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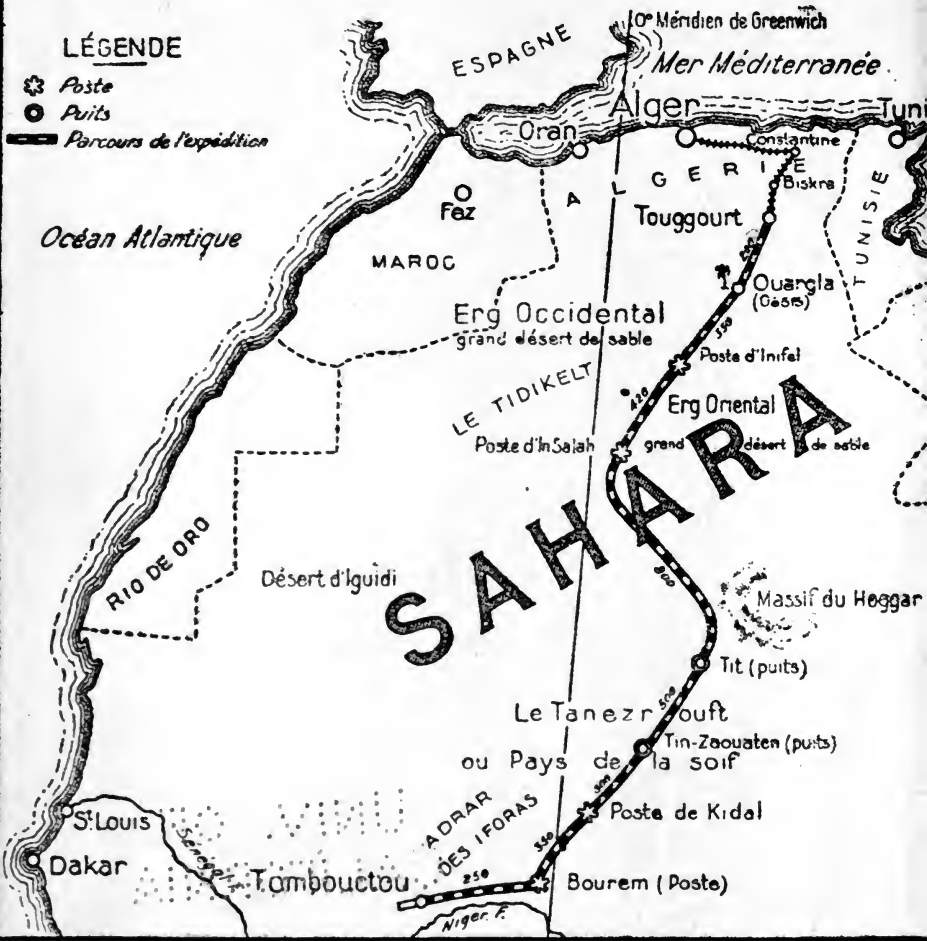
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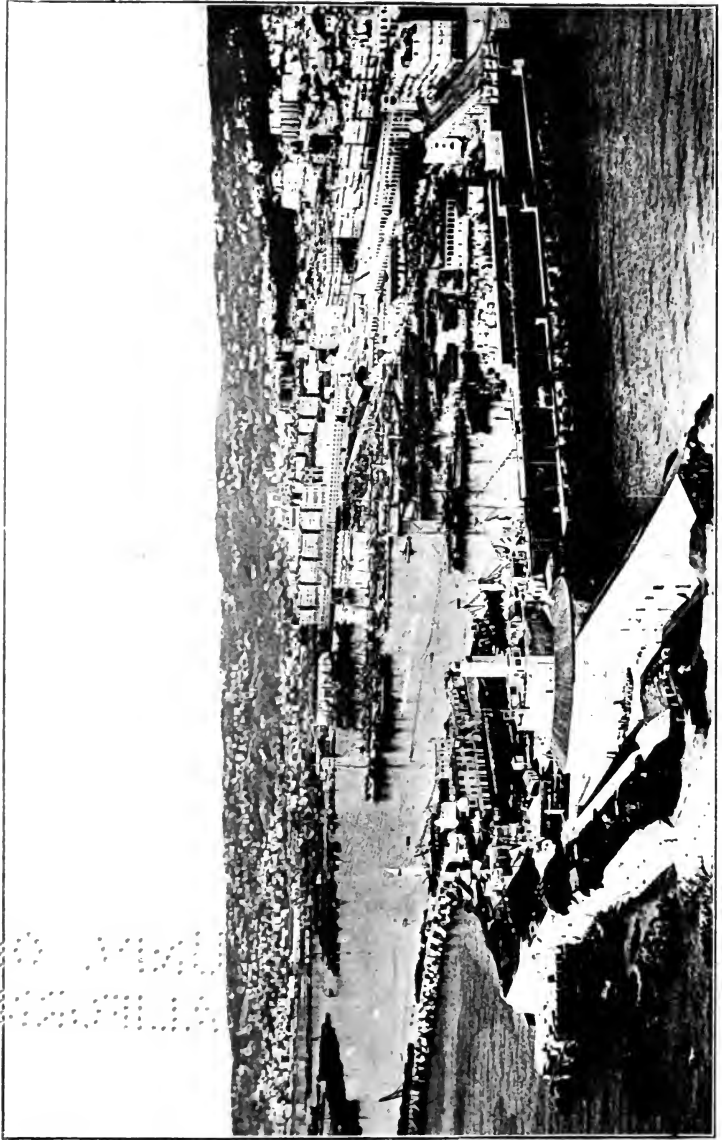


**ALGERIA**

**TO-DAY**



UNIV. OF  
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*Frontispice.*

ALGIERS FROM THE AIR.

*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

# ALGERIA TO-DAY.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. GORDON CASSERLY, F.R.G.S.

*Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord*

*Recd*

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TO  
BASIL CAVE, C.B.  
*H.B.M. Consul-General in Algeria*  
AND TO  
MRS CAVE  
IN TOKEN OF ADMIRATION OF  
THE GOOD WORK THAT THEY HAVE DONE FOR  
THE EMPIRE  
BY THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN  
THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN  
THE FRENCH AND THE BRITISH PEOPLES.





## PREFACE

THROUGH the dark centuries of Moslem domination the Barbary States were a menace to the world, as well as a curse to themselves. The countries that under the Romans had held great cities, supported teeming populations, fed with their surplus the hungry millions of Europe, became a wilderness again.

To France was it granted to restore them to civilisation. And well has she performed her task. In Algeria, in Tunisia, she has accomplished marvels; and what she has achieved there she is doing to-day in Morocco. Old Rome never sent more splendid Proconsul to Africa than the great French soldier who is redeeming the Moorish Empire. In ten brief years Maréchal Lyautey has given peace, security and justice to a land that in all her history had never known them.

All honour to the country he serves! In her far-stretching North African Empire her devoted sons have built a monument more enduring than brass. And on it is graven

TO THE ETERNAL GLORY OF FRANCE.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

### OLD ALGIERS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| The Atlas Mountains from the sea—Hills and plain—<br>Algiers—An African Marseilles—The new city—<br>The old Pirate Town—The watch seaward—<br>Arabian Nights' streets—Departed grandeur—<br>Veiled beauties—The Market—A native coffee-<br>house—Moslem musicians—The Streets of the<br>Trades—A Mosque—The Daughters of Joy—A<br>dancing girl—The Thieves' Bazaar—The Cemetery<br>of El Kettar—A child's burial—The Kasbah—The<br>Hill of Soap—The failure of Charles V.—El Biar—<br>Cathedral and Winter Palace—The Palace of the<br>Dey's Daughters . . . . . | 9    |

## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW ALGIERS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Place du Gouvernement—The meeting of East and<br>West—The New Mosque—The Great Mosque—<br>The Inner Port—A Spanish relic—Sea pictures—<br>Convicts—The modern city—Square de la Ré-<br>publique—The Opera House—A poet slave—A<br>prophecy—The Palace of the Janissaries—The<br>pageant of Algerian life—The Boulevard Laferrière<br>—The Société de Géographie—Mustapha Supérieur<br>—The Colonne Voirol—The Summer Palace—The<br>Bardo—The Sahel Hills—Jardin d'Essai . . . . . | 27 |
|---|----|

## CHAPTER III

### THE PEOPLE OF ALGIERS AND THEIR WAYS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| The population under the pirates—The native in-<br>habitants—Their mixed origin—Their dress— |  |
|--|--|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Women's costumes—The Jews—A Moslem gentleman's house—Negro soldiers—The Mozabites—The legal position of Moslems in Algeria—The proportion of natives to Europeans— <u>How Algeria is governed</u> —The European element—Modern buildings—The flat roofs of Algiers— <u>Life in Algiers</u> —Social customs—Gaieties—The Carnival—Commercial Algiers—Its export trade—Language and education—Algiers as a winter resort—The climate of Algeria—What Algeria offers . . . . . | 43 |
|---|----|

## CHAPTER IV

## THE STORY OF NORTH AFRICA

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Prehistoric Africa—The Legend of Hercules—Its meaning—The Iberian invaders—Their characteristics and their descendants—The Phoenicians—The Carthaginians—The Romans—The prosperity of Barbary under Roman rule—Its exports—Hatred of Rome—The Vandals—The Byzantine Empire—Christianity in Africa—The coming of the Arabs—Okba-ben-Mafa—The Moorish conquest of Spain—The second Arab invasion of Africa—The splendour of the Caliphs and Kings—The rise of the Barbary pirates—The Spaniards in Barbary—The legendary founding of Algiers—The early history of Algiers—Its naming—The Barbarossas—The suzerainty of Turkey—The Regency of Algiers—Its organisation, government and armed forces—The pirates—At war with the world—Christendom under tribute—Failure of attempts to destroy Algiers—Dey Hassan—A fatal blow—How France avenged an insult—The taking of Algiers—The fall of Constantine and Oran—Abd-el-Kader—The conquest of North West Africa . . . . . | 61 |
|--|----|

## CHAPTER V

## ALGERIAN PICTURES

|   |  |
|---|--|
| A splendid canvas—An old-time picture—Algiers under the pirates—Galley-slaves—Christian captives— |  |
|---|--|

# CONTENTS

xi

PAGE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Janissaries and sea rovers at variance—The Slave Market—True Christianity—The fall of Algiers—The last of the tyrants—A President of the Republic—A picture full of colour—Veiled desert-riders—Street Arabs—A desert vendetta—A gallant Frenchman—The convict ship . . . . . | 79 |
|---|----|

## CHAPTER VI

### FROM ROSE TOWN AND THE STREAM OF THE MONKEYS TO THE KSAR OF BOGHARI

|  |    |
|--|----|
| A trip into the interior—A morning scene in Algiers—The Square de la République—The diligence to Blida—Its passengers—Over the Sahel Hills—The Mitidja Plain—The contrast of East and West—Wayside villages—Vineyards and cornfields—A fruitful land—Birkadem, Birmandreis and Boufarik—A memento of the brave—Blida—Its holy founder—The pirates' Capua—The Little Rose—The punishment of its sins—The quarter of the Painted Ladies—Respectable Blida—The Government Stud Farm—Ahmed-el-Kebir—Oranges—The Atlas Mountains—The Djurdjuras—Winter sports—Les Glacières—The Gorges of the Chiffa—The Beni-Salah—The Stream of the Monkeys—Friendly apes—By rail to Boghari, Médéa and Berouaghia—Boghar, the "Balcony of the South"—The lure of the Ksar of Boghari—The daughters of the Ouled-Nail—The desert men's beacon . . . . . | 99 |
|--|----|

## CHAPTER VII

### KABYLIA AND THE KABYLES

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The home of the Berbers—The Kabyles—Their characteristics and their country—Their customs—Their virtues and their failings—Their women—Berber independence—Their numbers—A journey into Kabylia—The way to Tizi Ouzou—The countryside—The Djurdjura Mountains—Tizi Ouzou, capital of Kabylia—A Kabyle village—Kabyle women and children—The men—School-boys—A Saturday fair—The road through Kabylia—Fort National—African snow . . . . . | 120 |
|---|-----|

## CHAPTER VIII

## SOME ALGERIAN CITIES

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Constantine—The city on a rock—Its many sieges—The Gorge of the Rummel—The bridges—The approach to Constantine—A City of Contrasts—Little witches—Chemin des Touristes—A fearsome gorge—In the abyss—Roman baths—Dark caverns—Towards Tunis—A cork-oak forest—Hammam Meskoutine—The Accursed Baths—The legend—Roman ruins—St Augustine's birthplace—Roads and the flag—Oran—Algerian railways—A flourishing city—The Spanish connection—France's colonising policy—Sidi Bel Abbès—The Foreign Legion—A fertile country—Tlemçen—Algeria's treasure house—Departed glories—The City of Victory—Mansoura and Abou Yakoub—Koulougliis—The citadel—Sidi Bou Medine—A sweetmeat-maker saint—The road to Morocco—A contrast—The triumph of French administration—What France has achieved in Morocco . . . . . | 136  |

## CHAPTER IX

## FROM THE SEA TO THE SAHARA

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The three zones of Algeria—The Tell, the Tablelands and the Sahara—The climates of Algeria—The rainfall—The flora—The iron road to the desert—The railway to Biskra—Among the mountains—The Iron Gates—The Hauts Plateaux—Bordj-bou-Argeridj—Sétif—El-Guerrah—A night's halt—Batna, Lambessa and Timgad—Ruined Roman cities—Roman penetration into Africa—Snow on the tablelands—Ain Touta Mac Mahon—The last Arab revolt—The Aurès Mountains—El Kantara—The Gateway of the Desert—The first vision of the Sahara—The Senegalese barracks—A dry river—Desert soil—Oases—Biskra, New and Old—The Streets of the Ouled Naïls—A desert fairyland—The Villa de Benévent—In Old Biskra—Hot springs in the Sahara—La Fontaine Chaude—Sidi Okba—The Zab—The Ben Gana—Caïd Ali-ben-Gana . . . . . | 151 |
|---|-----|

# CONTENTS

xiii

## CHAPTER X

### FROM BISKRA TO TOUGOURT

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| The desert train—Varied passengers—The surprises of the Sahara—Water in the desert—Appropriate railway stations—Mirage—The salt lakes—Chott El Melghir—Desert storms—Saharan ice—The useful palm—Dates—France developing the desert—Tougourt—The City of the Sands—The market-place—A deep well—The Caïd of Tougourt—History and legend—The end of a Saharan day . | 170  |

## CHAPTER XI

### SHEIKHS, SAINTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| The Governor-General in the Sahara—His guests—The aeroplanes of Beni Mora—Rain from Heaven—Oumache—A desert wedding party—Tolga—Desert warriors—Arab chiefs—Goums—France's sway over the Sahara—In the town—The Grand Marabout—A young Ben Gana—Fantasia—Moslem democracy and aristocracy—The <i>Zmala</i> — <i>Sheurfa</i> —The military nobility—A Caïd at home—The hospitality of the Caïd of L'Arba—A link with Napoleon III.—The <i>hareem</i> —Spiritual leaders—No Moslem clergy—Religious confraternities—The House of Islam and the House of War—The Sennoussi—Their founder—The Aissaoua—The Tidjania—Anti-Christian societies . . . . . | 186 |
|--|-----|

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SAHARA

|  |  |
|--|--|
| The Fable of the Sahara—Varied character and climate of the desert—Its flora and fauna—Water underground—The making of a desert—A thousand kilometres into the Sahara—The Souf—The lakes of Tougourt—Temassine—Ouargla—The Azdjer Hills—The Ahaggar Mountains—The Air—Iferouane—Cultivation in the Air—Fashions—Agadez—The Damergou—The Niger River— |  |
|--|--|

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| French exploration and conquest—Saharan Arabs, sedentary and nomad—The region of Touat—The customs and commerce of the Touatians—Bedouins—Their character, ways, food, manners and religion—Arab superstitions—Surprising discoveries—M. de la Roncière—The Citroën cars—The Sahara conquered at last . . . . . | 208 |
|---|-----|

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE TOUAREG

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| A mysterious race—Early explorers—Barth—Duveyrier—Flatters—Marquis de Morès—Foureau—The numerical strength of the Touareg—The combat of Tit—The name of the Touareg—The Azdjer and the Ahaggar—Origin—Customs—Noble tribes and <i>imrad</i> —The <i>amr'ar</i> — <i>Tobol</i> —The <i>amenokal</i> —The pursuits of the Touareg—Their weapons—Their customs—Inheritance—Freedom of women—Musical evenings—Convenient beliefs—The difficulties of marriage—A proposal—The wedding—Divorce—Death and burial—Superstitions—Vampires and sorcerers—Djinns—Religion—Female education—Dress—Veiled men—Touareg chieftains at Algiers . . . . . | 228 |
|--|-----|

## CHAPTER XIV

## ALGERIA TO-MORROW

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Algeria's prosperity dependent on European control—France's success in Algeria—Danger to European predominance—Captain Peyronnet's opinion—Increasing disproportion between the races—How to preserve white supremacy—How to develop European colonisation—North Africa's population in a hundred years—M. Saurin's plan—M. Lutaud's opinion—Algeria must remain French—Example of Morocco—Algeria's need—Her future—What she has done for France . . . . . | 248 |
|---|-----|



## ILLUSTRATIONS

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Algiers from the Air . . . . .                           | <i>Frontispiece</i>       |
| A Street in Old Algiers . . . . .                        | <i>To face page</i><br>12 |
| In the Market . . . . .                                  | 14                        |
| Outside a Native Café . . . . .                          | 14                        |
| A Dancing Girl . . . . .                                 | 20                        |
| The Street of the Tailors . . . . .                      | 26                        |
| In the Palace of the Daughters of the Dey . . . . .      | 26                        |
| The Admiral's House . . . . .                            | 30                        |
| Boulevard de la République, Algiers . . . . .            | 34                        |
| Place du Gouvernement . . . . .                          | 38                        |
| The General Post Office and a Newspaper Office . . . . . | 38                        |
| Women of Algiers . . . . .                               | 44                        |
| Shoppers . . . . .                                       | 48                        |
| The Summer Palace, Mustapha Supérieur . . . . .          | 94                        |
| The Gorge of the Chiffa . . . . .                        | 112                       |
| Ouled Naïl Dancers . . . . .                             | 118                       |
| Kabyle Boys, Tizi Ouzou . . . . .                        | 132                       |
| African Snow—Fort National in Winter . . . . .           | 134                       |
| Constantine and the Gorge of the Rummel . . . . .        | 138                       |
| Oran . . . . .   | 144                       |

|   | <i>To face page</i>    |
|---|------------------------|
| The Gorge of El Kantara and the Aurès Mountains |                        |
| from the Sahara . . . . .                       | 162                    |
| A Village of Old Biskra . . . . .               | 162                    |
| In the Biskra Oasis . . . . .                   | 168                    |
| Caïd Ali-ben-Gana . . . . .                     | 168                    |
| Tougourt from the Air . . . . .                 | 180                    |
| The Palms of Tougourt . . . . .                 | 180                    |
| Tribal Chiefs in Tolga . . . . .                | 190                    |
| In Tolga . . . . .                              | 190                    |
| The Grand Marabout of Tolga . . . . .           | 194                    |
| Hamma-ben-Gana . . . . .                        | 194                    |
| A Goumier . . . . .                             | 198                    |
| Men of the Camel Corps in the Sahara . . . . .  | 246                    |
| Map of the Sahara . . . . .                     | <i>Front end paper</i> |

# ALGERIA TO-DAY

## CHAPTER I

### OLD ALGIERS

THE vessel nears the North African coast. Out of the blue depths of the Mediterranean rise the rugged crests of the Atlas Mountains, seeming to support the heavens on their snow-clad shoulders. Below the white peaks the clouds gather and leave the sky clear and blue, almost as blue as the waters in the long sweeping curve of the crescent bay below, here fringed with yellow sand, there edged with black cliffs and glistening rocks, and everywhere backed by the steep green slopes of a chain of low hills. Hills climbing abruptly from the water's edge and crowned with dark pinewoods or white villas in verdant gardens flaming with the reds of roses and poinsettia and bougainvillea. Between the hills and the snow-topped mountains lies a narrow, fertile plain, the Mitidja, now in spring-time blazing with the varied hues of wild flowers, the yellow of oranges, the green of cornfield and vineyard.

