XI.

PREDESTINATION AND SUPERSTITION.

The happiest moment of my life
Is neighbour to the hour that sees its greatest grief.
The Traitor: a drama.

Hence, to the realms of Night, dire Demon, hence !
Thy chain of adamant can bind
That little world, the human mind,
And sink its noblest powers to impotence.—ROGERS.

As is well known, the Muslims believe that all events in life and the destiny of the soul in the next world have been predetermined from the beginning ; not that we are the less responsible for our good or evil actions on this account. As we can be admitted into paradise only through the mercy of God, we must as long as we live strive to do good and avoid evil ; for, whatever be finally predestined for us in the next world—whether we shall be raised up to heaven or condemned to punishment—the happiness of the one state and the misery of the other will be increased, according to the way in which we have conducted ourselves in this.

Such is the Mahometan belief.

The question of man's ultimate salvation or perdition having been known, and consequently determined, before

his birth, is a proposition which, entering on the inexplicable, we cannot follow, and have therefore nothing to say.

We prefer to relate a circumstance illustrative of Arab belief in the dogma of fatalism, that took place the year before last.

On the first of November, the steppes which develop themselves to the southeast of Tiaret were the scene of unusual animation. From break of day the people—to use the figurative expression of the Arabs—had made powder speak; for the firing of cannon in Oulad-bou-Gheddou and Oulad-Mansour told to the blue sky of Africa that this was the fête of Sidi-Mouley-Abdel-Kader, and was the prelude to the rejoicings which were to celebrate the day in honour of this venerated Marabout.

Shortly after noon a noble cavalier, the Caïd Kaddour ben-Messoussa, who had been conspicuous amongst the rest for his high spirits and handsome face, separated from the company and, walking his horse quietly till he was out of sight, put spurs to his steed, which now carried him along with the speed of the wind. He drew up before a gourbi or hut, the door of which was partly open, and a young girl stepped forward to welcome him. The Caïd, having dismounted, clasped the maiden tenderly in his arms, entreating her to accompany him to the fête. At first she objected; but, at length giving way to his solicitations, she ordered a mule to be saddled, and with joy in their hearts and love in their eyes, they set out for the Ouada.

Kaddour's companion was marvellously beautiful; the mere contemplation of her charms gave to those who

looked upon her a foretaste of the delights promised by the Prophet to the elect in paradise, where the splendour of the houris pales the fresh colour of the rose.

An elegant and richly embroidered dress in the Moorish fashion covered, but did not entirely conceal, Aïcha's charming form. She was a dancing girl, whom the Caïd had known some time at Djeffal, and whom he wished to introduce into the tribe, which he had just been appointed to command.

The peculiar habits, mode of life, and the style of Aïcha's costume are accounted for by her profession.

In Algeria, as in some parts of Europe, people of certain localities follow particular callings. The Gallegos of Spain are generally water-carriers, Savoy furnishes chimney-sweeps, and Italy contributes her box-organists. Here, in Algeria, the Kabyles till the soil. At Biskra children are born to become porters, the negroes whitewash our houses, and Djeffal sends us dancing girls.

At an Arab fête, or at the close of some hospitable repast (*diffa*), we usually see one of these young and pretty *chattâlias* balancing herself lightly in the graceful movements of the dance, to the discordant and monotonous music of an orchestra composed of a cane flute and a tambourine. We admire the plastic poetry of her seductive form, as she dances a kind of *fandango*; but we miss the merry sound of the castenet and the melodious accompaniment of the guitar or the mandoline. The performance ended, she comes forward, her hair hanging over her shoulders, her bosom naked and palpitating, and her eyes sparkling with fire, as, half-kneeling, she throws back her white forehead, on which we place a

gold coin, when we ask her, 'Enta mnin ?' to which her reply is almost sure to be, 'Djeffal.'

Djeffal, hidden in a little corner of the province of Algiers, enjoys, as we have said, the privilege of giving birth to the chattâhas, who from Tunis to Marocco, and from the littoral to the Sahara, add to the brilliancy of the fêtes given by the Cheurfa and the Djouad.

On the plain where the Ouada was celebrated cavaliers of distinction—men of the great tent—were dashing about in every direction, for their horses, excited by the report of the guns, seemed on that day like winged steeds. The natives of inferior condition ran on foot, brandishing their arms over their heads, and firing powder at the tents in which the women and young girls of both tribes were assembled. Dressed in their holiday suit, their arms encircled with bracelets, their ankles ornamented with their khalkhals ; the Maras and the Chiras grouped in a circle had passed the day chanting hymns in honour of the Marabout whose protection they invoked.

Perceiving Aïcha approaching, the cavaliers advanced to meet her, and in token of respect they discharged their guns and pistols at her feet, repeating the ceremony again and again, till the beautiful chattâha was enveloped in a cloud of blue smoke, the saltpetre smell of which seemed to affect the olfactory nerves of this wild beauty more agreeably than the odoriferous perfumes of the East. Aïcha, blushing with pleasure and pride, sat down near the Caïd that she might, by her presence, grace and animate the feast, which was an open-air entertainment given to the people who had taken part in the dance. After dinner the guests returned to their

douars. Aïcha now sprang lightly on her mule, and rode forward; accompanied by Kaddour, and other cavaliers who wished to form an escort in her honour.

The little cavalcade proceeded gaily on, and many were the sallies of wit in a conversation, the principal subjects of which were the chattâha and the dance.

'Aïcha,' said the Caïd, following up a pleasant chat began in a low voice, 'thou may'st have remarked from the manner in which my friends greeted thy arrival that they are enchanted with thy beauty. I have already thanked them for their courtesy and kindness; disdain not thou, my beloved, to show that thou also hast been touched by their polite and gallant homage—make powder speak in honour of them.'

Aïcha, who had never fired a gun, was little disposed to comply with the wish of her lover; but, fearing to displease him, she held out her hand resolutely towards the mekahla which, on a sign from the Caïd, Ezzin ben-Abadi had just loaded.

On touching the cold steel a feeling of terror seized her, which she instantly repressed and, pointing the gun at Kaddour, she fired. The Caïd turned round, smiled, and besought her to continue. Ezzin then received the gun to reload. His own ramrod being a little too short, he borrowed another from one of his comrades. The horse which Ben-Abadi rode, a high-spirited animal, reared repeatedly, and its rider was with great difficulty able to perform what was required of him; at last he succeeded, and presented the gun to the chattâha. She took it this time with a charming affectation of bravado, put it lightly to her shoulder, and again chose her lover—who was a few paces in advance—for her mark. She aimed at his

head, in order to make him turn towards her, and then touched the trigger with her finger. The gun went off. The explosion was accompanied by a whistling sound, and a peculiar noise which nothing for the moment could explain. The report did not appear to have been heard by the Caïd, whose steed proceeded as if nothing had happened ; but, suddenly, on the spotless white of his burnous was seen, near the neck, a red stain which, increasing in size, dyed the cavalier's dress with crimson. He had just let fall the reins of his horse, whose mane he instinctively tried to seize, when his friends rushed to him. His eyes were half-closed, a livid paleness spread over his face, whilst blood flowed from a wound in the neck, which was pierced through with the ramrod that Ezzin had forgotten and left in the barrel of the gun he had given to Aïcha.

Being placed on the ground the Caïd, making a violent effort, pronounced some broken words of resignation attesting his belief in the dogma of predestination.

It would be impossible to describe the despair of Ezzin. As for Aïcha, driven to madness, she tore her face—as is the custom of the Arabs—and uttered the doleful and disconsolate cries which women of the East give vent to when the angel of Death has touched one they love with the tip of his black wing.

A native doctor, called in haste, tended the wounded man till he could be transferred to a military hospital at Tiaret, where he died the next day, after enduring great suffering.

The tragical *dénouement* of the fête was altogether accidental, for no thought of crime could be associated with its sad termination.

Some writers call the religion of the Mahometans a superstition. This can hardly be said of a faith founded on our own. That the Muslims, in common with many Eastern nations, are disposed to be superstitious, is true. This is partly to be attributed to the imaginative and credulous disposition of Orientals, who have preserved many of the customs, and something of the creed, of their pagan ancestors, which the religion of Mahomet has not been able to eradicate ; and is in particular the result of ignorance, as it is amongst the uneducated classes in more enlightened Europe and in America, where a man and his wife were publicly burnt alive in Mexico for witchcraft during the present year.

The brigands in Italy, before setting out on their kidnapping expeditions, invoke the protection of the Madonna, and call on their saints when they torture and murder prisoners. Thus the Arab-robber—who has also his protector in heaven—when engaged in a marauding undertaking, especially in the Sahara, does not fail to appeal to the Marabout Sidi Abd-el Kader Djelaly, whose philanthropy was so great that he could, when alive, refuse no one, and is now supposed to help those who pray to him.

The Mahometans have great faith in omens, and believe in charms, like many of our country people at home, examples of whose credulity are constantly chronicled in the newspapers, and will continue to be registered in future, as long as little boys and girls are not obliged to go to school whilst they remain children ; in other words, till education is made compulsory, like sobriety, humanity to animals, sale of property *pro bono publico*, manning the navy by impressment in time

of war, and so on. But to oblige parents, in the interest of their children, to have them taught reading and writing—resources which might be some compensation to the poor for the pleasures which money procures for the rich—acquirements which might cause many to avoid vice, and teach everyone how to become respectable members of society—is said to be un-English, so we had better say no more about it.

Many of our friends in the midland counties find an omen, good or bad, in the number of magpies they may chance to see together. On setting out on any business, to meet an ugly old woman is supposed to bring bad luck. The Arab has also a predilection for pretty faces, and if on leaving his hut he meets a young and handsome girl, who at his desire uncovers her bosom to make the favourable omen of meeting her more sure in its result, he feels certain of success in whatever he undertakes on that day. Compliance with such a request under the circumstance is never refused, particularly in the Sahara. When he leaves home in the morning, the Arab also looks upon seeing age and ugliness as boding no good. He is, as everybody knows, an admirer of fine horses; and, on the same principle, if on quitting his douar he should see a dirty, ill-conditioned mare, he believes it to presage disaster, so he goes back into his dwelling. To hear himself re-called just as he closes his door is a bad sign. As a pendant to our magpie superstition, the Arabs regard a crow flying quite alone as unpropitious; the same by a single partridge; whereas, two seen at the same time betoken good fortune.

Belief in the evil eye is general amongst the Arabs,

and many wear talismans and amulets to avert its effects. Parents are particularly solicitous to guard their children from its mischievous influence, and, where they think they have reason to fear it, have recourse to charms to dispel the baneful glance. They do not like people to look too long or too attentively at anything which belongs to them, a camel or a horse for example, unless Allah is invoked to protect it from the evil eye. An artist who cannot do this in Arabic, and would not be understood if he said it in his own language, has seldom an opportunity of drawing or painting such animals *dal vero*, which requires time and constant observation of his object. An old Arab told us with great gravity, that he saw a painter—'Allah confound their race'—making a sketch of his donkey, which soon after went off its food, pined away, and died, a victim to the evil eye of the man of the brush and pencil!

When anyone admires the horse of another, and does not observe the formula, 'May God protect it from the evil eye,' he is supposed to envy the owner the possession of it.

The Jews still find omens in the sacrifice of animals. These rites are usually performed once a week. On such occasions Jewesses may be seen offering up fowls at the sea-side. After some mummeries have been gone through, the half-dead bird is thrown or flutters into the sea, where the 'favoured people' discover a good or bad prognostic in its last struggles.

When we were at Constantine we had an opportunity of seeing the performance of the Khouans Aïssaouas. These fanatics, in execution of their feats, get wilder than dancing dervishes. When excited by

music and the applause of their audience they become half-mad in their exaltation, their contortions and cries giving them the appearance of people in a fit of St. Vitus's dance ; and as if to throw off every resemblance to the dignity of man, they roar like lions, yelp like dogs, and imitate the movements and howls of various animals ; in fact, when they have worked themselves up to the last pitch of frenzy, they look and act like demons, burn themselves with fire, swallow nails, eat scorpions, or dance on the sharp edge of a sword, and so on.

It is a most degrading spectacle, in which there is no doubt some deception, for one of the brotherhood lately died from the effect of inadvertently swallowing a nail ; but enough of truth remains in their unnatural antics to make a scene of this kind highly disgusting.

Arab women have also similar performances, in which some of the more revolting features are, however, omitted. We were present at an exhibition of this kind at Cherchell, where, walking one day near a Marabout, we were attracted by a peculiar noise which seemed to proceed from the inside. A young woman, who was at the door of the little building, surmising our curiosity, invited us to enter, adding that no Arab is ever permitted to be present on these occasions, but that for a Roumi it did not matter. The principal actors were two young ladies of a respectable position in society, who, as a cure for some malady, were killing themselves with excitement and frantic contortions. This—except the conclusions, which are our own—was what our introducer told us, adding that they had already made considerable progress towards recovery. The remedy was not the

less strange, whatever might be the result, for never had we imagined that the ligaments and muscles of the human neck could stand the swinging and jerking we now saw them subjected to. It was indeed fearful to watch these young women; their faces deadly pale, a wild ecstatic fire in their eyes, their long dishevelled hair thrown about at every movement, as they bobbed forward almost to the ground, jerking themselves up, and suddenly throwing their heads and bodies back with a rapidity and energy sufficient to crack the spine or loosen the head, which we expected every minute to see flying across the little temple! The backward and forward action was sometimes varied during a few seconds, by swaying the body from side to side.

When exhausted by the terrible ordeal they had gone through, the poor girls, falling prostrated into the arms of their friends, burst into hysterical fits of crying.

Other women followed, who enacted various feats, such as passing a lighted torch under and over their bare arms, putting the flame into their mouths and making it come out of their nostrils, &c. They did not appear to have any appetite for scorpions, at least we did not see such delicacies served up. It is impossible not to feel pity for these poor victims of ignorance and credulity.

In the adjoining empire of Marocco, where the inhabitants are in general far behind the Algerines on the way to civilisation, the degraded condition of the lower classes renders them as superstitious as savages, or as any barbarous race can be. In that country sorcery and all the occult sciences are practised by professional magicians, who deceive the people by tricks and jugglery.

These magicians have, besides other marvels, a mountain which speaks and divines futurity like the Augurs of old.

Thus do the ignorant amongst the Muslims, like the ignorant all over the world, abase the fair form of Religion, and set up Superstition in her stead.

CHAPTER XII.

LANGUAGE.



I've taught me other tongues—and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger.—*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.*

A KNOWLEDGE of Arabic, sufficient for practical purposes, may be acquired by those who will give themselves the trouble to study the excellent grammars and other elementary works in French and Arabic.

The strange characters must of course be first overcome. They are difficult enough, as each of the twenty-nine hieroglyphical-looking letters of the alphabet takes four different forms according to its place in the sentence. They are called separate, middle, and final letters.

An almost insuperable difficulty is learning to *read* Arabic, not on account of the complications alluded to, but owing to the orthographical signs, and those used instead of the vowels, which are three in number, being omitted in most manuscripts, and are properly placed only in valuable editions of books carefully got up and not easily met with. The vowels themselves are never written or printed, as they are with us; their omission, when indicated at all, is marked by the signs we have spoken of—signs which resemble those employed in

French to denote the accents—being put over or under the word to which the vowels belong. Nothing short of many years' practice in reading books printed without these substitutes for them can enable a man to read with facility. To comprehend the task we must imagine an English book without vowels and with no more punctuation than we find in a legal document put into the hands of a foreigner, or even of an Englishman, and think how much he would make of it. Of course in the grammars and other books intended for instruction, these signs are carefully given, and, as copious vocabularies and dialogues form a part of such works, enough of the language may be learned from them for conversation with the natives, for whom much talking is too great an exertion. It is well known that the Arabs read and write from right to left, their books and manuscripts beginning at the last page in ours. A little practice makes this inversion familiar to us.

The Arabs have the sound of our 'th,' which some foreigners find so difficult to pronounce; it is their  ts. The Spaniards, who have precisely the same in their 'ce' and 'ci,' no doubt took it from the Moors, as they did the 'j' (jota) from the Arab  kh. In fact, a great part of what adds force and character to the beautiful language of Spain is derived from the same source. Thus, such as speak Spanish may easily acquire those deep Arab gutturals which seem to proceed from the region of the lowest button on the waistcoat.

We may here mention that, the Spanish element being considerable in Algiers, those who know the language have opportunities of keeping up their practice in this useful idiom, which, after the English—as a mother

tongue—is the one most spoken in the world. Some of the shops—particularly cigar shops—are kept by Spaniards. It is true that these people usually speak the dialects of their own provinces, Valencia, Alicant, and others, but most of them are able to express themselves more intelligibly to those who understand Castilian. Some come from Murcia, where tolerably good Spanish is spoken by all classes. In society we occasionally meet with families who are either from Old or New Castile, and people of education generally speak well, to whatever part of Spain they belong.

Whilst on the subject of language we may remark, that as no people visit foreign countries as much as the English, to none is a knowledge of languages so necessary. After money, this is the most indispensable accompaniment of a journey. We can say of language what we say of time, language is money; but it is not so much the negative advantage of saving expense, as the positive gain in information and pleasure, which makes the acquisition of so much value. Yet how few of the English we meet abroad can speak even the one—almost universal tongue—French. The reason cannot be that they have not time to learn it. Bulwer, in one of his admirable novels, replies to this apology when he adverts to the quarters of hours we pass without doing anything; the old excuse is in truth the worst. As little can those who travel on the Continent so often, complain of want of practice, for it is their own fault if they will not associate with the natives of the countries they visit. Whatever be the reason it is a fact, that very few Englishmen can speak more than a pass-his-way kind of French. Not many are able to put together two

consecutive sentences correctly. There are of course exceptions amongst the more—we may say—ambitious classes, who, speaking well, can sustain a conversation with any intelligent stranger they may fall in with on their journey; but by far the greater number not only know little French, but, speaking what they have picked up with the pure cockney, or the drawling Dundreary accent, appear to be talking English when we do not catch what they say. Even in our own language this vitiated pronunciation, when carried too far, is only vulgar affectation,—applied to French it becomes ridiculous. With all these shortcomings, no nation is so little indulgent to foreigners as we are to those who speak and pronounce the Anglo-Saxon badly.

Travelling by rail we one day heard an Arab, who spoke good French, make some remarks to an Englishman who sat near him. As the Algerines, supposing French to be universal, know nothing of any other idiom, our Arab in the train, obtaining no reply, remarked to a friend that it was a pity that so nice a gentleman should be deaf and dumb! The Arab urchin who cleans boots or sells matches—seeing more of our countrymen—does not fall into the same mistake. He gets together a few English phrases, as part of his stock-in-trade to meet the requirements of the helpless Briton, who has passed months, perhaps years abroad: ‘clean your boots?’ ‘fine matches, Sir,’ ‘ripe oranges,’ &c. His vocabulary not being very copious, the lad has recourse to signs, counts numbers on his fingers and tries to explain himself in any way he can, except by speaking French, which experience has shown to be a loss of time and sous.

At Mostaganem we saw an unmistakable English-

man, who must have got so far through the linguistic talent of some railway official. He was talking to a coachman, whose carriage he seemed desirous to engage for a drive: 'Où, Monsieur, désire-t'il aller?' enquired the driver. 'Now,' said the Briton, 'if you wish to be understood in a Christian tongue, speak English to me.'

In talking to Arabs it is necessary to use the infinitive mood, for it is the only part of the verb they understand. Rejecting the complication of conjugation and leaving out all inconvenient words, they reduce language to a comprehensible degree of simplicity.

In Arabic they 'thee' and 'thou' everybody, however little they know the person addressed, or however high his rank may be. Thus a familiar and droll turn is given to conversation with them. When an Arab does not understand he says *makach*, or simply repeats what you say. Here is a specimen. We ask one to find us a model to paint.

We (anxiously)—'Toi pas parler avec Maure?'

Arab (smiling)—'Moi pas parler avec Maure.'

We (angry and disappointed)—'Toi bête, pas comprendre.'

Arab (mildly)—'Moi bête pas comprendre.'

We (imperatively)—'Toi chercher Maure à présent.'

Arab—'Makach, pas comprendre.'

Apropos of models, it is not easy in this country, where there are so many varied costumes and types of character, for the artist to find an Arab to paint, as Mahomet and prejudice forbid them to have their likeness taken; we have asked many, but the greater part had religious or other scruples; at last we sought and

found a fine-looking Kabyle for a full-length figure, thinking he might be less punctilious; but we had scarcely sketched in the head, when he swore 'by the beard of the Prophet' he would *stand* it no longer, nor risk the Evil Eye and Heaven for any Roumi in Christendom. A good-natured Black, who was not so bigoted, threw a burnous over his shoulder, and enabled us to complete the picture.

There is, however, no want of subjects for the painter in Algeria. Nature and architecture abound with objects of interest. The African landscape, with its novel and wonderful vegetation, presents endless variety, and is inviting ground for brush and pencil. We may choose Roman and Moorish ruins, where Arabs, classically draped, sit on the old walls, the deep blue sea, or the Atlas mountains, forming a background; or a scene of nomadic life, such as an Arab encampment with tents, camels, and mules. Another picture is the sea-like Sahara, where caravans are the ships and the oases the islands on the apparent water.

The artist must not mind a crowd of Bedouins, veiled women, European and native boys, forming a circle of which he is the centre. It is indeed painting under difficulties when we cannot see our object: but the Arabs, who have an instinctive notion of politeness, send away these curious intruders, reserving only the best places for themselves. This has often happened to us; but, being of a disposition easily satisfied—when we get all we want—we go on with our work as soon as the course has been cleared.

After this little digression we shall conclude what we have said about language—and the want of it—by re-

marking that Arabs who were men of middle-age about the time of the conquest seldom speak French.

A friend of ours, who had a pretty wife, told us that one day, in passing a mosque, he was accosted by a venerable Mahometan of a superior order or caste who addressed him in Arabic. As the Mussulman looked at the lady, our Englishman at first thought the stranger was proposing to buy, and then to marry her; but he soon found, from the old Turk passing his hand over his face, that he was only remonstrating with him for allowing his wife to go about without the adjar, which ought to conceal her face from eyes profane!

This calls to mind another illustration of Arab manners and customs. We were travelling in a distant part of Algeria. In our compartment of the diligence was a young woman who, having no adjar, had not the usual advantage over us. To the genuine Arab cast of countenance, regular features, brown complexion, black hair, and large black eyes, she united a lively manner and a graceful figure. Her dress was of the showy kind worn by women in the country, who do not cover the face with the adjar, and their persons with the haïk, except when they go to town. There was the usual display of trinketry both as to taste and quantity. We had not been long together when she addressed the chronicler of national characteristics with, 'Is this lady thy wife?' being answered affirmatively, she enquired—'How many hast thou?' 'Only this one.' 'Only one!' she exclaimed in astonishment, and after a pause remarked, 'For a gentleman one wife is not enough,' to which she added something which seemed to indicate doubts as to whether so limited a harem was not the result of economy or

stinginess, but concluded by making a fair offer of herself and her charms to supply the deficiency.

We close the chapters on the indigenous population with the following observations.

The native inhabitants of Algeria have considerably diminished in numbers since the conquest in 1830. This has been caused by war, emigration, and even by famine, when certain districts have been infested by locusts.

At the time this beautiful country became a colony of France, many of the Kabyles, Arabs, and Moors abandoned their homes for the neighbouring states of Marocco and Tunis, where the manners and customs of the people are more congenial to the taste of their co-religionists, who in these countries have not their Christian masters always before them. Some of those also who make the pilgrimage to Mecca remain in Syria for the same reason.

Notwithstanding this decrease in the native population—a decrease which continues only in a very slight degree, if it has not ceased altogether—the indigenous element is still as four to one of the European, being above two millions and a half to about six hundred thousand foreigners including the French troops.

New settlers are however constantly establishing themselves in different parts of the colony. Since the war with Germany, many families from Alsace and Lorraine have fled from the persecutions of the Prussians to find happier homes here.

The civil conflict in Spain has also had a similar result in regard to emigration from that country; Algeria, being near, and offering so many advantages for the

agricultural pursuits to which the class who emigrate dedicate themselves, has always been the place first chosen by them. They have lately come over in such numbers that the attention of the authorities has been directed to the application of the international law of recruitment between France and Spain.

Enterprising people, who think the resources of their own country insufficient, or have found the ground they wished to purchase in possession of others, have in Algeria a new, productive, and exhaustless field for labour, excellent soil, and one of the finest climates in the world. Thousands of acres of uncultivated land may be bought at reasonable prices from the government, which offers favourable conditions and every facility to industrious settlers, who have no occasion to seek in distant parts of the globe advantages which are to be found so near home. There are several English farmers established in the colony, but they are almost all men of property, who do business on a large scale.

When it is remembered that the Marabouts are incorrigible in exciting the people to revolt, it is well that the native population, not increasing itself, should be convinced that the number of new arrivals makes a successful insurrection impossible.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MARKET.

What a goodly prospect spreads around !

• • • • •
 She scatters plenty with unsparing hand.

• • • • •
 Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime.

THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

IT is an interesting sight to the newly-arrived European to see Arabs and Kabyles coming to market on camels, mules, and asses, laden with the products of a soil which yields two, or even three harvests in the year, and not only supplies Algiers with good things at low prices, but allows the surplus to be sent to many cities in Europe, the export not perceptibly diminishing the resources of the land.

Four steamers leave Algiers weekly, taking with them as part of their cargo large quantities of produce from these rich provinces, which were once the granaries of ancient Rome ; yet an inexhaustible store, enough to load a fleet of such vessels, always remains in the market-place.

The cost of transport to Marseilles, over 600 miles of

sea, causes vegetables, game, &c., to arrive in Europe too dear to make a larger export profitable. When sent afterwards to distant places in the interior, such as Paris, Vienna, &c.,—losing much of their freshness and flavour—they become dearer still, and can be sold only to the rich. So that no encouragement is given for a larger exportation, especially as in autumn and spring the South of France and Italy can furnish many of the same articles at a cheaper rate, the sea voyage not having to be paid for.

The three middle months of winter are consequently those when the largest shipments are made. At this time the natives, and some of the Europeans—although they have these delicacies very cheap—lament that so much goes away; for, as they say, things would cost still less, if fewer people eat them!

In Algeria cultivation is increasing and improving, so that the resources of the soil are developed from year to year. Thus it is not likely that prices will rise; the Algerines, and the strangers who are fortunate enough to enjoy their dinners on the spot, have therefore no occasion to alarm themselves about the future of trade.

If Africa had been united to Europe the case would have been different; then indeed, train after train would have taken away vast quantities of these luxuries, and Algeria would long ago have been as dear as the neighbouring continent.

There are market-places which may be called picturesque. That of Valencia in Spain, and the Piazza delle Erbe in Verona, Italy—with its elegant architectural surroundings—may be so designated; but we have seen none so well furnished with the varied productions of nature as that of Algiers.

Before entering it, we may remark that the people who sell, and whose different costumes enliven the scene, are of many nationalities—Arabs, Kabyles, French, Spaniards, and Maltese—all talking and gesticulating, each shouting out the merits of what he has to dispose of, make a perfect Babel as to language.

The market-place is a square, with shops under arcades around, in which are sold butchers' meat, game—snipes, woodcocks, &c.,—poultry, groceries and the like; the never-failing fountain throwing up water in the middle. Here are to be had in winter all, and more than all, that summer produces in the North: fresh eggs, new potatoes, green peas, asparagus, French-beans, cauliflowers, artichokes, &c., in short, every kind of vegetable is thrown together in profusion. Some of them, such as artichokes and native asparagus, are simply upset from carts, the load of delicacies remaining in a heap on the ground!

Branches of orange blossoms, garden and wild flowers—many of them exotics on the other side of the Mediterranean—waft fragrance around, and give the square the appearance of a flower-show, whilst they impart freshness to the scene which, under the blue sky, is novel and delightful.

Delicious fruits, piled up on every side, add brighter colours to the verdant display of vegetables. Some idea may be formed of the great variety and quantity of fruit sold in Algiers from the fact that, within the three provinces are the climates and soil favourable to that of the North and South; thus apples, pears, and cherries, which require a colder temperature, grow on the high tablelands, whilst on or near the littoral are produced oranges,

bananas, figs, and pomegranates, the oases of the Sahara furnishing dates, tamarinds, &c.

Colour, and contrast of colours—in perfection—are the charming privileges of the South! We see them everywhere; in the streets, where the primaries are represented in the dress of the people; in the country, where nature displays them on every side, in the deep foliage of the trees, the colour of the ground, the birds in the air, the tints of the sky, and the blue of the sea. They are present throughout creation, but in Southern climes all is richer, deeper, and more intense.

Life—for the poor man especially—is more enjoyable and is most enjoyed in the South: the sun, the beneficent and impartial sun, warms and brings forth all that feeds him.

We have heard of an English merchant who had made a fortune in Sicily, but it gave him no pleasure where the *lazzaroni* get for nothing a luxury wealth cannot purchase—a fine climate. Of what use was his money in Italy where the poorest peasant shared this privilege in common with himself? He therefore left the country in disgust because he was not envied for his riches, and returned to England where, he thanked God, money can buy comforts which cannot be had without it.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLIMATE.

Kennst Du das Land, wo die Citronen blühen,
Im dunklen Laub die Goldorangen glüh'n?
Kennst Du es wohl, dahin, dahin!—GÖTTE.

THE climate of Algiers in winter is temperate, and, compared with that of Italy, it may be called a dry climate even at this season. A very simple but decided proof is that salt never becomes damp, as it almost always is on the South of Europe. There are no mosquitoes in Algiers, a plague which is the consequence of a warm humid atmosphere; the absence of this detestable insect is another indication of dryness and salubrity.

The littoral is free from venomous reptiles; if there be any, they are harmless. In the Sahara the *vipères à cornes* and scorpions are dangerous. Pestilential and epidemical diseases have—at least in modern times—never taken any strong hold of places on the coast. Visitations of cholera have been rare, and the seaports have suffered little on these occasions.

Some of the French guide-books call winter in Algiers '*la saison pluvieuse*.' Everything is relative. Algiers can

be called rainy only when the necessary and refreshing showers, which fall at intervals between September and April, make it wet *in comparison* with the summer months, during which it seldom rains, abundant dews supplying its place. When it does rain it often comes down in torrents of short duration, what is called a spell of bad weather being almost unknown.

A climate which is at the same time moist and warm being considered more beneficial for a particular class of invalids, there may be a wish to accommodate matters when that of Algiers is called damp. It is the interest of the inhabitants to induce strangers to choose this city for their winter quarters, as it is natural for rival '*stations hivernales*' in the South of France and Italy to extol their own attractions. Whether it be favourable or prejudicial to consumptive subjects, winter in Algiers is generally dry and bracing, although only moderately cold. It is however advisable on fine days to be on our guard against the seductions of the African sun; gentlemen as well as ladies ought to carry a parasol.

The weather becomes cooler in the afternoon, from 4 o'clock, and those who are not used to what may be called summer in winter will do well to dress warmly after this hour, even if they do not notice any very perceptible change in the temperature.

Algiers from its situation—which we have already described—is well protected from the north winds.

During several winters we have passed here, we have found that it rains mostly at night; whether this is caused by the power of the sun during the day, or whether the fact can be accounted for in some other way, we do not know, we merely state what may per-

haps have been accidental, but certainly is not imaginary.

Eight months of the year—from the beginning of October to the end of May—the weather is delightful, being neither too hot nor too cold. There is no necessity for fires, although every room has a fireplace, which people of European parentage, but who are born here, sometimes make use of. The country is green, flowers bloom, birds sing, all nature rejoices in life and colour, whilst, frost and snow being never seen, it is scarcely possible to believe that it is winter.

When we say that the comparative dryness of the climate of Algiers makes it less suited to patients suffering from phthisis than places which are warm and damp, like Pisa and other towns in Italy, we only repeat what is the opinion of some medical men. As for ourselves, we cannot imagine that so uniform a temperature can be prejudicial to *any* class of invalids.

Consumption is unknown to the Kabyles and Arabs, who live in the country and only come to town occasionally; but the Moors, who lead a sedentary life in shops, seldom going outside the gates of the city, sometimes fall victims to it.

In Algeria—taken as a whole—as much rain is said to fall as in Paris. It does not descend so often; but, as it pours down more heavily at shorter intervals, the statement may be true; particularly as it rains much more in the interior than it does on the littoral, where the capital is situated. In Algiers itself, weeks often pass in winter during which the city and the country around it are under a canopy of blue sky. When a change comes, the weather soon takes up again, often

on the same day ; and, during the pauses, unlike the breaks of a Northern clime, the sun reappears in all its brilliancy, drying the streets and roads in a few hours. There is a great difference between the quantity of water which is required for vegetation and the constant damp atmosphere occasioned by frequent and lasting rain.

The climate of Algiers is very dissimilar from that of Italy. We know that beautiful and interesting country well—from end to end, and from sea to sea, having lived there during several consecutive years, and have often visited it since.

In Algiers the climate is more equal than that of the Italian peninsula, where the transitions from hot to cold are more sudden and severe, a chain of mountains running longitudinally through it, whilst the tramontana and sirocco seem to be always in contention which shall be master of the situation.

Thus the climate of Italy is generally either damp or windy, as the north or the enervating south wind predominates. The latter, which comes from the African desert, is dry and warm, and in winter is not unpleasant in Algiers. In crossing the sea it takes the humidity of the water and, as water does not cool at sunset so quickly as land, the air on coming in contact with the former element whilst it retains much of its own warmth, adds to it the moisture it attracts in passing the Mediterranean.

In this condition it is carried over to Italy where, impregnated with damp, the overcharged atmosphere discharges itself in rain.

The mistral or tramontana—the Northern blast

which Europe sends to Africa—being a cold wind, does not attract humidity from the sea in a like degree, so that it arrives at these shores as a healthy breeze, bringing rain only when it takes a westerly direction.

Those who have passed winters in Italy and Algiers cannot have failed to notice the contrast between the climates of Rome, Naples, Florence, and other places in Southern and Central Italy, and that of the Algerian capital. In the first-named towns it is, as a rule, rainy, cold, or windy; very fine weather without any one of these drawbacks being the rare exception from December to February. Whereas in Algiers the exceptions are rain and cold, if 48° Fahrenheit in shade at sunrise—the lowest degree quicksilver descends to—can be called cold.

The advantage winter in Italy possesses over this season in more Northern climes is rather its short duration than its mildness and uniformity of temperature. During the three middle months it has many of the characteristics of the same period in England, the principal difference being that, when it snows in the North, it generally rains in Italy: still it is something to have autumn carried half through November, and to welcome spring in the middle of February. Yet more delightful is it in Algiers where, properly speaking, there is no winter at all.

As no information in regard to weather can be so practical and intelligible as a statement of its character and changes during an average season, we have taken note of each day, from the time of our last arrival up to when we left. Not to enter into unnecessary detail, we shall notice especially only the periods at which fine weather

was succeeded by bad and *vice-versâ*, describing the intervening fluctuations by a few general observations. The temperature in Europe on particular days having been published from time to time in the 'Moniteur de l'Algérie,' we also shall register it, as well as the corresponding number of degrees on the same days in Algiers, in order that the reader may be able to judge of the cold and warmth of this climate in winter, as compared with that of places on the other side of the Mediterranean. We adopt the Fahrenheit scale as being more familiar to English readers.

We arrived in Algiers on November 10, 1873. From that day up to December 1, we had a continuation of fine autumnal weather, more delightful than the excessive heat of summer anywhere. The warmth at noon during these three weeks averaged about 65° Fahrenheit outside, in shade, the mornings and evenings being cooler.

On December 1 a change came, and up to the 14th we had rain more or less on ten days of this fortnight, the other four being fine; it was not cold, and on seven of the ten rainy days we had intervals of sunshine; the other three brought rain which lasted from morning to night.

During these two weeks of broken weather in Algiers it was very bad in Europe. In Rome, for instance, they had on some days only 37°, whilst it was 56° here.

On the 15th the weather again settled, and continued as beautiful as it had been the first three weeks till December 26, 1873; on this day the thermometer indicated 60° at 8 A.M. in Algiers, in Florence 39°, Paris 37°, Constantinople 33°.

This fine weather lasted up to January 4 of the new year. It was followed by four days during which it was very variable. We had rain and sunshine by turns up to the 8th. From this time to the end of the month the weather was remarkably fine and genial, with the exception of one rainy day, and some showers on three of the others.

On January 16 the temperature in Algiers was 60° outside in

shade. On the same day and hour at Palermo it was 51° , in Florence 46° , in Rome 37° .