And set in the curve of the lovely bay, in the

emerald crescent of low hills, the white houses of Algiers climb on each other's shoulders up the steep slopes to stare out seaward as in the past centuries when every sail winging its way towards them came to fill them to the eaves with wealth or to batter them down with fire and iron.

Algiers—El Djezair, "The Islands," the old Arabs called it from the rocky islets before it—its story running in legend and history from Hercules and his Quest of the Golden Apples through the long-forgotten chronicles of Numidian, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab and Turk to the last of the Bourbon kings, Napoleon the Little and the French Republic to-day. Less than a century ago the headquarters of the cruellest pirates that the world has known—and now a bright and beautiful city of modern France. With its mixed population of over two hundred thousand the capital, no longer of a colony, but of a Department of France; for such Algeria is with its representatives in the Senate and the *Chambre des Députés* in Paris. An up-to-date city. To the eye a second Marseilles with its walled harbour where beside the quays lie great steamers being loaded with the produce of a bountiful land in cask and case piled high on the wharves.

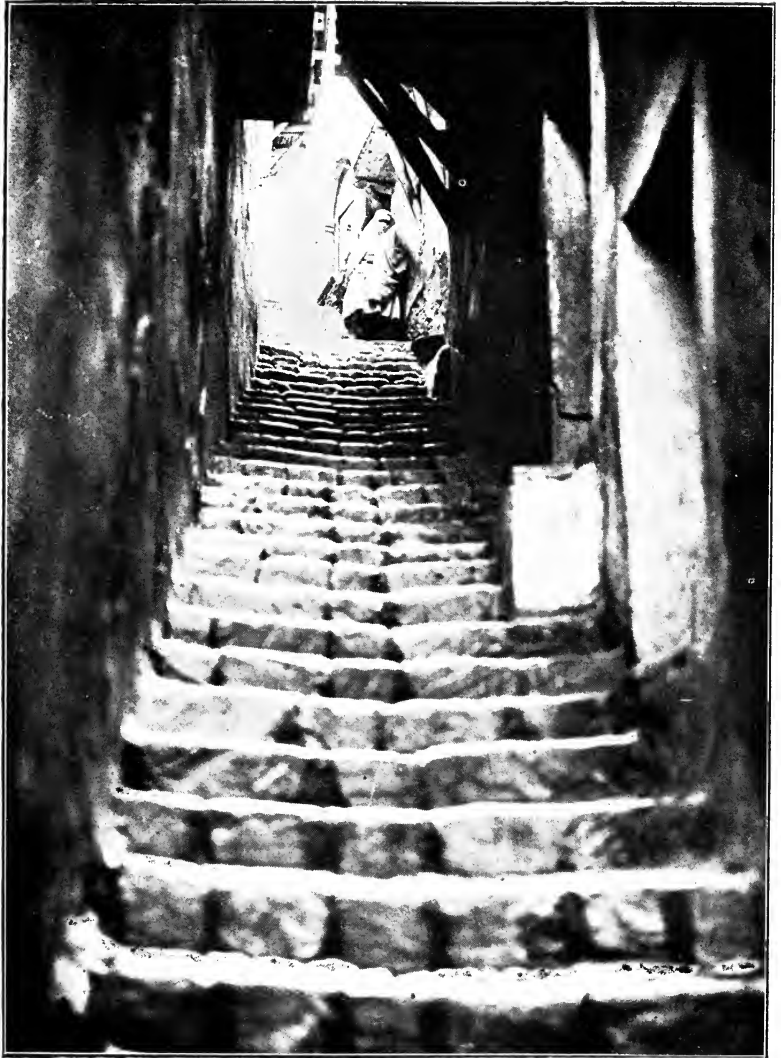
From the decks of the ships it looks just a modern-built town; for all along the high, cliff-like wall above the harbour and stretching north and south on either hand over the sea it is a city of long blocks of six-storied stone or stucco houses in European mould, of shady squares where palm-trees wave above electric trams, of theatres, hotels, restaurants and cafés. Of

shops that would not disgrace Paris. Of crowded streets where automobile and motor-lorry dispute the right of way with tram and five-horsed wagon loaded with wine casks.

But raise your eyes beyond the level new city over the harbour. Look up where the close-clustering white houses of the native quarter, the old Pirate Town, climb one above the other up the steep hillside as though striving to gaze over their neighbours' heads out to sea. For here dwelt the piratical people that lived by bloody crime on the face of the waters. Every being in it, man, woman and child, Moorish pasha or Christian slave, had a personal interest in watching each sail that lifted above the distant horizon. It might be an Algerian rover loaded with plunder and chained captives. It might be the herald of a Frankish fleet coming to batter down the pirate stronghold and set the wretched slaves free. The flat roof of every house, then, must show its occupants the coming ship that might be friend or foe, might bear the master of the household back enriched with spoils to deck his wives with further jewels or else bring the news of his death in battle, news that would scatter those wives to other harems or, if youth and beauty had deserted them, to the slave-market or the beggars' corner. Upward and still upward, house topping house, until comes the dwelling of the biggest pirate of all the scoundrelly crew, the Kasbah, once the palace-fortress of the Dey, the tyrant of Algiers, who claimed his share of the booty that each murderous seafarer brought home, whether it were plunder from sacked towns on European shores or weeping women from Italy, France or Spain.

To outward appearance this Moorish quarter has changed but little since those pirate days. Streets, alleys rather, traverse it, steep and narrow—so steep that frequently they must become staircases to climb the hillside. So narrow that three men cannot walk abreast, and the pedestrian must flatten himself against a wall to let a tiny, loaded donkey go by. Their very names are fascinating—Rues du Chameau, de la Girafe, des Abencerrages, de Tombouctou, des Sarrasins. Has not Rue Lalahoum or Rue des Abderrames the Arabian Nights' touch? Has not Rue de Nuit a mysterious, and Rue des Dattes an exotic, sound? The houses hemming them in thrust out their upper stories supported on inclined wooden struts until they are not a yard apart and often are built completely across, so that the narrow lane must pass under them in a dark tunnel. The few windows, small square openings, are barred with gratings bent outward; and here and there from them a pretty, painted face looks out and smiles invitingly on the wayfarer.

But usually the houses present a blank front to the outer world, blank, that is, but for an arched, carved door with a small, twisted column on either side and a stone crescent above it. One of these doors open and three tiny children toddle out laughing, one a boy in a red fez and a small shirt, the others little girls with flowered blouses, coloured skirts, and gaudy handkerchiefs twisted around their heads. The open door gives a glimpse of a wee, tiled hall with a dwarf staircase twisting up out of sight. Farther down another door stands invitingly open. Pass through it out of the dim alley and you are in another world. A bright courtyard open



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*  
A STREET IN OLD ALGIERS.





to the blue sky above, two, three tiers of galleries with gaily-tiled parapet walls supported on carved stone or marble pillars, a vine swinging across the void, flowers in pots or a bougainvillea dashing a note of glowing colour into the court on which, as in the days of yore, veiled women look down and call shrilly to the unveiled serving-maids seated on the paving-stones below cleaning great brass water-jars of old and graceful design.

But the glory has departed; pasha and pirate have had their day, and their mansions, too often, have fallen from their high estate. Instead of one rich man peopling the chambers that open on to the tiled galleries with his harem of silken-clad wives of many races and filling the dark cellars and noisome dungeons below with wretched slaves, a dozen or more poor families, Arabs, Jews, Maltese, Spaniards, crowd into the one-time pasha's palace. Too often the beautiful courtyards are turned to utilitarian purposes; and a carpenter's bench or a grocer's counter replaces the marble fountain that once filled the air with the tinkle of falling water.

Out again into the dark lanes and vaulted tunnels. Stand aside and let this porter pass. Bent double he lurches heavily up the steep ascent, a band around his forehead helping to support the weight of the immense package on his back. With his red cap twisted about with a dirty kerchief, his torn shirt and baggy trousers, his bare feet thrust into heel-less slippers, he resembles—and is alike to him in feature as in faith—a *hamal*, or porter, of Constantinople toiling up the equally steep streets of Stamboul.

Out of a dim alley come two white-robed female figures, veiled to the dark eyes that, lustrous and beautiful, shine under the black eyebrows and fair foreheads. Massive silver and gold necklaces hang on their bosoms, their henna-tipped fingers are loaded with rings, broad silver bracelets adorn their wrists and heavy anklets surround the silk-stockinged legs thrust into dainty slippers. Unlike the women of other Mahommedan countries they do not avoid the gaze of the unbeliever; rather do they seek it challengingly. For many of the veiled beauties of Algiers are not averse to an affair with a European; for they know that he is more chivalrous in his love than are their countrymen. With a lingering backward glance these two enter slowly a carved marble portal leading into a hall walled and floored with flower-designed porcelain tiles. Inscriptions in French and Arabic tell that this is the entrance to Moorish Baths, open to men until noon, to women in the afternoon. And the fair ones flock to it; for it is their lounge, their club, their glimpse of social life outside the harem, their Gossip Exchange. It and the Mahommedan cemeteries on Fridays, when only women may visit them.

The narrow alley dives into another tunnelled passage under the houses and emerges on a wider space, a market. Here spread out on the ground or on rough stalls are meat, fruit, vegetables, bread. Arab and negro dealers shout out their wares and their prices in Arabic and in French, while tall men in white burnouses, shrouded Moorish women and dark-haired, bare-headed Maltese girls chaffer and bargain with them excitedly. Buyer and seller shake their hands



IN THE MARKET.

*Photo. by the Author.*



OUTSIDE A NATIVE CAFÉ.

*Photo. by the Author.*



in each other's faces, scream with rage, call on Allah or the God of the Christians to bear witness, then quieten down and conclude the deal peaceably.

At the corner of the market-place is an Arab coffee-house—a *Café Maure*. Outside, squatting on the pavement or seated on benches against the wall, are Arabs, Kabyles, men of all classes and ages, merchants, small shopkeepers, clerks, labourers, conversing volubly, playing cards, dominoes, draughts, or merely sitting. Sitting idly, vacantly, unconscious of those around them. No man on earth, Neapolitan *lazzarone*, Hindu ascetic, Buddhist lama seeking Nirvana, is capable of such utter detachment from the world as the ordinary Arab.

A few of those gathered in front of the café hold tiny cups of coffee in their hands, taste it, drink it slowly, savouring every precious drop of the penny-worth of fragrant dark fluid. Inside, at the tiled, waist-high fireplace the cook is dipping a long-handled small measure into the steaming copper pot placed on a handful of red embers and filling the cups for the bare-armed attendant to take to customers seated on benches or huddled on mats in the interior of the establishment. The walls are scrawled with crude drawings of mosques, palm-trees, tigers and elephants—these last by an artist who had evidently never seen either animal—or adorned with chromos of French Presidents and European royalties, even German, indifferently.

A grey-haired, wild-looking old man in ragged garments, hung round with the skins of small animals, strumming a one-stringed guitar made from the shell of a tortoise and slung round his neck, enters the café.

Half shambling, half dancing, he wanders among its clients, holding out a hand for money. As he moves he sings in a high-pitched, nasal voice; and the contrast between the old Eastern love-song and its singer is striking. In better-class establishments situated nearer the French quarter and patronised by well-to-do Arabs you will often find quite a superior orchestra. Three or four respectable-looking, black-coated, white-collared gentlemen in red fezzes—or, as this headgear is termed in Algeria, *checchias*, pronounced “shesh-hias”—play strange instruments—a big guitar, a big drum called a *teboul*, a long one, the *derbrouka*, like an Indian tom-tom, a *ghaïta* or sort of flageolet shaped like a doctor’s stethoscope, and perhaps a tambourine, the *tar*—while they sing in nasal tones. And the expensively-burnoused or frock-coated clients, most of them probably educated at French *lycées*, listen in appreciative silence to music that to the less accurately-trained European ear sounds unmelodious, even discordant.

To the poor native the café is a club, a hotel, a home. He brings his crust of bread, his handful of onions, to eat there, he sleeps on its benches or on the pavement against its wall. And once or twice a day he spends two sous in it for a cup of coffee.

From the market-place lead narrow streets and, as in Eastern cities—Cairo, Tunis, Delhi, Canton—each is lined with shops devoted to one particular trade. Down this one are the tailors. In the square holes devoid of counters, tables or chairs, white-burnoused, bearded men who look like Biblical patriarchs, squat on the floor and sew furiously. On the walls hang the

duller garb of men, burnous, haick, hlafa, gandaura, or else, bright with tinsel and gay colours, the more attractive wear of women.

In the next street brass-workers hammer at bright pots and tall water-vessels, denting patterns into them with sharp-pointed instruments struck with mallets. Or tinsmiths display piles of saucepans and coffee-pots. In the tiny shops of the next crooked lane cobblers stitch rapidly at red leather babouches—the easy native slipper—or work beautiful designs with gold and silver thread and spangles on dainty little shoes for women's feet.

Here is a break in the trades' guild character of the shops. For outside this one a small crowd is eagerly watching the movements of a youth seated before a tiled stove running up into a pointed chimney and with a small table beside him. In a dish he is mixing white batter, rolling it, pulling and twisting it with nimble fingers, then dipping it into oil and placing it in the stove. His hand dives in once or twice after it, turning it, then with tongs he draws out a crisp, golden puff, lays it on a small square of newspaper, puts it into an eagerly-outstretched palm and accepts a coin for it. And the buyer turns away, contentedly munching the succulent morsel, while his place is taken by another expectant purchaser.

The next street blazes with colour. For here black-bearded Mozabites—heretical Mussulmans from the district in the Sahara called M'zab—in flowing Arab garb or hook-nosed Jews in semi-European attire display a wealth of rainbow-hued, long-fringed silk shawls, gay-coloured bodices and jackets, and skirts and other

garments, pink, blue, yellow, red, with leather belts gold-buckled and heavy with bullion and gold-embroidery, white wool or silk and wool gandauras, and sheikhs' crimson burnouses worked with gold or silver.

Then the jewellers' street. Here many of the shops have glass windows; and set out in them are massive silver bracelets three or four inches wide, gold and silver ear-rings three inches in diameter, huge necklaces of broad, beautifully designed flat silver and gold ornaments, filagree rings, heavy anklets. And always a multitude of tiny gold or gold-washed hands inset with coral or turquoise, the universal Arab mascot, *kamsa*, "five," they call it because of the five fingers. The Europeans term it "The Hand of Fathma," daughter of the Prophet. Every Arab woman—and many a foreigner—wears it; and on the wall of every Moorish house is the imprint of this luck-bringing hand. It is borne on the company colours of the regiments of Tirailleurs Indigènes, formerly called Turcos.

Dazzling white in the brilliant sunshine the walls of this mosque almost blind one's eyes by their glare. But enter it—you pass into dark, cool shadows, a silent interior bare and restful. Through the past centuries bearded Moslems with the blood of the unbelievers red on their hands have gathered here to bow down towards Mecca and beg Allah's aid in fresh crimes—but they thought them meritorious deeds, by the truth of the Most High! And every Friday the faithful come here still—and who shall say that none of them mutter in their beards curses on the Christian dogs that rule them?