On January 26 at Algiers the degrees were 58° , at Palermo 55° , in Naples 53° , and in Rome 48° .

From February 1 to 28 the weather was delightful, with the exception of five days, on two of which it rained a little before 8 o'clock in the morning, the rest of the day being fine; and three others, on which we had one or two showers. There was only one really bad day.

On the 23rd of this month, at 8 A.M., in Algiers the thermometer marked 57° , Naples 45° , and Rome 38° .

March opened with three rainy and windy days, followed by a week of fine weather; to which succeeded three showery and comparatively cold days. At *sunrise* on the coldest of these we had 49° , and 60° at noon. From this time to the end of the month the weather was magnificent.

On March 6 at 8 A.M. the temperature in Algiers was 51° , Palermo 42° , Rome 35° , and in Florence it was below freezing point!

On the 13th in Algiers we had 51° , on the same day at Naples it was 38° , and in Rome 35° .

Speaking generally, the temperature in winter on the littoral may be put down at 48° in shade on the coldest days at sunrise, and 60° in shade at noon of the same days. At sunrise in fine weather, the thermometer outside the house, in shade, usually indicates about 55° , and at noon 67° .

The winter 1872 to 1873 was finer than that of 1873-4, which last may be taken as an average one. We had in the former no rain before spring, fine days succeeding each other during the whole of November, December, and January, with heavy dews at night. About the beginning of February a change came, and the spring of 1873 was cold and rainy for this country. During the three months of delightful weather in Algiers, prayers were put up in the churches in England for a

cessation of rain ; a part of Lancashire was under water, and much damage was caused by the floods in different parts of the country.

As a rule, the first rain after summer falls towards the end of September or the beginning of October. The middle of the season—November, December, and the first half of January—is frequently, we may say generally, the finest part of an Algerian winter. Some heavy showers usually come down in February and March, and these are almost always the coldest months. In April and May, with the exception of a dull day now and then, the weather is balmy and very fine. Of course there are years when they sustain the capricious character given to them in Europe.

The degrees of heat in Algiers during the three warmest months of summer, July, August, and September, may have little interest for our readers ; we shall therefore only say that it is at this period greatly tempered by the sea-breezes, and those who like Algeria may prolong their residence in the capital, or other large towns on the coast, till the end of June, or even later, without being more inconvenienced by hot weather than they would be in many places in the North of Europe ; this is certainly true of the season just past. Living in Salzburg—which is a delightful summer residence—we received a newspaper from Algiers daily, in which the degrees of warmth were always given. Comparing the temperature with Salzburg and Vienna, we found that we had in Austria a greater number of days on which the heat was excessive than were put down in the statement we received from Algiers, where it was very hot only when the wind came from the desert.

Above all, the weather was during the whole summer more uniform—about 82° at 2 o'clock P.M. outside in shade—in Algiers, than it was with us, for we had many very cold days, and in August the temperature was not higher than 51° during a whole week.

The sirocco very rarely lasts more than three days, and it generally ceases to blow after twenty-four hours.

It is well known that in places very far north, as Moscow and others, exceptionally hot weather is often intense. The cold days we have occasionally here—Salzburg—at this season, cause the *average* heat to be less than it is at Algiers, where such exceptions in summer are unknown.

During fine weather the dews are so copious after sunset in Algeria, that in the morning one would suppose it had rained.

The climate of the interior, the high table-lands, and the Sahara, is very different from that of the coast ; but as this may also be a matter of indifference to many, we shall not enter further into the subject than to mention that snow sometimes falls in winter at Medeah, Milianah, and other places in high situations not far from Algiers, although frost in these elevated districts is rare, and when it does occur mercury descends only just below freezing point. In summer it is much hotter in such places than it is on the littoral.

Instances of longevity are common amongst both the natives and Europeans, the doubtful hundred years being frequently passed.

An old French lady, who has lived in Algiers since the conquest in 1830, told us that the climate is particularly adapted for aged people. Her own hale person

bore witness to what she said, for never had we seen a more healthy-looking old woman at eighty-five. She had with her a fine handsome young man, her descendant in the third generation.

Speaking of Algeria with the respectable prejudices which she had preserved from the time of the invasion, she said : ' It is a paradise inhabited by demons ! ' This agreeable and venerable lady—whom we met accidentally in one of our country rambles soon after our first visit to Algeria—insisted, with the politeness of her nation, which in her early days was polite *par excellence*, on showing us many beautiful spots in the neighbourhood ; walking and climbing with a vigour which fully sustained what she said of the climate.

We met with another enthusiast in an old man of ninety years—the greater part of them summer—whom we saw working in a garden. He was quite a spoiled child of old Time.

Being near some aloes, we asked him if it were true that this prodigious plant died as soon as it flowered. To which he replied : ' Well, I know nothing about *that* ; mais qu'est ce que cela nous fait à nous pourvu que nous vivions.'

Telling us a bit of his history, he said he had been through the wars of the first Napoleon, and had lived long in Algiers. The climate was however the theme on which the veteran most delighted to expatiate. Concluding a eulogy on its charms, he exclaimed : ' If I could take it in my hand '—closing his fingers, but leaving a hollow which was figuratively supposed to contain the genial climate of Algeria—' I would kiss it,' which he did, metaphorically at least.

The old fellow was right ; man without sun is only half alive, he droops and saddens like everything in nature. In winter commend us to the land where the glorious orb of day brightly shines, where the trees and grass preserve their green, and the earth yields its fruits.

As climate is a subject of interest to all, and is a serious question to many, we hope this notice on that of Algiers may be acceptable to our readers.

CHAPTER XV.

FIRST EXCURSION.—ALGIERS TO MEDEAH.

Journey into foreign lands, for God's earth is wide.—*Story of the Two Princes.*

Chi va lontan dalla sua patria, vede
 Cose da quel che già credea, lontane ;
 Che narrandole poi, non se gli crede,
 E stimato bugiardo ne rimane :
 Che 'l sciocco vulgo non gli vuol dar fede,
 Se non le vede e tocca chiare e piane.—ARIOSTO.

DELIGHTFUL excursions may be made along the littoral, and into the interior of Algeria.

The capital, placed about equidistant from Oran, near the frontier of Marocco, to the West, and to Bône on the Eastern boundary of the French possessions, is an excellent starting-point, offering great facilities for tours to interesting places, such as Coleah, Tipaza, Cherchell, Tenez, Mostaganem, and Oran, on the one side, and Dellys, Bougie, Djidjelli, Bône, and Constantine on the other.

From the sea to the Sahara fine roads radiate fan-like in all directions ; at one time passing over well-cultivated land ; at another running through wild mountain passes, from which they emerge on extensive

plains ; now skirting the margins of lakes and the borders of rivers, they enter dark forests, or ascend some high table-land, opening to magnificent prospects over an African landscape.

Such are the general features of the country over which we shall take the reader.

Although our excursions will extend to the limits of the provinces east and west, and to the oasis of Biskra in the Sahara, they will present but an incomplete survey of the interior of Algeria, to intersect which in every direction, and to describe all that is to be seen, would be inconsistent with the object of this work. Thus we leave the mysteries of the Grande Kabylie and other romantic ground to the imagination and the enterprise of the traveller, satisfied if what we narrate excites in him a desire to see more.

The characteristics of the three provinces into which Algeria is divided may be classified as follows.

That of Algiers, which is the smallest, enjoys the most temperate and equal climate. It is the only one which strangers—not engaged in trade—make their residence. In it is the capital of the colony, the seat of European refinement and comfort, which are here united to the picturesqueness of Arab life. A part of the Grande Kabylie being included within its limits, this province has much of the wild nature of that fine district, whilst for the number of Roman remains—Julia Cæsarea one of the most interesting being amongst them—it is second only to that of Constantine.

The province of Oran is the best cultivated and, owing to the railway which is open from its capital—

Oran—to Algiers, the facilities for travelling are greater than in the other two. The Spanish residents here are so numerous that they form a not inconsiderable part of the whole population.

The province of Constantine, the largest of the three, is the most wildly picturesque, both as regards the grand scenery of the country, the primitive character of its inhabitants, and the peculiar appearance of the towns and villages. Its unique capital, the ancient Cirta, built on a high inaccessible rock, is the most singular city in Algeria, perhaps in the world. This province has more Roman ruins scattered over it than even that of Algiers. The extraordinary temple of Medracen, the ruins of Tebessa and Lambessa, are here to be seen; their arches, temples, and gates still standing. It has also the greatest number of inhabitants.

As few of the English who pass the winter in Algiers leave the metropolis for the interior, the *agrémens* of these departments are almost unknown to them.

Following the travellers' good old rule, we start early on our excursion. An hour after sunrise the train arrives at Hussein-Dey, a village near the sea—which is called after the last of the Pachas; the one who pushed European forbearance too far, and in a single moment caused the cup to overflow which had been filling for centuries.

The finest views of Algiers are on this side. From the beach at Hussein-Dey, in particular, it is seen to great advantage. When approached in a vessel the town, being directly opposite, does not appear to stand

out into the water so much as it really does. Seen from this spot the Moorish city seems to rise like a fairy creation from the waves. Those who wish to take a general view of the picturesque capital of Algiers will find no more favourable point to paint from. In the foreground are some aloes and cacti, which harmonise well with the picture ; and, if the artist retreat a step or two after he has sketched in the background and middle distance, he may bring in some palm-trees, and often a stray Arab on his camel, passing along the highroad, which lies between the *Jardin d'acclimatation* and the seashore.

The trees and flowers in this garden grow on the field where a sanguinary battle was fought in 1541, when Charles V. landed here with an army of 25,000 men, which was signally defeated by the old enemies of Spain. Fernando Cortes, afterwards the celebrated conqueror of Mexico, was present at this engagement.

At a more recent period (1775), another Spanish force, under the command of Count O'Reilly, was vanquished not far from the same ground.

After stopping at several stations we came to Blidah. The distance from Algiers, only 38 English miles, occupies two hours, for the trains do not go at more than half the rate they travel in France ; but to compensate for lack of speed, the carriages are unusually roomy and agreeable.

The principal hotel in Blidah—the Hôtel d'Orient, is a fair specimen of those in the provincial towns of Algeria ; and before we proceed farther, we may mention that the best hotels in the interior are very good. The *best* hotel is always the one at which the

French officers breakfast and dine. Most, even of the small towns, have a garrison, with a resident general or *commandant*, according to the importance of the place in a military point of view, and as all the officers, from the general downwards, take their meals at the hotel—those of superior rank forming a party alone, the others messing at a table together—it is the interest of the landlord to treat them well, that he may secure their patronage, which they transfer to another house when not satisfied with the one they usually visit. That which is frequented by these gentlemen is a guarantee for good living and prompt service, soldier fashion. The excellence of the *cuisinc*, the quality of the wines, and the conviviality of the table, are matters of importance to men who lead rather a monotonous life in country quarters.

Thus it is that such houses—even in villages—are generally well provided with the choice of all that is to be had at the market, not only on account of the officers and civil officials, but for the repute their favour acquires for the hotel, which soon becomes known as the first in the place.

In regard to bedroom accommodation we must sometimes 'rough it;' but the reasonable traveller will overlook the smallness of the apartments and the simplicity of the furniture of a country inn, in consideration of an excellent bed, and the good things of Algeria cooked in the best kitchen in the world, all of which are to be had in the most out-of-the-way places throughout the three provinces.

Blidah, called 'the beautiful' by the Arabs, is delightfully situated at the foot of the lower Atlas, in a

grove of orange and lemon trees. The modern part is well built, the houses are high, the streets wide, and one of the squares, that on which the Hôtel d'Orient stands, is spacious and attractive, with its fountain spouting water in the middle. Altogether the impression made on arriving is that we are in a lively and open town.

The native quarter presents the usual characteristics, with more animation than is generally remarked in Arab communities.

Public gardens at Blidah are almost a superfluity, where the country around is a garden on a larger scale. Here the very hedges are composed of pomegranate, orange, and lemon bushes, mixed with double roses. Plantations of orange, fig, olive and other trees give to the environs of the town the appearance of a vast orchard. We have never seen soil better cultivated nor labour employed on more varied and beautiful productions.

No one who goes to Blidah must fail to visit the *Bois Sacré* or sacred grove; a name given to a wood of olive trees near the town, and which, for the Mahometans, is hallowed by the tomb of a venerated Marabout—Sidi Mohammed Blidi—who rests beneath a white Moorish temple, appropriately placed under the old trees, which keep it in perpetual twilight. There is something solemn and impressive about the silent spot, where the light of day is excluded by these centennial olives, which throw a sombre shade over the grave of the Mussulman. Some of these giants of the wood are as large as the oldest oaks in England.

The olive is indigenous, and grows spontaneously in Algeria; wild or cultivated, it yields excellent oil. There is scarcely any part of the colony where this productive

and useful tree does not spread its luxuriant branches in the sun, its dull green foliage often sheltering a whole troop of Bedouins from the summer's heat. The trunks of some exceptional specimens of this enormous vegetation measure from ten to eleven yards in circumference, and those of which we are speaking have scarcely less gigantic proportions. Such as we see in the South of Europe convey no idea of the dimensions of their African rivals.

From Blidah we look over the misty plain of the Metidja which, from some peculiarity of the atmosphere, resembles the sea. Across this imaginary water the *Tombcau de la Reine* rises like a landmark, adding apparent truth to the fanciful view; but, as we shall have an opportunity of inspecting this mysterious monument on our way to Tipaza, we shall say more about it when we arrive at its base.

Across the country, on the table-land of the Sahel, the town of Coleah looms, like the fantastic buildings of a mirage. As night approaches this effect becomes still more striking, and the illusion of the intervening water yet more complete, for the lights in the old Arab town may be taken for a beacon shining from cliffs on some distant coast. We always liked and often re-visit the orange-grown Blidah.

A short drive in an open carriage, on the road to Medeah, takes us to one of the wonders of Algeria, the famous Gorges de la Chiffa, a region of wild and romantic beauty, such as we might expect to find far removed from town or city, but which is only three hours from the capital. Half an hour brought us to the entrance of

this famous pass. As we advance into the gorge the character of the scenery begins to develop itself. Below ripples like a brook or dashes along like a torrent, according to the quantity of water which descends in cascades from the lateral hills, the *Ruisseau des Singes*.

In Northern latitudes fir and pine-clad heights, white with snow, look grand and imposing in winter. Here, in Algeria, where vegetation of every kind is green and flourishing at this season, softer tints colour the mountain slopes, overgrown with wild olive, cedar, and carob trees, whose delicate foliage, even near, lends to them something of the tender hues of distance.

As we proceed, enchanting scenes open out before us ; at one moment precipitous rocks narrow the passage, their height and the straitness of the gorge darkening the way below, which in some places is only wide enough for it and the rivulet in the ravine to pass through. From time to time the turn of an angle opens to a broader part of the defile which, in contrast to the shade from which we emerge, is seen in the full blaze of the sun.

Beautiful as light and shade play about them are the lilac or grey colours of the rocks, their crevices ingrown with lentisk and ivy, wet by the sparkling water which innumerable small falls spirt on them from the mountain side.

Through this picturesque gorge before civilisation—as unwelcome to the king of the Atlas as to the Arab—marched along the macadamised road made by the soldiers, many a stray lion passed on his way to the littoral.

A much less formidable animal, but in his wild state

one not uninteresting to Europeans, still frequents the Chiffa: this is the monkey. Troops of them sometimes come down from the heights to drink at the river, called from that circumstance the Ruisseau des Singes.

Having ordered breakfast at the inn we took a stroll amongst the fine scenery in the neighbourhood. We had been there so often without seeing the monkeys that we had begun to look upon the story as a myth, got up to attract people to the house. This time however we were rewarded for our perseverance, for we saw great numbers in the trees, jumping from branch to branch or eating the fruit or leaves of such as they feed on. Like all wild animals, even the ugly monkey looks much better in the enjoyment of his natural liberty. Those we saw were large, with skins and hair less coarse than their brethren in confinement. Nothing is more amusing than the antics and gambols of these half-human creatures, so like man in the gravity of his face, and boys in their hour of play. Besides those on the trees, we saw many others in the ravine below, diverting themselves on the banks of the river, where they formed a circle, the young in the middle, with their elders sitting round. When they perceived us the parents took the little ones on their backs, and ran away with them up the rocks. Such was the first sight we had of our remote and interesting ancestors—according to the Darwinian theory.

These apes are a feature and an attraction in this part of the gorge. Even the reserved and cautious English tourist gets so far excited and thrown off his guard by the novelty, that he accosts people to whom he has no letter of introduction with, 'Have you seen the monkeys?'

When the first soldiers and colonists arrived in Algeria the long-tailed inhabitants of la Chiffa, not used to be disturbed in their solitudes, threw stones at the invaders.

Whilst watching the apes we observed something moving in the underwood near the river, which we found to be a hyena, the first we had seen out of the Zoological Gardens.

Wild carnivorous animals sometimes penetrate into this ravine, even now, when it is passed twice a day by the public stage, and often by other carriages. As the assertion may be called in question, we extract the following from the 'Moniteur de l'Algérie' of January 17th, 1874, in confirmation of our statement:—

'During the night of the 5th to the 6th of January, a lion was seen roaming about the ravines and underwood of Oued-Mouzaïa and la Chiffa. A hyena was shot in the same place whilst eating a bait prepared for the lion. The *saiïl* was last seen in the Pass of the Mouzaïa, near that of the Chiffa, where he feeds on wild boars, which are numerous in these parts: this dangerous guest has already devoured several oxen. A panther with its two young ones has for some time taken up its quarters in the Oued Karakache in the same neighbourhood, and several wild boars are known to have fallen victims to its rapacity.'

To return to what we saw ourselves. We were fortunate this day, for in the blue sky, high over the mountains, soared a magnificent golden eagle. Its distended wings must have measured some two yards from point to point. Those who have not seen the king of birds floating over grand and solitary scenes can form no con-

ception how striking it looks, and how greatly its presence adds to nature, so much in harmony with the imposing appearance of the mighty bird.

What a beautifier is liberty! How different from the lord of the air is the captive eagle, moping crest-fallen in a barred cage, with drooping wings and tarnished plumage!

Some Arabs, who saw what we were looking at, pointed out to us the mate of the bird above, the female eagle, sitting on its eyry, made in front of a fissure of the rock, a place chosen without care for concealment. It seemed built there as if in defiance, full in the face of man, the wanton destroyer—as often for sport as for necessity—of all that enjoys life and freedom. But he would have been a bold fellow who had dared to confront those yellow eyes which were glaring at us across the ravine.

An Englishman present asked one of the Arabs to fetch him an egg, or a young one. The Kabyle was a brave man, who—as the Arabs say—‘had killed his lion,’ but he said something in Arabic to the Englishman which we may translate freely by—‘catch me!’

Returning to the inn, where the monkeys were the subject of conversation, we were told a curious story of them.

A pedlar, who had women’s caps for sale, stopped there one day to rest. After he had dined he laid himself down under a hedge for a nap, with his basket near him. When he awoke, great was his consternation to find it empty, and a troop of monkeys, each with a cap on its head, grinning and gesticulating at him from the trees. Before he could recover from his astonishment

they scampered off, led by an old ape, the patriarch of the tribe, which had the poor pedlar's hat on his head. For the itinerant vender of caps it was no laughing matter, as through this freak of the monkeys he lost all his stock in trade.

Besides coming occasionally to drink at the river, they sometimes arrive here as fugitives, when retreating from the pursuit of wild animals of a less inoffensive nature ; yet people may go many times to the Ruisseau without being able to see them. In some other parts of Algeria monkeys are in great numbers, and it is extraordinary to meet with them in the Gorges de la Chiffa, only because it is so near the capital.

The rugged side of the mountain behind the inn—where a fall of water from the heights above rushes precipitately through African vegetation—will repay the ascent made by a path which follows the windings of the rocks.

The inn itself—kept by a Spaniard—beyond its fine situation in one of the most beautiful parts of the gorge, is remarkable for nothing but its bad breakfasts and dinners, which are charged double what is paid for good ones at the French hotels.

As we were going farther, we here sent back the open carriage which we had engaged at Blidah, that we might enjoy the scenery more, and be able to pass a few hours at this spot, before the diligence for Medeah should come up. When it arrived we took our seats in the coupé, and had got about half way through the pass, our seven horses galloping merrily along, when a huge piece of rock as big as the diligence—a fragment of stone which had for ages remained high and immovable—was

suddenly detached from the mountain side, and came bounding and rolling down, crushing trees and all that stood in its way, till it fell with an awful crash on the road, a few feet before our three leading horses, which stopped as if their feet had been riveted to the ground. If only two seconds had been added to the countless years during which this rock had kept its place—defying storms and rain—it would have fallen upon us, smashing our coach like the egg of an ostrich, or dashing it over the precipice into the ravine, and we should, after crossing the stormy Gulf of Lyons in safety, have been drowned in the rippling rivulet below, and this book could never have told the tale.

A Mahometan, who was with us in the coupé, called it destiny. ‘The stone,’ he said, ‘was from all eternity preordained to fall, and to stop just where it did; exactly one yard before the feet of the three leading greys, when they started back like horses affrighted on the brink of a precipice.’

For ourselves, we thanked Providence for our escape, whether it was predestined or not.

The diligence was completely blockaded; and, being unable to proceed, the conductor had to wait till some men could be procured to hew in pieces the rock which obstructed the way. As we found this would be a business of time, we profited by the opportunity, and set off on foot through the rest of the gorge.

When we say *we* in these pages it is not always the great *we* of literature; ours is often the sociable little pronoun which represents the author and his wife.

No hay mal que por bien no venga. The accident which caused the detention, however disagreeable to those who

were in haste to get on, offered us the rare chance of a walk in this romantic and solitary region. It was indeed a privilege to be alone in the African gorge, surrounded by its magnificent scenery and strange vegetation, with the picturesque forms of the mountains and rocks rising before us, the river murmuring below, and wild birds floating in the air above.

Nothing was wanting to complete the picture but the presence of a lion which, having dined well, might, in a good humour, have been taking his siesta on the road-side!

Near the end of the defile is a small inn, where the diligence stops for dinner. It stands quite alone in these solitudes, *una venta en despoblado*, as the Spaniards call a public-house so situated.

Arrived here, we related to a party of zouaves and the people of the house what had happened. In an out-of-the-way place any news is welcome, so ours created quite a sensation. We were made to relate the accident over and over again, as if we had been the heroes of a great adventure. At last the stage, whose conductor had found men to clear the way, came up.

For a little road-side inn, far removed from town or village, an excellent dinner was served up, which sent us refreshed and rejoicing on our way.

Besides a spotless table-cloth and napkins, there are always three things to be had at a French dinner, however humble or unpretending it may be; good table wine, good bread, and good cooking.

As the road had continued to rise since we entered the gorge, we had attained a considerable height when we left it for the open country. The view which spread

out before us on issuing from the defile being over an extensive plateau of undulating ground—hills and mountains bounding the horizon—was very striking as contrasted with the narrow pass we had just left.

After a winding ascent of three hours we reached the heights, on which Medeah would have looked well, had it occupied so conspicuous a position, instead of being built on the Southern slope of the Nador, where nothing is seen of the town till we enter its gate.

Those who approach Medeah from Boghar in the opposite direction see it to greater advantage.

CHAPTER XVI.

MEDEAH TO COLEAH.

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
 In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
 Purple and gushing.—*Don Juan.*

El clarin sonó: guerreros,
 Marchad, blandiendo las lanzas
 Sobre el relinchante bruto
 Que el freno espumando tasca.—*FLORIAN.*

MEDEAH, which was called *Mediæ* or *Medias* by the Romans—being situated equidistant from two other cities—was a place of some importance under their government.

The French obtained possession of the town in 1830, but kept it only a few days, after which it was taken and re-taken several times, the celebrated Abd-el-Kader being one of its last defenders, till in 1840 Medeah was finally added to the conquests made in the province of Algiers, and since then it has been strongly fortified.

In Medeah we miss the Moorish architecture, which is always pleasing even in the humblest buildings, whilst it gives character to the rest of the town. Notwithstanding its European look—for there is scarcely an Arab

house to be seen—we never saw so many natives walking about as there are at Medeah, where they form crowds in all the streets and squares, such as we see in villages on market days, or during a fair.

When we come to a town standing on a height, from which it is probable that there is a fine prospect, our first object is to see it. Here we were not disappointed. The views from near the wall, looking towards the range of the higher Atlas, are grand and diversified.

Vegetation at Medeah, under the opposing influences of a Southern latitude and an altitude of 3,000 feet above the sea, partakes of two different climates. Orange, lemon, and olive-trees are no longer seen; whilst, in their stead, pears, apples, and other Northern fruits grow in the gardens and orchards.

Looking across the beautiful table-land of the Teil, we see holm-oaks, cedars, and other trees which represent the vegetation of the South; whilst the purple tints thrown over the mountains and the warm colours which pervade the landscape show that we are approaching the Saharian regions.

Those who find no pleasure in the contemplation of nature may not care to have such scenes set before them, but to the man—and especially to the traveller—of taste we shall be doing *una cosa grata* in pointing them out.

Notwithstanding the height at which it is situated Medeah is a famous wine district, although there is not so much produced here as on the Sahel. It is cold in winter, but the temperature is not so low as in some of the best wine departments of France, whilst in summer it is hot and dry, a climate well suited for the vine. Amongst other wines at Medeah is one of a superior

kind, possessing the quality of keeping for years, which is not the virtue of the usual light table wines.

Medeah is well supplied with the necessaries of life ; and, as it is a small town, and has no larger one near enough to draw away its superfluities, living is cheap. The Arabs, who have an allegory or a legend for everything, say that the Spirit of Evil, roaming about for victims, once entered Medeah. Passing up the streets, the Evil Eye saw abundance on every side till, turning into the market, the great quantity of provisions and produce of the soil which were displayed there made the bad spirit despair of causing mischief where food was so plentiful. Advancing farther, only a doctor and an advocate could be found who were dissatisfied—for the one had no patients, and the other no clients. So the Evil Genius left Medeah in disgust, quitting the town by the gate opposite to the one by which it had entered, to seek in large cities, amongst the poor and needy, the poverty and discontent which lead to crime.

On one of the days we passed at Medeah we saw an exercise of Arab military. The Spais, chiefs of tribes or clans, have now subordinate commands in cavalry regiments of native troops in the service of France. Throughout Algeria, these officers form a conspicuous feature on their gaily caparisoned steeds. Nothing is more striking than the proud bearing and picturesque appearance of these gallant cavaliers, with their burnous thrown gracefully over the shoulder. At the review were hundreds—officers and men—dashing about till the ground almost shook under them.

Never had we seen such rapid evolutions, such galloping *ventre à terre*. At one moment a squadron of

full-blood sons of the desert were at our side, snorting and pawing the green sod ; but see ! they are far away over the great plain : the white burnous of the riders, spread out with wind and speed, look like flying clouds, and the little horses are but spots in the distance. It was a novel and exciting scene.

We say that our longer-limbed racers run faster than the Arab ; it may be so, but they do not *seem* to fly as swiftly, and perhaps their legs do not move so fast, although they may get over more ground in a given number of seconds.

There was a Roman road from Medeah to Tipaza, through which village—once a flourishing town—we shall pass in going to Cherchell. Traces of the old way have been discovered in making the new one, but the line followed by the ancient and modern engineers does not appear to be always the same.

As we intended to visit Cherchell and other places on the coast, we retraced our steps as far as Blidah, whence we took the diligence to Coleah. To be sure of a seat in the coupé—from which the open country is seen almost as well as in a private carriage—it is prudent to telegraph beforehand.

Our route lay across the fertile plain of the Métidja, and up the heights of the Sahel. Mile after mile of the highroad runs between luxuriant hedgerows, of the charming kind described in the chapter on the environs of Algiers.

The Sahel—a pleasure-ground of nature—is a succession of vine-clad slopes, whose sunny sides are covered with that beautiful and suggestive plant

The French understand the culture of the vine

better, and attend to it more, than any other people. Here, as in France, it is cut short, so as to concentrate the flavour of the fruit into a limited number of grapes, the stem not being allowed to grow high and straggling as in Italy, where comparatively little care is taken of it; this is the principal reason why wine is not so good there as might be expected.

Algeria will no doubt be called to occupy an important place amongst wine-producing countries. A great part of the provinces of Algiers and Oran is highly favourable to this branch of cultivation, as regards both soil and climate; and it is this which has induced the colonists to plant so many vineyards in these districts.

Everything seems to prognosticate that the Sahel—which is an elongated table-land, extending from Algiers to near Tipaza—and all that side of the littoral will, at no distant period, be overgrown with vines, which would yield an important article of exportation to Europe.

Whilst we anticipate a brilliant future for the wines of Algeria, it is not less certain that the French in the colony prefer those of the mother country, so that France still supplies a considerable quantity of all that is drunk. As regards the superior qualities this predilection is intelligible enough; but even the light table wines in Algeria—like prophets—find no favour in their own country.

Amongst the most enterprising and successful wine-growers are the monks of La Trappe, that once austere fraternity so well known for the almost fanatical severity of the Order. They are now become more useful members of society, being the means of distributing

comforts to others, which it is reasonable to presume they do not altogether deny to themselves. These friars have a vast establishment at Staouéli, where their extensive vineyards cover many acres of that famous battle-field.

Speaking of the culture of the vine and the monks of La Trappe has led us a little out of our way, for we do not pass through Staouéli in going from Blidah to Coleah, it being on the road from Algiers to the latter town.

Having mentioned Staouéli, however, we may say a few words about the memorable battle fought there, and which—although the first general engagement—decided the ultimate success of the invasion.

After the French landed at Sidi-Ferruch they were constantly harassed by the Arabs, who lay hidden in the underwood and wherever they could find shelter and concealment.

This kind of guerrilla warfare was only a prelude to a more serious and combined attack. The Algerines, having received considerable reinforcements, concentrated their forces on the plain of Staouéli, and pressed their commander-in-chief, Ibrahim-Agha, to lead them to battle.

It was June 19, 1830, when 50,000 native troops were set in motion. To these were opposed 35,000 French. The Arab sharpshooters marched first, next followed two strong columns of infantry, one commanded by Ibrahim and the other by the Bey of Constantine. Each selected a French division for attack, and the skirmishers were sent to reconnoitre the enemy's position.

As the Arabs had on former occasions made short work of the Spanish force under Charles V. and that commanded by Count O'Reilly, they felt sure of giving a good account of their new antagonists.

The Turks, under the Bey of Constantine, began the battle, and rushed with such impetuous valour on the first French division that they succeeded in penetrating into the intrenchment, but, after this momentary success, they were driven back at the point of the bayonet. On the right and in the centre the engagement was hot, but of short duration. The French had reserved their fire till the Arab army should be within gun-shot. When it had approached near enough, it was received by a fire of musketry which covered the ground with dead and wounded.

Three times did the Algerian cavalry and infantry rush furiously on the French lines, but were always repulsed in disorder. As they were about to make another effort, the French general assumed the offensive. Two divisions advanced to the charge, whilst the brigades formed a reserve before Sidi-Ferruch.

This combined attack decided the fortune of the day. The flying Arabs, decimated by grape-shot, and falling under the bayonet, abandoned their position and their batteries, so that an hour afterwards the field of Staouëli was occupied by the French.

It was what may be called a picturesque battle ; one hundred camels, four hundred standing tents, many pieces of artillery, and some well-provisioned magazines fell into the hands of the conquerors.

This brilliant engagement between African and European troops was a scene such as the florid and life-

giving pencil of Horace Vernet loved to portray ; many pictures of the kind he has left to his country, and they are now to be seen on the historical walls of Versailles.

From Coleah—called by the Arabs the ‘Holy City’—the view over the plain of the Métidja, looking towards the Gorges de la Chiffa and the lower Atlas, is very striking. The town itself, partly Arab and partly European, does not offer many objects of interest, except two mosques and a Moorish fountain, all in the best style of these light and elegant structures.

The marabout of Sidi Embarek, near the larger of the mosques, was one of the only buildings which remained intact after the terrible earthquake of 1825 had laid Coleah in ruins. Mustapha Pacha erected the present edifice, to commemorate the event of the sacred temple having been spared the fate of the rest of the city.

The great attraction of Coleah is the Jardin des Zouaves, a name given in honour of the soldiers who made it.

French gardens are often stiff and formal, and a small portion of that at Coleah is laid out in this style ; but it seems to have been done only for the purpose of contrasting bad taste with good, for in the greater part Nature has been taken as a model. The inequalities of the ground, and a river running below some bold rocks forming a miniature ravine, have been turned to good account. The tall and shady trees which stand on and about these rocks are frequented by a multitude of singing birds, whose songs—the sweet voice of the nightingale in particular—make this garden truly delightful. The Jardin des Zouaves at Coleah is perhaps the most

picturesque in Algeria, and, after that of the capital, it is one of the most beautiful and extensive.

In this way do the French soldiers pass their leisure hours and exert their ingenuity wherever they pitch their tents. Such occupations are rational and praiseworthy in a profession in which so much time is usually lost in idleness, or in worse than doing nothing.

All over the colony we see small parcels of waste land turned into oases, which contribute both to the comfort and pleasure of the troops, who have converted unprofitable ground into pleasant spots. It is the same with other pursuits, for each man in the army avails himself of the trade he learnt before he enlisted, or was enrolled by conscription.

At Coleah a carriage can be engaged to the Tombeau de la Chrétienne, and to the site where Tipaza once stood. After seeing these interesting ruins, the tourist will proceed to Marengo, where the road joins that leading to Cherchell (Julia Cæsarea).

CHAPTER XVII.

COLEAH TO CHERCHELL.

What was this tower of strength? Within its cave
 What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.
 But who was she, the lady of the dead?

Childe Harold, Canto III.

Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
 An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below.—BYRON.

AT a distance of eighteen miles from Coleah we come to the mysterious mausoleum of which we have spoken. It is called by the Arabs Koubar-Roumia. According to some authorities it served for the burial-place of the kings of Mauritania, others say that it was erected in memory of a Vandal princess who had been converted to Christianity. This remarkable building, which is seen from a distance of 60 miles, is 150 feet high, its base—of a polygonal form—is 200 feet in diameter; Ionic columns are placed at the sides of a monolith forming a kind of built-up door, 12 feet in height and 6 wide. Above this is a flight of steps, each of them nearly 2 feet high. As the circumference of the edifice diminishes gradually till near the top, it has the appearance of a truncated cone.

LEGEND OF THE TOMBEAU.

A long time ago there lived in the land of the Hadjoutes a man called Jussuf-ben-Cassem. He was married and had a very happy home; his wife was handsome, amiable, and gentle, his children were healthy and obedient, but Jussuf-ben-Cassem was brave, and he wished to go to the wars. Now, brave as he was, his courage did not prevent him from falling into the hands of the Christians, who carried him to their country and sold him as a slave. Although his master treated him well, Jussuf was sick at heart, and many were the bitter tears he shed when he thought of all he had lost.

One day when he was working in the fields, he felt more dejected than usual; so after he had finished his labour, he sat down beneath a tree, and gave himself up to sad reflections.

‘Alas,’ said he, ‘whilst I am cultivating fields for another who is attending to mine? What is the fate of my wife and my children? Am I then condemned never to see them again, and to die in the land of the unbelievers?’ As he gave vent to this sorrowful lament he saw a man of grave aspect, habited in the dress of a sage, approach the spot where he was sitting.

‘Arab,’ said the stranger, ‘to what tribe dost thou belong?’

‘I am of the tribe of the Hadjoutes,’ answered Ben-Cassem.

‘Then thou must know Koubar-Roumia?’

‘Koubar-Roumia! Alas! my farm, my home, where

I left all that I love, is not an hour's walk from this mausoleum.'

'Would'st thou like to see thy home again, and to return to the bosom of thy family?'

'Canst thou doubt it?' said the captive. 'But what avails it to pray for that which cannot be granted, to desire what we cannot obtain?'

'I can obtain it,' replied the Christian; 'I can unbar the doors which keep thee from thy country, and send thee to enjoy the caresses of thy loved ones; but for this I require a service from thee. Art thou willing to perform it?'

'Speak,' said Ben-Cassem; 'there is nothing I would not undertake to regain my liberty, provided thou do'st not demand what would endanger the salvation of my soul.'

'Be not uneasy on this account,' replied the Christian. 'Hear what I have to say. I shall pay thy ransom immediately, and furnish thee with means to return to Algiers. When thou art arrived in thy own country, thou shalt devote three days to thy family and friends, rejoicing with them on thy return. The fourth day thou must betake thyself to Koubar-Roumia. Having kindled a fire near the monument, thou shalt burn in it the paper which I am going to give thee. Thou seest that nothing is easier than to do this. Swear to observe what I have just told thee, and I shall set thee free.'