The nearer the church—'tis an old saying. And



sharply away, so that the eye ranges over the deep valley of Bab-el-Oued with its gardens and houses to the bright red scars of quarries and cliffs in the green hillside opposite crowned with the domes of the famous church of Nôtre Dame d'Afrique facing across the Mediterranean to its sister Nôtre Dame de la Garde on the height above the harbour of Marseilles.

Here where one stands on the summit above the steeply-descending pathway are the densely-crowded graves of the Arab cemetery of El-Kettar. A very few are marked with white domes, most have thin white stones at head and foot, some are but green mounds. A grave-digger in a garment of ragged sacking and a wide-brimmed straw hat is digging languidly, while a couple of urchins stare with interest at brown bones and a skull in the mould that he has thrown up.

Across the drawbridge a small procession of natives in red checcias and coats and trousers follow towards the cemetery a man in a worn burnous who carries in his arms a tiny packet tied up in white cloth and covered with a gold-fringed, parti-coloured silken pall. Beside a little open grave he stops and, pulling off the cloth, lays the white package tenderly on the ground. Standing over it he looks down at it sadly and raises his hand to his head in prayer; while his friends seat themselves on adjoining mounds, light cigarettes and chat unconcernedly. The grave-digger comes to the party; and after a word with him the sorrowing father lifts up the tiny body of his son—it must be a boy, for a girl would be treated with scant ceremony—and lays it gently in the shallow grave. Then while the earth is being thrown in he sits with hands stretched out, palms

uppermost, and chants in a high-pitched tone, while his friends, seated or standing, some smoking but all with similarly outstretched hands, interject responses. In a few minutes the simple funeral is over. The friends go off chatting gaily; while the father, the gold-fringed pall over his arm, accompanies the sexton to pay for the little grave.

On this sad Garden of Allah the walls of the Kasbah look down. Here in this palace, fortress, prison, the last Deys of Algiers shut themselves away from their discontented subjects and the guns of their stronghold frown threateningly on the murmuring city beneath. Here surrounded by soldiers and slaves the Pirate Lords lived out their days in debauchery and cruel tyranny until in 1830 the very last of them, Hussein Pasha, saw from his windows France's avenging squadron manœuvring in the bay below him and her brave soldiers swarming up the wooded slopes of El Biar above and knew that his rule was ended.

To-day from the walls of the Kasbah one looks down on a larger, grander city than Algerine pasha ever knew, on a splendid harbour where a great fleet may ride at anchor, on the beautiful bay curving by Mustapha Supérieur, Hussein Dey and Fort de l'Eau to the green point of Cape Matifou exactly opposite. And across the low hills and the plain the eye ranges to the cloud-capped peaks of the Djurdjura Mountains in Kabylia.

Beyond the Kasbah the road goes on by groves of ragged-barked eucalyptus trees and just under the hill-top that is the highest point above the city seen from the streets below. The Koudiat-es-Saboun or Hill of Soap it is called; and on it the Emperor Charles V.

camped with a big army in 1541 and looked down exultantly on the pirate town that he had sailed across the Mediterranean to destroy. He was sure of victory. He could see his enormous fleet at anchor close inshore a couple of miles away where to-day is the Jardin d'Essai, or Botanical Gardens. But Hell fought for its own. A storm arose and wrecked his countless ships. The rain that drenched his soldiers in their bivouac damped their courage as well as their powder, so that they fled before a handful of Moslem mercenaries—and Algiers was reprieved for three hundred years until in 1830 French troops stormed the fort that in 1545 Hassan-ben-Kheir-ed-Din built on the spot where Charles had camped. Sultan Kalassi he called it; Fort l'Empereur it is termed to-day. Now it is a military prison. In front of it towers a tall granite obelisk, a monument to the African Dead, visible from far out at sea.

Beyond this hilltop the road winds up to higher ones, giving glorious views over valleys in which white villas nestle in bright gardens, over coastline and blue sea, until it reaches the suburb of El Biar on the summit of the line of the Sahel Hills and passes on through vineyards and cultivation to Ben Aknoun and the interior.

But turn back from the Kasbah and go down to the city again by the tortuous Rue Rovigo that twists between modern residential buildings in the steep decline and between arcaded sidewalks lined with the shops of M'zabite and Jew sellers of silks and jewellery until it emerges on a small square in which the cathedral that was once a mosque lifts its twin towers above its

neighbour, the modest Winter Palace of the Governor-General, formerly the residence of Hassan Pacha. Thus the headquarters of Moslem creed and dominion shelter now an alien faith and rule. Facing them is a white building that was the Palace of the Daughters of the Dey, the exterior plain and unpromising, the interior a gem of Moorish architecture and ornament. In the exquisite tiled courtyard where twisted marble pillars and white arches support the galleries with carved wooden balustrades one can fancy that the negro seated by the exquisite fountain is the fierce guardian of beautiful Mauresque princesses lolling on gold-embroidered divans in the gilt-ceilinged chambers upstairs.

A few score yards lower down Old Algiers and New meet in the spacious Place du Gouvernement.

And here the modern city begins, more sombre in hue than the Old that earned the name of La Ville Blanche from the brightness of its whitewashed houses. But seen from far away across the bay the crowded masses of buildings of Algiers sweeping up the hillside from the blue sea to the dark green of the eucalyptus woods above are snowy under the brilliant African sun and still merit the title of the White City.



*Photo. by the Author.*

THE STREET OF THE TAILORS.



*Photo. by the Author.*

IN THE PALACE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE DEY.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW ALGIERS

THE Place du Gouvernement is a medley of strange contrasts of buildings and races, with its mosques and its modern hotels, its tall palms waving over newspaper kiosks, its European and its African loungers on the promenade by the balustraded wall above the Inner Port that once sheltered pirate galleys and now holds motor-boats and submarines.

On three sides are French cafés, shops and hotels. The fourth is partly occupied by the white walls and rounded domes of a mosque, the Djama El Djedid (or "New Mosque"), built in 1660. Above it rises a square minaret a hundred feet high from which only a century ago the voice of the muezzin—the priest who called the Faithful to their prayers—floated out over the harbour and bade the pious pirates climb up the steep slope to the mosque and there give thanks to Allah for victory over the accursed Christians. But Modernity has made even this tower her own and placed a great illuminated clock in it, has massed electric trams in its shadow, has planted before it a bronze equestrian statue of a former Royal Governor-General of Algeria, the Duc d'Orléans, to show that France rules over Islam in this land now.

The ground plan of this mosque is in the form of a Grecian cross; and legend says that a Christian slave charged with the building of it purposely gave it this abhorred design in despite of his Moslem masters who did not discover the fact until the edifice was completed. Then the impious blasphemer paid for his crime with his life; but the mosque was not destroyed. In the fountained courts beggars shelter and footsore wanderers rest their weary bodies in the House of Allah, in the dim, many-arched interior white-robed men turn their faces to Mecca and bow their faces to the mats in prayer.

Around a side door squat shapeless bundles of white clothing the livelong day through, veiled Moslem women, some with hands outstretched for charity, others weeping silently while they wait to be summoned before the Cadi in his office in the sacred building to hear with unavailing protests his pronouncement of their divorces from husbands whose love has passed to newer wives.

Beside this mosque is a larger one, the Djama El Kebir ("The Great Mosque"), supposed to have been built early in the eleventh century of our era. Its street front in the Rue de la Marine is an arcaded gallery supported on white marble pillars, having in the centre a fine black marble fountain.

The prayers of the Faithful in both mosques are disturbed by the constant rumble and clanging of the tramcars around the Place du Gouvernement; for most of the city lines start from or pass it and in the evenings it is bordered with long queues of white toilers waiting to be conveyed to their homes in the suburbs



of Algiers. All day long the square is filled with a medley of races—Arab and Kabyle men in flowing burnouses, veiled women whose shrouding white outer garment, if displaced, gives a glimpse of bright pink or scarlet or blue jackets underneath, dark-faced Sicilians, Maltese and Spaniards from the poorer quarter of Bab-El-Oued (“The River Gate”) which begins on the north of the Place.

The white mass of the Djama El Djedid fills but half of the east side of the square, leaving a wide gap towards the sea that gives an unrestricted view of the glorious panorama of the harbour, the bay, the curving coastline with its green hills and far away beyond them the lofty peaks of the snow-clad mountains of Grand Kabylia.

Lean on the balustraded railing of the wall that on the seaward side falls forty feet to the wharves below and look down on the busy port, the Inner Harbour of which is very much as it was in the days of the pirates. That charming little white Moorish building with its domed roofs and high arches is the French Admiral’s House—but it was once the residence of the Turkish Minister of Marine, the Oukhil-el-Hardj.

Behind it from a polygonal stone bastion rises the white tower of a lighthouse. That bastion, the Peñon, is all that is left of a formidable fort built by the Spaniards in 1510 when they seized the rock on which it stands. A rock only a few hundred yards from Algiers, but which a garrison of a hundred and fifty men held for nineteen years, while they fought the Algerines almost daily; until Keir-ed-Din, one of the

famous Barbarossa brothers, with a tremendous force captured the fort and barbarously slew the few of its defenders that remained alive. With the material of the demolished fort he built a mole to join the rock to the mainland and form the protected Inner Harbour that exists to-day. One bastion was left and on it was erected this tower to serve as a lighthouse. And now four hundred years afterwards with modern appliances it guides peaceful merchantmen and friendly warships instead of the bloodstained pirate craft of Old Algiers.

This Inner Port that was big enough to shelter the long-oared galleys of the Barbary rovers is too small for present-day uses and long stone piers enclose a great stretch of the bay beyond it and form the Outer one that can rival any in the Mediterranean. But Algerian commerce demands still more; and an enormous projected extension will make vaster still the harbour that is the reason of Algiers' being.

What fascinating sea pictures it offers to your view as you look down on it from the Boulevard de la République by the Place du Gouvernement! Over the water dances a flotilla of white-sailed boats manned by swarthy-faced fishermen, or a piratical-looking felucca from Sicily or Spain slinks in with a furtive air—no craft could look honest with that lateen rig. A couple of submarines creep just awash into the Inner Harbour and moor where the corsairs of old cast anchor. Perhaps a British super-dreadnought flying an admiral's flag at the fore, her quarter-deck bright with long lines of white-clad officers and sailors and ranks of blue-uniformed Marines present-



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

THE ADMIRAL'S HOUSE, ALGIERS.



ing arms while the band plays the Marseillaise, steams out in state, and a covey of top-heavy destroyers hover like anxious chickens around her as she puts to sea.

Or maybe a many-decked transatlantic liner rounds the harbour wall, drops anchor and discharges seven or eight hundred hustling American tourists who have just six hours to see Algeria.

Perhaps a more gruesome, more tragic sight than these. Near the harbour-mouth lies an ordinary-looking grey steamer—a tramp in ballast she seems. Nothing about her to attract your attention for the moment. But beneath you on the wharves is the long, low building of the railway station—conveniently close to the dock. A couple of hundred Senegalese soldiers in red caps with blue tassels and khaki uniforms, and parties of police of all varieties, *agents de ville* in greenish-khaki, gendarmerie in blue, *agents de Sûreté*, appear from nowhere and converge on the station. Around it they form a cordon, clear a broad space between it and the edge of the quay, drive back a crowd of curious sightseers or more interested observers, and stand on guard, the soldiers with bayonets fixed, the police with revolvers in their belts.

And in the harbour a navy launch with armed sailors puffs up and scatters a flotilla of small boats filled with shore-folk, Arab men and an occasional white-shrouded woman, swarthy-faced Spanish youths and weeping girls. What does it all mean?

A shudder seems to run through the waiting ranks of soldiers as they come to attention, a shudder repeated through the spectators. For a long train steams slowly into the station. On the end platforms

of every carriage stand armed police and the red caps of soldiers are seen at many windows. But when the train draws up and police and troops descend the mystery is explained. For after them come dark-clad men in pairs—they are chained in couples. Five hundred and fifty convicts, European and native, bound for the French penal settlement of La Guyane across the ocean. They are dressed in a dark blue uniform with sailor collar showing white shirt or jersey underneath, and a round woollen cap on their close-cropped skulls. They are clean-shaven. A few are old, but the majority are young. Well-fed and smiling, they would draw the remark under other circumstances, "What a cheery lot of boys!"

Yet there are all the crimes in the calendar over and over again amongst them. Murderers who have slain in quarrels or revenge, callous brutes who have killed for a few francs. Brigands who have terrorised a countryside for years and slaughtered men, women and children indifferently. Villains that the extraordinary clemency of French justice has spared from the guillotine.

And now they are marched on board lighters which are towed by a tug to the waiting grey steamer. And all the rowing boats scattered by the navy launch crowd daringly towards them, for their occupants are friends or relatives of the convicts eager for a last look. Men wave their hats, women their handkerchiefs; but some of the latter need them to wipe their streaming eyes. For in these boats there are mothers, wives, sweethearts, to whom these scoundrels are as dear as though they were honest men.

But each lighter is fringed by rows of soldiers all round its four sides; and the convicts are made to sit down. But here and there an upraised arm from the dark-clad mass waves a handkerchief on chance. And uplifted faces are turned towards the climbing white houses and the green hills of Algiers that few of them shall see again. A good riddance for the colony!

Look away beyond the prison-ship to lovelier things to take the bad taste from your eyes! Across the blue bay the wavelets crisp in crystal lines on white sands below the wooded hills dotted with villas, and beyond the hills the white crests of the snow-topped Djurdjura Mountains melt into the pale blue sky.

The sea-front of Algiers is as imposing as any in the world. The steep slopes that formerly ran down to the water's edge have been cut away, and on the thus levelled shore wide quays and wharves made; while the scarp is revetted by a great forty-foot wall to support the splendid promenades, the Boulevards de la République and Sadi Carnot, lined with great five-storied blocks of buildings that run along above the harbour on deep arches which shelter under vaulted roofs the cat-haunted Fish Market, coal and marine stores, cafés and shipping offices. To these boulevards ramped roads or hydraulic lifts in white stone towers give access from the lower level.

To north and south high above sea and harbour the modern Algiers stretches away from the Place du Gouvernement in these long regular lines of imposing buildings—hotels, or flats above and offices or shops below opening on to the arcaded sidewalks. To the north a new quarter of blocks of apartment-houses

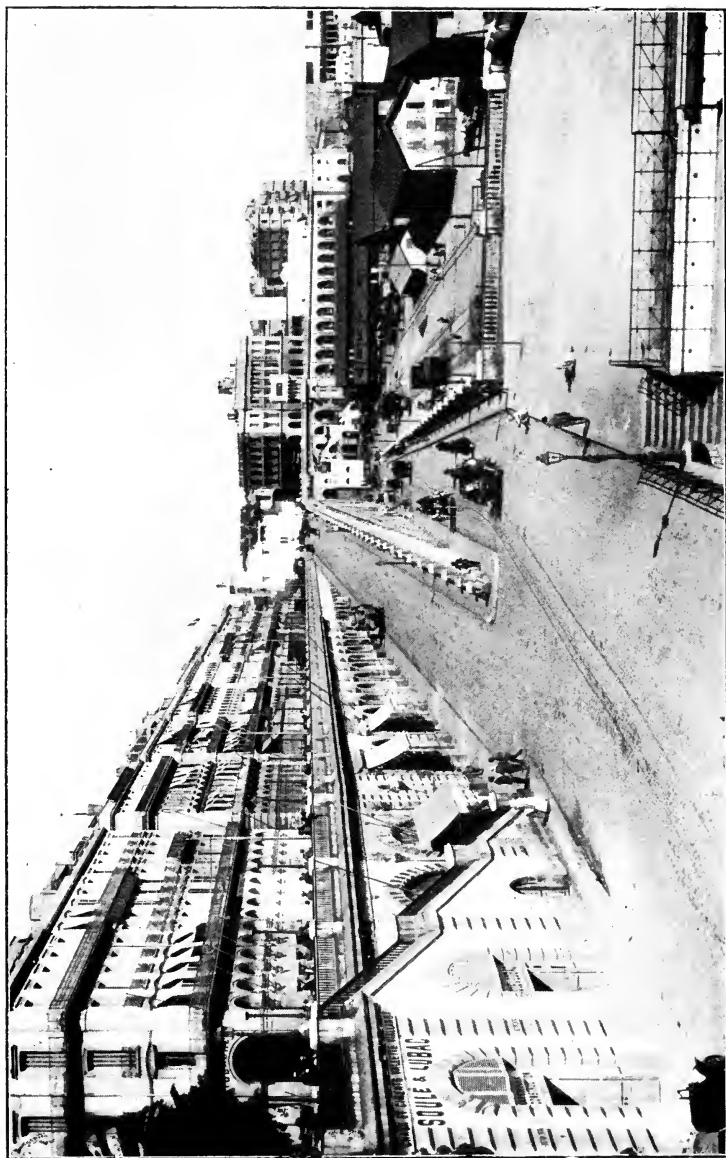
reaches out to the great Christian and Jewish cemeteries at St Eugène, beyond it a suburb of villas and summer bungalows perched above the rocky cliffs and sandy coves under steep hills.

To the south of the Place is the real city, and a few hundred yards on its impressive sea-front is broken by a leafy public garden, behind which is another square. Here the deep shade of bamboo, banyan, banana and palm-trees offers a welcome retreat to the workers in the shops and offices around in the hot *siesta* hours from noon to two o'clock, when all the business establishments in the city almost without exception close for lunch and rest for their employees.

In the Square de la République behind this garden is the fine building of the Théâtre Municipal, the Opera House, the home of grand opera and ballets in Algiers, and in Carnival time the Temple of Terpsichore—for here the masked and fancy dress balls of that gay season are held.