Ben-Cassem did all that was required of him by the Christian, who now put into his hand a paper written over in magic characters, the signification of which Jussuf could not divine. He obtained his liberty the

same day ; and his mysterious benefactor accompanied him to a seaport, where he embarked for Algiers.

He remained only a short time in this city, so great was his desire to see his wife and children. Continuing his journey he travelled as quickly as possible, till he came to his own tribe.

It would be impossible to describe the joy of his family, and his own, at this happy meeting. His friends also came to rejoice with them at this unexpected good fortune, so that during three days his dwelling was filled with visitors.

On the fourth day he did not forget the promise he had made to his liberator, and at daybreak he set out for Koubar-Roumia. Here he lighted a fire, and burnt the mysterious paper, as he had been ordered to do. The flames had scarcely consumed the last fragment when, to his great astonishment, he saw pieces of gold and silver come out of the mausoleum from between the stones. It was like a swarm of bees, frightened by some unusual noise, rushing out of their hive. These coins, after turning about the monument for a moment, flew away towards the land of the Christians with wonderful rapidity, in a long line, the end of which was lost in the distance. It seemed as if several flights of birds were following each other.

Ben-Cassem, who saw all this treasure passing over his head, jumped as high as he could, and tried to catch in his hands some little of the wealth that was escaping from him. After he had exhausted much of his strength in these vain attempts he remembered his burnous, which he threw up as high as possible. By this expedient he succeeded in bringing down some twenty pieces

of gold, and a few more silver ones. But no sooner had the precious metal touched the ground than the flow of money from the walls ceased, and all returned to its usual state.

Ben-Cassem spoke of what had happened only to a few friends. This extraordinary adventure came however to the ears of the Pacha, who sent workmen to pull down Koubar-Roumia, hoping to possess himself of the treasure which it still contained. These men fell to work with great spirit, but on the first blow of the hammer a phantom in the form of a woman appeared on the top of the tomb, calling out 'Aloula! Aloula! come to help me; they are going to take away thy treasures.'

Instantly there emerged from the lake enormous mosquitoes, as large as birds, which put the workmen to flight by their venomous stings.

Since that time every attempt to get into Koubar-Roumia has been made in vain; and wise men, learned in such mysteries, have declared that a Christian only can possess himself of the riches it contains.

Nothing less picturesque can be imagined than the modern villages—French or Spanish—we pass through on almost every highroad; they usually consist of a row of straggling small houses which are seldom more than one story high, built on the wayside; many are mere sheds, and all bear the stamp of inferiority to those we meet with in little places in the mother country. This inferiority may be remarked in the recently acquired colonies of other nations.

The emigrant appears, builds, and his dwelling represents the smallness of his purse and the extent of his

bad taste. The shops cannot at first be classified after the names of trades, for each sells a little of everything, that the most pressing necessities may be supplied. New people arrive ; but the original stamp of ugliness remains long after the village has become large and prosperous.

But we are arrived at Tipaza, near the sea. The site where the old Roman town once flourished is surrounded by venerable olive-trees, almost as old as the ruins they enclose. Scattered about are many interesting vestiges of other days. Amongst the relics of antiquity are the remains of an aqueduct, which doubtless formed part of the vast structure of Oued Nador, which we shall pass after leaving Marengo on our way to Cherchell : a part of the ivy-grown walls of a basilica are also standing. The Arabs call this desolate spot Tfessadt, or the ruins, and the solitude which surrounds them certainly bears out the sad appellation.

The sea rolls its restless waves on the shore, advancing and retiring, yet ever fresh and sparkling in the sun, which has risen and set two thousand years over the city and its wreck. Nature remains unchanged whilst the works of man rise and fall ; no planetary revolution, no tide in the sea of Time brings them back when they sink into decay. Such is the 'now' and 'then' of Tipaza ; but we are approaching ground of greater fame, a mightier ruin—Julia Cæsarea—the once splendid capital of Roman Africa.

On our way between Tipaza and Marengo some Arabs, who were breaking stones on the road, told us that they had just seen a lion cross it, not far from where they were at work.

It sometimes happens, but not often in the present day, that the king of the Atlas travels to the littoral.

About Mount Chenoua, at the Western and wilder end of the range of hills which rise between the plain of the *Métidja* and the sea, some panthers have their haunts, but a lion is a rare apparition. To anticipate, we afterwards heard that the one which had crossed our path had killed eight oxen in ten days.

The coachman told us that, on one occasion, coming suddenly round a bush, he found himself face to face with a large black lion, that he—the coachman, not the lion—paralysed with terror, could not move one step; the animal, which appears not to have been hungry, after looking at him quietly, walked slowly away.

It is well known that the lion is dangerous only when he is in search of food; but the European has another chance of safety when he meets the sultan of the desert, provided the tourist is in a carriage driven by an Arab; the lion always eats the Arab first! his bare legs and gay attire being more familiar and attractive to the noble beast than is our sombre, ugly dress, which seems to be both strange and repulsive to his good taste.

As we approached Marengo our driver, pointing with his whip to a trim farm near the road, said, 'That is my property;' and a very pretty property it was, with its garden, fields, and vineyard, for our coachman to possess.

It is not unusual for people of this class, after passing ten or twelve years in the colony, to purchase small estates, which they would never have been able to

do if they had not come to Algeria, where they are now landed proprietors in a small way.

Marengo is a large modern village, almost a town, quite French in appearance.

In the distance, facing the avenue of trees by which we leave it, we see before us a lofty and singularly formed mountain, called *la Dent du Lion*, a name given it by the Arabs ; it is a striking object, never lost to view in this open country.

About half way between Marengo and the once famous capital of the Roman settlement in Northern Africa, we come in sight of the magnificent aqueduct, which brought the water of the river El Hachen to Julia Cæsarea. Now it is seen following lofty ridges, now it is carried over valleys from hill to hill, spanning great heights and space till it becomes lost to sight when its course has been cut through a mountain. At Beni-Habiba, where it is a second time visible, it is almost intact, its seventeen arches—in three tiers one over the other, standing in solitary grandeur amid the stillness of nature—being conspicuous from the high-road. After this the aqueduct, following the sinuosities of its way, is again hidden by the inequality of the ground, till near Cherchell, when the traveller once more sees the remains of the vast structure in a less perfect, but more picturesque state ; the lower part of its gigantic supports are here so worn away by time that it seems miraculous how they can sustain the mass of solid Roman masonry, and preserve their own equilibrium. Looking up at the arches above, they seem to be suspended so high in the air that we fear to hazard a guess at their elevation. An Arab standing below reached

only to the two lower stones, giving us an idea of the proportion man sometimes bears to objects of his own creation. We saw nothing in Rome more striking than these magnificent remains of former greatness in one of its provinces.

Drawing nearer to Cherchell, evidences that a great city once stood on the site where this little town is built develop themselves at every step. Enough remains of the old walls to show that the length of the ancient capital was six miles, parallel with the sea. Extending inland across the plain, it rose amphitheatrically up the heights beyond. Here are now strewn vestiges of the once splendid capital of Mauritania. Amongst the ruins may be seen what is left of a fine arena, elliptic in form, and nearly as large as the Coliseum in Rome. The oval is unbroken, many of the steps are still there, and a few of them are perfect up several gradations. In this circus men were torn in pieces by wild beasts, Christians were burnt alive, and it was the scene of other cruelties which disgraced a great but, in some respects, a semi-barbarous age. We see the wreck of an open-air theatre, and extensive baths. A temple dedicated to Neptune stands near the sea, and not far from it are the broken fragments of another, besides several monuments now fallen into decay.

The site on which the ancient city stood is now either waste or cultivated land; here and there is a peasant's house built with the stones and pillars of temples, which have been used to construct farmhouses and Arab huts. 'To what vile uses' have they come! Mutilated monuments, bearing half-effaced inscriptions, fluted columns of beautiful marble, are scattered about

in every direction ; whilst on digging almost anywhere, mosaics, statues, and coins are found at the depth of a few feet, for the classic ground has been only partially explored ; enough has however been found to form a collection of works of art in Cherchell, and a more valuable one in the museum at Algiers, besides which many fine specimens have been sent to the Louvre at Paris. Some columns are so large that it was not possible to remove them to a distance, and they now lie in the public walks, serving for seats. Like all such relics, they are looked at by the people of Cherchell with the indifference of habit and ignorance.

The port of Julia Cæsarea, which was of considerable size, has been destroyed by an earthquake. Buildings, overturned and thrown into the sea may, in calm weather, still be distinguished in the water.

Nothing tells the mutability of time so forcibly as the ruins of a great city which flourished in a former age. A modern cemetery is the burialplace of yesterday. The ruins of Cæsarea are monuments to the far Past ; its broken walls are tombstones to the memory of a remote generation. On a spot so suggestive of vanished greatness, the least impressionable mind must try to picture to itself how the new capital looked when its peopled streets and beautiful edifices covered the plain, and rose proudly up the hills in the background, overlooking the sea, on which floated Roman galleys and a powerful navy.

The following historical notice may be acceptable to some readers.

Jol, which stood on the site where the modern town of Cherchell is now built, was a Carthaginian city, which

Juba, second king of this name, enlarged and adorned and, under the name of Julia Cæsarea, made the capital of Cæsarian Mauritania.

After a prosperous reign of forty-five years, during which he promoted science and art, Juba left the throne to his son Ptolemy, who was assassinated by order of Caligula, whom he had eclipsed in splendour. After this Mauritania, united to the Roman empire, became the theatre of intestine wars excited by hostile religious sects. Firmus, a Moorish chief, profiting by the dogmatic disputes between Catholics and Donatists, descended from the mountains and seized upon the city, which he destroyed. Theodore, after vanquishing this barbarian, rebuilt the town, which was again reduced to ashes by the Vandals.

Cæsarea appears to have regained some of its former magnificence under the Byzantine Greeks.

Marmol relates that the Caliph Kaïm, who reigned at Kairouan, overthrew it from top to bottom. Leon the African says, that his countrymen after their expulsion from Granada took refuge here, and occupied themselves with the care of silk-worms. In 1531, Andrea Doria burnt the fleet which Barbarossa had assembled in the port, but could not keep what he had taken by a *coup de main*. From this period nothing of historical interest took place till 1830. The rest is too well known to require recapitulating.

The little town of Cherchell, which has grown like an incrustation on the remains of the old city, is a mixture of French and Moorish buildings, the latter predominating, as they do in most of the mediæval towns of Algeria; it was originally built by the Moors shortly

after this period, for they established themselves here when they were driven out of Spain, about the close of the fifteenth century. The houses are only one story high, either owing to the danger of earthquakes, or because the inhabitants were too poor to construct larger ones.

Cherchell is delightfully situated, and is a pleasant little place, for those who do not expect more than it has to offer. Almost all the natives speak French, which is not the case in Algiers. Here, the European and indigenous population being thrown more together, the children play with each other, and thus learn French in the best and most natural way.

We were at first surprised when we spoke to a little tattooed girl—with Moorish bracelets on her arms, and rings round the small part of the leg, khalkhals or anklets—to find her answer like a Parisian.

If nations, who have possessions obtained by conquest—particularly when the conquered people are an uncivilised race—appreciated the advantage of language as a means of instructing their new subjects and making them comprehend the benefits of civilisation, they would not neglect so important a medium. In Cherchell, where the natives assimilate with Europeans, they acquire the habits of industry and trading tendencies of the latter, whilst they become friendly and well-disposed towards them ; as was shown during the revolt in 1871, when the town Arabs took part with the French against a tribe of Kabyles who inhabit the neighbouring mountain district. These people, excited by their *Mara-bouts*, devastated the country around, burning woods, attacking farms, and murdering all who had not taken

refuge in Cherchell. Here the French and Spaniards, supported by the Moors, were safe during the month the gates were closed against the insurgents.

In Algiers the Kabyles are morally an isolated people. Being entirely ignorant of French, no intercourse is possible ; thus they remain apart, cherishing in their hearts the same sentiments towards their conquerors as they did in the days of the Emir, who is still the high priest venerated and exalted in their monotonous chants and wretched music. Those who doubt this will be better able to decide when they have read our narrative of the massacres at Palestro, about which we shall speak when we come to that unfortunate village.

The French possess in a high degree the power of assimilation, a recent proof of which has been given in the patriotic stampede from Alsace and Lorraine, where the Prussians were not able to recruit half a dozen young men in two provinces which once formed part of Germany.

But even this quality of attraction, so justly attributed to the humanity and amiability of the French character, has not been able to conciliate those on whom it could have little effect, owing to their ignorance of the language.

Christians who were taken prisoners by the Algerines before the conquest had the choice of Islamism or death ; a more expeditious way of making converts than the persuasions of the Bible Society. When the French, not following the example of the Mahometans, allowed them to keep their religion, it would have been at least sound policy in establishing schools to have pro-

moted education wherever it was possible to introduce it. If this had been done, the Arabs in this second generation might have spoken French like natives of France and, with the language, would have acquired new ideas, have become civilised, and instead of being hostile in feeling, they might now be as much French, on many essential points, as the French themselves; but this is a digression.

For those who have no resources in themselves Cherchell must be a dull sojourn. What has a man to do here who does not know its history, and cares not a Barbary fig about it? Who has no taste for nature, and is ignorant of art, who can neither draw nor paint, is not a sportsman, and does not like fishing? For whom there is no society, where English is not spoken? Where there is no club, no 'Times,' nothing, in short, that he is used to, and which is necessary to his existence? Such persons, after a superficial view of the remains, vote the ancient city a bore, and wonder what people discover interesting, where there is nothing to see; as if they expected to find Julia Cæsarea still standing in all its glory!

Two classes of English, in particular, visit Cherchell—those who find nothing, and those who find too much. We have spoken of the first; the other travellers are dilettanti archeologists, who copy every scrap of inscription into their note books, fill their trunks with stones, which they treasure up for mosaics, and buy coins on which, after a good deal of rubbing, they sometimes bring out an excellent likeness of Napoleon III.

Of course real archeologists also come to Chérchell;

for them the site of Julia Cæsarea must indeed be a fruitful field for labour. Besides these, there are no doubt some stray tourists, men of taste and intelligence, who do not regret having passed a few days on a spot, charming at present, and more than interesting from its association with the past. As to ourselves, we remained a fortnight at the excellent hotel, one of the best in the three provinces, at once *gemüthlich*—to use an untranslatable German word, which expresses even more than our cherished word comfortable—and superior. Our time was spent most agreeably; we had plenty to sketch and paint, and, as to society, all the officers in Cherchell breakfasted and dined at the inn. In the room where we were, the general from Milianah—on a tour of inspection—and the commandant of the town occupied the next tables to us; a young captain of zouaves was seated at another. They had all knocked about the world, and in their intercourse with different people of various nations had brushed off the dust of prejudice, men whose conversation was both entertaining and instructive. In speaking of Algeria all were equally enthusiastic; and we obtained much valuable information on subjects talked over, as we discussed dinners which would have done honour to the best hotels in Europe.

The commandant was the personification of a fine military character, a perfect gentleman, always in good humour, and full of anecdote, one whose good qualities were inscribed on his frank and intelligent face. He was married to an English lady, and we never saw a man prouder of his wife, or who was more affectionately attached to his children—two pretty little

girls who were soon to arrive from France with their mother—but sooner still a shocking fate was to befall the noble fellow himself.

The young officer was a striking contrast to the jolly commandant: if the latter saw life like a landscape lighted by the sun of Africa, the handsome face of the captain was always under a cloud; ‘triste, très triste,’ was the comment he made on almost everything. This was sometimes very amusing, for, in his gloomy absence of mind, when a funny story had made us all laugh, he occasionally shook his head with a croaking remark. The general asked him if it were true that he was soon to be married. ‘Oui, mon général, very soon,’ he replied with a sigh. ‘I must go to Algiers to see my fiancée; le mariage est pourtant une chose triste, très triste.’

One of the last things the commandant told us before we left Cherchell seemed to presage some calamity. He was passionately fond of hunting, and related a strange dream about it. He had dreamt that he was chasing wild boars—sometimes more dangerous than the lion himself—that one of these savage animals rushed at him as he was taking a steady aim—his gun missed fire—and he awoke just as the fierce brute was about to tear him in pieces with his tusks.

A few days after we returned to Algiers the French journals contained an account of a tragical event, under the title of ‘*Le drame de Cherchell*.’ A gendarme called Noël, who had been degraded for some breach of discipline, furious through drink and excitement, set fire to the barracks and, bayonet in hand, resisted those who came to arrest him. After wounding several soldiers, Com-

mandant Conti attempted to disarm the madman, who sprang upon him passing the bayonet through his body. Our unfortunate friend died soon after from the dreadful wound.

The gendarme killed himself in prison at Blidah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHERCHELL TO MASCARA.

Numidia's landscape has its spots
 Of pastoral pleasantness.
 Here nature's hues all harmonise—fields white
 With alatum, or blue with bugloss—banks
 Of glossy fennel, blent with tulips wild,
 And sunflowers, like a garment pranked with gold ;
 Acres and miles of opal asphodel,
 Where sports and couches the black-eyed gazelle.—CAMPBELL.

Nature smiled, and o'er the landscape threw
 Her richest fragrance and her brightest hue.
 —These scenes Salvator's soul adored ;
 The rocky pass half-hung with shaggy wood,
 And the cleft oak flung boldly o'er the flood.—ROGERS.

THERE is a cross-country road from Cherchell to Mili-anah, but no public conveyance, and it is too bad for a private one ; we therefore retrograde to El-Affroun, on the railway line to Oran.

Leaving the train at the second station, Bou-Medfa, we took a carriage to Hamman-Rirá, a drive of about six miles, as we wished to see the once famous Roman Spa. The road is one of the most charming that can be imagined.

We have expended so much eulogy in our descriptions

of these roads that we may appear too enthusiastic in the expression of our admiration ; we can however assure the reader that the reality far exceeds anything we can say of a country, where bold and romantic scenery, a luxuriant and gigantic vegetation, are varied by the soft and quiet charms of an English landscape changing again to the grand characteristics of Alpine regions.

The hot springs of the Hamman-Rirá gush out of the S.E. side of a hill, which is separated by a ravine from those near it.

Higher up, at an elevation of 5,000 feet, the peak of the Zakkar darts its sharp point into the sky, towering above all the other peaks of this vast accumulation of rock.

Dr. Lelorrain, a distinguished physician and geologist, is of opinion that this mountain, like all those of the lower Atlas range, has been of slow formation. Mineral waters are generally found in places where there is volcanic matter, and the many earthquakes which shake this mass every year seem to indicate the existence of some such subterranean agency.

The higher part of the hill forms an inclined plateau, where a Roman town once stood which, taking its name from the hot springs, was called *Aqua Calidæ*. The remains of walls, enormous blocks of hewn stone, broken columns, capitals, porticoes, the ruins of a temple and baths, together with many tombstones that have preserved their inscriptions, all bear witness to the prosperity and opulence of the city, which seems to have been built during the reign of Tiberius, about thirty-two years after the Christian era.

It is probable that the mineral springs which burst

from the side of the hill caused the spot to be converted into a fashionable watering place, such as are met with in the present day at Bath in England, in the South of France, and in Germany.

It is well known what splendid edifices the Romans erected wherever they found mineral waters. How strong was their passion for baths we may form some idea from the description Vitruvius has left us ; whilst, what we see of these ruined buildings and the shapeless remains scattered about attests the importance and magnificence of *Aqua Calidæ*, which was the favourite place of resort for invalids and all who delighted in the pleasures of the bath, at the time *Cæsarea*, *Tipaza*, and *Icosium* (Algiers) were flourishing cities.

Returning to *Bou-Medfa*, we proceeded to the third station, *Affreville*, at which we engaged a carriage for *Milianah*, where an up-hill zig-zag ride of about an hour brought us to a height of some 2,300 feet.

Milianah, like *Medeah*, placed among the mountains of the lower Atlas, is built on a plateau of the *Zakkar*, whose dark sombre form, standing behind the town, has a grand and impressive effect. But the most admired view from *Milianah* is the prospect over the vast plain of the *Chélif*, beyond which rises the bold range of the Atlas.

French writers call this the finest sight in the world, and we heard so much of it from people who had been to *Milianah* that we must confess to the disappointment which frequently results from too much praise ; to us the mountains in the distance appeared deficient in variety and in beauty of form. Certainly they are, in this respect, not to be compared with the loftier and more picturesque chain of the *Noric Alps*, which stand

in all the sublimity of nature before the author's villa in Saizburg.¹⁵

In Milianah itself little is to be seen—only a few straight streets, and one or two squares, bordered with trees in the French style. Except the remains of an old minaret, there is no appearance of Arab buildings.

When we were last here it was winter; in these elevated, although Southern regions, the temperature is very different at that season from the eternal spring which gladdens the face of nature on the littoral. At Milianah, after the end of November, a little snow falls on the mountains, but it soon melts.

On our former visit we sat down to table in a curtain-drawn saloon, lighted by candles, a crackling wood-fire blazing on the hearth. This called to mind the Northern comforts of a winter dinner, and it must be owned that the convivial meal taken under artificial light has its charms and attractions. Now it is spring—the scene is changed—open windows, flowers, and daylight are the accompaniments of the repast, which fortunately is equally good in both cases.

Everybody knows how much effect the moral has on the physical, or in simpler language, how much a good dinner influences our feelings; we take another view of things, and when we again looked at the celebrated prospect from the bastion we liked it better, and thought that our morning impression had scarcely done it justice.

Whilst we were admiring nature we fell in with an Englishman, who complained that he and his family had been obliged to sleep in their own carriage, all the hotels being full. It happened that there was an exchange of military between Milianah and some other place, and

that many officers had arrived before the others had left.

Our countryman told us that he had passed the night in reflecting how he could avoid such an inconvenience on other occasions, that a brilliant idea had occurred to him, which was to travel in future with a tent or tents, in which he and his household could encamp Arab or gipsy fashion, and thus be 'independent of all confounded hotels.' We applauded the originality of the conception, adding that, as an Englishman he would surprise nobody.

From Milianah we went to see the magnificent forest of cedars near Teniet-el-Hâd. This village, which is still higher than the town we had left, is not remarkable in itself ; but the road to it, which crosses fertile valleys and passes through woods of Aleppian pines, thuias, ever-green oaks, and other beautiful trees, is delightful.

Few objects in nature are more striking than a great forest ; a forest of cedars in particular is solemn and imposing. The traveller on entering that of which we are speaking, will observe with astonishment a tree which has raised an enormous stone entwined in its branches, and carried it up in its growth ; thus it is held suspended two yards above the ground.

Besides Algeria, there are in the world only two countries in which this majestic tree is found. It grows in the solitudes of the Himalaya and on Mount Lebanon. Those at Teniet-el-Hâd are of prodigious size ; and one, the monarch of the wood, measures more than six feet in diameter.

Regaining the railway line we took the train to Relizane, after which we continued our journey by the diligence. The country through which we passed was not very interesting till we came in sight of the sea.

Mostaganem—the next place we visited—is built on an eminence where the Murustaga of the Romans once stood ; from a distance it is striking and peculiar.

If the reader can figure to himself a city cut out of chalk—or of a material less crude and cold in colour—with terraced roofs giving it a flat look, broken by domes, minarets and other superstructures rising from the blended mass of white houses, like towers and spires emerge from the low mist on an autumnal morning, he may form a tolerably correct idea of the Arab portion of Mostaganem ; a quarter which, if less comfortable and convenient, is the most interesting to the wanderer in search of new impressions.

The relative position of the indigenous and European populations, as they reside in Algiers and at Mostaganem are inverted ; the lower part being here inhabited by the former, and that above by the latter.

From the sea Mostaganem, with its streets, squares, and houses built on arcades, makes an agreeable impression, to which the embattled walls round the town greatly contribute.

The environs are well cultivated, and possess all the pleasant natural attractions which usually surround Algerian towns.

From Mostaganem we took the coach to Oran ; the road, which follows the sea-coast, and passes from time to time through small woods of thuya (*lignum vitæ*), lemon groves, green oaks, and olive trees, is enchanting.

At a little less than half way to Oran we came to Arzew, the Arsenaria of the ancients. It has an excellent port, which is wanting at Mostaganem.

The Romans, fully appreciating the advantageous

situation of Arsenaria, gave its fine harbour the name of Portus Magnus. The position of Arzew is indeed highly favourable for communication with the interior, the rich valleys of the Sig, Habra, Mina, the fertile and extensive plain of the Chélif, offering facilities for traffic and travelling to the Western Sahara. As will be seen in another chapter, a railway from this point in the above direction is projected, and will soon be in course of construction.

Our road, which sometimes lay more inland, passed through a highly cultivated country till we arrived at Oran.

Oran, which is a place of great antiquity, became long after its foundation a Roman colony, and was called the Unica Colonia. It was afterwards possessed successively by the Vandals, Berbers, Arabs, and Turks.

In 1509 it was taken by the Spaniards, under the command of the celebrated Cardinal Ximenes.

In 1708 Oran again fell into the hands of the Turks, but in 1732 it was once more occupied by the Spaniards. During the reign of Philip V. they however evacuated the town, and gave it up in 1790 to its last masters, in consequence of a dreadful earthquake which laid almost the entire city in ruins.

Oran is now regarded as one of the most flourishing towns of Algeria. Situated at the base of a lofty mountain near the sea, it rises to the table-land, round which it is built almost in the form of a triangle, broken by a ravine, which divides it into two almost equal parts, connected by an embankment; the water which flows between them being carried off by a subterranean passage.

On the heights are gardens, and at this point a bridge unites the old Casbah with the quarter St. André.

Externally this city presents an imposing aspect, which it owes to the extent of the gulf on which it stands, to the chain of high mountains in its background, and above all to formidable fortifications and turreted walls, some of which have been erected by the Spaniards and others by the French.

The fort Santa Cruz, conspicuously placed on the summit of the Ramra, commands all below it. Viewed as a whole, the place has a grand and warlike character. Not less striking is the appearance of Oran and the gulf, when seen from above.

As a town the capital of the province has a somewhat mixed and irregular look, which is caused by three different styles of architecture—Arab, Spanish, and French—being brought together, and forming one heterogeneous ensemble; but the Arab buildings are so exceeded in number by the European structures, spacious squares, wide streets, elegant and modern houses, that it might be taken for a Franco-Spanish city.

The elevated esplanade de Létang, with its fine trees and sea-views, is equal to any in Europe.

Oran is indeed a very delightful town; and, if our distinguished poet Campbell liked it when it was under the Algerian Regency, it is now, with the advantages of civilisation, a much more desirable place to live in.

The temperature is here a little higher than it is at Algiers, and it rains even less in winter than it does there.

The number of inhabitants is fifty thousand, which is not greatly exceeded in the capital of the colony.

Oran has two ports; the one nearer to it is at present but an insecure harbour, although a breakwater and lighthouse have been constructed, and other improvements are in progress. Steamboats and sailing vessels enter it in fine weather; but, when the sea is rough, they are obliged to go to Mers-el Kebir, situated six miles farther along the gulf, it being separated from Oran by a tongue of land called la Moune. In this magnificent roadstead there is room for the united navies of France and England to ride at anchor, for it is a spacious and secure harbour, which has not its equal on the Algerian coast. A fine natural position and strong fortifications by land and sea have made the African port as formidable as the not far distant Gibraltar, on its impregnable rock in Europe.

The route from Oran to Mers-el-Kebir, following the beautiful bay, is one of the most picturesque in the world; a great part of it is cut out of precipitous cliffs, at a fearful height above the sea; a hedge of aloes which borders the road protecting the traveller from danger at this dizzy elevation.

Midway between Oran and Mers-el-Kebir is a charming spot, called *les Bains de la Reine*, from the circumstance of a Spanish princess having, some three hundred years ago, come to drink of its water.

Shortly after leaving Oran for Mascara, we passed a village inhabited exclusively by a black population—three to four thousand. These natives present very singular types, from the thick-lipped negroes to the copper-coloured denizens of the Sahara; all offering to

the physiognomist or painter, who wishes to study peculiarities of character and shades of colour in the descendants of Ham an opportunity not often to be met with.

The country over which we were travelling was wild and romantic ; at every turn in the road, every rise in the undulating ground, the view changed. One moment we were in a deep wooded pass, at another our path lay between bare rocks and huge blocks of stone, which had been thrown together and heaped up into strange and fantastic forms by some convulsion of nature.

On broad patches of red earth grew wild olives or stately cedars ; dotted about singly, they looked like outposts of the forests in the distance, and well did their sombre masses harmonise with the soil on which they stood. Here, out of clusters of evergreen oaks rose the white dome of a marabout ; there, we saw the gourbi of the Arabs grouped like Indian wigwams, and near them a few natives added their long-robed figures to the picture.

Farther off in the middle distance, dark clumps of trees, the jujube, thuya, and the carob, spotted the landscape, whilst troops of camels, mules, and asses, with Arab riders and drivers, were seen winding up the sinuosities of the way. It was altogether a *Salvator Rosa*-like scene, savage and characteristic, such as nature paints to contrast with her gentler creations.

As we approached nearer to Mascara the slopes of the hills covered with vineyards, tobacco plantations, gardens, and orchards rich in fruit trees, replaced the wilder vegetation we had left behind.

Mascara, surrounded by an indented wall, stands on

two eminences, separated by the river Oued Toudman. With its terrace-roofs, domes, and minarets rising out of cypress and olive-trees, it is one of those Oriental-looking towns which are so characteristic and pleasing to the eye.

A fine prospect extends over the beautiful plain of Eghris ; but the environs, with their orange groves, vineyards, and pleasure grounds, present on every side a smiling sunlit landscape ; and what contributes to the charming aspect of the place are the public gardens gay with flowers—those never-failing ornaments of every Algerian town.

Abd-el-Kader was born (1806) at the hamlet Guetna, near Mascara. This celebrated Marabout is of the tribe of the Hachems, which is said to be descended from the Fatimite Caliphs, and consequently from the Prophet himself.

Abd-el-Kader, when a young man in 1832, was chosen Prince of the Faithful by his countrymen, and established the seat of his power at Mascara, which was his favourite residence.

This city was built by the Turks, on the site of a Roman town, of which in the present day scarcely any vestiges are to be seen. Under the government of the Pachas Mascara acquired great prosperity, and like Tlemsen became the seat of learning ;¹⁶ they were the Oxford and Cambridge of the Muslims.

Mascara, about 1,800 feet above sea-level, has a healthy climate ; but, being an inland town to the south of Oran, the heat in summer, when the wind blows from the Sahara, is greater than on the littoral. The sky is

usually cloudless, and the air in winter pure and bracing, but sometimes cold.

From Mascara we travelled some distance on the road to Tiaret, wishing to see something of the country in that direction.

With this little deviation we shall close our journey, denying ourselves the pleasure of the reader's company on our way back to Algiers ; but, before we separate, to meet again on our second excursion, we would detain him yet a while, that he may hear an Arab story which we shall relate in the next chapter.

As we were about to take our places, we found that the vacant seat in the coupé would be occupied by an Arab chief with whom we were already acquainted, having been presented to him at Mascara by a captain of Spais. This introduction from one of his own countrymen broke through the taciturnity and reserve which Orientals usually observe when in the society of Europeans. He told us that he was going to see some friends at the place where we intended to stop on the road to Tiaret.

Our companion was a tall man, with the pure Arab type of face, made to appear rather long than oval by a black pointed beard, which contrasted with his white burnous. He had dark eyes, quiet and thoughtful in repose, but which, we afterwards found, lighted up and sparkled when excited by emotion. His mouth expressed firmness and dignity of character, as Arab lips generally do. It was a head which harmonised well with the hood and drapery, like the head of a friar of the middle ages, such as we see in pictures. Our fellow-

traveller did not know much French, but spoke Spanish fluently. We had left Mascara a couple of hours when, pointing up a bye-path before which we passed, he called our attention to a projecting rock at some distance along it.

‘This spot,’ said he, ‘was once the scene of an encounter with a lion, in which a Christian cavalier was the hero.’

We begged him to relate it to us.

‘It is rather a long story,’ he replied, ‘in which the meeting with the saïd is only an episode ; besides this, it is a love story, which would require more time to tell than is left us before we halt for breakfast ; but, as you are not going farther, and I remain at the inn, you shall have it when we take our coffee.’

We thanked him for his promise, anticipating great pleasure in listening to a tale of Arab life, to be told in a language which unites the softness and grace of Latin with the strength and figurative style it has derived from Arabic.

Arrived at the inn, our friend kept his word. Breakfast over, we sat down to our coffee and cigars under the shade of a magnificent olive, which spread its branches invitingly at some paces from the house.

For a few moments our companion remained silent, calling up his recollections as he slowly smoked his cigarette and sipped his mocha ; after this he began his story, which we shall tell in our own way, keeping however as near to the Arab’s diction as our memory and the English idiom will allow.

CHAPTER XIX.

OURIDA.

Natura la fece, e poi ruppe la stampa.¹⁷—*ARIOSTO.*

Egli mirolla, ed ammirò la bella
 Sembianza, e d'essa si compiacque, e n'arse.
 Oh meraviglia ! Amor, ch' appena è nato,
 Già grande vola, e già trionfa armato.—*TASSO.*

SOME years after the Christians first landed in Algeria, when the Crescent had begun to pale, and the Cross of the Roumi—the symbol of another religion—was carried with their standard into the land of the Faithful, none of the brave sons of Ismaël defended the country more valiantly, or had greater faith in its ultimate triumph, than Ali ben Ahmed ben Aïssa. ‘What has come to pass was predestined,’ he was wont to say ; ‘and so surely is it written in the book of Fate, that we shall drive out the enemies of the Prophet, and the Crescent will again shed its soft light over the land which is not theirs.’

Ali ben Ahmed was a chief of the great tent, a man in authority, Amin el Oumena, whose tribe had struggled hard in the fight for independence, and it was one of the last to submit to the conquerors.

But those days had passed away, and now the Christians were masters where the Pachas had ruled.

The sword and spear of Ali ben Ahmed were 'hung up for monuments,' and his long mekahla served but to hunt the sultan of the desert. He no longer dwelt in the tented field. His home was now an Arab castle in the country, built in the Moorish style, its bright turrets and marabouts rising out of a grove of dark cypress, almond, and flat-topped pine-trees. Around were extensive grounds, shady walks, and a garden with fairest flowers.

All this, and much more, had the old warrior to console him for what his country had lost ; but in this delightful abode Ali ben Ahmed would have remained unhappy, brooding over the times that were gone, if Allah had not granted him one great blessing, more precious than house and land. Ali ben Ahmed ben Aïssa had a daughter—a flower more beautiful than any his garden could produce—a being more perfect than he had ever imagined he should see, when the Prophet would seize him by the tuft of hair, which grew alone, like an oasis, on his shaven head, and draw him up to the Mussulman's heaven, where houris bloom in eternal youth, bright as the roses in his own verandah.

Ourida—such was the name of the lovely maid—was the delight of her father's eyes ; and her voice, when she opened her coral lips, was music to his ears : she was indeed a wonderful creation of a clime where nature perfects her choicest works. Fifteen summers had developed charms which no man could contemplate without feeling the power of beauty and innocence.

But Ourida had been seen by none except her father

and her female attendants ; for, when she went forth, her face—according to the custom of her country—was covered with the adjar, and her graceful form was hidden beneath flowing drapery.

This child of nature had hair black as the wing of the raven ; her dark eyes were soft as those of the r'ezala, their long lashes threw a tender shade below them, whilst above they were arched over by brows to which no dye could lend a deeper tint. Faultless was the mould in which her features were cast, even the jealous adjar could not conceal the perfect line of her nose. Her small mouth with its pearly teeth, and the bloom on her cheek, which neither flower nor fruit could equal, would have driven an Oriental poet to despair, if he attempted to find anything to compare them to.

If the features of her oval face were beautiful, in her person she united the three things which Arab taste requires, for her hands, ears, and feet were such as only true blood can generate. When she walked in her father's grounds, her light step scarcely bent the flowers she trod upon.

The Angel of Death had called away Ourida's mother when she brought this lovely child into the world ; but Ali ben Ahmed's wife had looked upon its face—which seemed to her bright and celestial as the unclouded full moon in the darkness of night—ere her spirit flew to regions beyond the luminaries.

Some time before this event, when war and confusion were spread over the land, a beloved sister of Ali ben Ahmed had disappeared from her home, and he saw her no more.