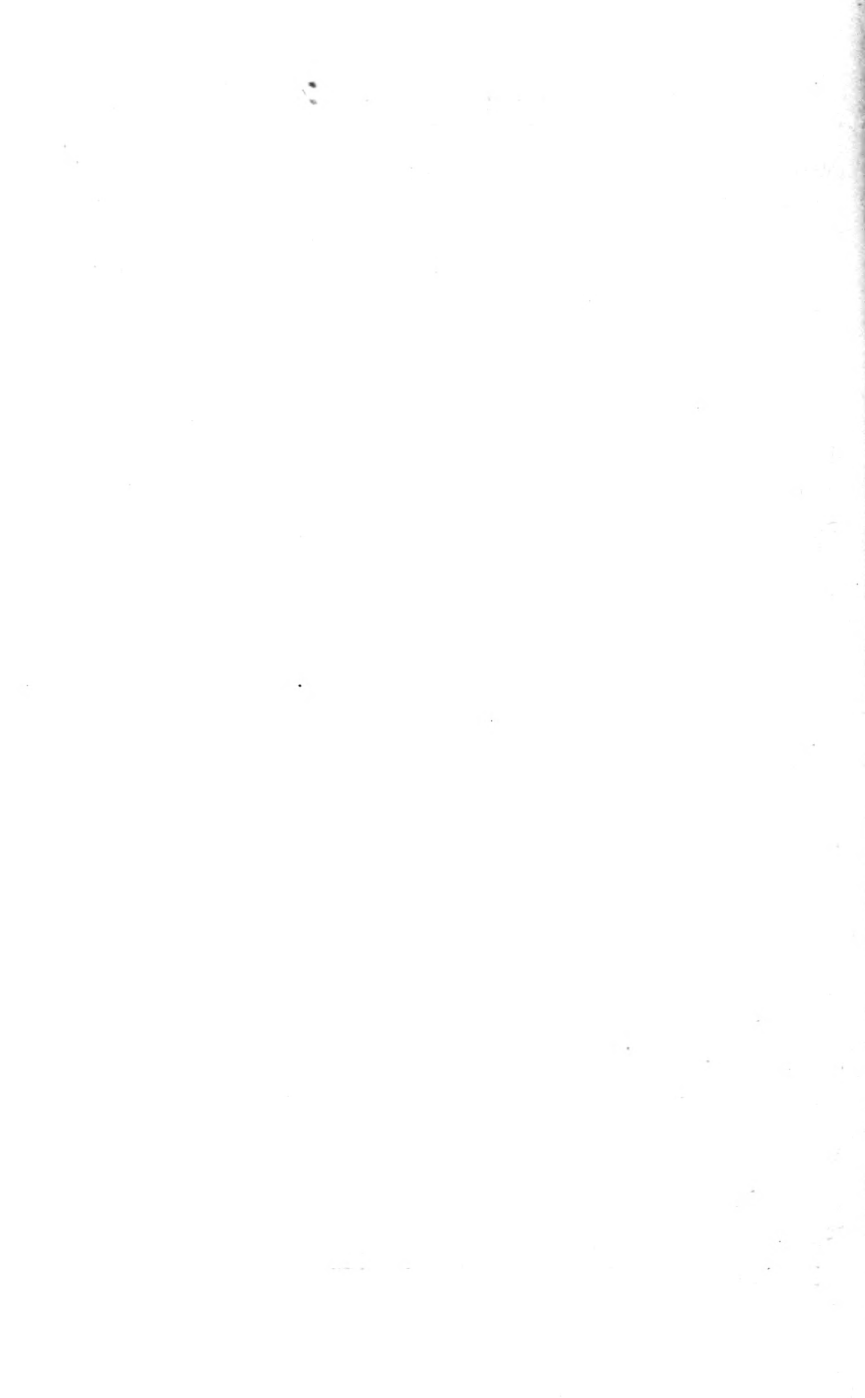
On its façade is a plaque commemorating the French poet and playwright, Regnard, who was a captive and slave in Algiers. On another building in the Square is an inscription recording a deed of daring that outrivals fiction. When the army of Charles V. was fleeing in dismay from the Hill of Soap before a few thousand janissaries and citizens a gallant band of Knights of Malta turned fiercely on the pursuers and drove them headlong back to the city of Algiers, into which the Moslems fled through the Gate of Bab Azoun, closing it only just in time to keep the daring Christians out. A French knight, Sir Ponce de Balagnier, Sire de Savignac, Standard Bearer of the Order, galloped





*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

BOULEVARD DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE, ALGIERS.



up alone under a hail of bullets and arrows, planted his dagger in the wood of the gate and, as he fell dying with a score of wounds, cried, "We shall return!" Three hundred years rolled by and his prophecy came true. His countrymen returned.

Around the Square are the most popular cafés in the city which at midday, in the afternoon and the evening are filled with officers and civilians and their families listening to the string orchestras as they sip their drinks, while the clanging trams go by to the suburbs north and south. Beside the Opera House is the Officers' Club housed in a historic building, the old Palace of the Janissaries, of that "Foreign Legion" of the Algiers of pirate days recruited from the criminals of Turkey and Asia Minor and Christian renegades and scoundrels from all European nations. While behind the Opera the Old Town rises in terraces above it to the hilltop, stately streets of seven-storied blocks of buildings in the style of Paris lead off to the south from the Square. And a gently-sloping street goes up to the principal thoroughfare of the new city, the Rue d'Isly, its luxury street lined with cafés and shops worthy of the French capital, the fashionable promenade in the afternoons where demoiselles and señoritas—for the Spanish element is strong in Algiers—stroll up and down in affected unconsciousness of the admiring stares of the *jeunesse dorée*.

The epitome of the mixed Algerian population, the Rue d'Isly is interesting and full of colour. Burnoused Arab beggars stately in their rags, and red-capped Moorish town-dwellers elbow Frenchmen, Spaniards and Italians. Black-coated civilians mingle with

officers in uniforms of many hues, in the blue tunics and red breeches of Infantry of the Line, the pale blue of light cavalry, the khaki of native regiments, the brilliant scarlet jackets and red burnouses over white of Spahis. Bluejackets with the striped jerseys and the red pompoms on the little caps of the French Navy pass Zouaves in red fezzes—or checcias, as they are called in Algeria—dark blue shell-jackets braided with red and baggy red trousers. Tirailleurs Indigènes—native infantrymen, the Turcos of old—in uniforms similar to the Zouaves but of a delicate turquoise blue with yellow braid stroll by cheery-faced, thick-lipped negroes of Senegalese regiments in khaki. A young Japanese—how came he here?—stands at a street corner selling cheap ornaments. White-bearded Arabs looking like Biblical patriarchs in their rounded headgear, thin cotton drapery thrown over it bound round with camel-hair cord and hiding the backs and sides of their heads, long white woollen burnouses with hoods hanging between their shoulders, and gandauras or long gowns reaching to their ankles, bare feet thrust into heel-less slippers, stalk slowly along. Behind one a pet sheep trots unconcernedly, ignoring dogs and passers-by.

Tall, fair-faced Berbers from the mountains of Kabylia, with high cheek-bones, blue eyes and sandy moustaches that give them the appearance of typical Scotsmen, in dress similar to Arabs, go briskly by. For these aborigines of North Africa are energetic and businesslike and do most of the outdoor labour of Algiers, work on the quays, drive carts, carry loads; and they sell rugs and carpets in the streets here, as they do in Marseilles and farther afield.

And veiled and white-shrouded Mahommedan ladies with heavy silver rings around bare ankles and naked feet in high-heeled Paris shoes gaze into the shop-windows or stare with the instinctive antagonism of their sex at smartly-dressed French ladies in big hats, long-waisted frocks, short skirts and silk stockings.

As Algiers is built on steeply sloping hillsides the streets running parallel to the sea are terraced one above the other. From the Rue d'Isly flights of stone stairways, the number of their steps reaching the hundreds, lead up to residential streets and on higher still to green slopes and groves of melancholy eucalyptus trees climbing to the grey mass of Fort l'Empereur on the summit of the Hill of Soap.

The Rue d'Isly passes by a depressing statue of Marshal Bugeaud who gained the victory of Isly over the Moroccans in 1844, and ends in the finest open space in the city, the Boulevard Laferrière, that finds few equals anywhere for the picturesqueness of its surroundings. On one side open to the sea, so that the eye can range over the bay to the villa-dotted hills above the coast and past them to the Djurdjura Mountains beyond. Inland a terraced public garden gay with bright flowers goes up to the tree-clad slopes of the Hill of Soap.

The other two sides are framed by massive blocks of seven and eight-storied buildings pierced by roads north and south, ornate structures, the long façades of which are broken by countless balconies—each window has one. But at one corner of the great square is a colossal white mass of architecture in the Neo-Mauresque style, high Moorish arched entrances

adorned with Arabic lettering and ornaments, and lofty cupolas and domes. A building worthy of being the principal mosque in Africa—but it is only the General Post Office! The Prefecture on the sea-front near it is in the same style.

Farther up on the same side is a similarly designed building in tasteful Moorish architecture, the offices of a daily newspaper, the *Dépêche Algérienne*. Past it are many-balconied blocks of flats lining stone balustraded flights of steps leading up to new boulevards on the hillside.

And in one of these is the headquarters of the Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord. For Algiers is not only commercial or pleasure-loving. It has room for learned societies; and this particular one is world-famous. Many celebrated African explorers have given the first narration of their travels in its hall; the number of its members runs to thousands and includes the names of famous men; and under the presidency of the distinguished man of letters, M. Armand Mesplé, it has conquered a foremost place for itself among scientific societies of the world.

Across the Boulevard Laferrière the Rue d'Isly is continued by the Rue Michelet, a long street indeed. For, at first lined with fine blocks of buildings of regular and massive architecture, flats above, shops and offices below, passing the University in its gardens terraced high above it, it runs out of the city to the south and winds on and up between the gardens, villas and hotels on the sharp slopes of Mustapha Supérieur, giving glorious views of the bay and Algiers, to end in a gap on the summit of the Sahel hills about five or six hun-



*Photo. by the Author.*

THE PLACE DU GOUVERNEMENT AND THE NEW MOSQUE.



*Photo. by the Author.*

THE GENERAL POST OFFICE AND A NEWSPAPER OFFICE.





dred feet above the sea, where a small monument called the Colonne Voirol commemorates the construction of the road by the Foreign Legion under General Voirol in 1833 when the French decided on retaining Algeria and began to extend the zone of their conquests beyond Algiers.

But half-way between this spot and the city there is a gate in a high wall recessed in a semicircle at this point and with niches in it containing busts of former French Governor-Generals of the Colony. Beside it is a stable full of long-tailed white horses and red-burnished Spahis. A sentry stands by the open gate which gives an entrancing glimpse of a beautiful garden full of flowers and palms in front of a splendid white building, all pillars, ornamented arches and domed roofs. It is the Summer Palace of the Governor-General of Algeria, a building well worthy of sheltering an African Proconsul, with its pillared courts, grand staircases, and the splendid ballroom with its wall-paintings, mosaics and carved ceiling.

Next to it is a less imposing but even more attractive residence set in lovely gardens, the Bardo, formerly the summer palace of the last Dey of Algiers and bought from the Government after his deportation by a Frenchman whose family still possesses it. With the exception of the addition of modern lighting and sanitation it remains almost unaltered since Hussein Pacha sprawled on its soft divans in amorous mood with one of his seventy wives, while the other sixty-nine awaited his summons crowded together in the small house standing in the gardens some distance away from the main residence. The embroideries, carpets, tapestries, bronze

and brasswork, the pottery, the couches and Moorish beds, and the inlaid furniture that fill the chambers are wonderful and priceless. But never in Oriental palace in Morocco, India, China or Japan have I seen anything lovelier than the white inner court with its bathing pond sunk in the marble pavement. A setting for a picture of satin-limbed naiads finer than Alma Tadema ever painted.

Where the Rue Michelet ends and the road to the interior begins in the gap in the Sahel range the scenery is beautiful. On one side of the pass the hilltop is crowned with a pinewood pierced with many paths and known as the Bois de Boulogne, a favourite resort of the citizens of Algiers on holidays. On the other side of the pass the ground rises in a pleasant region of beautiful villas and gardens lining a hedge-bordered road reminiscent of England running along the ridge-top to El Biar. Behind lies the bay far below with Algiers to the left, while in front a new world opens. For here begins the interior of Algeria; and in tree-shaded ravines the ground falls to the fertile Mitidja Plain beyond which rises up the chain of the Atlas Mountains, the plain that in the days of Old Rome helped to earn for the land the title of "The Granary of Europe." Neglected under the Arabs until it sank back to jungle and feverish swamp, the efforts of French colonists restored it; and now it is a prosperous region of cornfields, vineyards and orange groves dotted with large European farmhouses and villages. Railways and fine roads traverse it, linking Algiers with the interior. Looking down from the Sahel Hills to-day it is hard to realise how through the last century

Every foot of the ground over which the eye wanders has had to be fought for—fought for against bloody pirate and treacherous Arab and deadly fever. A wonderful task this that the French have achieved in the face of countless difficulties and dangers.

Well, it all looks peaceful and prosperous enough to-day, the well-cultivated countryside, the curving coastline with its many sea-washed towns, the white city and its climbing houses basking in African sunshine, a prize that is a worthy reward of the sacrifices, determination and perseverance of France royal, imperial, republican.

The flora of Algeria is similar to that of Southern Europe; but the stranger to North Africa usually expects to find it a land of tropical vegetation. For that in Algiers he must look in the famous Jardin d'Essai separated from the sandy beach of the bay under the Sahel Hills by the railway and the road from the city under Mustapha Supérieur. It is the Botanical Gardens or, rather, the Jardin d'Acclimatation; for in its thousands of acres are cultivated trees from all parts of the world with a view to their being acclimatised for the benefit of the Colony. A big overseas trade is done in palms, tangerine and banana trees shipped to England, France and other lands; and the little potted palms one sees on sale behind the Madeleine Church in Paris and in Covent Garden were probably grown in the Jardin d'Essai. Great banyans from India and Burma, Yuccas from South America, cocoa-palms from Mexico, and the tropical countries of Asia, shade the paths on which the citizens stroll on festival days.

And by it trams and automobiles pass on farther

out between the fields to the race-course in the sandy dunes where in the past Frenchmen and Arab tribesmen fought to the death and their descendants now gather to witness bloodless contests in this modern phase of life in the New Algiers.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PEOPLE OF ALGIERS AND THEIR WAYS

WIDE-STRETCHING as it is to-day, spreading out along the coast and up the hills in suburbs and independent communes, Algiers yet holds a scarcely larger population now than it did in the days of the Turkish Pashas when over a hundred and eighty thousand folk, pirate and slave, janissary and trader, renegade and born Moslem, harlot in the brothel and weeping Christian captive in the harem, were crowded within the narrow walls now outgrown and destroyed.

The French call the native inhabitants of Algiers *Maures* or *Arabes*; and the Englishman terms them Arabs. But these indigenous citizens are not Arabs. They are a very mixed breed, the descendants of Berbers, Turks, Jews, Christian renegades of many races, captive slave women of varied nationalities, European, African and Asian. There can be little true Arab blood in these townsmen. Their language is almost more Turkish than Arabic. It must be remembered that the rulers, the governing classes and the janissaries or State Militia of Algiers were for centuries mostly Turks with an admixture of European renegades, and they had little intercourse with the Arab inland dwellers

on whom they all looked down with contempt and dislike.

Their garb was Turkish rather than Arab; and traces of it are seen to-day, though the majority of the native inhabitants of the city wear more or less European dress with the red checcchia. Around this cap the poorer classes sometimes twist a coloured kerchief to make a small turban of it; and with them a ragged shirt and trousers, or even merely an ankle-long cotton gown is all they wear, while the wealthier man clothes himself like a Parisian, save for the checcchia. European boots or heel-less leather slippers called babouches are the footgear.

Yet in the streets one sees many, mostly from the interior, in the traditional Arab attire, which is worn almost universally throughout Algeria by all but the town-dwellers. On the head is a rounded white high skullcap of hard felt, over which is draped a thin white linen cloth, the *hlafa*, that hangs down on the back and sides of the head, shades the forehead, eyes and cheeks, and is gathered under the chin by the body-garment buttoned over it. It is held in place on the cap by a thin brown cord of camel hair wound round and round many times. A long gown, the *gandaura*, of woollen material is confined at the waist by a coloured sash; and over it is the *burnous*, a white woollen hooded and sleeved cape closed in front near the throat. A well-off individual may wear two or three burnouses, the outer one of good cloth and embroidered with silk. The man who rides wears long soft red leather boots which, when he is afoot, he thrusts into babouches.

The city Mahommedan women of all classes and



*Photo. by the Author.*

WOMEN OF ALGIERS.





ages wear the same outer costume, the white voluminous drapery shrouding them from top to toe, worn like a shawl over the head, and if displaced giving a glimpse of gay-coloured bodices and baggy trousers. Bare feet are shoved into little babouches, which are often dainty slippers of coloured leather heavily embroidered with silver or gold. But modernised native ladies prefer silk stockings and high-heeled French shoes. All town-dwelling women wear the *Adjar*, an embroidered muslin veil hiding the face below the eyes and hanging down to the breast. Only the oldest and poorest dispense with it. But Berber and desert women do not conceal their faces; nor do the women of Tlemçen.

In the seclusion of their homes and on the flat roofs of their houses, if sure that no male gaze can rest on them, they throw aside veil and ugly outer garment; and the wealthy shine like butterflies or birds of paradise in glowing colours. Over chemises of finest gauze is worn a vest—perhaps more than one—of silk pink or mauve, blue, yellow, heavy with gold or silver embroidery and buttons. Above the vest a brocaded silk jacket. Below are trousers of finest silk wide as divided skirts. On the head is a dainty little velvet cap covered with seed-pearls or gold coins. Necklaces of coins, large hoop ear-rings, broad bracelets and anklets, rings and brooches adorn them.