During a season he grieved for his wife and his sister ;

but he was soon called away to the field of contention, when he confided the infant to the care of a black female slave.¹⁸

This slave, whose name was Alawee, had been long in the family of Ali ben Ahmed ; she loved the child of her former mistress as if it had been her own offspring, bestowing on it the tenderness of a mother.

Whilst the life of Ali ben Ahmed was a scene of adventure and vicissitude, that of his daughter was monotonous and still, like water over whose surface gentle zephyr breathes but disturbs not the depths below.

Thus she grew in grace and loveliness, till her fifteenth summer, when, like a flower in bloom, she burst from childhood to adolescence.

Now, though the seclusion in which Ourida lived allowed her not to be seen, it was said that Ali ben Ahmed's daughter was beautiful ; for beauty concealed is made known to fame, as perfume proclaims the rose beyond the garden where blooms the queen of flowers.

Thus it came to pass that Hassan ben Abed, one of the companions in arms of Ourida's father, a man of large possessions and a Cheik, asked the hand of his daughter in marriage. This chief counted the same number of years as Ali ben Ahmed. Together they had fought against the Roumis ; so Ali ben Ahmed refused him not.

When this news was imparted to Ourida, she bowed her graceful head, and only replied, ' I hear and obey.'

To her the tidings were like the splash of a pebble thrown into the tranquil lake, which troubles the water

for an instant, after which it remains placid and motionless as before.

Preparations for the wedding were going on when, one Friday, Ourida and her attendant went—according to the custom of Arab women—to the cemetery to pray. On their return, when they arrived near their garden, believing themselves to be unobserved, the lady removed the covering from her face.

At this moment a cavalier, mounted on a noble steed, emerged from a wood, which had hitherto concealed him. Ourida replaced her adjar and entered the gate; her large black eyes had however involuntarily fallen on the manly form of the stranger, and that furtive glance had left an impression on Ali ben Ahmed's daughter which was henceforth to be a part of her nature.¹⁹

When she returned to her father's dwelling so entirely was she changed, that it seemed strange to her that nothing was transformed there but herself. A new light had broken in upon her soul. Ourida, whose untroubled existence had never been excited by pleasure or depressed by sorrow, had suddenly acquired knowledge and feelings foreign to the indifference with which women of her country regard the events of life, for whom the sun rises and sets day after day, marking new epochs and bringing changes in nature, but none in themselves. Ourida had learned to distinguish this state from one full of new sensations, in which hopes and fears agitate the mind, causing it to fluctuate between pleasure and pain; in a word, she had discovered the difference between mere existence—and life. The daughter of Eve had seen the forbidden fruit, and no longer cared for the flowers in her father's garden.

As Ben Ahmed's daughter looked upon the robes, jewels, and all the paraphernalia prepared for her marriage with the man of her father's choice, her mind became troubled and the colour forsook her cheeks.

When her faithful companion observed the dejection into which the Lady Aïssa had fallen, she wondered greatly and addressed her in these words :—

'O my mistress! be not angry with thy slave if she speak to thee the words of truth and affection. Since thou hast seen the stranger on the black horse thou art no longer thyself, and much I fear me that love, the enemy of peace and tranquillity, the tyrant passion, which assumes every disguise, has entered thy heart to distract thee. This stranger in whose form he has appeared thou may'st never again behold; allow not then thy thoughts to dwell on what may be only the remembrance of a moment. Reflect, O my mistress, I conjure thee, that thou art the bride of the noble Hassan ben Abed, thy father's friend, and a chief among the Arabs. This comely foreigner, to judge from his attire, is doubtless a Roumi, and an enemy to us and to Allah—whose name be exalted.'

The Lady Aïssa made no answer, but remained immersed in her own reflections. Many days passed after this, and often did Alawee renew her admonitions and repeat her remonstrances, yet Ourida heeded her not, but remained changed as before. Once only had she spoken in reply to the expostulations of her faithful attendant; this was when she forbade Alawee to tell her father of the incident at the garden gate.

Who was the gallant horseman the sight of whom had so affected the daughter of Ali ben Ahmed? His

dress united something of the Eastern and European character. His face also had the Arab type, blended with an expression which spoke of another country. Young and handsome, he had an air of grave dignity suited to his manly bearing, but which usually belongs to men of double his years. When he saw the lovely daughter of Ali ben Ahmed he was struck with astonishment and confounded with her beauty, for in all his travels he had seen no one equal to that peerless maid. On beholding her he seemed to have found something he had lost ; a creation of his fancy, which he had never sought in the world, for he thought it impossible such a being could exist. When he reviewed his past life, it appeared as if he had journeyed through a waste. He felt like the mariner who, having been adrift at sea—of whose water he could not drink—finds on shore a crystal spring at which he can quench his thirst.

Wrapt in thought he allowed his horse to wander where it liked, whilst he gave himself up to devising plans for again seeing the beautiful being who had appeared before him. Thus occupied we leave him for the present.

Muse on, sanguine youth ; if thou art doomed to fail, thy steed may carry thee to a desert or to a paradise, life will have no more charms for thee ; but if thou art born under a fortunate star, thou may'st see thy love again.

CHAPTER XX.

OURIDA.

Far other feelings Love hath brought—
 Her soul all flame, her brow all sadness,
 She now has but the one dear thought,
 And thinks that o'er, almost to madness !—MOORE.

—Ma, qual pensiero, o figlia,
 Così ti turba ! L'inquieto sguardo
 Attorno volgi, e di pallor ti pingi !—ALFIERI.

ALTHOUGH Ali ben Ahmed regarded most things in life with the stoicism which believes that it was destined to take place, and though this often made him indifferent to all that happened, it did not prevent him from remarking the extraordinary change which had come over his child. At first he had attributed it to some passing whim or caprice ; to a phase of mental languor, which nothing would be so likely to dispel as her marriage with Hassan ben Abed ; so for a time he abstained from speaking to her on the subject ; but, when the unwonted mood into which Ourida had fallen assumed the appearance of settled melancholy, Ali ben Ahmed resolved to ascertain the cause of the alteration.

If the old chief had been born on the shores opposite

to his own country, instead of being a son of Algeria, it might have occurred to him that the change in his daughter was not unconnected with what he had told her about the disposal of her hand to Hassan ben Abed ; but such a motive would have been the last which a Muslim would suspect, where it was for him to command and for her to obey. Even Christian parents do not always consult the feelings of their children in a matter which decides their happiness or misery for life. How much less does such a sentimental consideration enter the head, or touch the heart, of a Mussulman whose religion and country's custom have made master of their fate.

Ali ben Ahmed wished only to discover the reason of his daughter's reserve, and of her apparent indifference to all that had hitherto given her pleasure. He one day therefore summoned Ourida, whom he greatly loved, into his presence, and thus addressed her :—

‘Ourida, my child, let me know the reason of the sadness which overshadows thy spirit, like a cloud comes over the sky on a summer's day. Of late I know thee no longer, so greatly art thou changed. When I go forth in the morning coldly do'st thou see me depart, and when I come back in the evening thy gladdened look no longer welcomes my return. Has the evil eye fascinated thee with its ill-omened glance ?’

Never before had Ourida kept a secret from her father ; nay, till now her guileless bosom could not have harboured a thought which was not reflected on her open countenance. She therefore felt abashed and embarrassed under the searching look of Ali ben Ahmed. She knew her father too well to tell him what had

happened ; but, being constrained to make some answer, she for a time prevaricated with the truth, and assigned many motives such as might have suggested themselves to the artful mind of a girl brought up in a less simple state of society ; so easily does deceit and cunning follow the first step taken in a wrong direction.

Seeing that what she said did not satisfy Ben Ahmed, who felt instinctively that Ourida had not divulged the true cause of her dejection, she resolved, whilst avowing her repugnance to marry Hassan, to conceal the circumstance which had occasioned it, and in its place substitute a plausible pretext, which she took from the resources of her own imagination.

After a pause she thus resumed :—

‘When I heard from thy lips that I must wed Hassan ben Abed, I answered as became one who has no choice ; but know, O my father, that in the night which followed the day on which thy will was made known, my mother appeared before me in a vision, and warned me not to marry this man. O my father, thou, who hast known thy daughter when a happy child, would’st not see her an unfortunate wife. Thou wilt not disregard the admonition of my mother.’

Now, when Ali ben Ahmed heard these words the light grew dark before his eyes ; for he was greatly moved. As an Arab he was superstitious, and the story of the dream made an impression on him, which he was unwilling to avow to Ourida ; but his anger was kindled at her disobedience ; he, however, repressed his displeasure, for, like a prudent Mussulman, he had as much command over his passions as he had over his own

Arabian charger ; besides which, great was the love he bore to Ourida ; he therefore rebuked her as follows :—

‘ Thy mother, O my child, never disobeyed me when alive, and her spirit would not return from the Prophet’s paradise to counsel thee to be undutiful to thy father. Thy dream was but a distempered fancy, arising from the brooding sorrow which, like the shadow that passes over the moon, has darkened thy joyous nature ; such caprices are unworthy of thy father’s daughter. Prepare to fulfil the engagement I have made with Hassan ben Abed, nor again venture to oppose thy will to mine.’

With these words he left Ourida, without giving her time to reply.

CHAPTER XXI.

OURIDA.

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely apparition.—WORDSWORTH.

D zarte Sehnsucht, süßes Hoffen,
Der ersten Liebe goldne Zeit,
Das Auge sieht den Himmel offen,
Es schwelgt das Herz in Seligkeit.—SCHILLER.

LONG had don Enrique de Gonzales, such was the name of the rider of the black horse, meditated on the plan he should adopt to enable him again to see the beautiful maid who had captivated his soul.

Even if he should succeed in this, he did not conceal from himself the difficulties—apparently insuperable—which lay in his way, although good fortune should accompany him. How was he, a stranger and a Roumi, to become united to one of another faith? Would a Mahometan family, embittered by the recent invasion of their country by the Christians, whom its people had so long defied and held in contempt, consent to her marriage with a Spaniard, a son of the land tradition had taught them to hate, even more than they hated the other enemies of the Prophet?

But when was youth and hope ever discouraged in pursuit of happiness ?

He confided in his propitious star, and trusted that something might occur that should throw light across his path, which seemed at present overcast by the darkness of night. It appeared evident to him that he must try to procure an interview with the attendant he had seen in company with the lady of his thoughts, and then by every means in his power endeavour to induce the servant to assist him in bringing about a meeting with her mistress.

With this design he now bent his steps daily towards the abode of Ali ben Ahmed's daughter, hoping to meet her companion either leaving or returning to the house.

On the sixth day after that which had formed an epoch in his life, he saw Alawee leave the dwelling alone. Although it was only the servant of the maiden of his dreams whom he was going to accost, he felt himself more embarrassed than he had ever been before. Unperceived he followed her some time, till she arrived at a retired spot.

For such an interview the cavalier possessed a great advantage in knowing the language and the manners of the country.

Appearing before Alawee, he began by calling to her mind how he had been so fortunate as to see her lady with her on the well-remembered day. At first the confidant of Ourida endeavoured to avoid him ; but his modest manner, pleasing demeanour, and the earnestness of his purpose at last overcame her scruples ; after which she entered without reserve into the subject ; but

by no means did she, or could she, encourage his suit. Her mistress, she told him, had been brought up almost as secluded as a nun—devotees in his own country of whom she had heard, but did not comprehend why they thus sacrificed themselves. She then informed him of Ali ben Ahmed's resolution to bestow the hand of his daughter on an Arab chief, one of his former companions in arms, and that the marriage was soon to take place. 'Ourida's father,' she said, 'would not break his word, least of all would he do so in order to marry his child to a man of another country and of another religion.'

Although Don Enrique had foreseen that he would have many obstacles to encounter before he could obtain this pearl of great price, he was almost overcome by the confident tone and the unfavourable disclosures of Ourida's servant. But what most affected him was to hear that another had asked, and had obtained, the promise of the hand he so ardently sought for himself.

At the thought of a rival a keen pang of jealousy passed through his breast. On this point therefore he questioned Alawee most closely. She told him all she knew, which was that Hassan ben Abed had not seen her mistress. She reminded the cavalier that, amongst Arabs, marriages are arranged by the parents.

'As to Hassan ben Abed,' added Alawee, 'he is a personage of her father's age, reputed to be rich, but covetous, a man in whose estimation the wealth of the bride was probably as valuable as the beauty of her person, which could be known to him only by report.'

The concluding remarks of Alawee offered Don Enrique some consolation for the pain the first part of the conversation had caused him ; and, with this impres-

sion on his mind, be resolved to ask no more questions about the lady, but to exert all his eloquence and power of persuasion to dispose the confidant to favour his suit with her mistress, to tell Ourida of his love, and then to implore that charming maid to grant him an interview, even if she were unwilling to remove her adjar. To induce Alawee to intercede for him was in fact the chief object of the meeting.

‘When the direct course is open,’ said the cavalier, ‘it is not right to diverge from the straight path. Happier lovers can seek a father’s consent to their union, but I must wait till another revolution of Fortune’s wheel turns up something in my favour, ere I can present myself before Ali ben Ahmed and ask the hand of his daughter. Where the usual means fail us,’ further urged Don Enrique, ‘we may adopt such as would be improper under other circumstances. Therefore do I beg thee, Alawee, and supplicate thy mistress, to hold my presumption excused, if I resort to the only plan left for speaking to her I adore.’

There was something sophistical in this reasoning which did not escape even the intelligence of Ourida’s companion, who thought that peculiar circumstances could not make that right which is wrong in itself, but she was too little of a casuist to argue the point. She therefore rejected the proposed mediation; but so eloquent was the cavalier, and so passionate were his entreaties, that she was at last compelled to submit; this she did only on condition that the interview should be short, and that any other meeting must depend entirely on the willingness or the disinclination of Ourida to grant

it, without further intercession being demanded on the part of her servant.

Having conceded so much, she directed the cavalier to proceed the next day—which was Friday, when Ourida and her attendant would visit the cemetery—to a spot she and her mistress must pass in leaving the hallowed ground.

It is a general belief among Mahometans that the souls of the dead return to their graves every Friday. The surviving relations therefore, by going to the burial-place on the Arab Sabbath, imagine themselves to be once more with the departed, whom they loved when alive on earth.

Don Enrique, too happy to have obtained the promise he had solicited, put an end to the interview by pressing on Alawee the acceptance of a bracelet of some value ; such as please all Moorish women, and have a particular charm for the class to which Ourida's servant belonged ; nevertheless she declined to accept the present till the cavalier should have prospered in his suit ; 'for,' said she, 'if the obstacles should prove insuperable I shall have to blame myself for my share in the transaction, but if Allah—whose name be exalted—should accomplish what now appears impossible, I shall remain in the service of thy wife when thou art united to her, and then can I accept the gift thou now so generously offerest me.'

When Alawee informed her mistress of what had happened she was greatly astonished. Many were the questions she put to her attendant ; after which she made her relate exactly all that had passed in her conference with the cavalier. Ourida's state of indifference to all

about her had suddenly become changed into concentrated interest in one subject. Alawee now asked the lady what she purposed to do in regard to meeting the cavalier.

After a short reflection Ourida replied :—

‘Know, O Alawee, that I seem to have no will of my own in the question ; I feel myself drawn by an irresistible attraction to do, what both the custom of our country and the modesty of our sex forbid ; verily I have no choice,’ she added ingenuously, ‘although it appears free to me to act as I like. What is decreed must be accomplished ; we shall therefore keep the appointment.’

The next day, after leaving the cemetery, the lady and her companion, on approaching the place where they were to meet Don Enrique, saw the cavalier awaiting their arrival.

When he perceived Ali ben Ahmed’s daughter and her servant, he made a profound obeisance to the lady in the respectful and ceremonious manner of his countrymen when addressing a señora, a formality they have adopted from the Moors.

He thanked her for the honour she had done him ; and, after a just homage to her beauty, he proceeded to plead his cause with the feeling and ardour which his passion and her presence inspired.

Eloquence persuades when it proceeds from conviction ; and sympathy—the connecting link which carries impressions from one breast to another—made her believe what he said. Thus Ourida listened like a fascinated bird, which is unable to fly from the charmer. The novelty of her situation and the tender accents of her lover affected the Arab girl in a very different way

from that in which they would have moved a Christian damsel. Ourida had felt the power of love when she first saw its object, but its passionate language was new to her ear. Brought up in seclusion and accustomed to the monotonous life of her father's house, her soul dilated whilst she listened to the words of the cavalier, as flowers open to the dew of the morning. Like the warm light spread over the landscape, this charmed hour in her existence seemed brightened by the rays of the sun.

'Idol of my heart, delight of my thoughts,' exclaimed Don Enrique—in the flowery language of her country and of his own—'from the happy moment when I saw thee enter thy dwelling, thou hast been present to my mind, nor is thy beautiful face now concealed from me by thy adjar. Pardon, O my beloved, the presumption of my love. Well I know that nothing can make me worthy of thee ; although my birth and lineage are such as would satisfy thy father, were no other obstacle opposed to an alliance of the illustrious houses of Ali ben Ahmed and Enrique de Gonzales. Our faiths differ, yet may all difficulties be overcome.'

Ourida, who had felt indescribable pleasure in listening to the cavalier, confessed that he did not love alone ; but she added that he had left for the last, the point which was first in her estimation, for 'O my lord,' said she modestly and timidly, 'I comprehend not how thou wilt obtain the consent of my father.'

'If a Muslim woman,' replied the cavalier, 'had not been permitted to marry a Christian, I should not be here speaking to my adored.'

Ourida was about to ask for an explanation of this

last remark, when Alawec admonished the lovers that it was time to separate.

Don Enrique promised that he would procure an introduction to Ali ben Ahmed, as a step towards the attainment of a result, the difficulties of which he did not disguise from himself, but he was careful to conceal them as far as possible from Ourida, trusting that some fortunate accident might yet favour his suit.

The maiden was fain to be satisfied with vague hope ; for what is ardently desired is easily believed.

They then separated, but not before Don Enrique had obtained from Ourida a promise to meet him again.

These appointments had been repeated more than once, and vows of love and constancy had been repeated still oftener, when a circumstance took place which led to results affecting the loves of Ourida and the cavalier, which could not have been foreseen in the event itself which we shall proceed to describe.

CHAPTER XXII.

OURIDA.

Non vo' che più favelle,
 Malvagio traditor, che alla tua onta
 Io porterò di te vere novelle.—DANTE.

Ma non sì, che paura non mi desse
 La vista, che m' apparve, d'un leone.
 Questi pareva, che contra me venesse
 Con la test' alta e con rabbiosa fame ;
 Sì che pareva che l'aerne temesse.—*Inferno*, Canto I.

OURIDA'S suitor, Hassan ben Abed, about this time invited Ali ben Aïssa and some other friends to a lion-hunt. One of these was known to Don Enrique, who had often expressed a desire to take part in a fight with the saïd; the Arab therefore brought his Christian acquaintance with him to form one of the party. We must now relate how the proposed expedition was brought about.

In another part of this work we shall describe the usual manner of hunting the lion, when a combat with the king of beasts is not the result of a chance encounter. On occasions like the present the Arabs endeavour to find out the route he takes in coming to their village ;

and, having ascertained this, they proceed to waylay him, being almost sure from their knowledge of his habits that the redoubted enemy of their flocks and herds, when he repeats his aggression, will continue to pass along the same path. On the day appointed for the purpose they take up positions—with a due regard to their own safety—availing themselves of whatever lies in the road which may contribute to it, such as a tree high enough to make it impossible for the lion to reach them, or they station themselves on some inaccessible rock.

Whenever the king of the Atlas is observed to follow a particular tract several times, even if his object be not apparent, the Arabs go to the chase for the love of sport and excitement, or to obtain the reward offered by government for each wild animal that is killed.

Now it happened that a servant of Hassan ben Abed, returning home at dusk, had twice seen a lion pass at a short distance from the spot where he had been at work in his master's fields. Having noticed this, he watched for it on the third day, and, seeing it take the same road as before, he informed Hassan of the fact.

Although Hassan ben Abed was generally disliked by the other Arabs, who thought him covetous, inhospitable, and false, he was in reality even worse than his reputation. How he had contrived to ingratiate and maintain himself in the good opinion of Ali ben Ahmed was incomprehensible to them, and could only be attributed to great duplicity and cunning on the part of Ben Aïssa's fellow-campaigner.

When Hassan ben Abed's servant informed his

master that he had seen a lion go several times in a certain direction, a wicked thought—the offspring of his avaricious disposition—suggested itself to the mind of the latter.

‘If,’ reflected Hassan, ‘Ali ben Ahmed did not stand in the way, Ourida’s husband would obtain his estates conjointly with her hand.’ He therefore deliberated with himself how he could conduct the preparations for the combat with the formidable antagonist so as to put Ali ben Ahmed in a situation of danger, which would not be difficult if he examined the ground well before posting the huntsmen, and assigning to each a particular position.

This was his privilege as master of the hunt and owner of the land on which it was to take place. So Hassan ben Abed surveyed the scene of action previous to the arrival of the party, on the day appointed for the fight with the sba. To each was then designated the spot he was to occupy. Ali ben Ahmed was stationed before a projecting rock on the path along which the lion was expected to pass. When it should be seen approaching the chief was to retire behind the cliff, and not fire till the saïd came up. This was the post of danger, for the lion always bounds towards the place from whence the attack proceeds; but, as Ali ben Ahmed’s friend Hassan had chosen his own position on the opposite side of the way, assistance from him would be at hand if the first shot from his comrade’s mekahla did not strike its object in the heart, or between the eyes, the only parts where the animal could be killed at once.

At a lion-hunt the Arabs consider it polite to cede

the post of honour, which is the post of danger, to any European who joins them in such an enterprise. Habit and personal courage render the natives of Algeria careless as to risking their own lives, but they are always interested to see how the foreigner will behave who for the first time faces the sultan of the desert.²⁰

On the present occasion Hassan ben Abed had willed it otherwise ; for to his unknown rival he assigned a place not far from Ali ben Ahmed. The rest of the party was stationed at some distance on the same road, in case the lion should not make a stand where he would be fired at.

The sun was sinking below the horizon when the huntsmen took up their positions ; all was silence and expectation. The tranquil aspect of nature was lighted only by what remained of declining day ; but powder was to speak, the loud voice of the deadly mekahla was ready to disturb the repose of the scene as soon as the unsuspecting lord of the forest should appear in the pride of strength and power.

On such an evening well could the most formidable of created beings, walking alone in conscious might, feel secure from danger. What could he meet on his way which would not turn aside, and leave him monarch of the road ? How many thousands of the human race could he not defy, if they attacked him only with the weapons nature has given to each ! Through an army of the perfidious sons of Adam could he march, as he would pass through a herd of antelopes, killing one only when he is hungry—not for the love of slaughter or the lust of conquest.

After waiting some time, a shadowy form was seen

moving along the road. As it came nearer, two fiery balls, shining like stars in the twilight, were seen drawing towards the spot where the company was stationed. It was the saïd, approaching with the slow and stately step peculiar to this noble and dignified animal.

As he looked neither to the right nor to the left, Ali ben Ahmed had only the chance of his ball striking the heart. When the lion arrived opposite the rock which had concealed his enemy the stillness of night was broken by a sharp report and a loud roar, which echoed amongst the hills and vibrated in the breast of every huntsman.

Ali ben Ahmed did not miss his noble mark ; for the lion, made savage by the treacherous shot, bounded towards him, and Ali would have been torn to pieces as quickly as the ball had left his mekahla, had not a saving hand interposed between the infuriated beast and his victim.

Ali ben Ahmed, thrown to the ground, and struggling under the mighty grasp of the master of his fate, supposed that it was his friend Hassan who had hastened to his assistance ; he saw only the barrel of a rifle—which touched the enormous head of the saïd—discharged over his own prostrate body. To rescue him had been the inspiration of the critical moment. The ball broke the massive jaw which was about to tear him in pieces. The wounded animal, finding himself attacked from another quarter, turned furiously on his new aggressor, whom he bore to the earth and lacerated with his terrible claws. Ali ben Ahmed, who had been little hurt, so quickly was he saved from inevitable death, now rose to assist and thank his brave deliverer.

But what was his astonishment to see, instead of his friend Hassan, the Roumi stranger writhing in the gripe of the lion, and before he knew how to act in the fearful crisis, Don Enrique—who had not for an instant lost his presence of mind—had plunged his yatagan deep into the heart of the monster, which fell back mortally stricken, just as the Arabs who had been posted along the road came to the spot where the struggle was taking place. Although the death-blow had been given by the cavalier, some more balls were fired at their valiant foe, who, in making a last effort to avenge himself, fell dead at the feet of his enemies.

If Ourida's father—thanks to the devotion and timely succour of the Christian—had received no serious injury, less favourable was the condition of his noble saviour, who now lay insensible on the field of combat.

A burnous, spread out, was made into a litter, on which the lifeless body of the Spaniard was laid. This cloak, carried by four Arabs, conveyed the wounded cavalier to the house of Ali ben Ahmed by orders of that chief, whose heart, oppressed with grief and overflowing with gratitude, yearned towards the brave stranger who had saved his life, perhaps at the expense of his own. Ali ben Ahmed despatched a servant to the nearest town for a European doctor.

Where was Hassan ben Abed, who had chosen his place opposite the rock where his friend was stationed, that he might come to his rescue in a moment of peril?

From the instant Ben Ahmed had fired at the lion Hassan had disappeared. Too often had the old soldier confronted the *said*, and too often had he fought against the Roumis, for desertion on this occasion to be at-

tributed to want of courage. Another motive must therefore be sought for this extraordinary conduct, and many were the conjectures made to account for it. The suspicion of treachery which had been excited by his forsaking Ali ben Ahmed was increased to conviction on questioning Ben Hassan's servant, who mentioned his master's strange behaviour when he first heard of the lion ; his subsequent disposal of the hunting party, and the post assigned to Ali ben Ahmed, who was to rely on a support which depended on Hassan to give or withdraw, served to confirm it. The object of this premeditated perfidy became yet more apparent on considering the relation in which the two friends stood towards each other, owing to the projected marriage of Hassan with Ourida.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OURIDA.

With pleasures long resigned,
Lo ! Memory bursts the twilight of the mind,
Her dear delusions soothe his sinking soul.—ROGERS.

Io vivrò sempre in pene,
Io non avrò più bene ;
E tu chi sa se mai
Ti sovverrai di me !—METASTASIO.

WHEN Don Enrique de Gonzales first opened his eyes after the state of insensibility in which he had continued since he fell into the power of the lion, he found himself lying in a strange house. A doctor was watching his return to life, and Ali ben Ahmed was standing near his couch anxiously awaiting the opinion of the physician when his patient should recover consciousness. On removing his dress in order to examine the wounds, a closed locket, attached to a chain round his neck, had been given to Ben Ahmed, who put it aside without examination, intending to give back the medallion to his suffering guest when he should be able to receive it.

The injuries inflicted on the cavalier when in the rude embrace of the lion were very serious and caused much pain.

The doctor who had bandaged the wounds was a man skilled in all the appliances of art ; Don Enrique could not have fallen into better hands. He now gave the invalid a sleeping draught, but declined to offer an opinion, before the next day at the earliest, as to the possible result.

Till midnight Ali ben Ahmed sat by the bed of his deliverer, who continued to sleep on from the effect of the opiate.

When Ben Ahmed at length threw himself on a sleeping divan in the same room, the exciting incident of the day and the irritation of his own hurt—which though slight was sometimes painful—kept him awake till near morning, and when he at last fell into a troubled doze, it was again to pass in a distorted form through what had taken place during the day. He dreamed that as soon as he was thrown to the ground by the terrible beast it was suddenly changed into Hassan, who was about to kill him with his hunting knife, when, lo ! his long-lost sister seized the hand of the assassin as he was preparing to strike. After this the scene changed. Ali found himself in a Christian temple. At the altar stood his daughter Ourida, and by her side was a young cavalier whose features he was trying to make out when he awoke.

Having shaken off the troubled vision of the night he betook himself to the bed of the invalid, who soon after opened his eyes to the dim light, which was beginning to break into the sick man's chamber. Ahmed ben Aïssa took his hot hand between his own, and, after enquiring affectionately how he was, thus addressed his young friend :—

‘Many seem the hours of night to him, O my son, who longs to see a wounded companion in the morning. Endless have they appeared to me, for that companion is my deliverer. With us Arabs he, who in a fight with the lion, saves a man’s life, has achieved a greater and a better deed than he who meets the saïd in single combat. The life thou hast saved I hold for thee, should good or evil fortune permit Ben Ahmed to show that he is not ungrateful. A service rendered leaves him debtor who receives it; and should occasion serve, the Arab will do for thee what thou hast done for him, nor think his obligation cancelled. Should fate throw no opportunity in my way, then, O my Christian rescuer, ask what thou wilt, for nothing in my power shall be denied thee.’

A faint smile passed over the pallid lips of the cavalier as he replied in a low voice:—

‘Promise not, for there are favours too great to ask, as there are boons too precious to bestow.’

Ali ben Ahmed was about to protest, when the doctor entered the apartment. He was not well pleased to find the master of the house in conversation with his patient, and he at once forbade all excitement which could disturb the invalid and retard his recovery.

Having felt his pulse and asked a few questions, the physician prescribed some soothing medicine, and gave a few directions; after which he took Ali ben Ahmed aside, and informed him, that a wound fever had set in as he—the doctor—had anticipated, that at present the condition of the sufferer was not without danger, the extent of which could be ascertained only by observing the progress of the fever. He then repeated his admonition, that undisturbed repose of mind as well as of

body was absolutely necessary, adding that if this advice were not followed recovery might be despaired of.

Thus warned Ali ben Ahmed, like an obedient nurse, sat silently by the couch of the cavalier day after day, and during the greater part of each night. If the sick man addressed to him a question, it was met by a pressure of the hand, and by a sign not to speak till the doctor should permit.

Don Enrique had been ill about a week, during which the Oumena watched almost constantly by the couch, when he one night sought his pillow a little earlier than usual, hoping to obtain the repose which he so much needed; but, finding he could not sleep, he fell into a train of reflections. 'How strange is destiny!' thought Ben Ahmed. 'I who have so long hated the Roumis, and have fought against these invaders of my country, now owe my life to one of our foes, when my own countryman, my friend and my companion in arms, leaves me to be devoured by the lion. Allah is great; there is no deity but God! extolled be His perfections! He knoweth all secret things. Verily no man can contend against his fate.'

From time to time he rose and went to look at his sick guest, who continued to slumber on, in the same state of feverish unconsciousness. At last, finding he could obtain no rest himself, he left his bed to walk about the room till dawn.

A subdued light was burning in the chamber.

After the watcher had taken several turns his eyes chanced to fall upon the locket, which the poor cavalier had worn round his neck, 'He seems to have kept it as a talisman near his heart,' thought Ben Ahmed, as he

mechanically took it up, and turned the medallion over in his hand; in doing this he accidentally touched a spring, on which the clasp opened, and great was his astonishment to see a miniature portrait of a beautiful female face; one which carried his thoughts back many years, for it seemed to him the likeness of his long-lost sister Zareefeh, as she looked when she so mysteriously disappeared from her country.

The mind of Ben Ahmed was confounded at what he saw. Before him was again the well-remembered expression of that charming countenance; the same sweet smile was on the lips, that feature so characteristic in the Arab; the dark hair and eyes, all were there, as if Time had recalled the past; the past, when Ali often left home to fight for the independence of his country; the past, when their masters were of their own religion; the past, when Sabeehad his young wife was not yet the mother of the child whose birth had cost the life of her father's faithful companion. During this long interval Ourida had been born, and this lovely daughter had since grown to womanhood. Above all Ben Ali dwelt on the earlier period, when he had failed to find his sister on returning from one of his military expeditions.

'How many other changes had taken place since those troubled days! What hopes and aspirations had been disappointed! The enemy against whom he then combated was now master in the land for which they had fought.' Again his thoughts reverted to the strange fatality which had linked his fate with one of that very race; for 'did he not owe his life to the Roumi cavalier? and what could mean this portrait which he had worn near his heart—the likeness of Zareefeh?'

Greatly perplexed at all this, his first impulse was to return the miniature to Don Enrique and ask him to explain the mystery ; but he rejected the idea as quickly as he had conceived it, when he remembered the state of his unfortunate guest, and the injunctions of the doctor, that, above all, he must not be excited in any way. Thus was Ben Ahmed condemned to lose himself in conjectures, and to suffer the torture of impatient waiting. 'It seems my fate,' mused Ahmed, 'to be drawn towards these Roumis, and even to love one of that once detested race. This painting is also the work of a Christian, for no other artist of the forbidden craft could so well represent on the elephant's tusk the beautiful face of Zarefeh.'

During the time the events narrated took place, the secluded life of Ourida remained undisturbed by other excitement than that of her own thoughts, which no longer flowed in the tranquil course they had hitherto taken. She had heard of the lion-hunt from her handmaid Alawee, and that some catastrophe had happened to one of the party, but little imagined who the sufferer was ; and still less did she suspect that it was her lover, who was hovering between life and death under the same roof with herself. She had not seen her father very often of late ; and, with the reserve always maintained by Arabs towards her sex, he had told her nothing of what had taken place. It was a relief however to Ourida that no mention had been made lately of Hassan ; Ali ben Ahmed had not once pronounced his name, nor had he made any allusion to her marriage. This reprieve she attributed to the accident which had resulted from the encounter with the lion, for it had

brought a wounded stranger into the house, about whose recovery the old chief appeared unusually solicitous.

Regarding this foreign guest she had been able to learn very little ; as even Alawee had not seen him, a male attendant having been chosen to relieve Ali ben Ahmed in watching at the bedside of the invalid.

But if the silence regarding Hassan brought some consolation to Ourida, receiving no tidings of Don Enrique distressed her greatly. Unable to account for this apparent indifference, her fancy suggested evils which rendered her unhappy state of mind yet more wretched.

On the morning after the incident of the locket the doctor remarked an abatement of the fever, and the day following he pronounced his patient out of danger ; but the physician recommended great caution, and repeated his injunctions in regard to repose, mental as well as physical, observing that the least excitement might be followed by a relapse, in which case fatal consequences would probably be the result.

Ali ben Ahmed, thus constrained to comply with the exigencies of the medical attendant, continued to watch the progress of his deliverer towards convalescence with as much assiduity as before ; although it obliged him to wait for a solution of the mystery attached to the locket till the cavalier should be able to explain it.

Of Hassan ben Abed neither he nor his friends had heard anything since the eventful night of the fight with the lion. It was known only that he had left that part of the country. Some thought he had gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca, others believed him to have passed into Marocco, or to have retired to one of his estates in a

distant part of Algeria. All agreed that his absence was a proof of conscious guilt, and that Ali ben Ahmed might consider himself released from any promise he had made to a man whose treachery was evident, and whose character and age made him unsuited for the husband of a girl so young and so estimable as his daughter.

Ben Ahmed listened in silence to the comments of his friends, making no reply to what they said on the subject, for he liked it not. His impressions of the event remained the secret of his own bosom.

As soon as the condition of Don Enrique had taken a favourable turn youth and a good constitution achieved the rest, so that he made rapid progress towards complete recovery.

He had left his bed some days, and had even been allowed occasionally to walk a little in the garden, when Ali ben Ahmed thought the time was come to question his guest about the medallion portrait.

One day, when the Oumena was on the point of speaking to him about it, Don Enrique himself asked for the locket, which Ben Ahmed had no sooner given to him, than the young man, opening it, gazed affectionately on the beautiful face and, kissing the little picture, exclaimed: 'O my mother! thou knowest not of the danger in which the life of thy son has been placed, little do'st thou imagine that we might never have met again.'

When Ben Ahmed heard this apostrophe of the cavalier the light became dark before him. 'After all,' thought the old soldier, 'it is not my sister, but some chance resemblance which, exaggerated by my own imagination, has deceived me.'

His attachment and gratitude to his young friend were however not lessened by this disappointment ; and, desiring to learn to whom he owed his life, he begged Don Enrique to tell him something of his personal history.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OURID.1.

To live in hearts we leave behind,
Is not to die.—CAMPBELL.

‘MINE,’ replied the cavalier, ‘is a very simple and imperfect story. My father, Don Alvarez de Gonzales, who belonged to one of the distinguished families of Spain, lost his life in a fall from his horse before I had attained half my present age. I remember him as a fine-looking, handsome man, but still better by his love for my mother and myself, for this made and left the impression by which I recall him to mind now, as at every other moment of my life. I have heard my mother—whom Providence has spared to me—say that, before he met with her, the great pleasure, or rather passion, of his life had been to travel into foreign countries, but from that happy day his love of change and adventure ceased, and my father—like the volatile bird which has found the mate it loves—concentrated his affections on his wife and home. It was during one of his journeys in the country where we now are that he first saw my mother. She is of the noble house of Aïssa.

‘Hold, young man,’ exclaimed Ben Ahmed, inter-

rupting him, 'Aïssa, didst thou say? This is the name of my family. There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! O my desire, my hope! Suspense is torture; proceed, I conjure thee.'

'As I have said,' continued Don Enrique, greatly excited by the remark with which Ben Ahmed had broken into his narrative, 'my mother is a native of this land, and is even from this part of Algeria. Her brother was a chief of an Arab tribe, the name of which I have heard her mention, and it is that we both have just pronounced.'

'Son of my sister,' exclaimed the old soldier, 'come to my bosom!' Overpowered by feelings which the unexpected disclosure of a happy circumstance calls forth, they remained for some moments clasped in each other's arms.

Don Enrique was not less astonished and delighted to learn that the man whose life he had saved was his mother's brother, than was the veteran to find that it was to his sister's son he owed his deliverance. The cavalier had known Ben Aïssa only under the name of Ali ben Ahmed, a name he did not remember to have heard from his mother on the rare occasions when she had spoken of her nearest relation, whom she had then called Aïssa. Ben Ahmed he knew to be the father of Ourida; for, soon after he met that lovely damsel, he wished to have her father pointed out to him, and this desire had been gratified, but a personal presentation to the chief had first taken place at the lion-hunt, where Don Enrique so greatly distinguished himself.

The chivalrous character of the Spaniard would have made him fly to the rescue of anyone in danger, but to

save Ourida's father willingly did he risk his life. It would be impossible to describe the sensations of the cavalier when he thus discovered that, besides his other claims to favour in the eyes of Ben Ahmed, he was his own nephew and Ourida's cousin.

Absorbed in this delightful reflection he had forgotten to continue his narrative ; and, as the disclosure of their relationship had plunged Ali ben Ahmed into a like pleasing revery, he had not immediately noticed the interruption ; but he now desired Don Enrique to proceed.

'The story of my mother's life at this period,' continued the cavalier, 'is but imperfectly known to me. I have heard her say that she became acquainted with my father when the struggle for independence was at its height ; thou, her brother, wert then fighting in another province, or wert a prisoner of war as some had reported.

'Long did thy sister wait thy return, for she wished to have thy consent to her marriage. The insecurity of those troubled times, at last, induced her to place herself under the protection of the man she loved, and they were united—as others have since been—by a civil marriage according to the laws of this colony ; and never had she cause to repent of her choice.

'It was not necessary for her to abjure her own faith, nor did she do so. My father was a Christian of enlightened mind and liberal principles, who looked more to the moral maxims of religion than to any particular form of belief. For him it was enough that he and his wife adored the same God, and that Christ, our Saviour, was venerated by both.'

‘After my parents had arrived in Spain letters were written to thee, her brother ; but, as no answer was ever received, it was supposed that thou hadst either fallen in battle or hadst died in captivity.

‘As to my personal history,’ added the cavalier modestly, ‘it is not worth relating. Unlike thy active military career, my valiant uncle, it has been adorned by no stirring exploits in the field, nor by any adventure except one, which could leave a lasting impression on the mind.’

‘But that one,’ interposed Ben Ahmed, ‘would form an epoch in the life of any man. Many there are who face the monarch of the forest, but few’——

‘Oh,’ said Don Enrique, interrupting him, ‘I did not allude to the fight with the lion, but to an encounter far more dangerous to me.’

The old soldier, who considered the said a very respectable antagonist, looked at his nephew in astonishment. ‘And what,’ asked Ben Ahmed, ‘couldst thou meet more formidable than the king of animals?’

The cavalier felt that a critical moment of his life was at hand. When he called to mind the prejudices of the Muslims against the Christians he was almost afraid to proceed ; but, sustained by the hopes with which so many favourable circumstances inspired him, he resolved to open his heart to Ourida’s father, and trust to his star for the result. As well may I know my fate now, he thought, as live on in the torture of suspense and fear.

Therefore summoning up his resolution, he thus addressed Ali ben Ahmed :—‘Some weeks before the eventful day of the lion-hunt, riding in the neighbourhood of this mansion, I passed through the wood near

it. On emerging from the forest I observed two females, evidently a lady and her servant, about to enter the gate of a garden. Being close to it, the former, supposing herself to be unobserved, took off her adjar, when I was for an instant—for a single moment—permitted, by my good or evil fortune, to see a face which has never since been absent from my mind ; except when sickness made me unconscious of everything in the world.'

Ben Ahmed, whose brow had darkened as he listened to the latter part of the cavalier's narrative, was about to make some observation in reply, when Don Enrique added : ' Think not, noble Ahmed, that, because I obeyed the call of duty—the instinct of the huntsman—in flying to assist a comrade in a danger which might have been my own ; or because thou mad'st a hasty promise, when thou could'st not know how precious might be the boon asked of thy generosity, I would for this presume to hope that thy sister's son may become also thy son, and the houses of Aïssa and Gonzales be thus doubly united.'

' Young man,' answered Ben Ahmed, calmly and almost coldly, ' discoveries and surprises have followed each other so rapidly since thou hast begun thy story, that had the unexpected conclusion been suppressed, I should yet have required time and repose to recover from the excitement it has occasioned. Remember that there exists an obstacle to thy union with the daughter of a Muslim ; it is that which my sister overlooked when she married thy father. For the present let us say no more on the subject. Leave me now, my son, to my own meditations ; and may Allah—whose name be exalted—guide me in the struggle between inclination

and duty; and, if they cannot be reconciled, may He teach me to submit to His decrees.'

When Ali ben Ahmed was left alone it was the hour of evening prayer, and sincerely did the old Mussulman supplicate Allah, the High, the Great, for a happy inspiration in his embarrassment.

Some days passed, during which Ali ben Ahmed had reflected about the answer he should give to Don Enrique, without being able to decide how to act; but as he turned over in his mind all the strange events that had taken place, he felt a vehement desire again to see his long-lost sister.

In order to accomplish this wish it would be necessary for Don Enrique to cross over to Spain; and, after having related to his mother all that had happened, to return with her to Algeria. 'Nothing,' thought Ben Ahmed, 'could so much contribute to the entire recovery of my young friend as such a change of air and scene.'

Thus resolved, he repaired to the apartment of the cavalier, and told him what he wished him to do. Don Enrique, who fancied that he perceived something in the proposal of his uncle not unfavourable to the aspirations of his own heart, and who foresaw that his mother might prove a powerful intercessor for him with her brother, gladly undertook the journey; and, after taking affectionate leave of his hospitable host, he set out the next morning, regretting only that he could not see Ourida before his departure.

After his nephew had left, Ali ben Ahmed debated, day and night, in his own mind the question of marrying his daughter to the son of his sister. 'As to Hassan,' swore the old soldier to himself, 'by the head of the

Prophet, a traitor—may God blacken his face²¹—shall not wed my Ourida. But shall I then give her to a son of Spain—an unbeliever?—to one of a people preeminently hostile to us, our oldest foes amongst the Roumi nations?’

Then his thoughts would take a more favourable turn, when he remembered how the cavalier had saved his life almost at the expense of his own; that the hand of destiny seemed perceptible in what had come to pass; besides all this ‘Was it not Ourida’s own cousin who asked her hand? Was he not half an Arab? Did he not possess excellent personal qualities? and did not the Christians treat their wives better than the Muslims? Would not his beloved child have a better chance of being happy?’

Often did Ali ben Ahmed fall into such a train of reasoning, often was that strong barrier—a difference in religion—assailed by every argument the veteran could bring to bear on the point.

Such conclusions for and against the consummation of his wishes—often adopted and again rejected—left the mind of Ali ben Ahmed undecided; till one day, after long deliberation, he remembered the remark of Don Enrique, that some Muslim women had married Christians²²—and this he knew to be true although of rare occurrence; but in spite of such precedents in favour of what he desired, he might still have remained as wavering as before had not a sudden thought come, like a gleam of sunshine, to cast a light over the dark labyrinth of his investigations.

‘Have I lost faith in the future of my country?’ suddenly exclaimed Ben Ali, as the idea struck him.

‘Do I no longer trust in the star of its destiny, or believe in the prediction of what is to come? Shall not the stranger be driven from the soil and this land be restored to the true believers? and when we are again our own masters, must not all who tread this ground follow the precepts of the Prophet?—may God favour and preserve him! So it was in other days, and so it will be again, when the holy Crescent once more shines over us as the emblem of our faith. Zareefeh’s son, if he marries Ourida, must live in Algeria, and when the day of our deliverance arrives he, like the other Roumis, will be obliged to abjure his false creed and embrace the true religion.’

‘All this,’ thought the old Mahometan, ‘is merely a matter of time, and the day is not far distant when it will be accomplished.’

Having thus settled the future of his country, much to his own satisfaction, and built a castle for the airy creations of his imagination, he gave up thinking on the matter, glad to have come to a resolution. The last consideration in particular—that which had put an end to his doubts—delighted him much, for it showed him in perspective Don Enrique—the man he preferred to all others for his daughter’s husband—converted to Islamism, dressed in the Arab costume, with his head shaved—save the regulation mahomet²³ on the crown, without which an orthodox Muslim might be left below when the rest are pulled up into paradise!

CHAPTER XXV.

OURIDA (concluded).

No hay mal que por bien no venga.—*Spanish adage.*

Be still, sad heart ! and cease repining ;
Behind the cloud the sun is shining.—LONGFELLOW.

THE life of Ben Ahmed now entered on a new phase, no longer tormented by doubt and uncertainty, for he had, in his own mind, consented to the marriage of his daughter with the cavalier ; whose absence was not inopportune, for it left the Oumena to mature his plans without being embarrassed by a lover's importunity.

At one time he indulged in pleasant speculations, whilst at another he thought over the surprising events which had lately taken place. As Don Enrique, whilst avowing his love for Ourida, had been careful to say nothing of his interviews with the lady, well knowing that this would be an unpardonable offence with an Arab father, Ali ben Ahmed could not account for the progress the reciprocal attachment had made in the breasts of the young couple. Comparing the time from which he had observed the change in his daughter with the period when the cavalier had first seen Ourida, he was convinced that she had loved her cousin from the day of

which he had spoken ; and that the objection she had to marry Hassan was not occasioned solely by her aversion to him, but because she loved Don Enrique.

The old chief, well pleased with the arrangement of his plans for the future, was in excellent humour with himself. He reflected that, if he kept his consent to the marriage a secret from Ourida and Enrique, their being unprepared for it would add to the pleasure of the surprise. ‘They shall be punished,’ chuckled Ben Ahmed—anticipating the effect of his practical joke—for falling in love without my permission ! Ourida will remain under the impression that Hassan is to be her husband, and Enrique—for whose presence on the occasion I can find some pretext—will believe the same.’

Thinking of Ourida made Ben Aïssa wish to see his beloved child, whom he had somewhat neglected during the illness of the cavalier ; he therefore repaired to her apartment.

She was in the same dejected state in which she had been for some time. Her health had declined and a settled melancholy made her indifferent to everything. Her father found her looking so pale and ill, that he at first felt disposed to abandon his intention of keeping her in ignorance of the unexpected felicity he had prepared for the lovers ; scarcely could he forbear to cheer her with the good tidings, for he knew that they would at once restore the afflicted girl and bring back more than the happiness she had lost, yet, unwilling to resign his pleasant anticipations of her astonishment and delight, when she should unexpectedly find the cause of her sadness removed, and in its place see the sunny path of a bright future open before her,—he held to his

original design. Remembering at the same time that the cavalier would be back in a few days, after which it would not be necessary to defer the wedding, he bade her prepare for it.

Ourida, who knew nothing of Hassan's conduct and disgrace, believed him to be her destined husband ; and, not knowing what had become of Don Enrique, despair had made life of little value to her ; so she only replied, 'I hear and obey.'

But, when she found herself alone with her faithful attendant, she gave vent to her feelings in lamentations and tears. Alawee sought to encourage her mistress with every consolation her attachment and duty suggested. She also admonished Ourida that 'all must submit to the will of Allah—whose name be exalted. Marriages,' continued Alawee, 'are events of doubtful issue ; they are,' she added—illustrating her observation by a Spanish adage—'like melons we buy at the market ; all appear alike, till we discover what is hidden by the outside with its green colour of hope ! In this uncertainty do all Arab maids wed, and few, before they marry, see the man of their father's choice.'

'True,' answered Ourida, 'but neither do they see the man they could love ; thus is my misfortune greater than that of most daughters of Ismaël.' In this manner did she deplore her hard fate.

Shortly after Ali ben Amed's last visit to Ourida, the cavalier and his mother arrived from Spain. We shall not attempt to describe the meeting of the long-separated brother and sister. Although Ben Aïssa expected to see Zareefeh metamorphosed after the Roumi fashion, he was not prepared for the extraordinary

change effected by her European dress, and greatly was he shocked when he saw his sister's face exposed to eyes profane. But he made her very happy when he told her—under promise of secrecy—that he consented to the marriage of the cousins.

Out of deference to the prejudices of the Muslims in general, and in order to avoid the comments of their own friends, it was agreed that after the wedding the bride, her husband, and Zareefeh should return to Spain and reside there for the present.

After Ali ben Ahmed had for a few days enjoyed the society of his sister, the veteran called on the mayor of the nearest town, and it was arranged that the marriage should be performed at the castle of Ali ben Amed ben Aïssa on the following day.

On his return from the Mairie he simply told Don Enrique that he should require him on the morrow to witness the transfer of some family property; to which the cavalier willingly consented.

In honour of the festive event which was to unite the noble houses of Aïssa and Gonzales, the great reception hall of the fine old Moorish building was decorated in the taste of the country. Around were hung the insignia of war and trophies of the chase. Amongst the victims of the mekahla and the yatagan a large lion—which in death still preserved something of the terrible aspect of life—occupied a conspicuous place, from whence, when the company should be assembled, it would again confront the party against which it had contended when alive! A rightful privilege, for it had brought about the ceremony over which it would appear to preside.

This was the lion Don Enrique had killed when he had saved the life of Ourida's father.

The day fixed by Ali ben Ahmed for the wedding being arrived, shortly before the party assembled he ordered his daughter to array herself in a dress becoming an Eastern bride.

With the aid of Alawee she completed her toilet, leaving her face uncovered ; an innovation submitted to by her father on the occasion as a concession to Christian customs, but about which the distracted girl cared too little to be surprised.

Amongst those who were invited to the fête were the men who had been present at the encounter with the saïd.

The sun-burnt Arabs, dressed in the national costume, many of them old soldiers, companions in arms of their host, formed picturesque groups, which harmonised so well with the surrounding proofs of their intrepidity, that the presence of the huntsmen seemed to impart vitality to the savage animals which looked on them.

The mayor, the witnesses, Don Enrique, and his mother were there.

When the drapery which hung over the entrance to the apartment where the guests were assembled was drawn aside, Ourida, accompanied by her faithful attendant, was seen on the threshold, trembling, and with downcast eyes, for to her it was the threshold of a new existence. She remained a moment motionless, as if afraid to advance ; fearing to see before her the dreaded Hassan ben Abed.

The sudden apparition of the beautiful girl—as she

stood framed by the doorway—formed a picture which excited the wonder and admiration of all who saw it.

From the high ogive window opposite the maiden was lighted by the rays of the sun, which shone down on her now, as it had brightened fifteen summers of her life.

If the appearance of the charming damsel had produced a sensation in all, there was one in particular whom the sight of Ourida—attired in the bridal dress—the presence of the mayor, witnesses, and the assembled party, caused to dread an approaching calamity.

Don Enrique had turned deadly pale from the instant his eye had rested on Ben Ahmed's daughter : an agonising suspicion had crossed his mind, and he trembled like the poor girl herself. His eager glance wandered uneasily over the company in search of Hassan ; for although he knew him not by sight, he feared to recognise his rival by his happy look. Of his treachery at the lion-hunt—like Ourida—he knew nothing, having been carried home insensible, and since his illness he had been absent in Spain.

The distress of the lovers was too much for Ali ben Ahmed, who loved them with tender affection.

Overcome by the painful result of the too successful stratagem, he seized the hand of Enrique, and led him hurriedly forward to Ourida, who—having just seen her lover there, as if to witness her marriage with another—had sunk fainting to the ground as her father caught her in his arms.

‘My child, my Ourida!’ exclaimed the old chief, pressing her to his bosom : ‘thy father has been cruel, the deception was a selfish artifice, but thy suffering is

over now. Thy hand, like thy heart, is for him thou lovest, for the noble Enrique de Gonzales, who saved thy father's life. Be happy, O my children, my blessing on you both !'

Who can tell, what pen shall depict, the rapture, the astonishment of Ourida when, instead of the dreaded Hassan's, her father placed her little hand in that of the beloved of her soul ! Her reason almost fled in the excess of her joy ; whilst Enrique seemed like one who—stunned by a sudden blow—had been brought back to life and happiness.

All who witnessed the tender scene were affected to tears ; even the calm dignity of the Arab chiefs gave way, and the pleasure felt by Alawee, was only surpassed by that of the delighted couple.

The ceremony was then proceeded with, and the beautiful Arab maid became the wife of her Christian lover.

When the marriage had taken place Ali ben Ahmed—like a true believer in fate and destiny—consoled himself with the reflection that 'all would be well in the end, if such be the will of Allah—whose name be exalted.'

United to the man she loved, Ourida, with her husband, her faithful Alawee, and Ali ben Ahmed's sister, left for the neighbouring shores of Spain.

Ali ben Aïssa intends to invite them to return, when the Crescent shall again shed its light over the land as the symbol of its religion, and Algeria shall no longer be the home of the stranger.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SECOND EXCURSION.—PALESTRO.—THE INSURRECTION.

Era la notte, e non prendean ristoro
 Col sonno ancor le faticose genti ;
 Ma qui vegghiando nel fabril lavoro
 Stavano i Franchi alla custodia intenti.—TASSO.

BEFORE starting from Algiers on our second excursion—in which, after visiting Palestro, we shall return to the sea, embark at Dellys, and sail along the coast to Bône, where we leave the littoral and proceed inland to Constantine and the Sahara—we may mention that a great part of the land route, that from Sétif to Constantine, is very monotonous, whilst that between Sétif and Palestro is defective and inconvenient, although the road is interesting in the highest degree, for it passes through one of the most beautiful districts of the Grande Kabylie—the bold and romantic defile known as the ‘Iron Gate.’

Pending the completion of the railway, which is in course of construction from Algiers to Constantine, we prefer the coasting voyage.

The village of Palestro alluded to above, which is on the road from Algiers to Sétif, has become painfully famous as having been the theatre of the worst atrocities

which were committed during the insurrection in 1871 ; and, as these sad events form a dramatic episode in the history of the colony, some account of them will not be out of place in a work on Algeria. We shall therefore relate what occurred when we arrive at that small borough.

The country between Algiers and Palestro is not interesting. In less than two hours after leaving the capital we arrived at the *Maison Carrée*. When the Turks were in power this fort, occupied by the Janizaries, was formidable to such Arab tribes as were disposed to revolt or were in arrears in payment of taxes, and to all who gave offence to their Ottoman masters. It is now used as a prison.

After quitting the *Maison Carrée*, and crossing the plain of the *Metidja*, we came to the town of *Alma*, and soon after to the *Col of the Beni Aïcha*, both of which, like *Palestro*, were the scenes of the insurrection. We shall speak of them when we narrate what happened in that ill-starred community, which is a few miles from the *Beni Aïcha*, a hamlet consisting of only a few houses.

Palestro is a solitary village situated amongst the mountains, out of reach of immediate succour in case of attack, as was made but too evident during the revolt of the natives three years ago ; which we shall now describe.

Poets and sentimental writers have indulged in much eulogy on Arab hospitality, and an Arab's respect for his word of honour. The following narrative of what took place during the late rebellion will not be found to sustain their reputation for these virtues, for more revolting treachery and barbarity than is revealed in the

drama of which Palestro and Alma were the scenes, can scarcely be found in the history of any people.

The insurrection of 1871 began in the province of Constantine, and spread during the months of April and May to the canton of Alma, as was the intention of the chiefs who planned and directed the movement. It was decided that, whilst the Caïd Ali laid siege to Tizi-Ouzou and Mahieddine, Alma should be attacked, and that the isolated village of Palestro, removed from any assistance, should be carried by storm and destroyed.

This project, as far as it related to Palestro, was only too successful; but it was destined to fail before the resistance it met with at Alma. The revolt was, however, not entirely put down before it had served as a pretext for many evil deeds, and had caused much bloodshed in the invaded provinces.

The native inhabitants of the canton of Alma, both Kabyles and Arabs, joined the insurgents. Hatred to the French had been excited to the highest pitch by the exhortations and preachings of the Marabouts, so that the rising, which under Mokrani had only a military character, now that it was fomented by the Cheik el Haddad—high priest of the religious order of Sidi Abderrhaman—assumed a form of fanaticism which was sure to be followed by abominable crimes.

Everything indicated the approaching rebellion, and foretold the consequences which would result from it. The natives became insolent and menacing, using language the real signification of which it was impossible to doubt, yet many Europeans refused to believe in the threatened danger. This was especially the case at Palestro, where the mayor, M. Bassetti, reposed entire

confidence in the protestations of the Caïd of the Ammals, Hadj-Ahmed-ben-Dahman, and obstinately declined to listen to the warnings of those who were not so blind as himself; but he was soon to be the victim of this misplaced confidence, for the same Caïd was the first to attack the village.

About the middle of April the principal chiefs held a conference before Tizi-Ouzou. War being resolved on, the part of each was assigned to him. It was agreed that the command of the army which was to storm Alma should be given to Omar ben Zamoun. This personage—who was brother-in-law to Caïd Ali—had been invested with considerable authority by the French Government; he was besides Amin of the powerful tribe of the Flissas. At the service of this general Ali or Kassi placed one of his own relations, Mohamed Saïd Ouled.

Besides the conference before mentioned, Omar ben Zamoun held two great meetings; one at his own house at Azib Zamoun, and the other at the Timezerit. At a later period, when called upon to answer for his conduct, he pretended that, on these occasions, he was against the insurrection; but the fact that after the deliberations he immediately assumed the supreme command is incontestible. Under pretext of protecting the Europeans who were in the neighbourhood of his Azib he induced thirty-two to shut themselves up in a caravansary, where they were left almost without food, and subjected to much ill-treatment, until they were given up to General Cérés after the failure of the revolt.

Events now began to progress. On April 19th, the tribes of the Flissas, Issers, Beni-Aïcha, Beni-Amran,

and the Khachnas possessed themselves of the defile of Beni-Aïcha. The inhabitants and a brigade of gendarmes, having received timely warning, had just left the village, which was plundered and burned.

The insurgents now divided themselves into two bands; one, composed of the Beni-Aïcha and the Beni-Amran, took the route to Palestro, distant about twenty miles—the other, and stronger of the two, made a descent upon Alma. After the anticipated fall of Palestro these bands, whose advance was marked by pillage and devastation, were to unite and continue their operations together. The one which marched on Palestro plundered and burnt all the houses they found on their way. The other, after having set fire to Bellefontaine and sacked some farm-houses, proceeded to attack Alma. Omar ben Zamoun, who had remained with the last column, established his head-quarters at Aïn Tigjellabin, an admirably chosen position, which commanded the sea-coast and the Algiers road to Dellys.

Here we shall leave the Arab generalissimo ready to assault Alma, whilst we follow the detachment marching on Palestro, and relate what took place on its arrival in that devoted village.

Few dramas are more affecting and more sanguinary than that of which this small place was the theatre, during the three dreadful days April 20, 21, and 22, 1871. At a distance from any European settlement, isolated and surrounded by mountains which command it on every side, it adjoins two tribes; one Kabyle, the Beni Khalfoun, and the other Arab, the Ammals, both of which had long been prepared to revolt. At several

meetings the massacre of the colonists had been resolved on, neither did the native population dissemble the designs which they cherished.

A remark made by the son of the Caïd of the Ammals to his father, some days before the insurrection broke out, will suffice to show what these projects were. They happened to be both at the house of a man named Seguy, whose daughter was at work with one of her companions in the same room with the Arab chiefs. 'That girl,' said Mohamed ben el Hadj to his father, 'must not be killed when we begin the war, for I intend to marry her.' The young woman, who understood Arabic, was terrified at this conversation, which she related to her parents; but they treated it as a joke. The girl herself was however so impressed with the signification of what she had overheard that, when the situation became more threatening some days later, she left for Algiers, refusing to remain at Palestro. She was accompanied by a few others, who thus escaped the fate of those who remained there.

It was agreed between the tribes which inhabited the environs of Palestro and those who were to attack the Col des Beni-Archa that the capture of this hamlet should serve as a signal for the assault on the former.

On the 19th, it being known that the Col had been burned, a meeting was held at Arbah, when the next day was fixed for storming Palestro. In the meantime nothing was omitted on the part of the Arabs which could lull the people of the village into a belief in their own security. The mayor was M. Bassetti, of whom we have already spoken. There was at this time an officer of artillery at Palestro—Captain Auger, who, in case of attack would naturally be chosen to direct the defence.

Up to Wednesday the 19th, both the magistrate and the officer believed the protestations of the Caïds and their Amins. It was in vain that an honest inhabitant, Hamida ben Salem, warned them of the imminent danger to which they were exposed. Refusing to listen to him, they placed confidence in the reports brought by Arabs whom they had sent to reconnoitre. These men, on their return, did not fail to say that they had observed nothing unusual. On this day however a system of resistance was discussed, which was to be adopted if necessary.

The morning of the 20th dispelled all doubts as to the hostile intentions of the natives. Such of the colonists as had to go into the country saw bands of armed men crossing the river, haystacks and farm-houses were on fire, whilst affrighted shepherds were hastening back to town with their flocks.

The alarm-bell was rung and the drums beat to quarters. The inhabitants were stationed in the three buildings known to be best suited for their protection. These were the priest's house, the gendarmerie, and the military barracks. They were separated from each other, and formed a kind of triangle, so that a cross or converging fire might cover the whole. Loopholes were made in the walls, and a supply of provisions brought in, as well as the most valuable property of the colonists. Captain Auger and the curé Monginot took the command of the presbytery; Mayor Bassetti and the brigadier of the gendarmes directed the defence of the barracks, in which were the men of his corps and some of the colonists. The *maison cantonnière*—which for want of a more appropriate name we call a barrack—being covered by an

arched terrace and having a court surrounded by a wall, was considered the one best adapted for resistance. Here therefore the women—fourteen in number—twelve children, and some militia, were placed under the orders of M. Ricard, a civil engineer.

Scarcely had these preparations been made when the signal for attack was given, by hoisting a flag on the Bordj of the Caïd of the Ammals. The dwellings which had been abandoned were given up to pillage, after which the Arabs appeared to hesitate about the triangle, but they vented their rage on some unfortunate Europeans—who had not been able to enter Palestro in time—killing them in sight of the village.

Hadj Ahmed ben Daham led the assault. Under his orders were about 1,200 combatants. For the present only a few shots were exchanged, but it was evident that the Arabs were preparing for the morrow. In the meantime they also made loopholes in the houses, from which they could fire on those occupied by the colonists.

On Friday the 22nd a discharge of musketry began at break of day. The Beni Khalfoun had united with the Ammals, and all the tribes in the neighbourhood had joined them. On an eminence, a little outside of Palestro, the Amin el Oumena (Si Saïd ben Ali) was seen mounted on a magnificent black horse; in this conspicuous position he looked like a general commanding his battalions, and the part he played in the drama was made too evident to admit of denial afterwards.

The natives soon saw that the presbytery was the weak point of the triangle; it was therefore against it that their first efforts were directed. Encouraged by

their chiefs, the Arabs went with fury to the attack ; but they were kept off by a well-directed fire. Even at this moment the infatuated credulity of the Mayor Bassetti continued to manifest itself ; a victim to his own illusions, he forbade his men to aim at the chiefs, and even went so far as to reprimand a colonist who, in fighting his way to gain the shelter of the presbytery, had been on the point of killing Si Saïd ben Ramdan, amin ferkat of the Beni Khalfoun, one of the most inveterate of their enemies. In this way the combat continued the whole day, during which Captain Auger was wounded. As night approached, the boldness of the assailants increased with the obscurity, under favour of which they made three successive assaults on the building, and at last accomplished their purpose of bursting open the door. From this moment the besieged found their position untenable. Leaving by a back entrance, they forced a passage at the point of the bayonet and, with a loss of four men, succeeded in reaching the gendarmerie. After murdering a woman who had remained in the house, it was set on fire, the flames assisting the besieged in watching the movements of their enemies during the night. An incident occurred at the close of this sad day which could not fail to discourage the defenders of Palestro. Four men, including Ricard to whom the command had been confided, abandoned the *maison cantonnière*, and attempted to escape. Three succeeded and one was killed. This deplorable desertion threw the little garrison into a state of profound depression ; without a leader, and not knowing how to conduct the defence, they for a moment lost heart and energy.

At daybreak the assailants made propositions for sur-

render. The terms offered in the name of the Caïd of the Ammals were that the inhabitants of Palestro should retain their arms, and that they should have safe escort to Fondouck. Scarcely had these overtures been submitted for deliberation than they were changed for less favourable conditions, for the besieged were now required to disarm and to give up their money.

The Mayor and Captain Auger desiring to treat directly with one of the chiefs, Si Saïd ben Ramdan came forward and guaranteed the treaty in the name of the Amin el Oumena, pledging at the same time his own honour that it should be faithfully executed. Captain Auger made the retention of their weapons an absolute condition. After a further conference with the grand chief Si Saïd ben Ali, the Amin ferkat came back to say that this was conceded; but the captain wishing to have the word of Si Saïd ben Ali, that personage advanced on horseback, and reiterated his assent to the stipulation regarding the arms, adding that he would himself be surety for the lives of the prisoners.

After this followed a short suspension of hostilities, during which some of the men went from the gendarmerie to the *maison cantonnière* to see their wives and children. This happy inspiration saved the lives of those who did so.

In defiance of the agreement, the Arabs almost immediately ordered the Europeans to give up their guns and swords. On their refusal, the Amin Si Saïd ben Ramdan, who had only just given his word that they should keep them, obliged several of the colonists to obey. 'Leave the rest for the present,' said the Caïd to his followers, 'for, if you kill them all now, it will prevent their comrades from quitting the gendarmerie.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

INSURRECTION OF 1871—concluded.

Gefährlich ist's den Feu zu wecken,
 Verderblich ist des Tigers Zahn ;
 Jedoch der schrecklichste der Schrecken
 Das ist der Mensch in seinem Wahn.—SCHILLER.

THE object of the Arabs in making the treacherous proposal for a capitulation was now evident ; it had been their intention to draw the garrison into a snare, and they succeeded but too well. Notwithstanding the perfidious policy of the chiefs in not wishing to have the men who had accepted the convention killed immediately, the Arabs persisted in demanding their arms ; and on the refusal of one of them to comply, a volley was fired at him and he fell pierced with balls.

This was the signal for a general massacre. It would be impossible to describe the dreadful spectacle which followed. The priest Monginot, who implored mercy on his knees, was dispatched with knives and yatagans, the rest were sacrificed in the same way to the fury of these fanatics, the Amin el Oumena being present whilst the victims of his abominable duplicity were

slaughtered in cold blood. Two episodes of this dreadful drama may be mentioned as having had a less fatal termination than the rest. When the Arabs were about to kill Captain Auger, it occurred to the Caïd el Oumena that, if an officer in the French army were retained as a hostage, his ransom would produce a considerable sum of money. He therefore ordered his men to take the captain prisoner. The other circumstance alluded to is the following. Young Bassetti, a lad of fourteen, son of the mayor, was also on the point of being killed when, falling down before the Arab chief, he supplicated him with outstretched arms to spare his life. The great Caïd made a sign to the assassins, who placed the boy before him on his horse. It is worthy of notice that this act of the Amin el Oumena was the only one which showed any humanity on the part of a native during that scene of horror. Other children had been killed, and this youth seems to have owed his life to one of those caprices which sometimes visit the hardest heart; for only a moment after, the same Caïd was deaf to the entreaties of the lad pleading for the life of his father, when the Amin replying coldly that he had done enough already, left the place with his two captives.

These incidents show that a word or even a sign from the Caïd was sufficient to save the lives of those whom he wished to rescue, a fact which makes him responsible for the bloodshed which followed. After he had retired the massacre continued, and the most revolting atrocities were committed. The barrack was next invaded. The colonists had set at liberty three natives, who had been confined there; but no sooner had they done this than the Arabs supplied their

countrymen with arms, and these men were now distinguished among the most ferocious of the combatants. The brigadier of the gendarmes and another European were killed by them. The Mayor Bassetti was first shot and then finished by stabs with yatagans, one of the wretches tearing open the yet palpitating body of the too confiding magistrate. To relate all the details which are known of this dreadful butchery would make the narrative both too long and too repulsive. It will suffice to say that, during this shocking carnage, forty-one Europeans were murdered, and their bodies showed that they had been afterwards treated with barbarous violence. The Marabouts who fomented the insurrection, and the chiefs who were present at Palestro, inciting and encouraging their men, are above all answerable for these crimes; for those in command could have put a stop to the tragedy, instead of looking on, glad to see their detestable passions so well served.

The work of extermination being completed at the gendarmerie, the Arabs attacked the *maison cantonnière*. Owing to some inexplicable negligence, the door of the court had been left badly closed, and through it the assailants made their way, the Caïd of the Ammals reproaching those who hesitated, till they had invaded the yard, which was then pillaged of all it contained; on this the besieged retreated to the first floor, where they made an heroic resistance. The Arabs, who now thought of burning down the building, set the furniture on fire, feeding it with dry wood and every combustible they could lay their hands on. The flames soon reached the floor above, on which the colonists were obliged to retreat

to the terrace, having previously cut away the staircase that led to it.

It was now noon. In a small space of thirteen square yards forty-five persons were crowded together. The wall or parapet of the flat roof was not one foot and a half high, so that they were obliged to lie down in order to escape the shots of their enemies. Four of the men who stood up to fire over the wall were killed. The Arabs, finding that their balls did not fall on the terrace, threw stones and bricks, which fell on the devoted heads of the people, several of whom were severely injured by these missiles. The situation of the Europeans was dreadful. A burning sun darted its ardent rays from above, whilst a hot sirocco added to the intolerable heat. Under their feet, the house being on fire made the scorching floor painful to tread on, and to increase their sufferings they had not a drop of water to quench their thirst. In this great distress one of their number committed suicide; the women wept and groaned aloud, entreating their husbands and friends to put an end to their misery by surrendering; but this the men refused to do, preferring, they said, rather to die in the flames than to undergo the fate of their comrades of the gendarmerie; they also hoped that succour might come at the last moment.

The iron work of the terrace prevented the arched roof from falling, but the fire below made it crack and sink inwards, until smoke and flames were seen through the crevices. The dresses of the besieged caught fire, and at every moment it was necessary to take precautions to prevent the powder from exploding.

At six o'clock in the evening, the arch being on the

point of collapsing, it was no longer possible to prolong this heroic struggle, and the defenders of the place at last resolved to listen to what terms the Arabs would offer, but they wished to treat with the chiefs.

‘Hope for no relief,’ said the Caïd of the Ammals to the brigadier: ‘Fort Napoléon, Dellys, Dra-el-Mizan, the Col, Boudouan, are taken and destroyed. Surrender, and you shall have safe conduct to Algiers, where you can embark for France.’ It is scarcely necessary to say that all this was false.

The French wished to have the word of honour of the Amin el Oumena, on which he came forward and gave it to be understood that he adhered to the conditions offered by the Caïd of the Ammals.

After this the natives were allowed to ascend; those who went up stripped the colonists of all they possessed even to their clothes. The prisoners were let down by ladders; and, as soon as they reached the ground, the Arabs set up a cry of death to all, wishing to repeat the former slaughter; but this time the Caïds interposed their authority in favour of the captives. These thirty-nine who survived the disaster of Palestro were at first taken to the house of the Amin ferkat, and the day following were sent to Si Saïd ben Ali.