The Jews of Algiers are known only by their features, for they have adopted European dress and discarded the long black caftans and the black checcias that are still their costume in Morocco. Only occasionally an elderly Jewess may be seen with the black or coloured fringed silk handkerchief shrouding her head.

There is both comfort and luxury in the homes of the richer natives of Algiers. A visit to a Mahomedan gentleman's house in the old city is interesting. From the bright streets of the modern portion one passes to the narrow lanes of the native quarter; and after climbing the stone stairway of a dark and filthy alley hemmed in by high, almost blank walls, you arrive at a low portal thrown open hospitably to you and entering a dim hall emerge on the sunlit square inner court paved with bright tiles where your host receives you. Pillars support the galleries, which are reached by narrow staircases and have carved wood railings. On the first to which you ascend open several rooms with gilt and crystal chandeliers, though electric light is usually now the illuminant, carpets too often of gaudy European manufacture instead of the mellow-hued native make, divans, painted wood shelves and chests, gramophones, and a mixture of French and Oriental furniture, generally covered with holland shrouds. On the walls are coloured oleographs—views of the Kaaba of Mecca, of Constantinople, of St Sophia, or pictures of Moslem heroes, all inscribed with Arabic characters. In the sleeping chambers in recesses are comfortable Moorish beds with wide canopies and intricately designed brass-work and piles of folded blankets and coverlets stacked up in corners.

A portion of the roof is screened in perhaps by leafy vines which do not altogether hide the dark-eyed and fair-complexioned ladies who peep down at you, their veils cast aside since the green screen is supposed to conceal them. And if the building in which you are

gives a view over the flat roofs of houses lower down and you chance to see other Moslem ladies divested of their shroudlike outer enveloping white garment and bright as butterflies in pinks and yellows and blues, well, you are not supposed to look at them or at least to mention the fact.

If your host does not happen to speak French—which is rare—some of his younger male relatives are sure to do, and will interpret for him as over coffee or fragrant mint tea from Morocco and honey cakes he inquires politely about your health or the ways of your country.

One sees few negroes in the streets of Algiers; unless they be the cheery, thick-lipped, scarred-faced soldiers of a Senegalese regiment quartered in the casemates of the fort near the Boulevard Laferrière where the old fortifications end in the sea.

The stranger soon notices that in all the native-owned shops he is served by pale-faced, black-bearded men in the traditional Arab dress, who seem to bear a family likeness and are unlike the other Mahommedans about them. These are M'Zabi or Mozabites, pure Berbers, descendants of the Zenetes but members of a Mahommedan sect regarded by all other Mussulmans as pernicious heretics. Yet theirs is the oldest sect in Islam, the Ouahbite Abadites, preponderant in all North Africa from A.D. 762 to 910. When Yakoub, seventh and last Abadite Imam, lost Tiharet to the sultan of the Fatemide dynasty, he fled with the few who remained faithful to him and the sect into the Zab, the wide Saharan district around Biskra. They stayed some time at Ouargla, but were chased

from this oasis out into the pitiless desert. In the middle of the tenth century A.D., they sought a refuge in the sebka of M'Zab, a stony and barren waste where the hate of their enemies could not follow them. There for centuries they toiled hard to wring a living from the rocks, and finally fertilised and brought into being oases, cultivation, and even towns, where formerly nothing but vipers and scorpions could live.

Safe in their cities, defended even better by the waterless desert around than by the strong walls they built, hated and despised by all other Mussulmans, co-religionists though they were, they gained wealth by trading with the caravans. When the French came to Algeria in 1830, this isolated race possessed five principal towns—Ghardaia, Metlili, Berrian, Beni Isguen, El-Ateuf and Guerrara—forming the confederacy of the Beni-M'Zab, "Sons of the M'Zab," with a sedentary population of 45,000. In 1854 they recognised the suzerainty of France, paid a tribute and were left their ancient feudal organisation.

But as a punishment for supplying arms to a rebellious tribe, the Ouled-Sidi-Sheikh, in 1881 the French annexed their district and invested their sheikhs in the name of France. A fort built above Ghardaia, the principal city of the confederacy, held a French garrison; and officers of the Bureau Arabe, which is a sort of Department for Native Affairs, administered the Circle of the M'Zab, which includes the Aghalik of Ouargla, the Chamba of Metlili and the Chamba of El-Golea. Each of the towns is administered under the eye of the military authority by a president of the *djëmaa*, or elected assembly,



SHOPPERS.

*Photo. by the Author.*



chosen by the people with the approval of the Governor-General of Algeria. An Abadite imam fulfils the functions of Cadi. So that in a way the M'Zabites are still left fairly well to govern themselves.

But they are avenging their lost liberty by sapping French commercial strength in Algiers and other cities. The journalists already write of "the Mozabite peril." Their young men come to the European towns in Algeria as grocers, drapers, butchers, cobblers, money-lenders, cloth-merchants, fruit sellers, hardware merchants, etc. Leaving their wives and families behind and beginning in the humblest way, they live in the most parsimonious fashion, wear the same clothes for years, never spend a penny unnecessarily, and soon are able to undersell and displace small French or other European shopkeepers whose expenses are greater since they cannot live so frugally.

When a Mozabite needs help in his business he sends for his young sons, nephews or other relatives, and never employs anyone of another race. As soon as he has accumulated a sufficiency of wealth he goes back to the M'Zab, taking with him all his capital except enough to finance his successor, another Mozabite, as a loan.

Thus not only do they prevent Europeans from making a living in Algeria, and so deprive it of needed colonists, but they also withdraw what is beginning to amount to a great deal of money from circulation and from French banks.

The legal position of natives in Algeria is somewhat anomalous. Although they are French subjects they are not French citizens, and cannot vote in

Parliamentary elections, unless they become "naturalised," when they are bound by the laws applicable to Europeans and must surrender their privileges as Mahommedans of Moslem polygamy and easy divorce. But now they can vote for the elections of the *Conseils Municipaux*.

Most of the better class Mahommedans one meets in Algiers have been taught in the French *lycées* and are educated men. Whether this European education has the same effect on them as one finds in India and teaches them to despise their own people while making them jealous of and hostile to the ruling race is not yet easy to say. But most Frenchmen in Algeria have little fear of there ever being another serious effort to overthrow their authority; for, as they point out, there are over eight hundred thousand Europeans to five and a half million natives who have little cohesion and could not do much more than indulge in sporadic outbreaks. And France is very near. Algiers has 152,701 whites to 51,270 natives, according to the census of 1921.

There is a party of young Algerians under the leadership of a descendant of the great Abd-El-Kader who ask for the electoral franchise and demand a voice in the government of the land. But the bulk of their own fellow-countrymen do not pay much heed to them as yet; and there is no doubt that the majority of Arabs in the land are not fit to govern themselves. And the French President, M. Millerand, when unexpectedly confronted with such demand during his visit to Algiers in 1922, gave his interlocutors wise advice when he bade them be content to hasten slowly.



Algiers, besides being the chief town of one of the three local departments into which the Department of Algeria is divided—they are Algiers, Constantine and Oran—is the seat of the government of Algeria, which is a department of France and is not autonomous and does not make its own laws. It however prepares its own budget and submits it to Paris for approval and sanction. The Governor-General is now always a member of the *Chambre des Députés*, and in it defends the financial proposals made by him and his Superior Council in Algiers. The French in Algeria have little or no desire to be self-governing; but they would naturally like to have more say in settling their own taxation and in the disposal of their revenue instead of these being decreed by Ministers in Paris who have no knowledge of local conditions. At the moment they have the good fortune to possess a Governor-General\* who devotes himself to the betterment of Algeria and is deservedly popular, which is not always the case with such functionaries.

The presence of the Governor-General and his Heads of Departments and other high dignitaries adds to the official and social importance of Algiers. The city is also the Headquarters of the 19th Army Corps and of the Algiers Division; but there are few troops garrisoned in it. Nevertheless it contains many officers, whose gay uniforms help to brighten social entertainments, the cafés and the streets. And among them are often seen some whose faces burned almost black by the Saharan sun bespeak them men fresh from arduous and lonely years in the heart of the

\* M. Steeg.

desert wastes, and their joyous light-heartedness shows that they are on their way to the never-forgotten homeland for a few months of longed-for leave. Algiers has a vice-admiral whose official residence in the Inner Port was once the house of the Turkish Commander of the Harbour and Minister of Marine in the days of the pirates. But only a few destroyers or torpedo-boats or such-like small craft represent the French Navy in Algeria.

The European population is very far from being exclusively French. It is probable that the majority of the working classes are of other nationalities, either by birth or descent—Spanish, Maltese, Mahonese, Italian. Indeed, throughout Algeria the lower class Frenchman, either in town or country, seems unable to compete against these other races of Southern Europe, who can make a living where he starves. As a colony it is somewhat a failure as far as he is concerned. He cannot succeed as a farmer—his own government does not encourage him to come here to try—for farming, vine and orange growing is only successful if done on a large scale with plenty of capital to tide over the years that defective rainfall makes lean. For the climate is unreliable and a failure in the rainfall means famine, the death by starvation of natives and beasts and the ruin of white men.

Market gardening in a small way, around Algiers, is done by Mahonese, who are sober, frugal and industrious folk; and the fishermen whose boats cover the bay are seldom French.

The modern part of the city has no slums. The houses inhabited by the poorer classes are tall, airy,

solid and handsome buildings, blocks six, eight or ten stories high bordering fairly wide streets, a stone or iron balcony outside each window. Of course a whole family may be crowded into one room. No matter how high the houses are there is always an extra *appartement* of two or more rooms built on the flat roof, or *terrasse*, which serves as garden or a drying-ground for the washing. For even in the modern city the Eastern habit of flat roofs persists and these Parisian-like houses have them. The inhabitants, not needing them to watch for the home-coming pirates, use them for more prosaic purposes. On them clothes are hung out to dry, little gardens are cultivated, and the tired citizen lolls in an easy chair and slippers to read his evening paper. Here on this one girls are playing battledore and shuttlecock, on that a young mother is pushing a perambulator, on a third a boy is circling slowly round on a bicycle. And I have seen on the concreted roof of the Custom House by the harbour two men playing tennis across a net stretched between the glass domes that light the interior of the building.

Only in the outskirts of the suburbs are there small houses, a story or two high, serving to lodge one or two families; though here and there in the city may still be seen what was once a villa beyond the then confines of Algiers, which has grown past and engulfed it and dwarfs it by the monstrous buildings that tower above the once handsome residence.

Everywhere in the French town the streets are lined with regular blocks of more or less ornate architecture similar to those seen in the modern quarters of most Continental cities, offices or shops on

the ground floor, and self-contained flats above. As there are usually three of these flats on each floor with four or five rooms and a kitchen, and a house has from four to eight or ten stories, it contains quite a numerous population. And in the quarter of the poorer classes, where each room perhaps shelters a family which may possibly take in lodgers, one trembles to think of the number of inhabitants in a house. As in Southern Europe wooden floors and staircases are almost unknown, the latter being of marble or cement, the former of coloured tiles of various designs. This makes for coolness and cleanliness. Although as in France most buildings have their *concierges* they, unlike their Paris confreres, do not have their rest disturbed at night, as all the residents have keys to the outer doors. London postmen would envy their Algerian fellows, for in the entrance halls of the houses are the letter-boxes for all the *appartements* in the building.

The European in the Algerian capital leads much the same existence as in France. The housewife goes in the morning with or without her servant to one of the many well-arranged municipal markets scattered about the city—unless she is rich enough to be above domestic cares—has the *déjeuner* prepared for her husband when he returns home for the noonday meal, for almost all establishments close from midday to two p.m., is at home to her friends in the afternoon, and goes out with her lord and master to their favourite café for the before-dinner *apéritif*. Very many families, however, take their meals in the restaurants, which are numerous and cheap. Nine or ten francs for *déjeuner* or *diner* with wine is quite a high price

in Algiers, where a good repast of four courses can be procured for four and a half or five francs, including a half-bottle of light and palatable Algerian wine.

The European inhabitants of the city are believers in "early to bed and early to rise"; and after nine o'clock at night the streets are deserted and the cafés are empty at ten p.m. The trams practically cease running at nine; but special cars are provided at midnight at the Opera and theatres to bring the play-goers home.

Social life and customs in Algiers are very much the same as in French provincial towns. Unmarried girls of the better class are as closely chaperoned; and the freedom of their English sisters would seem incredible to them. No married woman dare even walk in the principal streets alone with a man not a relative without making a scandal. She receives her friends at afternoon at homes as in France, when the guests sit and chat, are waited on by the hostess and other ladies and proffered coffee, tea and cakes, while someone sings or plays to amuse the gathering.

The "Algerois" are not avid of gaiety. Theatres, and even the cinemas, are not well patronised, and the Opera season, for which good singers are engaged from France, generally proves a disastrous speculation. The working class, the majority of whom here are not French, support the Carnival festivities outdoor and in more than do their betters. Algiers is not a mere pleasure city; a leisured class hardly exists and its professional and commercial men toil hard.

But like the cities on the northern shores of the Mediterranean she keeps Carnival. Then the

boulevards on the sea-front are gay indeed with fluttering flags on every balcony or strung between Venetian masts, while rows of many-tiered stands covered with red cloth hide the arches of the arcaded sidewalk. For here takes place the Battle of Flowers, where bloom-decked carriages and automobiles and great cars go slowly up and down, filled with gaudy maskers, pelting, and being pelted by the occupants of the stands with tiny bouquets. And on Shrove Tuesday brightly-dressed throngs of masqueraders cover each other and the spectators with confetti. For busy, commercial Algiers relaxes at this time and pours forth its thousands to enjoy Carnival, although even at its height a street away the shops are open and "Business as usual" is the motto. For the city is not a town that lives by gaieties and tourists, as Nice and Cannes across the way do.

The importance of Algiers as a port is great. It is the principal gate through which the wares of Europe enter and the varied products of North Africa go out; although it commences to feel the rivalry of other Algerian ports such as Oran, Bougie, Philippeville, Arzen, which serve as doors to the outer world for the districts nearest them.

But none is yet a serious rival to Algiers, the size of the harbour, its miles of quays, defying competition. The trade done is enormous; for Algeria produces much that the outer world wants. The wines are sent to-day all over the world and deserve to be even better known than they are. Wool, oil, coral, wax, skins, are exported now as in the days of the Romans. Iron, lead, copper and zinc are the chief metals, though

several others are found in the colony. Tobacco, cork from the forests of Constantine, Grand Kabylia and the province of Algiers, alfa from the High Plateaux, dates from the Sahara and oranges and corn from the Tell, all pass through this port, which for many centuries before the coming of the French sent out only pirates to kill and enslave.

The new arrival is generally surprised to find that the majority of the native inhabitants, not only of the capital, but of Algeria, speak French and speak it well. Servants, labourers, artisans, peasants, beggars, news-boys, street traders, all talk it fluently. The French very wisely make their subject races learn their language, unlike our way in India, where English is unknown to the vast majority of natives and the Civil Service and Indian Army and Staff officers have to learn to speak the vernacular correctly.

Education is not neglected in Algeria. In round numbers the European population is 800,000, the native 5,500,000. In 1,115 French primary schools 2,000 masters and mistresses teach 108,330 boys and girls; while in 518 native primary elementary schools there are 779 masters and mistresses for 30 to 35,000 boys and 2,000 girls. Education is not compulsory for native children; and the Arabs, while usually strongly opposed to it for their daughters, are not averse to it for their boys, although the Kabyles—that is the Berber inhabitants of Kabylia—are.

There are 18 primary superior French Schools; 8 in the Department of Algiers, 5 each in those of Constantine and Oran—with 68 masters and mistresses for 1,000 boys and 1,260 girls.

For secondary instruction there are three *lycées*—one at Algiers with 2,300 pupils and two annexes, one at Mustapha, the other at Ben Aknoun. One at Constantine with 560 and the third at Oran with 1,500 students. There are altogether 6,280 *lycée* pupils. To these are added 2,400 pupils of colleges at Blida, Médéa, Bône, Philippeville, Setif, Mostanagem, Sidi-Bel-Abbes and Tlemçen. A certain number of these youths go on to the great schools in France—the Normale Supérieure, Polytechnique Centrale and St Cyr.

The secondary education of girls is not neglected. There are 2,148 of them divided between the three *lycées* of Algiers, Constantine and Oran and 509 go to the Bône college or to the supplementary course of Philippeville.

The University of Algiers has 529 students *en droit*, or Law, 359 in Medicine, 198 in the School of Science and 160 in the *Faculté des Lettres*. The standard of the professors of the *lycées* and of the University is very high and compares well with that of any similar body of men in Europe or America.

There is a finely-built Medersa or theological college for Mahommedans.

As a winter resort Algiers is not as well known or as popular as it deserves to be. Its climate is decidedly warmer in winter than that of the French and Italian Rivas; and it is a true statement that during that season there is less difference between the daily temperatures of Paris and Nice than between those of Nice and Algiers—to the advantage of the last. Of course one must be prepared for the sudden drop in



temperature that comes at sundown—you meet with that even in India during the cold weather; and I have felt chillier, seen more frost and needed fires at night more in Central India than I ever did in Algiers, where, although most rooms in dwelling-houses and hotels have fireplaces, these are very rarely used.

There is not much rain in winter in Algiers itself; and when it comes does so generally at night. Thunderstorms, however, are not unusual. Occasionally in early spring the sirocco, the hot wind from the deserts of the South, blows fiercely on the city and brings cloudy skies and a choking sultriness.