The next day, the 23rd, the chiefs held a council of war on the ruins of the village; the natives assembled in great numbers, twelve to fifteen tribes having latterly taken part in the assault. Si Saïd ben Ali, who presided at the meeting, informed the people that he had received orders from Omar ben Zamoun for the troops to join his army in the attack on Alma, but a report that a French column was advancing on Palestro broke up the con-

ference. This column did not arrive before the following morning, for Ricard, who, it will be remembered, had made his escape on the evening of the 20th, reached Algiers only on the 22nd, when he reported the critical situation of the besieged.

Owing to the war with Germany Algeria had been almost denuded of troops ; for, in a struggle in which the French were as one to three—and in some of the battles the disparity of numbers was still greater—it was necessary, however impolitic as regarded this colony, to call back every soldier who could be spared, to assist the mother country in her hour of need.

In the emergency of which we are speaking the military authorities had only a small force left in the capital, but they got together a body of 600 men, the command of which was confided to Colonel Fourchault, a man of judgment and energy. On the 24th this detachment, having overcome the difficulties of the march, arrived at Palestro, where they found only the ruins of the village and the dead bodies of its inhabitants. Having seen the latter properly interred, the column returned to Fondouck. The retreat was full of danger, and it was only by hard fighting every step of the way that the little band could reach that town.

The insurgents of Palestro, as had been previously concerted, now joined those of Alma.

That we might relate events in the order in which they took place, we left the commander-in-chief, Omar ben Zamoun, about to attack Alma, which he did on the 22nd of April. A gallant defence enabled the village to hold out till the fall of Palestro. Their position then became more critical, for, besides the insurgents who had

accomplished the ruin of that unfortunate hamlet, the Amin el Oumena called to his assistance Bach Agha Mokrani, who, with many tribes which had placed themselves under his standard, hastened to join him. With the combined forces, amounting to 12,000 or 15,000 men, Omar ben Zamoun and Mokrani hoped to crush the column of General Cères, who now appeared in the field, having come to the rescue of Alma, and to put down the revolt.

The French and Arab armies met at Souflat, a place about twenty-five miles from Palestro. In this encounter, where disciplined valour was opposed to fanatical courage, the insurgents were totally defeated, and Mokrani slain. The death of this leader and the loss of the battle was a fatal blow to the insurrection, so that the chiefs now thought only of tendering their submission. The victory also saved the lives of the prisoners, who had undergone much ill-treatment; every day they had to hear that it was to be their last, that the French had been everywhere beaten, and that nothing was left them but the city of Algiers. After the defeat of the Arab troops, the Amin el Oumena, knowing that no hope remained for the cause of independence, tried to purchase a remission of his crimes by giving up the captives to General Cères; thus, after twenty-two days of incarceration, they were set at liberty.²⁴

In the environs of Alma about twelve persons had been assassinated, and at Palestro fifty-four fell victims to the cruelty and perfidy of the Arabs, without taking account of the wounded.

Many interesting episodes in this terrible drama

might be mentioned, but we shall add only the following to those already given.

On the night of April 20, two Spanish colonists, Molinas and Pepe Camarada, after they had retired to rest, were attacked by some natives who had entered their gourbi. Pepe was killed before he had time to defend himself, Molinas however seized his double-barrelled gun and fired at the assailants, who answered by three discharges, none of which struck him. The Arabs then made off, pursued by Molinas, who was a famous huntsman and a dead shot. He had often followed more formidable, but less treacherous game. Coming up with the chase which, in the fine African night was conspicuous by the white burnous, he brought down one of the villains. When he fired from the hut he had mortally wounded another, who afterwards died in prison, where he related what had passed ; the second was condemned to death, when judgment was passed on such of the insurgents as had added private murder to the crime of revolt.

Those who seek Arab protection, and 'eat the salt' of Arab hospitality in times of war, may learn the fate that awaits them by the following narrative. Four colonists, Lallemand, Lemaître, their wives, and a woman named Rosarie, terrified at the insurrection, sought safety under the roof of Si Saïd ben Mohamed, Caïd of the Khachnas. This chief at once promised them shelter, and they were received into his house, where they remained his guests during two days, after which, wishing to be taken to Alma, the Caïd consented, adding that he would accompany them with an escort for their defence.

When they set out, instead of going towards Alma by roads on which they would have met none of the rebels, he took one that led to the camp of Tidjellabin, where they soon found themselves in the midst of armed men. Here Si Saïd ben Mohamed was asked what he intended to do with his prisoners, one of the chiefs suggesting that they should be taken to Tenda, where there were some other captive colonists. 'See,' said the Caïd, 'how I shall send them to join the prisoners at Tenda,' and, raising his gun, he fired at Lallemand, whom the ball only wounded, but the defenceless victim was at once dispatched by the Caïd's Khodja. The other men who had formed the escort followed his example, the wife of Lallemand, Lemaitre, and his wife were also slain in cold blood. The other woman, on seeing these shocking murders, made her escape for the present.

This quadruple assassination raised the Caïd in the estimation of the people, and so great was his prestige from this moment that he was now looked upon as one of their principal chiefs. Rosarie succeeded in reaching the farm of the Corso, where she arrived quite exhausted and unable to go farther. Here a native called Ali bel Kadi bel Merdassi, whose name deserves to be recorded for he took compassion on the Christian, gave her food, and as she was thirsty he went to fetch her some water. He was perhaps the only Arab who had shown disinterested humanity during the insurrection. When he returned he found the unfortunate Rosarie expiring under the yatagan of a man, who had pursued her from the camp of Tidjellabin.

All honour to the poor Bedouin Ali bel Kadi, whose

one good action—like an oasis in the sand—makes a verdant spot in this desert of crime.

In our indignation at the cruelty of the Arabs at Palestro and Alma—although one evil deed cannot excuse or palliate another—we must not forget that people in a higher state of civilisation, when blinded by bigotry and fanaticism, have perpetrated abominable acts on a larger scale. In Christian lands victims have been immolated on the altar of Religion who were the countrymen of their murderers, professing the same faith, but differing on some particular point or dogma.

Who can think without horror on the Sicilian Vespers, so called because the hour of prayer was made the signal for assassination? the slaughter of the Albigenses, or that of the Huguenots in France? or, looking nearer home, if accident had not discovered the Gunpowder Plot, it would have been followed by an exterminating massacre of the Protestants all over England. For the horrors of war we need not go farther back than our own times: the barbarous way in which the Prussians conducted the late invasion of France shows that civilisation has little to boast of in point of humanity. If Christian nations can thus forget the lessons of charity and forbearance, inculcated by the Divine Founder of their religion, what can we expect from ignorant Arabs, fighting for their independence, who had been told by their Marabouts that to kill a Christian is to secure a place in paradise, and whose chiefs promised them in this world a millennium of happiness after they had extirpated the foreign rulers of their country?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PALESTRO TO THE COAST.—DELLYS TO CONSTANTINE.

Du heiliges und weites Meer,
Wie ist dein Anblick mir so hehr!
Sey mir im frühen Strahl begrüßt.—STOLBERG.

Thy hand
Diffused thro' endless space this limpid sky,
Vast ocean without storm, where these huge globes
Sail undisturb'd.—MALLET.

RETURNING sea-wards we now continue our excursion. At Azib Zamoun we fall into the direct road to Dellys; the drive between these two places is one of three hours in the diligence.

As we approach the latter town the country becomes extremely picturesque, the road being cut out of the mountain-side. In the immediate environs are delightful gardens, and orchards which produce the excellent fruit for which Dellys is famous; and at a short distance is the valley of the Sebaou, which ought to be visited by every admirer of fine scenery.

It was in this little Kabyle town that the French first found themselves face to face with that warlike race, which had never been subjugated, not even by the conquering legions of Rome. Accustomed to be charged by

the Arabs in the open field, as we have seen at Staouëli, the invaders now found themselves before a second Saragossa, for here also the Kabyles, shut up in their houses, defended their homes like heroes, the women, who took their share in the struggle, fighting with the ferocity of savages. Each dwelling had to be separately besieged; when taken, the defenders retreated to their gardens, which were fortified by palisades, and here the contest was renewed. Dellys was not permanently occupied by the conquerors of Algeria till 1844.

The ancient city of Rusuccures was long supposed to have stood on this spot; but an inscription, lately discovered a few miles from Dellys, points to another site as having been that of the Roman town.

In more modern times, when the two notorious corsairs Barbarossa and his brother Kair-el Din divided the regency between them, the latter established his piratical government at Dellys.

It was late in the evening when we went on board the steamer, and we were soon after gliding silently along the moonlit shore.

An Italian writer has remarked that the pleasantest sea-voyages are those made near the coast, as the most agreeable journeys on land are when the road lies near the sea.

On the other side of the Mediterranean the ride along the Liguria—the blue sea spread out before us to the distant horizon, the varying colours of the water, with feluccas and fishing boats cruising about—is charming, whilst here, sailing by the Algerian coast, the bold rocks, verdant hills, Moorish towns and villages we pass in ever-changing succession, are not less delightful

to see, and both bear out the truth of the poet's observation.

We have in these pages often spoken of sunny days in the South, and ungrateful should we be if we did not acknowledge their charms and exhilarating influence; but night is also beautiful. Night—particularly at sea, when we are on the great waters, which then so much resemble the grey blue canopy above them—is indeed the season for contemplation. The starry firmament is a grander scene—if less attractive to some, because it is less comprehensible—than even the lovely creation which day presents to our view. Every star we see is a world, and a world probably inhabited by an order of beings of whom we can form no conception. In an African night all these planets and stars seem to shine brighter, through the transparent atmosphere.

The least reflecting mind must sometimes soar beyond the confines of the earth on which we are placed, and in the unbounded space above try to conceive something of the stupendous work of the Almighty. If with our limited faculties we can understand little, elevating our thoughts to those regions may cause us to reflect at least on the Supreme Being who created the universe.

As we passed headlands, on which stood castles or Roman ruins, these conspicuous objects, seen under the cold light of the moon, had a singular and at times a fantastic effect.

On board, the scene also harmonised with the hour, and with the land we were coasting. Some three or four hundred Arabs, enveloped in their burnous, lying asleep on deck, looked like an encampment by moonlight, whilst an omnibus, which had been shipped at Algiers, might

have been taken for a caravansary, and the sea for the desert.

‘Glorious night, thou wert not made for slumber,’ said the poet, and truly if the night he apostrophised was like this ; but poor human nature requires the sweet restorer, so we did as the Arabs had done before us—we retired to rest.

When we came on deck at daybreak the next morning, the rising sun, casting its golden rays over a lofty promontory on which stood an ancient temple near some olive-trees, lighted the group ; thus painting a picture of Day, as the moon a few hours before had shown us one of Night.

Soon afterwards we arrived at Bougie, built on the south side of the Gouraïa. Rising up this rocky elevation, with high mountains in the distance, the town from the sea looks striking and picturesque. Bougie stands on the Western shore of the extensive bay formed by the capes Carbon and Cavallo.

When we ascended the heights above the city we were not less struck with its advantageous situation inland than we had been impressed with its appearance from the water. The fertile valley of la Soummam, stretching out from its very gates, opens a passage into the mountains of the Grande Kabylie. A road through the Pass of the Chabet has been many years in course of construction, but the engineering difficulties, which are great in proportion to the grandeur of the scenery, and the obstacles opposed by nature, still retard its completion. This magnificent gorge through the most mountainous part of Algeria is equal to any of the celebrated passes in Europe, but these summits of the Atlas range

seen from a distance are somewhat monotonous, their forms repeat themselves too often, and do not offer that variety which is so pleasing in natural objects.

Bougie, originally built by the Carthaginians, has been successively occupied by the Romans, who gave it the name of *Saldœ*, the Kabyles, who made it their chief city, and by the Spaniards, who were established here till driven out by the Turks.

As late as the sixteenth century Roman villas, ornamented with mosaics and elegant sculptures, were still to be seen in the immediate vicinity.

Continuing our sail, a few hours brought us to Djidjelly. Very different from Bougie is its aspect from the deck of a vessel. The inequalities of the ground about it are inconsiderable, but the mountains of the Kabylie rise in the background. Tall palms, bamboos, bananas, aloes, and other trees and plants growing near the water, and the rich Southern vegetation which is spread over the whole landscape, give something of a West Indian look to Djidjelly when seen from the sea, into which the town advances, standing on a little peninsula.

The Carthaginians, who founded this city, gave it the name of *Igigellis*. During the Middle Ages, and up to a more recent period, Djidjelly had thriving commercial relations with the opposite shores of Italy and the South of France.

In 1664, during the reign of Louis XIV., a French army, under the Duke of Beaufort, made a descent on Djidjelly, and established itself in the place; but the town was soon after retaken by a Turkish force which

came to its relief, and obliged the invaders to return to France.

We are told that after the battle of Asculam, when the officers of Pyrrhus came to congratulate the king on his victory, he replied, 'If we gain another like it we shall be inevitably lost.' The victory of the Turks at Djidjelly achieved its ruin, without the necessity of a second triumph; for, having introduced a new order of things, the trade with Europe declined, and the number of inhabitants decreased so rapidly, that at the beginning of the last century only a few houses remained of the once flourishing town.

The steamer remaining some hours at anchor, we had an opportunity of going on shore to see the place, and of making acquaintance with some of the natives. This we have always found to be the surest and most agreeable way of obtaining information relating to the countries we travel in. Here we met with some people from the village of Tassia du Tababort, who told us that the little community had been alarmed the night before by dreadful roarings of contending wild beasts; the noise seemed to come from one of the mountain gorges, a short distance from their douar. A combat between lions and panthers—as sometimes happens—appeared to be going on at this spot, the cause of dispute being probably some coveted morsel of prey. In the morning, when the inhabitants of Tassia went to see what had caused the disturbance the night before, they found the mangled body of a large panther, which had been the victim of the nocturnal struggle, pools of blood attesting the fury and obstinacy of the combatants.

Englishmen who like sights of this kind may gratify

their inclinations better in the land of the Arabs than at home in witnessing prize-fighting between their countrymen—brutes in their way it is true—or in seeing bulldogs worry each other to please some who belong to a class of society which still retains the vitiated taste of the last century.

A fight between wild animals in the freedom of nature—a fight not brought about by the rational animal man—surrounded by mountain scenery very different from the arena or the cock-pit, must be a novel and exciting spectacle, when it can be seen from a safe place, such as the top of a tree where, concealed by its foliage, we have a good view of the combat and a fair prospect of a safe retreat.

Returning on board, some of the passengers sat smoking and chatting under the awning spread over the quarter deck; whilst others, who preferred silently to contemplate the great ocean, or to admire undisturbed the beauty of the coast, kept apart from the rest. As we glided over the smooth water, scarcely rippled by a breath of wind, we could not help reflecting how terrible is this same element when stirred up by the violent tempest; then the ship which now seems to play and coquet with the bright blue waves, which bear her gaily on towards a safe harbour, is tossed about and buffeted by furious billows which break about her and, dashing great seas over the deck, sweep overboard all that stands in their way. As the storm increases and the wind whistles in the rigging, the frail bark plunges down the abyss which opens before her; then, carried up the next big wave, she shakes and trembles as if in fear. As the poor ship rolls, pitches, and rights herself, by turns, it is

impossible for the stoutest heart to divest itself of a feeling of apprehension, which is not diminished by the sight of the cork-jackets and life-belts which are suggestively placed for the passenger's speculation in his cabin, where, prostrated by sea-sickness, he wishes he had never trusted himself on the Gulf of Lyons and reflects that he has not only to arrive in Algiers in safety—he must get back again! But these are not pleasant considerations. Let us enjoy the calm weather and our cigar whilst we have them. Friendly tobacco, glorious plant! Let those who envy others a pleasure they cannot share defame thee; for us, and for all who do not abuse thy use, thou art—like wine in moderation—a comfort and delight; thou wert not made in vain when thou canst cheer the sad hour; thou art not hurtful, or thou could'st not be the companion of the old!

Soon after daybreak we anchored before Philippeville. The impression made by this town—which is built up the heights behind it—when seen from the steamer, is sufficient to prove that a city standing on rising ground, with the sea before it, may yet have an unpicturesque appearance; for Philippeville, with its plain new houses and straight streets, has not the striking and pleasing look of Algiers, or of those Italian towns which rise amphitheatrically from the water.

Philippeville occupies the site of Rusicada, and it is amongst the ruins of this ancient city that works of art have been found sufficient to form an interesting museum: that it was a place of considerable extent and importance is proved by the remains of its former magnificence, which are still to be seen in the neighbourhood

of the modern town. At the time of the Romans Rusicada probably extended as far as Stora, a village three miles along the shore, which until last year was practically the port of Constantine, the anchorage being more secure than at Philippeville; but, the works which had been long undertaken to render the latter a safe harbour, being nearly completed, steamers and sailing vessels now go there in almost any weather.

Philippeville itself is a very uninteresting place for most travellers, but the beautifully wooded country about it compensates for the dulness of the town.

A few hours' sail brought us to Bône.²³ The harbour is one of the best in Algeria, vessels of the largest size being able to discharge their cargoes on the quay. This town has a considerable trade, and the mineral products found in its neighbourhood are of great value. The country along the coast on both sides is very fine, and magnificent scenery extends inland along a great part of the road to Guelma, and to St. Charles, on the other route to Constantine. Bône is about two miles from the site on which stood the ancient Hippone; the remains of a great city indicate the place.

St. Augustin, one of the most pious and eloquent of the early Christians, passed forty years of his life preaching the Gospel at Hippone, and a monument has been erected to his memory on the ground where it once flourished.

On a former journey we proceeded as far as Guelma, wishing to see the country between Bône and that town. On that occasion a romantic glen between the forest of Beni Amran and Guelma was pointed out to us,

as having been the scene of a fatal encounter with a lion.

One evening, not long before we passed that way, two Arabs, who had farms near the dell we are speaking of, lay in ambush for a lion which had carried off some cattle from their douar by jumping over the enclosure.

When the Arabs perceived their enemy approaching both fired at the same time, the balls striking the body of the marauder, who bounded furiously on his assailants, one of whom he instantly dashed down a ravine ; then, springing on the other, he literally tore the flesh from his bones. When satiated with blood the infuriated animal left his victim and disappeared in the thicket.

People from the neighbourhood soon arrived on the ground where this fearful drama had been enacted. Coming up to the dying huntsman, who for a moment had recovered consciousness, one of his friends said, 'We shall take thee to town, where the European doctor will cure thee of thy wounds.' 'No,' replied the brave fellow, making an effort to speak ; 'I know that I am dying, let me expire in my tent surrounded by my friends and my children.' He could say no more, his end was drawing near, and the next day he died in great suffering, but proudly disdaining to make concessions to the weakness of nature. Like the gladiator of old, pain was to him only a last enemy to be conquered.

We return to our present route, that of St. Charles ; for, wishing to approach Constantine from the side where it is the most striking, we chose this road. At about eighteen miles from Bône we came to the lake of Fetzara, below whose tranquil water lies a buried city. The road skirts the borders of the lake for a distance of twelve

miles, after which we passed through a wood of cork-trees. We never see this beautiful feature in the Algerian landscape without feeling regret and indignation that these forests are periodically set on fire by the natives. Were it not for such conflagrations, Algeria would be richer in game than any country in the world. This wilful destruction, which was carried still further at the time of the Regency, originated at a more remote period. History informs us that Queen Kaïna²⁶ a Berber princess, who reigned 709 of the Christian era, devastated the whole coast, destroying all the stately trees which formed an uninterrupted continuation of groves from Tripoli to Tangiers. In the present day, notwithstanding the vigilance of the authorities, scarcely a month passes in which extensive woods are not burned. When discovered, the Arabs give two reasons in extenuation of their conduct; one is the desire—not the necessity—of procuring more pasturage land for their flocks and herds; the other, that it is done to dislodge the wild beasts, which are the enemies of their cattle.

A society was formed in 1873 to plant new trees; and, as they grow with surprising rapidity in Algeria, it was hoped that such a restoration, united to a stricter *surveillance*, might produce some good, if not remedy the evil altogether. This was however found to be insufficient, and it became evident that more efficacious means must be resorted to. The question was therefore thoroughly investigated by the authorities in Algeria, who drew up a special statute to protect the colonial forests; which, being submitted to the Government for approval, was passed into law by the Chamber in Versailles.

As the subject will only interest readers who deplore

the loss of these magnificent objects of nature, we shall merely say, that one of the principal clauses in the recent Act makes the whole of the inhabitants of the district in which a forest is burnt responsible for the fire, and obliges them to pay a collective fine if the perpetrators of the crime are not discovered. When these are known their property will be sequestered. Those who do not take into account the participation of the whole tribe in this wanton mischief, may find that the new law punishes the innocent with the guilty ; the fact is, that there is not a single man in such an Arab community who does not approve and abet the offence, and conceal his knowledge of the parties who committed it.

Experience proves that, in these exceptional cases, this is the only effectual way of dealing with uncivilised or evil-disposed people who act in concert ; and if some such stringent measures were introduced into Italy, brigandage—which exists only through the connivance and assistance of the peasants and landed proprietors—would soon cease, and we should then be able to travel safely in Sicily.

At St. Charles the road joins the railway line from Philippeville to Constantine. The fertile and wooded country we had passed through here acquired another character ; trees became fewer, and the land less and less cultivated. As we proceeded the landscape assumed a sterner look, not bare and arid, for a dull grey vegetation covered the hills which rose about us. From time to time we came in sight of a few Arab tents or gourbi, and near them loitered some solitary shepherds, too few and too motionless to enliven the dreary prospect ; but, suggesting population, their presence made solitude more apparent.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONSTANTINE

Ach wie schön muß sich's ergehen
 Dort in ew'gen Sonnenschein,
 Und die Luft auf jenen Höhen,
 O wie labend muß sie sein!
 Doch mir wehrt des Stromes Toben,
 Der ergrimmt dazwischen braust.—SCHILLER.

The fool to native ignorance confined,
 No beauty beaming on his clouded mind :
 Untaught to relish, yet too proud to learn,
 He scorns the grace his dulness can't discern.

DU FRESNOY.

SOON after we had passed the Hamma station some Cheiks, who were in the carriage with us, called our attention to a city which stood on a lofty rock commanding every side from the finest position in the world. 'That,' said the Arabs, as we caught sight of it, between the hills, 'is Constantine—this is Africa—those who have seen only Algiers and littoral have not been in Africa!'

Grand and impressive is indeed the first view of Constantine, placed as by enchantment on its mighty pedestal of stone, in the midst of a vast mountain-bound panorama, where a treeless vegetation gives a wild ap-

pearance to the country in singular harmony with the Arab town. Queen of picturesque cities! on her rocky height, towering in pride of place, she overlooks all around.

The rock on a nearer approach seems to have been rent asunder by some convulsion of nature, leaving a fearful chasm between the parts detached. Looking down into this abyss, the head swims on the giddy height. Below rolls a torrent, now seen in the depths beneath, now hidden by shelving rocks, again it appears, then losing itself for a moment in a cavernous opening, shows itself once more before it dashes down the precipice and forms the falls of the Roumel.

A fall of water is beautiful when, amidst mountain scenery, in the stillness and solitude of nature, it rushes from under the dark foliage of trees and, leaping over perpendicular rocks, is thrown foaming from crag to crag till, with one last bound, all veiled in spray, it reaches the ground with a crash of thunder!

The Roumel rolls its restless stream in a yet grander scene. High above its water—suspended in mid-air—a natural bridge, which crosses the gorge, spans the abyss from side to side, whilst higher up still rises the steep wall of rock, on whose summit stands an unseen city. Wild birds soar above, and below smiles a lovely valley, which owes its rich vegetation to the impetuous torrent, now a gentle river calmly flowing between its banks.

But we have been carried away with the current, for we were speaking of the great cleft round Constantine. In this terrible opening eagles and vultures fly and scream, whilst on the roofs of the old houses which overhang its precipitous edge a colony of storks build their

enormous nests. As they stand motionless on their long legs on the tops of the buildings, they look like sculptured figures on the superstructure.

When we consider the solid base on which this remarkable city rests, the mind wanders back to the remote period when this bare rock, which man has chosen for his habitation, was a silent stone standing in the solitude of nature.

The open country round Constantine which, far as the eye can reach, extends to the blue highlands of the Kabylie, has not the monotony of a plain, for the immense space is diversified with mountains and hills, some of the most striking in form rising near the city. The highest of these, the Mansoura, commands the town, and was fortified at the time of the Romans, the remains of an old fort having been discovered whilst digging the foundation of a new one. Those who ascend this height, or the Sidi-Mesid, obtain a magnificent view over an unequalled panorama.

We shall conclude our description of the situation of Constantine by remarking that the astonishment and admiration we feel when we see grand objects in nature, such as lofty mountains, the sea, and others, is not diminished when they become familiar to us; on the contrary, it is by contemplating them frequently that we learn to appreciate their sublimity. Such has been the impression the matchless position of this city has made upon us; for the longer and oftener we looked at it, the stronger became the wonder and pleasure which the first sight had inspired.

As a town Constantine is a very agreeable residence. The European quarter possesses the comforts of

Algiers, or of a large city in Europe ; such as excellent hotels, elegant cafés, carriages, fine broad streets lighted with gas, footways, shops, &c., and the town is superabundantly supplied with water. Although the Algerines have so much to say against civilisation, some of them do not carry their prejudices so far as to deny themselves the enjoyment of a good dinner with wine ; for, if this be an acquired taste, it does not take long to learn, and the Franco-Arab officers soon prefer European fare to a dish of couscoussou. At our hotel the Cheiks who had travelled with us dined in the saloon in company with other Arab chiefs. All seemed to relish French cooking, and each emptied his bottle as if the inspiring beverage had not been forbidden by the Prophet. The dining-room at the Hôtel de Paris, where covers are laid for 300 guests, is lively and fashionable at the convivial hour, the uniforms of the European officers and the picturesque costumes of the Arabs—many of whom wore the French and English Crimean medals—relieving the less gay dresses of the mixed company. We may here remark that the natives of Constantine are more sociable in general than those of Algiers, they are also more friendly in their intercourse with strangers than are the Arabs in the capital, or the Kabyles who, being the least resigned to foreign occupation, are the most reserved towards the Roumis.

A party of our countrymen who were staying at the hotel dined in the saloon. They belonged to the long list of English who speak to foreign waiters in the language of Shakespeare, travellers who are little disposed to be pleased with anything out of their own island, but

are ever ready to find fault with all that is not exactly as it is there.

The *garçon*, who did not understand one word of the fluent English in which he was addressed just as if he had been serving in a London tavern, impressed with the conviction that a beef-steak is all that a Briton desires and requires, went to order the national dish in the kitchen. The company, becoming impatient when not further attended to, called out again for the waiter, who now started off in search of the *chef*, who was the linguist of the house. We heard him say 'beef-steak no cook,' but we were not able to make out whether the steak was obstinate and *would* not be cooked, or whether the slice was not yet cooked enough.

Our English tourists and temporary residents may be divided into two categories; those who are sociable, intelligent, and amiable, whose manners and characters are unexceptionable, and those who are the most unreasonable, reserved, selfish, and prejudiced beings in existence, always carrying with them the supercilious look of contempt for what they have not the discernment and feeling to appreciate. Unfortunately the latter predominate, no people travel more than this class. We meet them everywhere; from the Alps to the Andes, from Dan to Beersheba. None go abroad with so little advantage to themselves; not only do they profit nothing, but most of them return, like their boxes, all the worse for the journey.

It is said that travelling expands the mind, rubs off the rust of prejudice, teaches much, makes us more tolerant, less vain, and consequently more agreeable. So it may be, if we journey not only to see other lands,

but also to learn something of their inhabitants. To accomplish this several things are needed; it is absolutely necessary to know the language of the country we visit, and knowing it, we must be neither taciturn, suspicious, nor prone to jump to conclusions, but courteous and affable to those we address or who speak to us. To fail in this is to deprive ourselves both of instruction and pleasure.

How is it possible that the strangers in whose midst the English here, or on the European continent, reside, can become known to our countrymen, when these keep themselves apart, forming a colony and a *côterie* amongst themselves? It is this separation which has made them known to foreigners rather by their insularities and unsociable habits—rendered more evident because they are contrasted with the urbanity and generally pleasing manners of the people in whose territory they sojourn for a season—than for the good qualities which Englishmen really possess.

Those who have seen the Arab quarter of Algiers will find little to interest them in that of Constantine, where there is neither bit nor vestige of the Moorish architecture which is so striking and beautiful in the capital; neither have the few wretched shops the distinctive character of those which so please the artist and man of taste in the latter place. Some dirty lanes and poor-looking buildings, such as may be seen in Europe, are all we meet with; the terraced roofs—a feature peculiar to Southern architecture—are entirely wanting, the climate in winter not being suited to them.

Speaking of the old town, we may mention that from Sidi Rached, the point which forms the apex of the

triangle—the shape of Constantine—the unfaithful wives of former days were thrown, like Manlius from the Tarpeian Rock, into the gulf below. A proof that neither seclusion, adjars, nor houses without windows—for women have eyes if their dwellings have none—can prevent the frail sex from going astray if they be so disposed.

One of these unfortunate women, who had been cast over the precipice, was suspended in mid-air, owing to her dress spreading out, and thus serving as a parachute. She reached the bottom in safety, an accident which did not save her life ; for, being one of the wives of the Bey, he ordered her to be beheaded.

CHAPTER XXX.

AT CONSTANTINE.—THREE LION STORIES.

Si quisiera canonizar mis vicios dándoles el nombre de virtudes, diría que mi pereza era una indolencia filosófica.—*Gil Blas de Santillana.*

Dort erblick' ich schöne Hügel,
Ewig jung und ewig grün!
Hätt' ich Schwingen, hätt' ich Flügel,
Nach den Hügel'n zög' ich hin.—SCHILLER.

IN Constantine the intense laziness—or philosophical indolence—of the lowest class of the population shows itself more than in Algiers, where a greater number bring the produce of the fields their wives cultivate to sell in town, and where the Kabyles are industrious, and many Arabs have some kind of occupation. Here in the squares and streets the latter lie stretched on the ground basking in the sun, their faces turned towards the luminary in defiance of ophthalm^y and sun-stroke.

If we did not know that a few dates, a cup of coffee, and a paper cigar keep an Arab alive, and that he makes a coarse burnous—which covers dirt and nakedness at the same time—last for years, we should be puzzled to say how he manages to sustain an independent and—after his own fashion—a happy existence. He never

changes his dress ; summer and winter it is the same, for, like the Spaniard, he thinks that what keeps out the cold can keep out the heat.

When an Arab's burnous becomes insupportable from filth and vermin, he goes to a river, strips, washes his only garment, and then—naked as Adam before he covered himself with fig-leaves—lies down on the grass till it is dry : of shame, or even decency, he has no conception.

One day at Constantine we saw a Bedouin making his toilet in a public garden, close to the principal entrance. He had just pulled off his ragged burnous and gandoura, and at the moment we passed the gate he was slipping a newly-bought shirt over his naked person !

We called the attention of the custos to this exhibition of primitive life. He threw the cast-off toggery over the hedge, and pushed the owner after it, assuring us that the same thing happened very often, the Arabs being quite incorrigible, and that it was impossible to make them understand why civilisation and propriety could not tolerate these original manners and customs.

It must not be imagined, because the Arabs dislike labour and delight in repose, that they are incapable of hard work, when they have an object to gain in doing it. Some go to large towns, particularly the seaports on the littoral, for the purpose of earning and hoarding money. The water-carriers in the capital, for instance, all come from Biskra, and, after remaining a few years in Algiers, during which they acquire what to them is a little fortune, they return to their native oasis, marry, and pass the rest of their lives under the shade of a palm-tree.

This pastoral notion of happiness reminds us of a

picture of ideal bliss, which was sketched out by the French banker who changed our notes in Constantine. He was a thorough man of business, who understood rates of exchange, profit and loss, and conducted a flourishing concern in a style which did honour to the commercial spirit of his country.

The conversation having taken us to the Sahara, the banker to our astonishment became enthusiastic and eloquent on the poetry of the desert, the charms of solitude, and the virtue of abstinence. 'This plodding material existence,' exclaimed the man of money, 'is not suited to the aspirations of my nature; I was not born for ledgers and figures; away with this tight dress, throw over me a burnous, release me from the constraint of society, give me space and liberty, and I could be happy on a date in the wilderness!'

As artists—amateur artists at least—we had sometimes indulged in fanciful anticipations of a scene entirely new to us—even the desert might be better than its reputation—but our imagination had not been up to this.

To return to our subject, the indolence of the natives.

An Arab, who would refuse regular and steady labour with a moderate remuneration, will not hesitate to undertake a dangerous enterprise in which more money is to be gained in less time; thus many risk their lives in confronting the lion or panther in order to obtain in one night the government reward of forty francs, offered for the destruction of these animals; he will even accept hard work which is soon over but well paid.

We were one day looking down into the chasm round the city, when we observed what appeared to be

two goats in the depth below, and we were wondering how even that sure-footed and adventurous creature could get there, when some people who were watching the same objects informed us that they were two Arabs, who thus placed their lives in jeopardy to gather a particular kind of herb which grows at the bottom of the abyss, and all for the sake of the high price paid for this valuable plant, which is said to possess peculiar medicinal properties.

It was a fearful sight to follow the movements of the men as they climbed up the steep wall of the ravine on their perilous ascent back. With the aid of a pocket glass we could make out that they had filled two large sacks, which they had to get to the top as well as themselves. They took one at a time, the difficulty of their retreat being increased by the inconvenience of their burnous. One of the Arabs, by placing his foot on a bit of projecting rock, and catching hold of a bush above his head, managed to advance a few steps upwards, till he reached a small ledge, on which he obtained a dangerous footing. With the usual improvidence of their race, they had not taken a rope with them, so that he who had remained below was obliged to lift one of the sacks which his companion pulled up after him.

In this manner, one always before the other, slowly and carefully climbing the almost perpendicular side of the chasm, where a single false step, or the breaking of the twig they held on, would have precipitated them into the gulf beneath—after hovering between heaven and earth, life and death, for an hour—they at last attained the summit, and deposited half of their treasure on surer ground. We saw them descend for the second

sack, but did not stay to see the painful process repeated. If they succeeded in bringing up the other bag, well did they deserve the recompense, however great, which was to reward their daring venture.

In regard to climate Constantine is cold in winter. We were there in April, when we had fine bracing weather; cool in the morning early, the thermometer usually marking 45° Fahrenheit, but rising from 65° to 70° in the middle of the day. Just the temperature for climbing the Mansoura and other heights in the neighbourhood before breakfast, which we did not fail to do, always returning with a mountain-air appetite for our *déjeuner* at ten o'clock.

We could say much more about Constantine, a city with which we were greatly delighted, but it is time to proceed to Batna on our way to the Sahara. Having mentioned Batna, which the famous huntsman Chassaing made his head-quarters—it being only six miles from the *forêt des Cèdres* which is inhabited by lions—we may add that formerly the people of that town used to send the cubs they stole in the absence of their dams to Constantine for sale. The demand and supply appear to have fallen off in the present day, although the forest still abounds in noble game.

Under favourable circumstances the lion, when caught young, may be tamed and domesticated. An instance is related by M. Fenech—'Récits et Chasses'—of a lion living at the Hôtel Octavie in Constantine, where the influence of cooked food and the habit of seeing people near him resulted in his becoming as tame as a dog. This lion had been taken when a pup, and became the cherished guest of his master, for whose care he seemed

very grateful. The way in which he was brought up so modified his original nature that at the age of three years he was allowed to go about the hotel; he frequented the dining-room, went up-stairs, and even took the liberty of entering the apartments of travellers without ceremony. More than one tourist must have been terrified on seeing such an apparition, but none could have been more startled than M. Ed. P., a gentleman who, arriving at the inn after a long ride, retired to rest immediately, and being very sleepy forgot to close his door. The following morning the sun shining through the window admonished him that it was time to rise and dress. He had made but one step towards the sofa on which he had left his clothes the night before, when to his consternation he saw a lion comfortably stretched out on them. The most prudent thing that suggested itself was to jump into bed again, and to cover all that might tempt his terrible companion. Unfortunately there was no bell within reach, so he was obliged to resign himself to his fate. The lion experiencing the effects of an empty stomach began to gape, displaying to the observer—who was anxiously watching all his movements from the bed—a row of grinders not at all reassuring, and, extending his powerful limbs, sprang from the sofa, leaving the room in search of his breakfast in the kitchen, to the great relief of the traveller.

As our subject has led to the introduction of a lion story, we shall add two more in further illustration of it.

The following anecdotes related by M. Henri Béchade in his interesting work '*La Chasse en Algérie*,' show that the lion is sometimes equally inoffensive when he has not enjoyed the advantages of civilisation.