But it must be clearly understood that the climate of the mountains and high tablelands of the interior differs greatly from that of the sea coast. One must be prepared in winter to experience sometimes heavy rain, bitter cold and perhaps snow on the Hauts Plateaux three or four thousand feet high; and the mountain-tops with an elevation of seven thousand feet are white in May. In the tourist-centre of Biskra thirty-five miles into the desert, and a hundred and forty from the sea, in Tougourt a hundred and thirty miles farther in, the nights and mornings are cold; and to the South, deep in the heart of the Sahara, snow rests in winter on the summits of the Hoggar Mountains nine thousand feet high. Foureau when crossing the Tassili des Adjer with his Mission in December recorded temperatures of seven degrees of frost at a height of three or four thousand feet—and this near the 25th parallel and hundreds of miles into the desert.

Such cold Algiers never knows; and when London

is wrapped in fog and Paris frowns under gloomy skies, this White City of the old Barbary rovers is bathed in sunshine and offers the stranger modern civilisation wedded to the charm of the East. I have known in winter most other countries bordering the Mediterranean north and south—Tunisia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, Sicily, Southern Italy, the Italian and French Rivas—and for climate Algiers is then preferable to any city in them.

And few can offer what Algeria does. Glowing sunlight, blue skies, Oriental colour and pageantry, the triumph of France's toil and sacrifice, the story of Imperial Rome writ large in ruined temples and amphitheatres, sea-washed pirate cities and towns of sun-dried brick lost in sandy wastes, snow-clad mountains and fertile plains and grim deserts where veiled men move silently on fleet camels—all these are hers to give.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STORY OF NORTH AFRICA

DENSE tropical forests once covered North Africa; and in their gloomy depths elephants, rhinoceroses and stranger beasts roamed, dangerous prey for the hunters of big game in those days with their stone axes and spear-heads—weapons that the spade and the plough lay bare to-day in the now treeless uplands of Algeria and Morocco where only jackals and a chance panther are left of all the wonderful fauna. Thus must the land have been when Hercules came to it in the Golden Age when the Gods walked the earth.

Ancient Greek legends tell how this mythological hero of Mycene, the lion's skin hanging from his shoulders, set out to seek the Golden Apples of the Hesperides in a land far to the West, how he travelled through Macedonia, Northern Italy, Gaul and Spain and crossed by the Straits of Gibraltar into a new country where he saw the Giant Atlas supporting the heavens on his shoulders bowed under their weight. A pretty fable apparently.

And yet under the guise of legend it relates a historical fact; the migration of the blonde, blue-eyed

Iberians (originally from the Caucasus) from Greece, Italy, Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula into North Africa as far as the Atlas Mountains by way of Gibraltar and the Pillars of Hercules. This race of fair-skinned warriors, tattooed, tall of stature, crowned with the heads of wild beasts, the skins of which draped their shoulders and hung down their backs—note the similarity of the garb of Hercules!—were known to the darker peoples, the Libyans, who had preceded them into this continent by way of Egypt, as the Barbara, Berabers or Berbers. And this last name endures to the present day to designate the descendants of these wanderers, little changed in appearance from their ancestors who came from the North seven thousand years and more ago. In the mountains of Grand Kabylia within sight of Algiers, in the barren hills of the Aurès towering above the Sahara, in the ranks of the tribesmen of the Riff fighting the Spaniards, or of the Middle and the High Atlas ranges sullenly resisting French dominion in Morocco, and far away in the deserts that stretch almost to the Niger, they are found to-day, these tall Berbers whose blue eyes, fair skins and hair distinguish them from the Arabs around them.

Everywhere throughout North Africa have been discovered megalithic monuments that help to prove their common origin with the Iberians, the Celts and the Celtiberians who erected these great symbols in Europe. And stone axes, weapons and implements found in Morocco and Algeria are identical with those of the Morbihan, the Pyrenees and the South of Spain.

Mixing with the Libyans, dominating them by their

stronger personality, the Berbers gave their name to the northern regions of the continent, which was known as Berbery or Barbary from them. A branch of their race which had drifted through Asia into and across Egypt came in contact with them later. And still later a Scythian-Mongol people, the Hycsos, who, having overthrown the Fourteenth Dynasty, conquered Egypt and the Nile valley and occupied it for three centuries, were driven out westward by the Pharaohs of the Seventeenth Dynasty, allied themselves to the Berbers and led them against Egypt under the Nineteenth Dynasty in the fifteenth century before Christ.

Twice in the days of Rameses II. and his successor Minephtah waves of the invading tattooed nomads, blonde and blue-eyed giants with metal helmets or skulls protected by the heads of wild beasts, swept out of the illimitable West against Egypt.

Then the Berbers and others inhabiting the fertile strip of North Africa between the mountains and the sea settled down as husbandmen and cultivators living in towns or villages, and were entitled Getulians by the ancients. Those of them who wandered with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle about the hills and the high tablelands, tents their only habitations, were known as Numidians or nomads.

The first overseas civilised people to come in contact with them, the Phœnicians, gave them the name of Mahourim, "Westerners," from which were derived Moors, Maures and Mauritania. The Greeks termed them all Libyans. Later the Arabs called the

country Mag'reb, "The West," the name they still give Morocco, the most westerly land of all.

The Berbers, inhabiting a country divided up by mountain ranges and devoid of navigable rivers which would have served as channels of communication, were split up into groups of families and small tribes each jealous of its independence and constantly at war with its neighbours, never uniting under one leader unless for a short war or raid that promised plunder. Hardworking, industrious, brave in battle, they have transmitted their virtues and their vices to their descendants; and the Kabyles of Algeria, the mountaineers of Morocco, the Touareg of the Southern Sahara, resemble to-day in character as in appearance the fair Iberians of ancient Europe from whom they have sprung.

Their being split up into countless tribes, prevented by the conformation of the country from intercommunication, with no feeling of nationality or bond of common religion tending to hold the Berbers of old together, their tribal jealousies sundered them and made them ever ready to ally themselves with foreign invaders to gain a temporary advantage over their neighbours of the same blood. They were thus always an easy prey to an organised enemy from outside.

The Phœnicians, those adventurous merchant sailors from Sidon and Tyre, who daringly steered their barks from known seas out through the Pillars of Hercules into the mysterious Atlantic and traded for tin with the savages of far Britain, did not neglect the Barbary coast. They founded mercantile depots

along the North African shores, generally placed in charge of Jews—then as now distinguished by their commercial aptitude. Thus were established among others on the Tunisian coast colonies at Lamta, Souca, Tunis, Carthage and Benzert.

As they sought no territorial expansion and paid tribute to the local chieftains of the coast the Phœnicians were always welcomed by the Berbers. But when Tyre fell its commercial prosperity passed to Carthage, founded in the ninth century before Our Lord by Elissar the widowed daughter of Mathan, King of Tyre, who had fled from her native city in fear of her brother's vengeance and was hence known as Dido or "the fugitive."

This city was built on the Tunisian coast, a few miles from where Tunis stands to-day. Prospering exceedingly and growing powerful it founded in its turn other colonies on the Barbary coast, among them Hippo (where to-day is Bône), Rus-Cuar (now Philippeville), Djidjel (Djidjelli), Soldea (Bougie), Tingis (Tangiers) and Eikoci (Algiers).

But the Carthaginians, unlike their progenitors the Phœnicians, were guilty of territorial aggression and seized large tracts of country around their cities, reducing the Berber inhabitants to the state of territorial serfs. Unwarlike traders themselves they recruited armies of mercenaries, Gauls, Greeks, slingers from the Balearic Isles, Numidian cavalry and African light infantry. As such hireling troops will do these mongrel soldiers often revolted against their paymasters and were aided by the downtrodden Berber peasants. But despite many trials Carthage flourished

until after three wars she was annihilated by Rome and her possessions passed to her victorious rival.

For many centuries the Romans Republican and Imperial ruled over Northern Africa. Their soldiers pushed as far south as into the Sahara and crossed the Grand Atlas Mountains in Morocco. In Tunisia and Algeria the traveller to-day marvels at the ruined cities and camps, the amphitheatres, temples and triumphal arches, that show how far into Africa the short-sworded warriors, the functionaries and the colonists of Rome extended the dominion of their race.

In A.D. 42 the Roman Emperor divided Barbary into four provinces. The first, the Proconsular Province, comprised Tunisia as it exists to-day. Modern Algeria nearly corresponds with the next two provinces—Numidia extending from the river Tusca, near Tabarka, to the Ampsaga or Rummel that flows by Constantine and stretching from this stream to the Moulouia, Cæsarian Mauretania with Cæsarea (Cherchel) as its capital. The fourth province, Tingitanian Mauretania, with Tangiers as the capital, corresponded to the Morocco of to-day.

A Proconsul residing in Carthage ruled the first as a civil governor, while its military forces and those of the second province were under the orders of the Legate governing Numidia. Two Procurators administered the Mauretaniae. These provincial governors delegated their authority in the interior to native nobles.

The garrison of North Africa then consisted of the 3rd Augustan Legion, six thousand strong, with the headquarters at Lambessa where the tourists can still



see the remains of prætorium, temple and triumphal arch near the more famous ruins of Timgad. These Roman troops were supplemented by others recruited from widely scattered portions of the far-flung Empire—horsemen from the plains of Thrace, the famous Parthian cavalry, agile light infantry from Sardinia and elsewhere. And the Romans enlisted mounted men from the Numidians or nomads of the High Tablelands and foot-soldiers from among the sturdy Berber peasants of the maritime districts and sent them, the latter to serve in the Nile Valley, the former to Belgium, Germany and Pannonia.

Under the dominion of Rome Barbary reached a degree of prosperity, commercial and mercantile, that it has never known since; although under the enlightened rule of France it may hope to attain it again some day. Irrigation to an extent that does not exist even now supplied any defect in the uncertain rainfall and made the soil so productive that, as the old authors said, "under the palms grew olive trees, under the olives fig-trees, under them pomegranates, under these vines, beneath the vines wheat—and when the wheat was reaped vegetables, and after them pot-herbs, were cultivated, all in the same year.

Barbary provisioned Italy for eight months out of the twelve, and in a good season supplied 348,000 tons of corn. One town, Leptis, alone sent to Rome three million pounds of olive oil in a year. North Africa gave the Empire soldiers, sailors, and for her cavalry the graceful, light but sturdy horses, such as the Spahis ride to-day. It exported wine, wax, copper, gold dust and silver ingots. Rome drew supplies of luxuries as

well as necessities from it—black slaves to wait on her patrician ladies, ivory, marble, onyx and precious woods for imperial palaces, gladiators and wild beasts for her circuses. For immense forests covered vast tracts now treeless; and in them roamed herds of wild elephants and stranger animals.

And when in time the throne came to be a prize within the reach of any military adventurer Barbary even supplied her conqueror with emperors; for several wearers of the imperial purple were born on African soil.

Yet all the return that Rome made to the unhappy country was to despise, rob and enslave its native-born inhabitants. Deprived of their land, reduced to serfdom, the wretched Berbers rebelled again and again, always in vain.

Small wonder that they hated Rome and all that she stood for. They eagerly embraced Christianity at first, because its professors were regarded as enemies of the State; but when it became the religion of the Emperors they wandered in will-o'-the-wisp pursuit of every fresh heresy.

In A.D. 429, when a rebellious Roman governor of North Africa, Count Boniface, invited King Genseric and his Vandals—barbarians from the Baltic shores of Germany, who had made their way into Spain—to come to Barbary to his aid, and when, to the number of 80,000 warriors with women, children and non-combatants, they crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, the Berbers welcomed and helped them to end the Roman dominion and establish a Vandal Empire in its place. It lasted a century. The luckless Berbers found them-

selves no better off, and in 533 turned against their new masters and eagerly joined the famous general Belisarius sent by the Byzantine Emperor to win North Africa from the Vandals.

But as usual the Berbers found themselves left in the lurch when the Byzantines were victorious. Again they struck for independence; but tribal jealousies still rendered their efforts fruitless and the land was gradually ruined in the long struggle for freedom. Roman and Greek colonists disappeared, the forests were burned, cultivation gave place to jungle, and Barbary became once more a wilderness.

Loathing the religion of their oppressors the Berbers had abjured Christianity and were sunk again in idolatry or had gone over to Judaism. For thousands of Jews expelled from Palestine in the fourth century B.C. and others driven in the second century A.D. from Cyrenaica, where they had sought refuge after the fall of Jerusalem, had swelled the number of the comparatively few descendants of these Israelites who had come to Africa as the Phœnicians' commercial agents.

The way was cleared for a new faith and fresh invaders. And in the seventh century of the Christian era both came. After two incursions into Tunisia in 641 and 665 the Arabs swept into Barbary from Egypt, a sword in one hand, the Koran in the other, offering death or conversion to Islam to all who opposed them. In 669 the Caliph of Bagdad nominated an old comrade of the dead Prophet to seize and be governor of what he termed the Province of Ifrikya, which means "The Land of Corn." This man, Okba-ben-Mafa,

entered Tunisia, reinforced his army with converted Berbers, built the holy city of Kairouan as a Moslem stronghold, and in 680 marched victoriously through Algeria and Morocco to Ceuta, and then south as far as the Souss, and, riding his horse into the Atlantic Ocean, called on Allah to witness that he had left none behind him who dared deny that God was God and Mahomet was his prophet. But returning victoriously through the north of the Algerian Sahara he incautiously separated himself from his army with only three hundred horsemen, and he and they were all slain by pursuing Berbers a few miles east of Biskra. And to-day tourists motor out from that pleasant winter resort to see the mosque at Sidi Okba that holds his tomb.

But the Arabs came again and swept away unstable Berber kingdoms that rose ephemerally. They welcomed into their ranks on equal terms any defeated warriors prepared to adopt Mahommedanism. A former officer of a Berber queen who had fought against them, Tarik-Ibn-Ziad, a Jewish Berber himself, was made by them governor of Tangier when he became a Moslem. And this man with a Berber force, stiffened by a few Arabs, crossed into Spain, landed near Mount Calpe, since called after him Djebel-Tarik, "The Hill of Tarik," that is Gibraltar now, and thus began the Moorish conquest of Spain.

The progress of the Arabs in Barbary was facilitated by the instant appeal that their religion made to many of the Berbers. This new faith was simple to understand. In it all men were equal, the beggar and the king, and would be equally rewarded in the next life with sensual joys easy to imagine. All Believers paid

only the same one fixed and equitable tax, and the poor man was not, as under the Empire, ground down by countless unjust imposts from which the rich and highly placed were free. There were no priests or prelates to support in idleness; and the doctrines were not difficult for the ignorant to grasp.

So the Berbers readily went over to the new creed; and they held on to it even when in Morocco and Algeria they revolted against the Eastern Caliphs and set up sovereigns of their own race in Tiharet, Tlemçen and Sidjil-Massa. But the Arabs retained their hold on Tunisia.

In the eleventh century occurred the second and greater Arab invasion of Africa that was destined to be the permanent conquest. Formerly the men of Arabia had come in small numbers, had married Berber women, and settling down, often merged with the aborigines. But in this, the Hilalian Invasion as it is called, the Beni-Hilal and other nomad tribes from Egypt and the Libyan desert swept into Barbary two hundred thousand, soon to be a million, strong with their families and herds. Driving the disunited Berbers into the mountains and the Sahara, to be the ancestors of the Kabyles, Chaouias and Touareg of to-day, they occupied the plains of Tunisia, Algeria and part of Morocco, never reaching, however, the extreme west of this last country. Seeking only pasture for their flocks, these human locusts cut down trees, destroyed crops, burned forests, broke down dams and put an end to irrigation and agriculture, and turned the land into a desert again.

But in time the Arabs in Barbary established

kingdoms; and some built cities or occupied existing ones, although many have remained nomads to this day. Moslem monarchs from Arabia to Spain became proverbial for their state, splendour and luxury. The Caliphs of Bagdad, the Almoravide kings in Africa, the emirs in Spain, adorned their capitals with sumptuous palaces built by Byzantine architects and embellished by sculptors. They encouraged arts and letters, science and medicine. The cities of Fez, Marrakesh, Tlemçen, Kairouan and Cordova were centres of light and learning, with famous schools crowded with students even from Christian European lands. From the Alexandrian Greeks the Arabs had learned astronomy, philosophy, physics, mechanics and medicine. From India they acquired arithmetic and algebra, from the Chinese they got the compass, paper and gunpowder. They progressed in geography, literature, mathematics, and gave us the Arabic numerals.

The towns on the Barbary coast, Salé and Rabat in Morocco, Oran, Cherchel, Algiers, Dellys, Bougie and Djidjelli in Algeria, as well as Tunis and Tripoli, became notorious in a far different way. From the Moslem pirates of Spain these sea-bordering cities learned piracy and soon excelled their masters. And then they embroiled Africa with European nations.

But already France had intervened in the affairs of the Continent facing her southern shores. In A.D. 1270 the first French expeditionary force directed against Tunis landed in Tunisia. The last, by the way, did so in 1881 and established the French Protectorate. King Louis IX. was the commander of this first invad-

ing army; but he died of plague and his son, Philip the Hardy, withdrew the troops.

A second equally abortive French expedition landed near Tunis in 1390.

In 1505 pirates from Oran in Algeria ravaged the Spanish coast and burned ships in Malaga harbour. So the Spanish premier, Cardinal Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, raised an army and sent it against Oran, which was captured in 1509. Then in the next year the Spaniards took the then larger and richer city of Bougie, with its 8,000 houses, 30,000 inhabitants and renowned schools of philosophy, medicine, letters and astronomy.

Now Bougie is near Algiers, and its fate so frightened the Algerian citizens that they voluntarily submitted to the Spaniards, who, better to keep a watch on them, built on the tiny isle of Stoffa, before Algiers, a fort called the Peñon de Argel ("The Great Rock of Algiers"), a bastion of which remains to this day.

The origin of Algiers is lost in the mists of antiquity. Legend has it that when after his expedition to the Garden of the Hesperides Hercules was re-embarking at the spot where it now stands, twenty of his comrades remained behind and built this town, which they called Eixosi—which means "twenty"—whence its old name Eikosion. It certainly was a Phœnician trading depot, then a Carthaginian port, and later a Roman town known as Icosium. Probably it got its appellation from twenty small islets or rocks off its shore.

The Byzantines abandoned it and it lay in ruins. The little Berber tribe of the Mezr'anna, fraction of

the Senhadja (then occupying the maritime region between Grand Kabylia and Cheliff) established themselves in the ruins and called the town Argel, a Cymric word meaning "sheltered"—probably referring to its lying on the bay protected by Capes Matifou and Caxine.

The Moslems later named it Djezair-Beni-Mezr'anna, "The Isles of the Sons of Mezr'anna." It arose from its ruins; and in the eleventh century the Cordovan historian, El Bekri, described it admiringly as a town filled with magnificent buildings and monuments, with fine gates and a magnificent mosque that was once a Christian church.

Algiers had many vicissitudes and knew many masters before it saw the Spaniards at its doors in 1510. To get rid of them the citizens called in a famous Levantine adventurer, Aroudj, known by the Christians as Barbarossa or Red Beard, who treacherously turned on them and proclaimed himself Sultan. When he was killed later near Morocco, his brother Kheir-ed-Dine ("Welfare of the Religion" his name means), left in charge of Algiers and menaced by many foes, offered its sovereignty to the Sultan of Turkey, who included it in his dominions and made Kheir-ed-Dine his viceroy or Beylerbeg. This means "bey of beys"; for each of the three provinces, Algiers, Oran and Constantine, was under a bey. The interior of the province of Algiers was administered by the bey of Titeri, residing at Medéa.

Later on the title of Beylerbeg was changed, first to Pasha, then to Dey.

Kheir-ed-Dine gave the Regency of Algiers, as it



was called, the organisation which it retained to the coming of the French. The Viceroy was nominated every three years by the Ottoman Porte in Constantinople. He presided over the *Diwan*, or Council of State, which was composed of the four Secretaries of State, the Grand Administrator, the High Treasurer, the Minister of Marine and the Agha or General Commanding the Army. To these were joined on occasions representatives of the military forces and of the Moslem religious functionaries.

The Regular Army garrisoned the chief fortified places of the Regency and consisted of a few hundred cavalry, the *Sbahihis* or *Spahis* (supplemented in war by the *goums* or contingents of irregular horsemen sent by the beys of provinces), and the infantry, which eventually numbered thirty thousand. This army was known as the *Odjak*, which meant to these Turkish soldiers "the place where their pot boiled," indicating that they were strangers in the land and had no home other than their barracks. For they were janissaries, foreigners recruited at Constantinople and Smyrna, criminals, renegades, scoundrels of every nation. To keep them distinct from the Algerians, whom they were taught to despise, they were forbidden to marry native women. They, however, formed irregular unions, the offspring of which were termed "Koulouglis."

The janissaries' barracks in Algiers is now the splendid Officers' Club in the Square de la République. The raw recruit on arrival in Algiers found himself quite an important person, was addressed as "Effendi" and could aspire to the highest dignities in the State. The ranks of the Invincible Militia, as the army was

termed, were *yoldash*, or priyate, *shaoush* or sergeant, *oda-bashi*, lieutenant, *bouloush-bashi*, captain of a company, *agha-bashi*, major, *oukilhardji*, quartermaster, *kaya*, colonel, *agha* or the general. This *agha* remained only two months in command and then became Member of the Diwan; and the *kaya* succeeded him. Promotion in the Militia went strictly by seniority.

At times Algiers put as many as sixty thousand men into the field in its expeditions against Morocco and Tunis. But as a rule it only concerned itself with the mastery of the sea, by which it lived. Consequently the interior of the Regency was little interfered with and the inland towns were fairly free.

The Marine was simply a navy of pirates, for piracy was the trade by which Algiers existed. Every ship was licensed by the Viceroy to go out to capture the vessels of every nation not allied to Turkey; and a fifth of the plunder brought home went into the State Treasury, whilst the Pasha or Dey had first pick of the female and male captives.

The Algerine navy began with only a few ships and never rivalled in strength that of even a fourth-rate European power; yet for centuries it ruled the seas, devastated the shores of Christian lands as far away as Ireland and Iceland, and extorted tribute in some shape from almost every maritime nation. It is the almost incredible fact that Holland, Portugal, Naples, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and later, the United States of America paid an annual tribute—usually about 25,000 francs—France, England, Spain, Sardinia, Hanover, Tuscany, Ragusa and Venice gave

presents instead of tribute, while Hamburg and Bremen sent naval munitions and material of war. In addition Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were obliged to furnish arms, ropes, masts, spearheads, powder and lead.

And all this to purchase immunity for their merchant ships. Yet more often than not this cowardly policy failed, and the Algerine pirates respected no flag, except perhaps those of Austria and Russia. For these countries, being near neighbours of Turkey, could put effective pressure on the suzerain of Algiers.

It seems incredible that this nest of pirates, this city of at most 180,000 inhabitants, should have defied all Europe for centuries. Spain, France, England, Holland, the United States of America, in turn sent fleets to batter down Algiers; but none succeeded in utterly annihilating it. As usual disgraceful international jealousies prevented the Christian powers from uniting to extirpate this pest of the civilised world; and crime-stained Algiers managed to exist until well into the nineteenth century.

Charles V. failed to destroy it. Napoleon planned its conquest but never carried out his design. At last, in 1816, an English admiral, Lord Exmouth, bombarded it effectively, destroying the greater part of its fleet, and the last of its ships were sunk in the battle of Navarino; so that Algiers never again was a danger at sea. In 1830 its Dey Hassan, still swollen with pride, by an insult to the French consul, whom he struck in the face with his fan, gave France an excuse for ending the pirate kingdom for all time. In the July of that year a French squadron manœuvred before

Algiers and engaged the forts; while an army of 30,000 men disembarked at Sidi Ferruch, a few miles along the coast, and defeated the Algerian troops. Then climbing the hills above the city it attacked the land fortifications and so damaged Fort l'Empereur that its commander blew it up and left Algiers at the mercy of the invaders. The Dey surrendered and was exiled, and his capital was annexed by France.

At first the victors did not seek to extend their conquests; but events gradually forced them to advance farther and farther into Algeria. The city of Constantine, which formed almost a separate principality, was taken after two sieges. Oran was captured. The famous Abd-el-Kader, Bey of Mascara, for years held out with varying success against the French, but was finally forced to surrender and accept exile. Numerous revolts, of which the most dangerous was the Kabyle rebellion of 1871, failed to shake France's hold on the land.

And gradually she pushed her way south until her soldiers have carried the tricolour to the banks of the Niger and the Sahara owns her sway. Her laws give equal justice to white man, brown and black. Her colonists have reclaimed the wastes and restored fertility to the long-ruined country; her financiers are helping to develop the natural resources, the mineral, vegetable and agricultural wealth of Algeria.

French protectorates were established in Tunisia in 1881, in Morocco in 1912; so that now, with the exception of the Spanish zone and the small International zone in the latter empire, all North West Africa is under French control. And here its story rests.

## CHAPTER V.

### ALGERIAN PICTURES

A CURVING bay fringed with white sands and glistening rocks and over it green hills. And where the slopes are steepest a city climbs them to the tree-shaded summits, a city of white houses crowding together, a city spreading out in flower-decked gardens and snowy villas robed with the imperial purple of creepers and half-hidden in the dark foliage of cypress and palm.

And towering up to the blue sky the snow-clad peaks of rugged mountains that dwarf the hills and form a noble setting for this city of Algiers. Algiers, whose story runs back to Hercules and the Golden Apples of the Hesperides through many centuries of storm and strife.

Three hundred years ago! Charles I. sits on an uneasy throne in England; and Louis XIII. reigns in France. For I paint an old-time picture.

The sun shines brilliantly on the sparkling waters of the bay that cream lazily on the sandy shore where a century before they dashed the ships of the Emperor Charles Quint to matchwood and saved the Pirate City. On the curving coast a triangle of high walls, the base on the foul foreshore, the apex at the fortress of the

Kasbah hundreds of feet above, enclose the white mass of crowding houses that runs up the steep hillside. The Algiers of A.D. 1626. The scourge of Christendom. The plague-spot of the Mediterranean.

Behind the curving mole are crowded a hundred hulks, the ships that carry the bloodiest, cruellest pirates of history to harry the coasts of countries as far apart as Italy and Iceland, to seize or sink peaceful merchantmen and bring back their crews and passengers to a horrible slavery. Some of the craft are hoisting sail to set forth on their dread cruises. On one men are plugging shot-holes, patching torn canvas and replacing broken spars by fresh ones sent as tribute from far-distant Norway—repairs needed after the stern fight with the battered prize alongside, that tall Spanish galleon. On its deck a number of men, women and children are being fitted with irons and chained together two by two—unhappy captives whom Death has spared for a worse fate.

Out from the shelter of the mole darts a long, lean galley, twenty great oars on either side churning up the flashing water. And at each oar three wretched Christian slaves, their feet chained to the deck, toil with fettered hands, while on their naked backs blood starts with each stroke of the terrible kourbashes, whips of bull's sinews, unceasingly wielded by the brawny arms of negro taskmasters. Poor wretches! Only in the stinking bagnios at night have they leisure to think of the days when they were free men, Christian men, sailors, traders, gentlemen of France, hidalgos of Spain, merchant princes of Italian cities. And now slaves! Captured when voyaging by sea they are

doomed to toil under the lash until death releases them and their broken bodies are thrown into the merciful water. Some have lost an eye, others have fingers broken and teeth knocked out, by blows from the whips or olive-wood batons of the slave-masters.

The city, so fair to view from the bay, is a foul place of high, almost windowless buildings hemming in narrow, steep alleys noisome with stench and filth, where fettered Christians dispute with starving dogs for offal flung on rubbish heaps. Inside the blind walls of many of the tall houses are tiled courts in which fountains play and marble-railed galleries on which open luxuriously-furnished rooms in which on costly rugs and soft divans lie fair women of many nations robed in shimmering silks and decked with jewels—playthings willing or reluctant of fierce, bearded pirates or still more villanous renegades.

In an open space near a low wall that looks down on the sea stand two men who seem strangely out of place in their surroundings. For it is evident that they are Europeans, yet they are free. One wears a broad-brimmed hat with a long feather, a gold-laced, wide-skirted silken coat, gay breeches and silk stockings, and a sword hangs at his side. The other is clad in the long gown, baggy trousers and heel-less slippers of a Turk, while a turban is twisted about his grey head. But equally with the other he comes in for the black looks of the hook-nosed Jews slinking by and the curses of pious Mahommedans who lounge past them, spitting on the ground as an insult to the Christian dogs that defile the city by their presence.

“ Truly, *mon père*, Algiers is a more dreadful place

than I, with all my experience of Mussulman ways, had any idea of," exclaimed the gaily-clad cavalier in French, addressing his companion in Turkish garb.

"Ah, Monsieur Napollon, only the good God knows all the wickedness and misery of this accursed town. No human brain can imagine it! The sufferings of the slaves in the awful bagnios, the degradation of virtuous Christian women torn from their homes across the sea and subjected to the foulest excesses and brutal lust of these vile beasts in human form! Ah! if only you can succeed in the mission with which King Louis has entrusted you and buy the freedom of even our fellow Frenchmen in slavery here! There are thousands of them alone."

"How many Christian captives are there, think you, within the walls of Algiers?"

"Not less than thirty-six thousand. Yet not even I can tell you the exact number; although for twenty years I have laboured among them, seeking them out in the bagnios, carrying them to hospital if their cruel masters permitted it, giving them the Last Sacraments as they lie dying on the stones that form their beds. Yes, twenty years it is," he went on reminiscently, "since our Order of Our Lady of Mercy sent me to toil here. And how little good have I done!"

The old man was unjust to himself. He was a member of one of the Redemptorist orders of priests founded, as the name implied, to redeem slaves by ransoming them with money obtained from their relatives or raised by charity. They devoted their lives to succouring the wretched captives in every way.

"There is a hospital, then, for slaves?" asked the



cavalier, a Corsican Knight of Saint Michael and gentleman of the court of Louis XIII. of France.

His name was Giudicelli; but he was usually known as Sanson Napollon. He had been the French Consul at Aleppo, and his monarch, who was then allied to the Sultan of Turkey, had sent him to Constantinople to protest against the war waged on France and the thousands of French subjects seized as slaves by the pirates of the cities of the Barbary States along the North African coast—Tunis, Algiers, Oran, Salé, Rabat and others—that nominally acknowledged the Sultan as their suzerain.

And Napollon had come in this year of grace 1626 with letters and Turkish officers bearing the orders of the Commander of the Faithful that attacks on French property should cease and French subjects should be set free.

“A hospital for slaves,” echoed the old priest. “Yes. The hospital of Spain, we call it. Fifty years ago a Capuchin friar was captured by the pirates. He was the confessor of Don Juan of Austria, who sent a sum of sixty thousand livres to ransom him. But the friar preferred to remain a slave and use the money to found a hospital for other slaves. He died in chains himself and his body was flung to the dogs to eat.”

“God rest him! A true man, that!” exclaimed the cavalier. “But tell me, father, what chance have I of succeeding in my mission? I have made little progress so far. I had thought that the Sultan of Turkey’s commands were law unto Algiers; but the Pasha pays little heed to them. Who is the real ruler here?”

The old priest shook his head.

“ There be many masters in this city. The Sultan's writ does not run here if it be contrary to their will. True, his nominee, the Pasha, whom he appoints every three years, is supposed to be the Chief of the State. But if the Algerians be not pleased with him they put him on a ship and send him home to Constantinople.”

“ But he governs? ”

“ To a point, yes. But he rules only with the aid of the Diwan or Council. That is composed of the four Secretaries of State—the Oukilhardji or Minister of Marine and Director of the Arsenal, the Khasnadji or High Treasurer, the Khodja-El-Kheil or Grand Administrator, the Agha or Commander of the Army. With these are joined certain others—representatives of the Moslem clergy and veterans of the Janissaries.”

“ Who are these Janissaries? ”

“ Men recruited at depots established at Constantinople and Smyrna for service here. The worst scoundrels of the Levant. A criminal in Turkey has but to say that he is willing to go to Algiers, and he is set free to do so. There are thirty thousand of them here in the ‘ Inyincible Militia.’ Each is entitled ‘ Effendi,’ or ‘ Lord,’ exempted from all taxation and lodged free in barracks, sure of a pension when no longer fit to serve. See, there go some of them. Veterans those, by their leathern caps and gilded scabbards. Notice how scornfully they look down on the citizens! Ah, now there will be turmoil! ”

The group of swaggering soldiers, from whom peaceful civilians had shrunk aside, found their way blocked

by a crowd of sailors from the pirate ships in the harbour below. These were men of all races, Berbers from the Kabyle mountains, Soudanese negroes, Spanish Moors, renegades from Italy and France. Between the sea-rovers and the Militia was deadly hatred and jealousy; for the sailors could not aspire to any honours ashore, while the soldiers, although each one of them could hope to become General or even Pasha of Algiers, earned small pay compared with wealth that came the seamen's way from the plunder of vessels and the sale of prizes and slaves. How lucrative their piracy was may be judged from the fact that between 1613 and 1621 they captured 447 Dutch, 193 French, 56 German, 60 English, and 120 Spanish ships. To say nothing of those of other nations or those sunk, burned at sea or sold in foreign countries to avoid paying the Pasha his lawful dues of a fifth of their value.

Now fierce looks and angry words are exchanged between these representatives of the Army and the Navy and swords are drawn. The fray begins and men fall.

The old priest plucks at his companion's sleeve.

"Come away, my son; too much hangs upon your life to risk it idly. And when these Moslems come to blows the Christian may chance easily to meet his death-stroke."

Hastily he pulls Napollon aside as a party of sailors in European garb come running by them to the assistance of their mates, plucking their hangers out of the sheaths and cursing in good Anglo-Saxon.

"Stand not in their way, I beg you!" whispers the Redemptorist. "These are worse than any Turk.

English pirates—Christians, an it please you, who league with the infidel to war on their own kind.”

Hastily the pair turn down a side street, and the sounds of the fray die away behind them. As their pace lessens the cavalier looks at the passers-by. White men and elderly women in rags, chains clanking on their wrists and ankles, stagger past them under the weight of heavy burdens. Unkempt, unclean, devoured by vermin, with matted hair foul with dirt, their haggard faces and wasted forms telling of starvation and suffering, they hurry on, afraid to pause a moment to shift their loads or wipe their streaming faces. Poor slaves, death would be a boon!

One has found it. Two old men totter along carrying between them a naked corpse of a European, a skeleton clothed only with tight-drawn skin. As Napollon watches them they throw the body on a filth-heap; and before their backs are turned a pack of starving mongrels are tearing the body to pieces.

The cavalier shudders.

“ God! That such things should be! ” he cries.

“ Alas! my son, there is worse in Algiers. ” And the old man sighs.

Suddenly his face brightens as a slave comes towards them, bending under a heavy load. Unlike all the others that Napollon has seen, this man is smiling and seems to toil cheerfully. As he reaches them he stops for an instant.

“ Is all well with you, Father? ” he asks.

“ Aye, with me. But with you? ” cries the old man.

“ God be praised, yes. Your blessing! ”

The aged priest with tear-filled eyes raises his hand

and blesses him, and he goes on again, nodding a cheerful farewell to them.

“Who is that?” asks the cavalier with curiosity.

“Father Francis, one of our Order,” replies his companion. “You know that by our rules we are bound, when the money we have brought here to buy the liberty of the captives is spent, to free slaves by offering to take their place ourselves and give up our freedom in exchange for theirs. Father Francis has done that.”

“How noble! How God-like!”