Some years since a detachment of the 70th regiment of foot left Bône in Algeria for Souq-Ahras. After a painful march under a burning sun, several of the men sat down exhausted by heat, but one only remained behind. Resting for a moment under the inviting shade of an olive-tree, a deep sleep overcame him, from which he did not wake till the following morning. If he had had pleasant dreams during the night, very different was his return to the realities of life. A black lion of the largest size was sitting a few paces from him, looking attentively at the soldier, and apparently watching the moment he should awake. The lingerer at first thought he must be still asleep and dreaming; he rubbed his eyes, shook himself, and tried to dispel the unwelcome vision, but the terrible apparition remained before him. Although greatly terrified, he seized his gun, but it was not loaded, and he was afraid to put in a charge lest this should excite the anger of the lion.

Almost distracted he got up, the lion did the same; the man advanced a couple of steps, the lion followed his example; the former quickened his pace, the lion also walked faster. The agony of the soldier continued, for his terrible companion was always at his side. At last, after walking some time, the lion, who had probably arrived near his den, gave a loud roar and disappeared amongst the underwood. The man took to his heels, and rejoined the company to which he belonged. From this day however the word of command, the voice of his comrades, the least noise, brought on an attack of the nerves. If anyone called him suddenly by his name, he bounded from his place, and only became calm when he saw the person who had addressed him. His nervous

system being entirely shattered, it was necessary to send him home.

Besides the fabulous story of the lion of Florence, there are real instances of the said sparing children. Everyone in Algeria has heard of the lion of Jemmapes. This village was formerly a halting place for travellers *en route* from Bône to Philippeville; here was a spring of fresh and abundant water. A lion, which had long established his head-quarters in the neighbourhood, was accustomed to come to drink at this source. When the Europeans began to build there he did not appear to be much surprised, and continued to visit the fountain as before, quenching his thirst as if he had not understood that where the first indications of civilisation show themselves he—the representative of savage power—must disappear.

Although he intended to injure no one, the colonists, becoming alarmed at his visits, armed themselves, and lay in wait for him one day a little before sunrise, when they expected he would come to drink; but the sba, as if he had been warned of their intention, did not appear, and his enemies, after waiting a long time in vain, were obliged to retire.

At noon, when several children were playing about the spring, the lion came as usual, approaching gravely in the midst of the terrified group. After drinking long and copiously, he left the place without paying any attention to the little boys and girls who, having become bold on seeing the lion so quiet, were trying to tease him. The affrighted parents who had witnessed the scene showed themselves grateful, for none of them would kill the noble animal who had spared their

children. His visits now became less frequent, and at last they ceased altogether.

Incidents occur every year which, like the foregoing, show the inoffensive disposition of the lion, when not molested or attacked, and it is this quiet indifference which has acquired for him the character of being magnanimous and generous, although in truth he only obeys the instincts of his nature—which is harmless when he is not excited—for the lion can know as little of the fine sentiments attributed to him by some, as he is guilty of the cruelty and ferociousness laid to his charge by others.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONSTANTINE TO BATNA.

Strange is the imagination's dread delight
 In objects linked with danger, death, and pain !
 Fresh from the luxuries of polish'd life,
 The echo of these wilds enchanted me ;
 And my heart beat with joy when first I heard
 A lion's roar come down the Libyan wind.—CAMPELL.

Wie lange soll der Mensch, das schwache Thier uns äffen,
 Der nur durch List die Macht zu Boden schlägt ?
 Die List allein an ihm ist unser Schrecken.—WILLAMOW.

WE left Constantine for Batna in the evening, so we did not see much of the country through which we passed.

Our travelling companions were two Arabs, one a Marabout who could speak a little French, and his friend who did not know one word ; and, as we were not much more advanced in Arabic, conversation with the latter was not likely to be very lively or instructive. The prospect was less discouraging with the Marabout, a portly, jolly-looking personage—not at all in the Arab style—whose good-humoured countenance indicated a sociable disposition. With him we were soon on friendly terms. As he was a Marabout, and we wished to be enlightened on some points of his religion, that subject

was discussed ; and, this leading to comments on Arab customs, the adjar was mentioned. As it was not worn before the time of Mahomet, we suggested that the Prophet was jealous of his young and favourite wife Aïsha, and that this might be the reason why he had ordered the face to be covered.

Our Marabout was at first greatly shocked at the insinuation, earnestly assuring us that it had never occurred to him that the Prophet could have been jealous, and that no one had ever before ventured to hint at such an idea ; but soon after, looking at our proposition from a comic point of view, he could not help laughing heartily at the notion, although on reflection he perhaps thought there might be something in it. The other Arab, who was very curious to know what we were saying, often asked his friend what it was ; but the Marabout would tell him nothing about our profane suspicion, still less would he confess to us Roumis that we might have divined the truth. ‘No,’ said the Mahometan, ‘the Prophet was wise, and the institution of the adjar is a proof of his sagacity, for well he knew that there are two things which an Arab cannot resist—wine and women—he therefore prohibited the one and threw a veil over the other. When we Arabs see a beautiful woman whom we cannot marry, we fall desperately in love with her, and lose our reason ; Arab then *malheureux*, *beaucoup malheureux*, life is worth nothing, *pas dormir*, *pas manger*,’ continued the fat priest sentimentally, affected perhaps by this last reflection ! ‘Such prostration of mind and body is beneath the dignity of the Arab race. If you, children of the cold North,’ added our corpulent companion, ‘can contemplate a

woman's charms unmoved, we sons of Africa cannot ; yes, the Prophet was right, he knew his people well, and we are grateful for his injunction.'

Changing the conversation, we introduced the often-discussed topic of civilisation, but our Marabout was more enlightened than our friend of the strong arm, for he acknowledged that all—Arabs and Turks—must bow before it.

We afterwards saw a good deal of this Marabout, who was one of those kind-hearted Arabs of whom we have met many, for many there are who merit our regard and esteem.

After our chat with the Muslim we had fallen asleep, and had passed some time in the land of fantasy, when we were suddenly awakened—not by the storm of wind, rain, and hail which was rattling against the window of our carriage, but—by a voice which rose 'high above the elements, a sound we had never heard before, but which we shall never forget. It was repeated, not menacing but loud and terrible. There was no mistaking the roar of the lion, and a lion very near us. 'It is the saïd,' said our Marabout, with the respect an Arab always speaks of the king of the Atlas. We tried to catch sight of him, but the weather was too bad and the night too dark to allow us to distinguish anything. At dawn he had disappeared, so we are not able to say we have seen a lion—seen one, master not slave!

Soon after daybreak we arrived at Batna, a small town possessing no great interest in itself, but which is remarkable for three things ; the coldness of its climate for a place so far South, a fact accounted for by the elevated situation of the district, which is higher above

the sea than even the country about Constantine ; its vicinity to the old Roman town of Lambessa ; and its being in the neighbourhood of the Cedar forest, the home of lions and panthers. The lion, which is often spoken of in Algeria, has his proverbial share in conversation here, so near his royal domain.

We had not been long in one of the cafés when we heard a captain of Spais, who sat at the next table, remind a comrade that it was time to set off, if he intended to walk through the wood that afternoon. After the latter had left we asked the officer to what the advice he had given his friend referred. He told us that it was dangerous to go through the *forêt des Cèdres* after dark, but that there was little risk by day, even if we should meet a lion, which sometimes happens. ‘*Noli me tangere* is his device,’ added the Spais ; ‘the slightest sign of hostility rouses his kingly indignation, but he does not attack man unless he be insulted by that presumptuous biped. Not many days since,’ continued our informant, ‘I had occasion to ride through the forest at break of day, but had scarcely entered it when I saw a lion looking at me over some bushes ; my fear was that, if his nocturnal marauding had been unsuccessful, he might spring upon my horse, but we were allowed to pass, *quitte pour la peur*. I had not advanced many steps, and was beginning to congratulate myself on my escape, when a lioness appeared on the other side of the road ; she was standing still, but had evidently seen me ; my horse at the same moment caught sight of the terrible apparition and began to tremble. Not to irritate the noble mate of the saïd, I thought it best to walk slowly on. This policy—with

a wild beast probably satiated with food—succeeded, for we were permitted to proceed unchallenged.'

Whilst we are so near the head-quarters of the lion we may say something about his habits and the manner of hunting this magnificent game, introducing other information which we have picked up in conversation with the natives, or have acquired from French officers skilled in cynegetics.

In Europe, when we speak of the lion, we talk of him as we do of objects and events the interest of which is diminished by distance. Few Englishmen associate the most formidable of animals in his wild state with a three days' journey from London, and many would be disposed to vote the black lion of Africa a myth, if they were told that he and his tawny brother roamed about a region not many hours from their own homes; yet there he is, much at the service of those who wish to see him to advantage, *here* not altogether on their side.

It seems strange that in the very capital of the country, in Algiers itself, with all the accessories of European life about us, the home of this much-abused monarch of the Atlas may be seen from the windows of the houses.

He is indeed not far off; a couple of hours by rail takes us to the foot of the lower range, and a mere trip across it brings us to the lion's dominions. At this short distance from Algiers a stray one may be met with; but the tourist, who wishes to tell his friends that he has *seen a lion*, may be sure to find what he seeks on the wooded slopes of the higher chain, for there are said to be more of them in the province of Algiers than in the other two; or, if the traveller penetrate farther into the

interior, such a *rencontre* will probably form an incident in his journey to the Sahara. If it is during the day the meeting takes place, the *saïd* may be walking quietly along, or perhaps crossing the path of the excursionist; sometimes he is seen basking near it lazily in the sun. Indolent, but inquisitive, he will look at the strange visitor with as much interest, and less trepidation, than is felt by the man who has come so far to see and shoot him. Unless he is hungry—which is seldom the case in a country abounding in game fit for royalty—he will no more think of harming the stranger than would his own dog. Even when he has not broken his fast, man—who is always ready to kill the lion if he can take him at a disadvantage—is the last animal he would assault, but he would certainly make a meal of him if he could get nothing better.

After dark he is dangerous; at night his character, or at least his humour, changes completely, partly influenced by that sombre season, but more because it is the time of action—the time for killing and eating. He then becomes savage, and is as little like the same creature in a state of repose, with his appetite appeased, as man, when slaying his fellow-men in war, is like what he is when the battle is over, and his passions are calmed down. After dark therefore the lion will attack a man, particularly if he meets him in the forest, although he would not choose one of us as an article of food. The African lion—the black lion in particular—is amongst the finest of his species, but he is not always the ferocious brute that people suppose him to be. A French writer who had been fortunate or unfortunate enough to learn from personal observation something of his habits and

character, remarks that, 'if to so powerful a *physique* he united only a little of the wickedness of the human race, he would indeed be the most formidable of created beings.' It would seem as if the very consciousness of power restrained his natural instinct. Like man, he kills animals which are necessary to his subsistence; but he does not, like that rational egotist, immolate thousands of victims of his own kind solely because he has the power to do so. The lion takes the life only of the prey which he can eat. If you let him alone he will not injure you, assault him and he will defend himself: this is all that can be laid to his charge. Inoffensive as he generally is, he becomes terrible when wounded, for he possesses both the will for revenge and the power to execute it.

In 1836 General Yusuf was present at a hunt in a place called 'Le Rocher du Lion,' in the province of Constantine. This celebrated engagement with the king of the Atlas—in which it is to be presumed that the assailants were the inexperienced soldiers of his own army—is not forgotten where it took place, for fourteen men were placed *hors de combat*, eight were wounded, and six killed by a single lion.

Algeria offers to the enterprising huntsman an exciting field for sport. 'La chasse au lion, panthère, sanglier, &c.' is always *open*, and Europeans are welcome to join in such *parties de chasse*; so that when our English sportsmen, in all the parade of red coats, are tired of running down the poor little fox, they have no occasion to go so far as India in search of nobler game when, a few hours from their own midland counties, they can enjoy a lion-hunt in Africa; and what adds to its attraction is, that Arab etiquette cedes the post of

danger to the foreigner. Those who envy Jules Gérard Chassaing, and Bombonnel their laurels, and wish to emulate these intrepid huntsmen, will not have left home a week without a fight with the *saïd*, and when they go back—if they go back at all—they can take his skin with them as a trophy and a token of their prowess.

Although some ardent spirits, men who like strong emotions, go forth to meet the lion in single combat, the usual way of attacking him is to form a party for the purpose. Of the pluck and nerve of the Nimrod who sets out alone to encounter such an antagonist there can be no doubt, yet even then the advantage is on the side of the huntsman, who, armed with a double-barrelled rifle, lies in ambush where he knows the *sba* will pass; here, lurking like one of the feline race waiting for its prey, and sure of his aim, he watches till the lion turns in his direction, or by making some slight noise causes him to do so; at this moment the man who can hit a wafer at forty paces, fires, and the ball in its unerring line is lodged just between the eyes. Such a shot or one which strikes the heart is fatal, the danger is in the huntsman's missing his mark, which sometimes happens when the lion unexpectedly moves his head; in this case not much trust can be placed in the second barrel; for when wounded he at once bounds towards the bush where his invisible assailant is hidden. Besides the lion-killers before mentioned, there are many Arabs who singly confront the *saïd*. Those who have killed one in such a duel acquire great honour in the tribe to which they belong. Some have shot several during their lives; only a few weeks ago an Arab of the tribe of the Ouled-Driss killed one in his own garden, making the four-

teenth which had fallen under his deadly mekahla. But the plan generally adopted by the natives is to go many together, well-armed, and on horseback, to the haunt of the lion, it having been discovered before setting out. Arrived at his den—some cavern in the rocks—where they know that he is alone, for the presence of the lioness and cubs might make the adventure somewhat hazardous, they range themselves in the form of a crescent before his retreat. In order to induce the sba²⁸ to come out, some of the attendants go to the entrance of the cave, and make all the noise they can, using every expedient to arouse the animal, which at last comes forth to see what is the cause of the disturbance. When he sees all these people, evidently with hostile intentions, he hesitates for an instant what to do. This moment of vacillation is fatal. From every side a volley of balls is poured upon him ; tortured with pain, maddened with rage, and blinded by smoke, he bounds hap-hazard on his assailants ; these having opened their ranks after the discharge, the chances are against the lion being able to seize one of his enemies ; if he does so, the rest rush to the rescue, the Arab who is down trying to defend himself with his yatagan which is as nothing when the man is in the terrible grasp of the infuriated beast, and the one he has caught hold of dies with him, as the lion is shot by the other Arabs.

The following more detailed account of the manner in which the lion is hunted in Algeria is in part from ' *La Chasse en Algérie*,' a work already mentioned, and is partly what has been told us by native huntsmen.

When the Arabs hunt the sba by day and on horseback, the riders form a line on the outskirts of a forest.

By throwing stones and raising tumultuous shouts, men who are engaged for the purpose compel the lion to leave his den, after which the noise made by the *traqueurs* obliges him to take the direction of the horsemen. As soon as the cavaliers perceive the said advancing with slow steps and majestic air, they rush about with the rapidity of lightning, brandishing their guns and yatagans, shouting and hurraing with frantic gestures. The horses, excited by the spur, and still more by scenting the lion, are no longer to be kept in bounds. A giddy disorderly gallop ensues, and in this storm of frenzy their hoofs shake the very earth. The astounded animal stops short to observe the strange scene. He forebodes danger, for, from every side he hears threatening cries and sees only enemies around him. Whilst he hesitates whether to go back into the forest which resounds with the clamour made by the bushrangers, or whether to dash forward and try to break through the ranks of the Arab cavalry, the signal for action is given. One of the scouts aims at the royal game; whilst the rest, who are unarmed, disperse and climb up trees. They have played their part, that of the horsemen is now to begin. A volley is discharged, the horses tremble and rear, for they know that the lion will soon be upon them. In fact, rendered furious by this aggression, he springs at the rash fellow who has opened the hunt by firing at him, but the man has already joined his companions on the trees. The lion, resolved upon a victim, bounds towards the cavaliers who, so rapid in their movements but a moment before, now drawing in their reins, meet him half way, and he is fired at from every side. Again the wild evolutions begin, and the sba is surrounded by a circle of fire—pow-

der speaks around him. Soon the noble animal is pierced by balls ; not even revenge is in his power, but if he can single out one of his enemies he prepares to spring upon him. Whilst the lion watches his opportunity his adversary is changing his place every instant ; the hesitation this causes the sba decides his fate, for it exposes him to deadly shots, and amongst the many balls which bury themselves in his body one at least takes the right direction and strikes him on the head or in the heart. Thus unrevenged dies the huntsmen's brave antagonist, unless some imprudent wight gets within range of his terrible claws, in which case the luckless one is sacrificed for the rest.

Of a lion-hunt the Arabs philosophically remark : ' He who kills him eats him, and he who does not kill him is eaten by him !'

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LION AND OTHER ANIMALS.

La chasse dégage l'esprit des soucis, ajoute à la vigueur de l'intelligence, elle amène la joie, et frappe d'inutilité l'art des médecins.

L'homme qui s'adonne à la chasse fait chaque jour des progrès dans le courage ; il apprend le mépris des accidents ; il s'éloigne des gens pervers, et il échappe à la corruption du vice.

Les jours de chasse ne comptent point [parmi les jours de la vie.—*Un poëte Arabe sur la Chasse.*

There's such a charm in natural strength and power,
That human fancy has for ever paid
Poetic homage to the forest King.—CAMPBELL.

THE Arabs are passionately fond of hunting. Speak of the chase to one of these intrepid and indefatigable sportsmen, and you bring out the energy of his character ; his eye sparkles, his tongue becomes eloquent, and the habitual coldness of his demeanour vanishes, as he talks of his gun and the saïd. It is forbidden to sell arms and ammunition to the natives, but where is the Arab who has not powder and a mekahila !

In apparent contradiction to his staid and sober nature he likes excitement, stir, and even noise. This is observable not only in the field, but is evident on

many occasions. At Algiers, when a ship of war salutes the port, there is always a crowd of Arabs to listen to the voice of the cannon. Military bands, drums, trumpets, and other loud instruments are greatly to their taste. They delight in fireworks when there are plenty of rockets and squibs! At such times the Arabs lay aside their reserve, and let us see that they are pleased; but yet more demonstrative are they when engaged in a perilous adventure, where din, commotion, and excitement form part of the programme.

A French writer says, 'It is a remarkable feature in the Arab character, that this people usually so serious, men who scarcely know what it is to laugh, become gay and lively when their lives are in jeopardy. At such a moment they are not afraid to compromise their dignity, for the fact of being in a critical situation is sufficient to sustain their general reputation for gravity, although they may jest in the face of danger.'

In telling stories about the lion, several authors—on the faith of Arab information—relate incredible anecdotes about women, indignant at an invasion of their douars, running after the culprit, and assailing the unwelcome visitor with bitter invectives, calling him a robber, son of a thief, stealer of poor people's property, and so on, till the saïd, quite ashamed of himself, lets go his booty and sneaks away like a guilty creature!

If anything of the kind ever happened—and such things are related in almost every book on the subject published in Algeria—the most probable explanation is that the lion, surprised and disgusted at the row and hubbub made by the women, abandons his prey to

escape more quickly from the tumult and the clatter of female tongues, so disagreeable to his dignified bearing.

Such attacks on the farms are of frequent occurrence. They generally take place at night, and accounts of them—sometimes two or three together—may often be read in the newspapers.

These *coups de main* on the part of his selvine majesty do not show that the species is diminishing in any considerable degree before the march of civilisation, or that the king of wild beasts is less bold and enterprising in what he undertakes now, than he was formerly when he had a wider field for action.

As will be seen in the list of Arab words, a douar is an assemblage of tents forming a square or oval. In the midst of them is an enclosed space, in which cattle are kept in the open air. This enclosure—which is called the azib—is in a manner fortified, but not really protected, by palisades made of trunks of trees, &c. The Arabs often lose some of their stock from the effects of cold weather, which on the high table-lands is occasionally severe enough even in Algeria to injure the health of domestic animals; but the Arab intrenchments offer scarcely better protection against the sba than they do against the inclemency of winter.

It may not be easy to ascertain whether the lion, as a rule, prefers wild game, or whether, when he wishes to vary his bill of fare, his royal taste inclines to oxen, cows, and sheep fed and fattened by man. Probably, like us, he is fond of change. However this may be, to a powerful creature, rather indolent by temperament and habit, a provision of live delicacies guarded by canvas tents,

and protected only by sticks and branches over which he knows he can leap, is a temptation too great and a prey too convenient for his primitive and untaught nature to resist. Perhaps the attack is not made without some elementary strategy being observed, for the marauder is said to reconnoitre the enemy's position before he penetrates to its centre.

Nothing more dashing or bolder can be imagined than such a rape in the azib by a lion.

It is night. Repose and silence in the douar are suddenly broken by the barking of dogs and the bellowing of cattle, which, with the instinct of fear, apprehend the approach of danger. But too late; on comes the lion; disdainful of all obstacles, with one mighty bound he clears the high broad barricade, and alights like an aerolite in the midst of the flocks and herds! Seizing an ox or a calf, back he jumps over the fence and makes good his retreat, carrying with him his prey as easily as if it were a gazelle, before the camp is alarmed by the commotion the incident has occasioned in the farmyard. The Arabs say that the sba does not roar when he makes his *salto mortale*. They also affirm that he is so intent on his purpose—one of the great elements of success—that if there should happen to be ever-so-many people near the cattle in the yard, he pays not the least attention to them, but pounces on the sheep or ox which suits him, and vanishes like an apparition.

Although the saïd usually gets clear off when he makes an attempt on a douar, he is sometimes followed in his retreat; and the depredation he has committed then leads to an exciting hunt. An instance is related by General

Margueritte, which will illustrate what we have said on the subject.

‘The Arabs told us,’ narrates the General, ‘that about two o’clock in the morning a lion had got into the douar, by jumping over the fence which protected it. To do this he must have cleared a palisade thirteen feet high and thirty feet wide. Alighting like a thunderbolt in the midst of the flock, he seized a large sheep, springing back with it as easily as he had leaped in. Not having been disturbed he made good his retreat, the direction he had taken being indicated by a little wool scattered along the road, but it was thought he had not gone far to devour his booty. El-Mokhtar, an Arab well acquainted with the habits of the sba, was consulted as to what ought to be done. From the trace left by the wool, he thought the bold robber was most likely sleeping after his meal in a neighbouring thicket near a rock called Kef-el Korab. Our Arab guide went on foot to reconnoitre the spot, keeping a little in advance of us, as he feared the sound of the horses’ hoofs might disturb the saïd. It was agreed that if the lion should be in the bush our conductor was to make a sign to us with his burnous ; we were then to dismount and join him, making as little noise as possible.

‘A march of half an hour brought us to the foot of a high hill overgrown with trees, in the midst of which rose an enormous mass of rock. This was the Kef-el Korab, or Rocher du Corbeau, on the flat summit of which appeared our Arab, making the signal for us to alight and join him. Leaving our horses in charge of the attendants, we went to meet El-Mokhtar, who was coming towards us. His first words were to say that the lion was in a

bush below the rock. The guide directed us to follow him noiselessly, as we were to station ourselves on its top, but on no account were we to throw away a useless shot. "A ball," said our pioneer, "which strikes neither the head nor the heart has been fired for nothing." Having given this advice, he placed himself in front of the column. I must confess, says the officer, who is relating his first encounter with the saïd, 'that we were none of us without a certain feeling of trepidation, for a danger we confront the first time always appears greater than those to which we have become accustomed. The fight was about to begin. We knew that the lion, notwithstanding his wounds, or rather in consequence of them, rushes upon his aggressors, and that he has often strength enough left to tear more than one of them to pieces before he expires. Our guns were carefully loaded ; mine was an excellent rifle, and I hoped to make good use of it. Our leader, having taken us by a circuitous route not to excite suspicion, led us to the top of the Kef-el Korab. This rock is as perpendicular as a wall, and some forty-five to fifty feet high on the side which overhangs the thicket in which the marauder was concealed, but the foliage was so dense that we could discern nothing.

'We now formed into line, holding our guns ready for action ; several of the men had taken up their positions, when one of the Arabs slipped and let his gun fall, which made a sharp sound as it struck the stone. The lion, which had probably been watching what was going on, replied to the noise—which he took for a commencement of hostilities—by a loud roar, and bounded out of the bush towards us, bending young trees thick as a

man's arm as if they had been twigs. It was well we had placed ourselves out of reach of his first spring, for we should have got the worst of it, notwithstanding some balls which struck him on a general discharge, but which had no other result than that of rendering him more furious. The height of the rock prevented the lion getting at us by jumping; this however he tried to do, making several astounding bounds, roaring terribly all the time. El-Mokhtar and I had reserved our fire, and after the efforts the gallant animal had made to reach us, we were able to take a steady aim just as he was attempting another assault.

'The Arab's ball struck him in the chest and, passing under the right shoulder, came out at his side. I intended to hit him between the eyes; but, owing to a sudden movement of his head, the charge struck him in the mouth and broke a part of the lower jaw. These two last wounds exasperated the sba to the utmost. He lashed his sides furiously with his tail, tearing up the roots of trees and stones with his fore feet, throwing them far behind him. The combat was at its height when the lion, perceiving that he could not succeed on this side, changed his tactics, giving up his attack in front. We at first thought he was running away; but the Arab, who knew our valiant antagonist better, thinking that like a skilful general he was going to turn our position by taking us in the rear, advised that we should seek refuge in the trees. It was good counsel, and we hastened to climb up the oaks on the rock. The men left with our horses on an eminence not far off accelerated our movements by calling out that the lion was coming on the right and would soon be upon us. We were in fact scarcely perched on the boughs,

which bent under our weight, than he appeared, looking for us in every direction. His aspect was appalling ; at every respiration ensanguined foam burst from his mouth ; his bloodshot eyes seemed to emit sparks of fire ; his black, bristling mane falling over his forehead added to his strange and formidable look. He was a lion of the largest size, and during the fight he seemed prodigious.

‘The action continued ; on our side we fired at him whenever we had a chance ; and, as it is not in his nature to climb like the panther, he only ran from one tree to another, attracted by the reports of the guns and the shouts which accompanied them. At last, having approached near me, I fired my third ball, which struck him in the heart ; he sank instantly to the ground, and his fall was followed by loud acclamations ; but once more, in his struggle for life and revenge, he raised himself to his feet and staggered one or two steps forward, in a dying attempt to spring upon us. It was a final effort, in which he fell back and expired. He had received seventeen balls.

‘Long did we look upon the noble victim, now lifeless at our feet. The Arabs, whose farm he had plundered, were not sparing in their invectives, and exulted in his death. As for myself, the battle being over, I reflected that this lion had done me no harm ; and I was conscious that I had taken part in the drama actuated only by the vanity of being able to say I had killed a lion. I felt how little and mean was this motive compared with the glorious death of this courageous creature which had braved us all, and I acknowledged that we had only our guns to thank for the victory. Perhaps no animal excites so much sympathy and admiration as the

lion, for courage and strength are attributes often looked upon as virtues to be admired, wherever they are found.'

We shall say a few words about the panther, wild boar, hyena, and jackal.

The zoology of Algeria is rich in wild animals, many of which are hunted by Arabs and Europeans; but some, such as the two last mentioned, are considered game unworthy of the chase. Besides the lion and this ignoble couple, there are the panther, boar, ounce, lynx, gazelle, porcupine, monkeys, and others. Amongst the birds are the eagle, falcon, ostrich, and small game in great abundance. After the sba, the panther—nemir—is the most redoubtable among the wild beasts; for man it may be said to be more dangerous than any other inhabitant of the African forests. 'The most supple of the savage animals of Algeria, the panther has a skin soft, velvety, exquisitely clean, and elegantly spotted with black, whilst its body is admirably proportioned: when advancing in the silence of the forest, its undulatory movements displaying graces peculiar to the feline race, one might suppose it to be the gentlest and most inoffensive creature in the world; but when, excited by anger, it shows its white and sharp teeth, when its smooth coat is ruffled, and its eyes flash fire, we feel that a brute, possessing wonderful flexibility joined to a ferocity so terribly armed, must be indeed dangerous.'²⁹ The lion is less aggressive, less cunning, and not so cruel as the panther; he seeks his prey without caring to betray his presence, he abandons the calm dignity of his character only when he is obliged to defend himself, and he seems disinclined to take advantage of his strength unless he is forced to exert it. The panther, on the

contrary, creeps furtively along the skirts of the wood and lies concealed in the thick bushes, seldom showing itself except to spring upon its prey ; it has not only the appearance, manner, and stealthy step of the feline tribe, but has their nature also. The Arabs have not the respect for it that they have for the saïd. This noble animal, when attacked, wounded, and surrounded by enemies, fights to the last ; the panther accepts battle only when it finds retreat impossible, and it runs away whenever it has an opportunity. It is not so often seen by day as the lion, which is fortunate for the unarmed traveller, whom it will attack when it is not hungry. The panther is not hunted in exactly the same way as the lion ; fewer precautions are taken, and the presence of so many people is not considered necessary. The system generally employed is for a party of men to set out very early in the morning, before this nocturnal prowler has returned to its den. Some traqueurs are placed on the rocks above the cavern where it is usually found ; others, in order to cut off its retreat, are stationed before the entrance, and in the plain beyond. They observe the most profound silence, and remain perfectly immovable. At break of day the panther returns to its cave : surprised and irritated at seeing people about a place so fatal to all intruders except the lion, it stops where it can hide itself. Thus it often remains concealed near its abode, without the huntsmen being aware of it ; for it is only when the sun appears above the horizon that the Arabs know the panther cannot be far off, as its eyes are unable to bear the light of day, and it will then surely make an attempt to get into its lair ; the opening is therefore guarded

more carefully than before. Instead of the previous silence, the Arabs now make as much noise as they can, to induce the animal to leave its hiding place, but generally without effect; to decide it to come out, one of the rangers is sent to beat the bush. On a sudden the panther starts furiously from its covert, scratching and biting all who stand before its den and refuse to let it pass. Unable to accomplish its object and believing the wood to be full of enemies, it leaves it in a few rapid bounds, and is next seen crossing the plain to gain another forest. In making this attempt it is met by a general volley fired by the men posted in the open country. The frustrated brute stops confounded, hesitates what to do, trembling and crouching like a cat, till a shower of balls decide it to dash through the ranks of the huntsmen. When it springs amongst them its terrible claws leave bloody marks on its assailants; if wounded, its fury is redoubled, and it tears and bites all who come within its reach. If the panther seizes a man, and is not killed at this critical moment, the death of the victim is as certain as if he were in the powerful grasp of an infuriated lion. In almost every instance, however, the panther is either killed on the spot, or it makes its escape severely wounded, in which case the Arabs take care not to follow the ensanguined trace it leaves behind. Sometimes it springs over the heads of the huntsmen and gets into its cave, where it would be still greater madness to go after it.

Wild boars, antelopes, and porcupines are very numerous in Algeria; and being large game which is food for man, they are the most frequently hunted. The African boar, or sanglier, is said to be less vicious

than its cousin in Europe ; it is, however, larger, stronger, and equally bold. The lion, which finds the flesh to his taste, often attacks this bristly inhabitant of the woods but does not always get the best of it. When young the wild boar—Hallouf—is gregarious, but becomes more exclusive when he attains his full size ; he is then called a *solitaire*.

Although the lion and the panther find it easier to deal with the younger ones, which they perhaps prefer as being more delicate, a fight with a *solitaire* does sometimes take place. A combat between one and a lion was lately witnessed by some Arab and European huntsmen. The sanglier, on being assaulted, took his stand against the trunk of an old tree, and boldly confronted his terrible aggressor. The lion roared and crouched down some yards off, then sprang at his antagonist, but was met by the weapons and tactics of the veteran, which received the shock obliquely, lowering his tusks to tear open the side of the lion, retreating quickly after each encounter to his shelter against the tree. The sba became more savage and determined than ever, lacerating the thick hide of the boar with his powerful claws ; but the *solitaire*, whose tusks left bloody furrows on the body of his carnivorous opponent, seemed little disposed to give in. More than once the lion hesitated before that dreadful snout which, white with foam and red with blood, always met him face to face. It is impossible to say how the contest would have terminated if the boar, in one of these onslaughts, had not stumbled and fallen. The lion, profiting instantly by the accident, seized his obstinate adversary by the nape of the neck ; the boar resisted and struggled

violently, whilst the lion dragged it into a neighbouring thicket.

Intending to attack the wild boar, the panther waits for it near some pool, where the sanglier goes to drink and wallow in its muddy water. Hiding itself amongst the brambles, the panther remains motionless for hours; patient, for instinct tells it that the expected prey is sure to come; when the boar appears, its concealed enemy bounds upon it quick as lightning, and with its claws tears open the throat of its victim. The sanglier writhes with pain, but in vain it tries to free itself from the deadly grasp, till, uttering piercing cries, it drops lifeless to the ground.

The hyena and jackal are not hunted by the natives. The Arabs kill, but do not hunt them. Having for this reason little interest for the sportsman, and not much for the general reader, it will suffice to say a few words about these mean quadrupeds. The hyena is supposed by many to be dangerous and savage. This is a mistake; it is savage, but not dangerous. The Arabs, who know it well, regard the hyena as the type of cowardice and low instincts, a brute which runs away when attacked, and feeds only on carrion. They have the same contempt for the jackal, which is as timid in its nature and as disgusting in its tastes and habits as the hyena; both are too weak and too pusillanimous to be objects of fear, for a dog can worry the one, and a man armed with a stick can kill the other.

It is generally believed that the jackal—called the lion's provider—goes, like a sportsman's dog, before the lion, to point out his prey. This is an erroneous supposition. The jackal and the hyena are among the ignoble

beasts which follow—not precede—the saïd. These obsequious dependents keep at a respectful distance behind, to feed on what their master leaves, after satisfying his appetite by eating the best parts of what he has killed.

The hyena and the jackal are voracious and repulsive creatures, but exist, as do all others, for a good purpose. They devour the carcasses of animals which have died a natural death, and as these would not be eaten by other wild beasts, the remains, if left to rot, would infect the air and produce disease.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BATNA TO THE COL DE SFA.

Where temples stood, the tamarinds grow ;
 Broken columns are mouldering below.
 No steps are heard in the ruined hall.
 Such is man's pride, and such its fall.—ANONYMOUS.

I found myself suddenly transported to a wide and desolate plain, where nothing appeared to breathe, or move, or live ; and had that whole region been the remains of some older world, left broken up, it could not have presented an aspect more quenched and desolate.—*The Epicurean.*

THE vicinity of Batna to the forêts des Cèdres, calling to mind the wild animals of the North African forests, we dedicated the whole of the last chapter and a part of the one which preceded it to hunting adventures—the lion's share having been accorded to him in our narrative—adding to our descriptions some information on the zoology of Algeria. We now proceed to visit Lambessa.

The ruins of the old Roman city are only half an hour's drive from Batna, and a more interesting and suggestive theme for reflection is not often to be met with at so short a distance from a populous town. In the open country, still standing, are the temples, arches,

and gates, which were erected nearly two thousand years ago.

What a rich and exhaustless field is here offered to the research of those who, possessing the necessary taste and learning, are disposed to examine its treasures! Inscriptions, which date back to the time of the Roman, Arab, Spanish, and Turkish occupations, are as little difficult to find as they are easy to decipher.

A French savant, M. Charles Féraud, in an eloquent discourse on the ancient cities of Algeria, remarked, 'that before the year 1830, when the French first set foot in Algeria, Northern Africa was little known in Europe.' 'Only a few learned men,' proceeds the distinguished lecturer, 'had gleaned some knowledge of it from the old historians. Of the Lybian period people were in general very ignorant, and vague notions prevailed of the time of the Romans, the invasion of the Vandals, and the Byzantine restoration. As to the centuries during which the Arab and Berber dynasties reigned, and of the Turkish dominion, although so recent, history was full of strange inaccuracies, and passed over intervals about which no information was given.'

After a long and highly instructive dissertation on the subject, M. Féraud, coming to speak of Lambessa, says 'it was once a place of 60,000 inhabitants. In those days, near this town was another called Marcouna, yet more opulent than its neighbour.'

It would occupy too much space were we to follow the learned archeologist in his enumerations and descriptions of the treasures of art which have been found amongst these venerable ruins; properly to appreciate

the value of what had been disinterred, we must ourselves visit this open air museum. Temples dedicated to Victory, Esculapius, Minerva, Apollo, all specimens of the purest style of architecture, have been cleared from the rubbish ; mosaics rich in colour and various in design still pave the floors, over which there is now no other roof but the blue vault of heaven, whilst beautiful statues which seem just to have left the hand of the sculptor people this great edifice, which was probably the ancient Prætorium.

‘ When these masterpieces of art were first brought to light, one surprise succeeded another. Here were found marble baths ; classical fountains adorned with bas-reliefs ; porticoes whose thresholds still bore the traces of chariot wheels ; tombs containing gems, jewellery, and lachrymatory vessels, lamps and other funeral emblems ; besides great quantities of the rarest and most authentic medals.

‘ A monument which stood on an eminence attracted the attention of the explorers, who uncovered it with great care, when an epitaph led to the discovery that it was the burialplace of a certain Flavius, who commanded the third Roman legion garrisoned at Lambessa ; a volume,’ says M. Féraud, ‘ would be insufficient to contain a catalogue of the inscriptions gathered here and in the environs. It is by religiously collecting these pages of history, which the ancients have cut on stone, that we are enabled to read and understand the past events of a country. These records relate to subjects of the most varied kind, and treat of all that is associated with, or that can enlighten us as to the social state, manners, customs of the people, and the policy of the Roman Government.

‘Amongst other interesting objects is a hemicycle formed of stones : it ornaments a large hall, which in the present day we should call a club-room ; the members who composed the society had their names inscribed on tablets ; some of them have been effaced ; they were doubtless those of individuals who had rendered themselves unworthy to take their place with the rest. One of the inscriptions found at Lambessa relates the adventures of a Roman soldier who, having been sent to Saldœ (Bougie) to assist in repairing the aqueduct which brought the water to that town, fell into the hands of native highwaymen who stripped and robbed him.’

Returning from Lambessa, we started the next morning on our way to Biskra. After Batna, the traveller going to the Sahara must be prepared ‘to rough it.’ Between Constantine and the latter town we had found the road tolerable, but from the first hour after we left Batna, all traces of a regular track disappeared.

We were seated in a little nondescript kind of gig without springs, for no such accessories to the comfort of locomotion could stand the jogging and jolting of the pathless way we travelled over : sometimes we swerved to the right, then veered to the left, as the ruts or impediments obliged us to leave the straight line. We forded the Oued Branis several times, for its circuitous course, and perhaps our deviation from the direct point of the compass to which we were steering—like the tacking of a ship when the wind is against her—made this unavoidable. The rain which fell during the storm we encountered between Constantine and Batna had swollen the river so much, that the water often entered into our rickety conveyance, and more than once we were compelled to

go cross-country on foot, it being considered dangerous to attempt to pass the stream in the carriage when too heavily laden.

As we proceeded habitations became rare ; from time to time we saw an isolated hut or caravansary, and here and there on the low ground a solitary tree, or some bushes with locusts swarming about them ; thus it continued till we arrived at El Kantara, a small oasis—the first we had seen. It is situated directly in face of one of the most striking and picturesque defiles in Algeria, called by the Arabs—very appropriately—Foumes-Sahara, the mouth of the desert, for here the mountains which separate the Tell from the Sahara appear to have been split asunder to allow the Oued Branis a narrow passage. Precipitous and bare rocks rise to an immense height above this rent in the stupendous wall which divides these very different regions.

According to a local tradition the original inhabitants of El Kantara were a Roman colony converted to Islamism ; some ruins and inscriptions are supposed to confirm this assumption.

Already accustomed to the arid approach to the desert, when we emerged from this beautiful pass we were as much astonished and enchanted with the sudden transformation of the solitary and stony road we had travelled over into a charming palm-grown oasis, as we were with the imposing gate which opens to the Sahara.

After this verdant spot the aspect of the country is wild, barren, mountainous, and rocky, unlike the level sandy surface we had anticipated, a phenomenon which is not met with North of Biskra. The desert was so

associated in our mind with sand and flatness that this beginning greatly astonished, if it did not disappoint us ; yet the prospect on every side was singular and striking, for we had seen nothing before which resembled it.

Far and near rose salt hills, whilst in the distance red-coloured mountains presented fantastic forms, their tops often appearing like fortified heights, with bastions, as if built by the hand of man, round their sides. The ground was everywhere covered with a rough, unequal layer of stones and shells mixed with sand. Vegetation there was none, except a few tufts of tamarind or of wild thyme we saw spotted about ; animal life also seemed to be extinguished, although we noticed traces of some passing antelopes.

A profound stillness, which made the nakedness of the land more perceptible, reigned over this somewhat lugubrious landscape. The desolate tract was from time to time relieved by our meeting a small party of Arabs, with their wives and little ones riding on dromedaries, the women sitting in gaily-coloured tents on the backs of the docile animals, the men mounted on mules and horses, or walking near their wives. We were always glad when these children of the desert came in sight.

Interesting at all times, groups of camels are particularly so when marching through the Sahara, with which we are accustomed to associate them. As they appeared to us, they served to illustrate a remark we have made before, that the same object is very different under different circumstances. To make the picture pleasing, all must be in harmony. The lion, with his proud and dauntless bearing seen on the plain or in the forest, the bird in the air, and the camel in the desert, are very

unlike those in confinement, where they have little about them which we connect with their nature and habits. Speaking of the camel, when far off, grazing on some bit of accidental vegetation, it resembles the ostrich, for long legs and neck, a small head, and grey or tawny colour, are common to both ; thus we often mistook one for the other until we came nearer.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OASIS OF BISKRA.

Qui, a breve dir, in bell' ordin raccolti
 I miracoli in un della Natura,
 Che in mille foggie ti rapisce e bea
 E del suo Facitor alti-possente
 L'idea più grande ti ridesta in core,
 Festosi e lieti ti verranno incontro
 Per esser vezzeggiati da' tuoi lumi,
 Ed eternarsi nella tua memoria.—ALGAROTI.

Source limpide et murmurante

Tu paradis ! le désert s'anime !—LAMARTINE.

LEAVING the dreary waste behind, an ascent through a barren defile brought us to the summit of the Col de Sfa, an eminence overlooking the promised land.

Embracing at one rapturous glance a view which we could have passed hours in contemplating, we stopped as if fascinated by the sudden apparition of the Saharian scene below us.

The effect heightened by contrast, we saw the beautiful oasis of Biskra with its groves of palm-trees, their dark and graceful forms standing before the vast expanse of the desert, which stretches far away on the Southern

horizon—boundless as the ocean—a sea of sand, in which small oases that look like islets break the uniformity of the apparent water. The illusion was perfect even to the appearance of blue waves rippling on the imaginary shore.

He who has seen neither the desert nor the sea can form no conception of extent and distance, as they are displayed in these wonderful features of creation.

When we reached the Col de Sfa, the mountains of the Atlas range seemed penetrated by the fiery rays of the descending sun. Impregnated with light and colour they shone like transparent rubies, whilst the plain below was dyed in the deep purple with which nature paints the landscape at close of day, and far over the Sahara the evening sky, blending its blue grey into green and gold crossed with streaks of red, acquired brightness and depth as it became suffused with the warmth of the setting sun. It was like a vision of fairy land, an enchanted region, an artist's dream, a poet's conception. Fine sunsets we have in the North, but more intense and brilliant is the splendour which accompanies the descent of the luminary as it slowly disappears in all the effulgence of its glory in Southern climes.

Before we saw this effect of light from the Col de Sfa we did not know how true were the glowing pictures we had seen of the far East; we had thought them too highly coloured, till we saw the sun go down over the African desert.

Biskra, which may be called New Biskra, to distinguish it from the original Arab village about a mile from it, is a pretty little town which has sprung up under the auspices of the military. It has some tolerable streets,

small squares, and houses built on arcades—an excellent protection against burning heat in summer—besides shops, cafés, a public garden, and a promenade ; but the pleasantest walk is along the banks of the river, which flows through groves of palm-trees, with clusters of dates hanging from their branches. Many of the Arabs, appreciating the advantages which the modern town possesses over the mud-built capital of the Ziban, or finding it their interest to live amongst Europeans, have abandoned their former quarters, and their numbers now greatly predominate in Biskra proper.

The greatest ornament of Biskra is that which is at the same time the chief source of its prosperity, 200,000 palms ; a very forest of fruit trees, producing delicious dates, delicacies at our dessert, and the principal food of the natives. There are scarcely any other trees except olives, and a few pomegranates. This want of variety must, after a time, weary the eye accustomed to diversity in this beautiful feature of vegetation. We found the dates sold in Algiers much better than those at Biskra, the best being chosen for exportation, a policy and custom not confined to the oases, for many of the articles which are sent from one country to another, and even from one to another part of the same country, are the most excellent that can be selected. The shipments from Algeria form an exception to the rule, the greater part of what is taken away being spoiled when it is conveyed to a distance.

Living, at the only hotel, is rather expensive in Biskra, as much that is consumed comes from Batna and other places ; people in general, unlike our friend the banker at

Constantine, not being satisfied to vegetate on a date in the wilderness.

There is here a particular class of women, the *Almées*, of the tribe of the *Oled Nails*, who may be called one of the sights, if not one of the attractions, of *Biskra*. They come from near *Bousaada*, and are most of them dancing girls, more remarkable for the graces of their persons and the singularity of their costume than for the purity of their morals. Their complexions are darker than gipsies, for they daub their faces with tar and saffron to deepen the colouring of the African sun ! They are fond of gaily coloured dresses, tattoo themselves like savages, and wear earrings as large as small hoops. Their hair, being mixed with wool and plastered with grease, forms a mass about the head which rivals the false locks of fashionable ladies, only the raven tresses of the *Almées* are worn differently, for they fall over the ears, and enclose the face as if it were framed in ebony. They literally cover their persons with gold and silver coin, coral, and other ornaments, often carrying about them a small fortune in jewellery, which they display as proudly as if it had been virtuously acquired.

These women, who live apart in one of the quarters of the town, frequent the *cafés Maures* at night, where they dance a kind of bolero, but the performance of the *Saharian* girls is more unrestrained than that of the *Spaniards*. After a few years they return to their native oasis, and a marriage almost invariably follows this licentious episode in their lives.

In large cities all the world over, in spite of civilisation, or perhaps in consequence of it, a certain class of society follow the same course and, except the good dancing and bad music, amuse themselves much in the same way ;

but we did not expect to find the social evil amongst the daughters of the desert in the quiet and distant oasis.

Old Biskra is well worth a visit. The ruins of the Arab village—built entirely of mud hardened in the sun—so much resemble the ground in colour that they seem to have grown like fungi out of their original earth.

The ruins we are accustomed to see are magnificent even in decay; but at old Biskra the bare walls of the houses, their vacant courts, the broken arches, and the ancient fort—overlooking the broad and silent Sahara—make a better picture of desolation and solitude than the proud remains of a grand city.

In the neighbourhood of Biskra—about five miles off—are the hot sulphureous springs of Sala-Hin, which are in great repute, or rather they are held in veneration, by the people of the Ziban. This source throws up its waters in a wild out-of-the-way spot, to which there is no road. It is seldom visited, except by the Arabs, who come from far and near to wash in the beneficent fount. The temperature of this bath is not less than 114° Fahrenheit; but, as there is some superstition attached to it, the Arabs, men and women, plunge in and parboil themselves in holy water which no European skin could stand for an instant.

The mineral springs of Algeria are neither so well known nor so well appreciated as they deserve to be, and as they were at the time of the Romans; for curative properties they are scarcely equalled in the world.

Enclosed in the vegetation they make for themselves, what a contrast do these bubbling sources form to the

surrounding desert! Like virtue in the midst of vice—untainted by the impurities about it—these crystal waters rise and flow unsullied by the sand of the Sahara.

It is impossible to consider the efficacy of these health-bestowing springs without feeling grateful to Almighty Providence, which has caused the earth to send forth gushing waters pre-endowed, like the water of Jordan, with qualities suited to relieve many of the maladies with which suffering humanity is afflicted.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SAHARA.

Si tu savais les secrets du désert, tu penserais comme moi ;
 Mais tu ignores, et l'ignorance est la mère du mal.
 Si tu t'étais éveillé au milieu du Sahara,
 Si tes pieds avaient foulé ce tapis de sable,
 Parsemé de fleurs semblables à des perles,
 Tu aurais admiré nos plantes,
 L'étrange variété de leurs teintes,
 Leur grâce, leur parfum délicieux ;

Tu aurais respiré ce souffle embaumé qui double la vie, car il n'a pas passé sur l'impureté des villes.—L'EMIR ABD-EL-KADER.

Dov' è la nostra Patria ?
 Dove liberi sono
 I nostri passi, e il tuono
 Muggisce in libertà,
 E dove il vento è libero :
 La nostra Patria è là.—OTTOLINI.

LOOKING Southward we see dark spots, which are oases dotted about the sandy plain. Some of these are interesting to visit, such as Sidi Okbar, four leagues from Biskra.

Those who are disposed to penetrate farther into this terra incognita can extend their ride to Tougourt, one of the most Southern of the Algerian oases. The Sahara was once a sea and, where we now travel on camels by land, was then navigable water—and may be again—

Tougourt is a four days' journey from Biskra. As there is no inn, travellers are lodged at the Caïd's. Now lodging at a Caïd's is perhaps the most hazardous step taken in the desert. We heard a landscape painter at Biskra relate his adventures at Tougourt to some French officers, ending by a description of his sojourn at the Caïd's. Many compliments were paid the artist on his enthusiasm for art and the toughness of his skin, for the battalion to which the military gentlemen belonged had been quartered at Tougourt. On arriving they also stopped at the Caïd's, but at midnight were obliged to beat an ignominious retreat, for—as they expressed it—no hide but an Arab's, or that of a rhinoceros, could withstand the army of fleas, bugs, and another little pet insect, besides a few scorpions, which assailed them. The rest of the night was passed *à la belle étoile*, and the succeeding ones under cover of their tents.

We also wished to see the desert, so we engaged camels, and rode southwards; not to visit other Arab tribes—the inhabitants of the Sahara³⁰—nor to admire palm-trees growing on other oases; but, like the man who leaves port only to look upon the blue water and the vast extent of the sea, we cared to see nothing but the desert, and to experience only the sensations this ocean of sand might inspire.

The motion of the camel is not very agreeable at first, but we soon become accustomed to its long steps and undulatory movements. When we got out of sight of *terra firma*—for moving sand can scarcely be called steady ground—we found ourselves in a strange region; a few low hills alone broke the monotony of the sandy expanse. As we advanced the country became entirely flat, with clouds of dust blowing over it, which made our

guides draw the drapery of their burnous over their mouths, as Arabs always do during a sirocco, even when in town. Continuing our route we passed some camel bones burned white in the sun. Sand, level, yellow-grey ground below, the sun and blue sky above, endless space—space before and behind, space to the right and to the left—all around far as the eye could reach, made up the scene : we perceived no trace of vegetation or of water, for we were near no oasis. Of man or beast we saw nothing, ‘*ni rey ni roque*,’ it was like being at sea—sailing on the trackless ocean. When we set out we wished to form a conception of real solitude, here it was almost a feeling. The farther South we proceeded the more uniform became the prospect.

At some seasons the *serpents à corns*, whose bite is fatal, are met with in the Sahara ; but they are fortunately now scarcely ever seen near Biskra. A story is told of an Englishman who, wishing to protect his legs against these reptiles, provided himself with tin boots before entering the desert on the Laghouat side ; a pair is shown to travellers, but it does not appear very clear whether the Englishman left them, or whether the boots are all that is left of the Englishman !

Gazelles may often be seen in this part of the Sahara, but we saw neither these graceful animals nor the ostrich, which does not often wander so far North. This singular bird, which is as celebrated for the beauty of its feathers as it is distinguished for its wonderful swiftness, is not only the largest bird—except the condor—but is the greatest glutton of its species. It devours vipers, serpents, scorpions, and other venomous reptiles, and insects ; and the Arabs affirm that it eats stones and iron ; and, if left in its way, it will gobble up knives,

forks, coral-necklaces, spoons ; and, like a true African, it has also a taste for jewellery, coins, and other shining articles.

It is found in great numbers in the South of Algeria, particularly on the extensive table-land between Laghouat and Beni-Mزاب.

Having spoken of the ostrich, we shall conclude our excursion by describing how it is hunted.

‘The most favourable time for this sport,’ says General Daumas, ‘is during the hottest days of summer. The higher the temperature, the less strength the bird has to defend itself.

‘In a hunt of this kind preparations must be made for a somewhat distant expedition, one which may last a week or ten days. Some dozen mounted Arabs usually take part in the chase. Each rider is accompanied by a servant on a camel carrying provender for the horses, provisions for the men, and water for both, besides some simple cooking apparatus.

‘In the Sahara the ostrich is generally found where grass has sprung up in consequence of recent rain. The Arabs say that as soon as it sees lightning, and observes other indications of threatening weather, it runs towards the quarter where the storm is likely to burst, taught by instinct that vegetation follows almost immediately.

‘Having first ascertained from travellers, caravans, or from messengers who have been sent before for the purpose, that there are many of these birds at a particular place, the party set out very early, for they sometimes require two or three days to reach the spot where the ostriches have been seen ; here the hunters halt and bivouac. The next morning two of the most intelligent

attendants go to reconnoitre ; they are entirely naked except a cloth round the waist. As soon as they perceive the game they lie down and watch their movements, after which one of the men returns with the news. Sometimes he has to report as many as fifty or sixty ; on other occasions only a few couples are met with. The company, led by the servant who has given the information, walk quietly on to where the birds are assembled. The nearer the Arabs approach, the greater are the precautions they take not to be observed. They now look out for some rock or inequality in the ground, where they can conceal themselves. The cavaliers form a wide circle round the ostriches, but so far off that they cannot be perceived. The attendants, as soon as the riders have taken up their positions, walk straight forward to the centre of the ring, on which the birds run away affrighted. In trying to escape they come upon the men on horseback, who at first only drive them back. The ostriches, in running backwards and forwards, begin to exhaust their strength. Again and again they try to escape from the enclosure into which they are always driven. When they show signs of lassitude the huntsmen narrow the fatal circle ; the game, becoming more fatigued, open their wings, which is a proof of the greatest prostration. The Arabs, now sure of their prey, draw in the horses. Each chooses a particular bird at which he rides, and strikes it a heavy blow with the stick. The head, being bald, is very sensitive ; so that the ostrich, when struck, falls to the ground.

So tired are they when on the point of being overtaken, that those the huntsmen do not wish to kill may easily be caught alive, for they can scarcely walk.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FUTURE OF ALGERIA.

Der Geist nur sieht, die Augen stellen uns die Gegenstände dar.

ANONYMOUS.

BEFORE concluding we shall say a few words on the future prospects of Algeria.

To make the passage to Algiers shorter and more agreeable, it is proposed that, in addition to the steamers which leave Marseilles, others should sail from Port Vendres, near the Spanish frontier, with which place there is communication by rail from all parts of France.

Taking Port Vendres as a starting point, the voyage would not only be less in duration, but, what is of greater consequence, the dreaded Gulf of Lyons would be avoided, a desideratum for invalids and for all who suffer from sea-sickness.

We are unable to form an opinion as to the probable success of the project in a commercial point of view, but this has been well considered, and it is believed the result would be satisfactory.

A yet shorter run over from Europe, is to cross from Carthagena, in the South of Spain, to Oran, from which town there is a railway direct to Algiers.

When the political events which now distract the Peninsula are settled, faster boats will be put on, after which the distance, about 120 miles, could be accomplished in eight or ten hours.

It is designed to lay down several new railways, and others are begun, which will connect many places with each other, very interesting to travellers, but that are now difficult of access. The most necessary of these is one between Algiers and Constantine, by way of Sétif. A portion of it is in progress, but it has not yet been decided whether the line shall pass through the famous gorge called the Iron Gate, or make a *détour* southwards in the direction of Msila.

A railway is to be made from Affreville—a station on the way to Oran—to Boghari, by the valley of the Chélif.

Boghari is a borough on the table-land of the Tell, near the lesser Sahara ; the great Sahara or desert being 120 miles farther south.

Produce coming from the haut-plateaux, the oasis of Laghouat and others, which have the interior as far as Soudan for a background, passes through Boghari.

Two lines are to be constructed from the littoral to the Sahara ; one of these, which is to go from Arzew to Saïda, traversing the district of Mascara, is to be laid down immediately. The other is to run from Mostaganem to Tiaret by the vale of the Mina. We passed through the former town in our first excursion, as the reader will remember.

The productive regions of the high table-lands are rich in grain, oil, forage, &c. Above all, that invaluable plant, now well known under the Arab name of alfa,

grows here in profusion ; and increased facilities for its exportation would tend greatly to the prosperity of Algeria.

Alfa, which belongs to the gramineous genera of plants, being found in abundance all over the colony—in the Sahara, on the Tell, and near the coast—may become as valuable to it as cotton is to the United States of America. It is used in making hats, cords, baskets, matting, paper, and is employed in the manufacture of many other articles.

In the province of Constantine an iron road is to go from Bougie to Sétif, and another from Bône to Guelma and Tebessa on the Tunisian border, passing through Aïn Beïda ; but the boldest of these railway projects is to construct a line from Tebessa to Tlemcen, which will traverse the whole of Algeria, running parallel with the range of the Atlas mountains, thus uniting the Tunisian with the Marocco frontier.

The grandest conception of all is to form an inland sea ; an enterprise worthy of a nation which has joined two at a great distance from each other.

This gigantic undertaking is to be carried out in the region of the lakes, or *chotts*, which lie to the south of Algeria, near the Eastern Sahara. The ground is here lower than the level of the Mediterranean, the depression varying from thirty to fifty yards, which was once filled by water from the ocean. To make a sea in these desert latitudes it would be sufficient to dig a canal of no very considerable length from the Gulf of Gabès to the nearest of the Eastern lakes. The country to the south of Biskra, where they are situated, forms a succession of sinks or cavities, generally dry ; they are

what the French call *bas fonds*. This unequally depressed land, varies from twenty to sixty miles in breadth, and extends west to east to a distance of about 350, from lake Mel-Khir on the meridian of Biskra to the shott Faroun, separated from the Gulf of Gabès only by downs composed of small sand hills.

The material advantages which must accrue from the execution of this design would be the formation of sea-ports, not farther than eighty miles from Biskra, by which commerce with many parts of the interior would be greatly facilitated. Nomad tribes, such as the Touaregs, who at present monopolise the trade with Central Africa, and are now obliged to take the long routes by way of Marocco, Tunis, and Tripoli, would come to the new ports to sell what they bring from Soudan, and other places beyond the Great Desert.

It might be a costly undertaking ; but, if carried out successfully, the result would be commensurate with the outlay of capital.

A sea flowing through these sandy and barren regions could not fail to modify the climate by cooling the temperature, for so much water would cause more rain to fall and fertilise the vast extent of land which, now arid through drought, is lost to cultivation. What life and business might not then enliven this distant part of Algeria, where no sound disturbs the stillness of the solitude !

Those who take a sanguine view of the future see ports, docks, towns, ships, and steamers along the new shores. After these must follow agricultural emigration, with all the benefits it brings in its train. In a word,

where civilisation carries its blessings, what may we not hope to see, even in this waste of sand and sirocco ?

In the chapter on climate we have said that the weather in Algiers, and on the whole coast, is neither too warm nor too cold from November to May. It is both warmer, more uniform, and less damp at that season, than it is in the South of Italy, and less rain falls than in Sicily. Some invalids however require a higher temperature, such as is to be found at Madeira. For these Algeria has in reserve a climate, where they can meet with what they desire, without going so far as to that meridional island. We allude to the charming oasis of Biskra, where it is proposed to establish a winter station.

Medical men, notwithstanding that they seldom agree on any point, admit that Biskra possesses all the climatic advantages that nature can unite in one delectable spot ; being milder and more equal in winter than in the places first mentioned, it is better suited for people suffering from maladies of the chest, bronchitis, &c., and for all who are in delicate health. The natural beauties of Biskra are such that it would deserve to be called an oasis even if it were not in a desert.

But to return to 'Algeria as it is.'

Such, as we have attempted to describe it, is Algeria, with its matchless climate, its gigantic and ever-verdant vegetation, its lofty mountains, broad plateaux, and smiling valleys, its dark and silent forests, sandy Sahara, and fertile oases ; the wild and picturesque life of the natives, and the comforts of civilisation ; 'a pays de cocagne,' a land of plenty, which nature has blessed with the best she has to bestow, a part of Africa which a few

years ago was almost as little known as is still the untrodden interior of this vast continent.

In a word, what has been justly remarked of Italy may be said of this delightful and interesting country: 'he who has been there once, yet feels no desire to return, does not deserve to have been there at all.'

In concluding, we thank indulgent readers and reviewers, whilst we remind fastidious critics that 'tadeln kann wohl Jeder; im Bessermachen steckt die Kunst.'

NOTES.

Note 1, page vii.

In writing this historical notice we have been indebted to the kindness of M. le Directeur of the museum in Algiers, for allowing us access to works on ancient and modern history, as well as other books of reference, which have greatly facilitated us in its composition.

We have also occasionally followed M. Bérard, in whose pages historical subjects become interesting as well as instructive.

Note 2, page 1.

Scanty headings to the chapters. To know each paragraph before reading the book, diminishes the interest in the subject; the author has therefore not placed the usual summary of contents at the head of the chapters. Those who wish to ascertain *what is coming* will find a *résumé* at the beginning of the volume, where it is given as matter useful for reference.

Note 3, page 10.

The promontory alluded to is Sidi Ferruch, where the French landed in 1830. It is about nineteen miles west of Algiers.

Note 4, page 18.

Le jardin d'acclimatation. In this beautiful garden more than six thousand different kinds of trees and plants from distant parts of the globe are to be seen, flourishing in the congenial climate to which they have been transplanted.

Note 5, page 20.

These few words on Tunis are from a very practical and useful little hand-book, 'Guide en Algérie et en Tunisie,' published by M. Juillet Saint Lager, in Algiers.

Note 6, page 29.

Although there is the distinction pointed out between Kabyles, Arabs, and Moors, they are sometimes—when speaking of the native inhabitants collectively—called Arabs; and, to avoid repetition, we shall so designate them where the difference is immaterial.

Note 7, page 31.

Coffee. The Arabs pound their coffee in a mortar as fine as flour; this is more economical than grinding it, a smaller quantity being required when it is prepared in this way. Where the same *quality* and *quantity* is used, the pounded coffee has a finer flavour than that which is ground.

Notwithstanding the prevailing impression to the contrary, the Arabs sweeten their coffee as we do.

Note 8, page 33.

Barbarossa. The real name of this notorious pirate was Baba-Aroudj.

Note 9, page 54.

Moorish ladies at home. Although gentlemen do not meet with better opportunities than the one mentioned, their wives are sometimes introduced into Moorish families: This privilege has assisted the author in describing the costume.

Note 10, page 67.

Verse from the Vulgate or Latin translation of the Bible. The reader who may look for this verse in our translation of the Bible will find that there is so great a difference between the Latin and the English version that almost all resemblance between them is lost; the latter rendering is no doubt more like the Hebrew, but the words of the Prophet as given in the Vulgate are certainly in accordance with the goodness and mercy of the Almighty.

Note 11, page 68.

These remarks on insurrections in Algeria are by M. Achille Fillias.

Note 12, page 78.

The greater part, &c. ‘Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it.’—ST. MATTHEW, vii. 14.

Note 13, page 78.

‘Dealing damnation round the land.’ We remind these Pharisees that the salvation they deem impossible is possible with God. Apparent contradiction is reconciled by the words of our Saviour.—ST. MATTHEW, xix. 23-26.

Note 14, page 80.

The Crescent. We make this correction on the authority of M. C. Féraud, a distinguished archeologist, who alluded to the subject in a recent lecture to the officers of the French army in Algeria.

Note 15, page 161.

Invitation. If the reader, when travelling in Austria, where he will not fail to visit the picturesquely situated town of Salzburg, will call upon the author (Villa Gaskell, Mönchsberg, easily recognised by the English flag), he will have great pleasure in showing his countryman the view spoken of in the text. From the tower of Mr. Gaskell’s villa, the admirer of grand scenery will see before him one of the most magnificent panoramas in Europe—or in the world—in whose praise Algarotti wrote the Italian poem from which the lines at the head of Chapters II. and XXXIV. are taken.

Note 16, page 168.

Former advancement of the Arabs. The Arabs were at one period of their history a learned, intelligent, and—compared with the rest of the world at that epoch—a civilised people. They were skilled in the arts and sciences, medicine, astronomy, &c.; were admirable architects, and understood agriculture. Literature flourished; many works remain which show progress in geography, and their historical records are of value in the present day. It is from them we have derived several scientific terms, such as algebra, alkali, and others. Towards the close of the eighth century the Arabs were in advance of contemporary nations. Some useful inventions are also attributed to them; that of the clock is certainly due to the Arabs. The celebrated Sultan Haroun-el-Raschid sent to the Emperor Charlemagne a curious timepiece, which indicated the hour of noon by twelve horsemen marching round the dial, not unlike the famous clock in the St. Marco at Venice.

Note 17, page 171.

‘Natura il fece, e poi ruppe la stampa.’—ARIOSTO, Canto x. Stanza 84.

This admirable idea has been taken without acknowledgment by two English writers. Byron ends a monody on Sheridan with the following jingle :—

‘Sighing that Nature form’d but one such man,
And broke the die—in moulding Sheridan.’

We know not which to admire more, the notion that Sheridan was the most perfect man ever created, or the setting of Ariosto’s gem in such paltry rhyme. For a poet so rich in pearls of thought as the author of ‘Childe Harold,’ a poet—although not fully appreciated in England—second only to Shakespeare in the richest literature in the world, this is surely an unworthy theft from a brother bard. The notes to the ‘Monody’ are twice as long as the verses, yet none of the commentators have pointed out the plagiarism.

The other literary purloiner is General Burgoyne who, after sending home elegantly written despatches about his defeats in America, tried to find on the steeps of Parnassus the laurels he did not gather on the field of battle. In his comedy, ‘The Heiress,’ we find what follows. Act I. scene ii.

‘He cannot mistake her, for *when she was formed, nature broke the mould.*’

Note 18, page 174.

As we have seen in Chapter IX., speaking of the Blacks in Algeria, they were slaves before the conquest in 1830.

Note 19, page 175.

Love at first sight is not unknown even amongst the unsusceptible children of the North, but numerous examples of sudden and violent passion are recorded by Arab writers.

Note 20, page 193.

‘Sultan of the desert.’ Although this fine title, amongst other royal appellations, is given to the lion by the Arabs, it is not very applicable, for his majesty is seldom seen in the desert, where he would find scanty food and miss many things necessary to his habits. It must therefore be regarded as an honorary title, like those borne by potentates who have dominions they rarely visit !

Note 21, page 212.

‘May God blacken his face,’ is an Oriental imprecation applied, in particular, to traitors. It is a general belief of the Muslims that the wicked

will rise to judgment with their faces black ; hence the origin of the curse.'—LANE.

Note 22, page 212.

Marriage between Christians and Muslims. 'Bon nombre de Musulmans Algériens ont pris, pour se rendre à la Mecque, la route de Tanger. Le but de ce voyage était de présenter leur hommage au grand chérif Abd Eslam, dont le mariage avec une Anglaise a eu un si long et si grand retentissement.'—*Moniteur de l'Algérie*.

Note 23, page 213.

Tufts and tonsures. The tuft of hair on the crown of the head is left to grow, in order that the Prophet may catch hold of it, and thus draw up the faithful into paradise.

Roman Catholic priests, on the contrary, shave a round spot in the same place ; this is called the tonsure, and—although few of them are aware of the fact—the custom originated with the Pagans, the circular space having represented the sun amongst the Persians and other fire-worshippers.

Note 24, page 237.

At the trial before the Cour d'Assises Si Saïd ben Ali, (Amin el Oumena,) Hadj Ahmed ben Dahman Caïd of the Ammals, and other chiefs were condemned to death.

Note 25, page 249.

As the reader who visits Algeria will always hear the French names of places, such as Kabylie, Bône—instead of Bona—Roumel, &c., we have adopted them, for they soon become familiar by repetition.

Note 26, page 251.

Queen Kaïna. See Historical Notice, p. xv.

Note 27, page 260.

Ophthalmia, a disease very prevalent among the native inhabitants of Algeria, is not so often caused by the sand of the desert, as by their own imprudence in sleeping in the night dews, and basking in the sun by day.

Note 28, page 277.

Arab words. The reader is reminded that he will find the meaning of Arab words in the list at the end of the volume. To avoid repetition in

speaking of the lion we have occasionally—like the Arabs—called him ‘säïl,’ and in one or two instances we have the Arabic name ‘sba.’ For the same reason, the panther and the wild boar have once or twice received their native appellations.

Note 29, page 288.

The panther. The remarks on the panther in this page are from the French of M. Béchade, ‘Chasse en Algérie.’

Note 30, page 308.

Inhabitants of the Sahara. Some readers may suppose that the only people met with in the desert are the Nomad Arabs who pitch their tents there in winter, or the caravans which pass through. There are, however, towns and villages on the oases scattered about this part of the Sahara.

ARAB WORDS USED IN THE TEXT.

Abd, servant.

Abd Allah, servant of God.

Abd-el-Kader, servant of the Almighty.

Adjar, a kerchief which covers all the face except the eyes.

Aïn, a fountain.

Amin-el-Oumma, chief of several douars.

Amin-Ferkat, the chief of a part of a tribe.

Amin, chief of a village.

Azib, an enclosure where animals are kept.

Bab, a door or gate.

Be

Beni, sons.

Bordj, a fort.

Caïd, a chief of several douars.

Casbah, a fortress, a stronghold.

Chattaha, a dancing girl.

Chebec, a large boat of the felucca kind used by pirates.

Chéchia, a red woollen cap worn under the turban.

Chcik. This word, which signifies chief, is at the same time associated with age.

Chott, a lake.

Couscoussou, a national dish, made of flour, and cooked by steam. It answers to the polenta of the Italians.

Damah, the game of draughts.

Diffa, a hospitable repast.

Djebel, a mountain.

Douar, an assemblage of tents.

Foumes, mouth, as Foumes-Sahara, the mouth of the desert.

Gandoura, a kind of shirt or frock worn by the Kabyles.

Gourbi, a hut.

Habaya, an Arab shirt.

Hadars, a name given to the Moors by the other natives of Algeria. It signifies men of houses, that is men who dwell in towns, in opposition to the men of tents.

Haïk, a short kind of burnous without a hood, worn by women.

Hallouf-et-rhaba, the wild boar.

Hamman, a bath.

Kadi, a Mahometan judge.

Kantara, a bridge.

Khalkals, anklets.

Khodja, an adjutant or secretary.

Khouans, brethren—a religious Order.

Marabout, a Mahometan priest. The word is derived from *mrabeth*, devoted or attached to God.

Marabout, a small temple held sacred, owing to some venerated Marabout being buried in it.

Marabout is also a part of the superstructure of an Arab building.

Mahomet, a tuft of hair left to grow on the crown of the head; it is so called after the name of the Prophet.

Makach, no, not, don't know, do not understand.

Mekahla, a long-barrelled Arab gun with an old-fashioned flint lock.

Muezzin, the officiating Marabout who calls the faithful to prayers from the top of the minaret.

Nâm, an ostrich.

Nemir, a panther.

Oued, a river.

Ouled, tribe.

Oumena, a chief of several villages.

Ourida, a little rose, like rosina in Italian.

Outa, a plain.

Rézala, a gazelle.

Rhamadan, a Mahometan fast of thirty days.

Rouni, a Christian, derived from *Romanus*. The plural of this word is *rouâma* in Arabic, but we have written it simply with *s* as many French authors do.

Sabchad, the beautiful.

S'ba, the lion in Arabic, a name we have used occasionally in the lion stories to avoid repetition.

Sâid, lord or master, a title given by the Arabs to the lion.

Solitaire (French), a wild boar : so called after it is two years old.

Souk, market.

Spaïs, a native cavalry officer in the French service.

Tamtam, a large flat metallic drum used also by the Hindoos.

Tenia, a defile.

Thizzi, a mountain defile.

Thuia, a lignumvitæ.

Tolbas, learned men.

Yatagan, a kind of knife or poinard.

Zarrafch, the elegant.

SPANISH AND ARAB PHRASES.

Una venta en despoblado, a small inn standing quite alone and solitary in the open country.

Ni rey ni roque, not a living soul.

No hay mal que por bien no venga, No evil happens but what comes for good.

Enta min, Where do'st thou come from?

To make powder speak is a figurative expression amongst the Arabs for firing off guns and cannon.

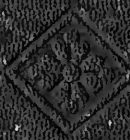
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Gaskell, George
Algeria as it is

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