“It is only our duty,” said the old man mildly. “I myself wore chains for five years in place of a young Italian whose poor family had no money to ransom him. But then the Father Superior thought that I could do better work free and sent five hundred livres to purchase my liberty. He forbade my exchanging myself again.”

“What is this? Who are these men?” cried Napollon.

Four or five Jews were dragging along the rough street by ropes a hurdle on which lay the bleeding, naked body of a white man, who moaned feebly as he was bumped over the ruts. Beside the hurdle, shouting out abuse, ran a number of Mahommedans and Jews mixed who struck at him with sticks, hurled stones and spat in the face of the dying wretch.

The priest turned sadly away from the awful sight.

“These are Spanish Moors and Jews who, because the Christians drove them out of Spain, seek to revenge themselves by buying at random some Spaniard who is a slave here and putting him to death. These men will drag that poor wretch round until he is dead.”

They had reached a long street closed at both ends and known as the Badestan.

“ Ah, here is the spot to which I wish that I could bring all the Christian monarchs and peoples of Europe to behold a sight that should fire them to war upon this accursed city until not one stone remained upon another. It is the Slave Market. Look! ”

At one end of the Badestan a large crowd of Moslems were gathered. Some sat on mats in front of a coffee-house, smoking chibouques and drinking from small brass cups. Some lounged against the walls, others stood about. Their eyes were turned on a group of men, women and children, all except the youngest chained and all mother-naked. They were captives brought in by pirates the day before and now exposed for sale. Europeans, all.

The men's backs were bleeding from the whips of the slave-traders; and, prodded with swords, they were forced to run up and down before the buyers. The white skin of some of the female prisoners was striped and torn by the lash. But the wretched women suffered more from the lewd gaze and the rude handling of appraisers of their value and would-be purchasers, who pawed them and felt them all over as though they were cattle.

The sales concluded, weeping children were torn from their mothers, young girls from their parents, wives from their husbands, to be dragged away to the harems of bestial brutes in human form.

The cavalier crushed down a mad desire to draw sword and rush in among the crowd of buyers and lookers-on and strike blindly until he fell dead himself.

But he registered a solemn vow to spend every crown he possessed in ransom of as many wretched slaves as he could.

And well he kept his oath. At his own expense alone he bought the freedom of over two thousand French slaves, besides liberating others with funds supplied by the King or various cities in France; and he left no French subject in chains when he finally sailed from the Pirate City.

A true historical picture this of life in Algiers. Sanson Napollon earned but little thanks from his ungrateful countrymen and was killed by the Genoese in 1633.

Spread me another canvas!

Over the blue waters of the Bay of Algiers a majestic fleet of white-sailed warships is strung out from Point Pescade to the Mole. At the peak of bomb-vessel, frigate and line-of-battle ship floats the white ensign of the Bourbons; for it is a July day in 1830 and a Bourbon king sits on the throne of France. From the open ports the grinning muzzles of the guns look out and bark defiance at the Algerine forts too far away for the cannon-balls fired from ship or shore to do aught but splash harmlessly in the sea between.

But not so high up above the doomed city. The grey mass of Sultan Kalassi, the big fortress that tops the hill over Algiers, is wreathed in smoke as it fruitlessly answers the shot and shell that rain on it from the French siege-batteries. The dead bodies of its artillerymen lie across their heated guns, and its fire dwindles. In vain Fort Bab Azoun and the Kasbah try to aid it. Below the brow of the hill the storming-columns are

forming up, and their blue ranks are tipped with gleaming steel.

Suddenly a sheet of flame shoots up to the cloudless sky; and in a pillar of smoke a mass of stones, bricks, and human bodies is flung up to fall far and wide, most of it on the terrified city below, crushing to death scores of its people. The despairing commander of the fortress has blown it up.

In the Kasbah the Tyrant of Algiers, Hussein, the last of the Deys or Pashas, rushes madly out to the crowds of soldiers and citizens who have come to beg him to surrender to the all-conquering Frank.

“Never! Sooner would I blow up my palace, Kasbah and city!” he cries and, brandishing a loaded pistol, runs towards the powder-magazine.

But his subjects fling themselves on him and disarm him by force; and he slinks back into his harem to await his doom among his weeping women.

Scarcely has the smoke of the explosion died away over the wrecked Sultan Kalassi—Fort l'Empereur, they call it now, rebuilt and serving as a military prison—than a battalion of gallant, red-breeched infantrymen dash over the smouldering ruins and plant the flag of France on them.

And on this day, 4th July, 1830, the Dey of Algiers surrenders his city and himself to the victors, and the hellish rule of the Pirate Lords is ended for ever.

A Picture of To-day. In bay and harbour lie great grey hulks of battleship and cruiser and the topheavy shapes of destroyers moored alongside low, flat submarines. On most floats the tricolour of France; but



the Stars and Stripes or the White Ensign, the Red, White and Green, and the Yellow and Red of Spain are seen.

The long front of Algiers with white mosques dwarfed by the massive stone blocks of six-storied buildings is gay with fluttering flags and crowded with a swarming mass of humanity of many races. French, Spanish, Maltese, Italians, city-dwelling Moslems in red caps and store clothes, country and desert Arabs stately in camel-rope-bound turban, white *hlafa* and flowing burnous, cheery blue-eyed, sandy-haired Berber labourers in ragged garments, white-veiled women and gaily-clad children, all wedged together on the pavements of the long boulevard behind the lines of troops with fixed bayonets keeping the roadway clear.

And these soldiers, white, brown and black, tell the story of the past hundred years in Algeria. Dark blue, red-braided shell-jackets and baggy red trousers mark the Zouaves, the gallant French infantrymen whose predecessors conquered North Africa in a century-long campaign. Turquoise-blue, yellow-braided jackets and trousers for the Tirailleurs Indigènes, the Arab and Berber soldiers who, now as in bygone days when they were called Turcos, fought shoulder to shoulder with their French comrades against German foes. Grinning negroes in khaki with long tassels to their red caps—Senegalese these to tell how France's African Empire has extended.

And now from warship and fort the guns' roar and the white smoke drifts away over the sea; and the mountains and hills that have echoed the sound so often in the past centuries look down impassively on

man and his frail handiwork. And along between the lines of soldiers comes a gay procession.

A Frenchman in uniform with drawn sword, but whose cap-band of silver oak-leaves marks him a Civil Officer, leads it on a powerful bay horse well trained and walking steadily along in strong contrast to the savaging, screaming stallions behind it. White or grey almost without exception, silken-coated with long manes and tails to their fetlocks, high-peaked saddles, headstalls and bridles gay with red, purple or blue velvet stiff with heavy gold embroidery, they are the priceless, dearest possessions of the men who bestride them. Bearded, well-featured, hawk-eyed these riders, whose fathers, or mayhap themselves, for some are white-haired, have fought the French in fierce razzia or desperate rebellion; and the curved, silver-hilted scimitars bared in their sinewy hands have assuredly drunk deep of Christian blood, for they have passed from father to son through many generations.

And now these Arab caïds, chiefs of tribesmen from the sea to the Sahara, robed like princes in scarlet burnouses heavy with gold embroidery and adorned with enamelled crosses and stars of French orders of chivalry, with their long red boots thrust into silver stirrups, are riding peacefully behind a Frank, obedient to his signal.

And behind them on lean, lithe horses with tossing manes come other Arabs in the same Bedouin dress, white headgear wound around with camel-hair cord, an inner white burnous flung back over the outer red one showing open red shell-jackets, baggy breeches and wrinkled red leather boots. These are the famous

Spahis, recruited from the warlike tribes of the South, whose curved sabres have flashed on many a battlefield in Africa, Europe and Asia under the silken folds of the tricolour.

Then handkerchiefs flutter, hats are raised and cheers go up as, drawn by big artillery horses ridden by French gunners, a high carriage comes by in which sits a small, white-haired man whose hat is waved in incessant reply to the greetings from crowded pavements, balconies and roofs.

He is dressed in sober civilian garb and looks a modest, unassuming gentleman. Yet in his honour the guns roar, the flags wave and chieftains whose ancestry dates back to Mahomet's time escort him through the city in which for centuries the Christian was a dog and less than a dog.

For he is the President of the French Republic and France rules in Algeria to-day.

A night picture this. Bowered in palms and flowering bushes on the steep hillside of Mustapha above the bay stands a fairy palace. The white dome, the graceful arches, blaze with a myriad lamps and dim the stars. Lights twinkle among the dark vegetation, outline the paths, shine from the foliage. Into the still night music floats out over the sea far below.

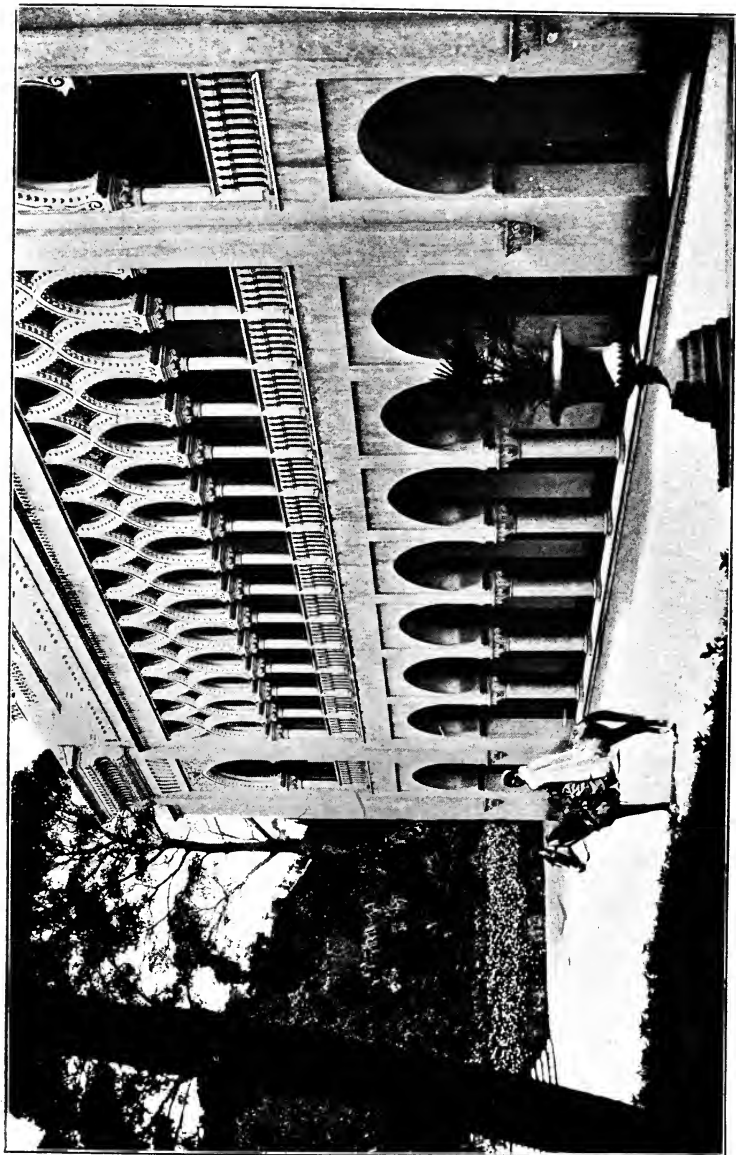
An immense chamber with carved cedar ceiling, chiselled white columns and walls gleaming with bright mosaics and gay with painted scenes of Algeria and its peoples. Large as this great salon is it is yet too small for the gay crowds that fill it and overflow out into the tiled corridor outside, the marble staircase, the galleries that look on the pillared Court of Honour of the Summer

Palace of Algiers. For to-night the Governor-General of Algeria gives a State Ball in honour of the President; and, spacious as is his official home, it cannot contain the thousands of his guests.

A kaleidoscope of varied, shifting colours. The bright hues of the ladies' dresses are dulled by the scarlet and gold burnouses of Arab caïds, the gay uniforms of officers of Spahis, Chasseurs d'Afrique, Tirailleurs Indigènes, Colonial Infantry and Desert Camelry. With them compete the gold epaulettes and dark blue of many Navies—French, American, British, Spanish, Portuguese—whose ships lie visible in the bay below outlined in tiny electric lights from truck to water's edge.

Bands play upstairs and down, but dancing is not possible. In a large white room of Moorish architecture glowing with the bright hues of Eastern rugs are set out card-tables. At the first sits a French military officer playing bridge with three Arab caïds whose scarlet burnouses are covered with decorations. Solemnly these chiefs from Tell and Tableland and Sahara study their cards or discourse on the last rubber in fluent French. And around them sit or stand a throng of other caïds or sheikhs in gold-embroidered velvet garments under their flowing drapery, following the fortunes of the game and awaiting their turn to cut in.

Presently the dense crowds in hall and court press eagerly forward and stare open-eyed. Down the broad marble staircase lined with interested guests come six tall men in garb bizarre and strange even in this medley of costume. From turbaned head to ankle they are draped in black or dark blue, though over it one wears



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

THE SUMMER PALACE, MUSTAPHA SUPÉRIEUR.



the scarlet burnous that is an alien dress to him. On their bare feet are sandals. On left arm from elbow to wrist a cross-hilted dagger is fastened, pommel to hand, and a long straight sword with silver scabbard at each man's side. They are covered with amulets—little metal boxes or leather bags containing Koran texts in parchment, lion's teeth or claws, scraps of giraffe skin. But, strangest thing of all, each one is veiled to the eyes with a long black veil that hangs to his chest.

No wonder the civilised guests press forward to gaze on these desert wanderers. For they are chieftains of the legendary Touareg, those strange masked raiders from the far south of the Sahara. From the rugged mountains of the Hoggar they have come hundreds of miles on their swift white camels to pay homage to the great Sheikh of the Roumis whose daring explorers and devoted soldiers have extended their empire from the Mediterranean to the Niger River. And the grim veiled figures complete the picture.

From the sublime to the ridiculous! A smaller canvas is needed for the next picture, for it portrays just a group of boys.

Real street Arabs these. They are gathered together before the *terrasse* of a European café that looks on a shady garden filled with the exotic foliage of palm, banyan and bamboo. Of all ages from eight to fourteen—some in tattered blue cotton gowns to their bare ankles, others in ragged breeches and shirts, but all with the red cap—fez, you call it in Turkey, tarboosh in Egypt, checchia or shesshia here—that, borrowed from the infidel Greeks, is now the mark of the True Believer the world over. Some carry bundles of news-

papers and call out "L'Algérie," "Nouvelles," or the names of the journals you see on the kiosks of Paris. Others, with boxes tucked under their arms and shoe-brushes in their hands, inspect with anxious eyes the boots of the straw-hatted beer and coffee-drinkers at the little white marble tables.

"*Cireur* (Polisher), *m'sieu?*" cries one, and, darting between the chairs, flings himself at the feet of a seated European.

"*Makache cireur* (No shoeblack needed)," says the drinker in pidgin-French. "*Va-t-en!*"

The disappointed shoe-shiner withdraws reluctantly, his eager gaze sweeping over the footgear around him. A smudge on a dandy's boot arrests his eyes. Again he offers himself, this time with better fortune. Then with a few coins clinking in his hand he hurries off round the corner into a side street to seek the rest of the group who have already disappeared there. And then newsvendors, shoeblacks and beggar-boys indulge in a quarrelsome game of pitch and toss. The fiercest, angriest gambler of them all is an undersized boy of ten whose pinched face and hacking cough are a sure income to him and bring in the coppers to be thus squandered. Now he loses all he has, and with foul-mouthed abuse of the winners takes himself off.

And five minutes later on the other side of the square a kind-hearted old lady is deeply touched at the sight of this poor, starved boy crouching despondently on the hard pavement with his back against the railing—and out comes her ready purse.

An Algerian picture should be full of light to match the sunshine. But there is shadow in some.



A pleasant summer night. Across the bay the lights on the hillside of Mustapha Supérieur climb up to mingle with the stars. Around the squares of Algiers the cafés are filled and the tired loungers have deserted the streets for the marble-topped tables and cooling drinks.

The glass doors of a fashionable hotel swing open and the French hall-porter bows politely as an Arab passes out. But a superior Arab. On the breast of his snowy white woollen burnous is the red rosette and enamelled cross of the Légion d'Honneur and the bright-coloured ribbons of a few other orders. His long and soft scented red leather boots are thrust into heel-less babouches and shuffle over the pavement as their wearer saunters idly under the arcades. And, as he goes, a couple of shadows detach themselves from a dark pillar and two Arabs steal along the deserted street after him with the noiseless tread of the rare panther of their stony hills.

The caïd strolls on carelessly, thinking little of enmities that he may have kindled in the exercise of his authority among his tribesmen so far away in the barren wastes of the south. For he has the whole power of the French Republic, whose executive officer he is, behind him. Of course a rifle in the shadow of a rock in the desert spaces is no respecter of persons. But rocks and sand and oases of the Sahara are all far enough away now. This is Algiers, a civilised and well-policed city, a Paris *in petto* by the sea. A stealthy footfall, a panther's spring—and a knife flashes in the light of the incandescent gas lamps to plunge deep in the caïd's back. And with burnouses streaming

behind them two Arabs fly different ways along the empty street. The vengeance of a desert vendetta is accomplished.

But there is a companion picture. The silent thoroughfare is not completely empty. A white man, a French civilian, chances to be coming along and witnesses the tragedy. He is unarmed.

But France does not breed cowards. He has marked the assassin, and unhesitatingly he gives him chase. The poet may sing of the swift-footed Arab, but the heel-less babouche will never outrun the prosaic European boot, and the pursuer closes with his man. The murderer turns savagely and stabs at him with the reddened knife. The Frenchman is wounded, falls, and the native rushes on free.

But only for a moment. Despite the blood streaming from him the courageous white man staggers to his feet, takes up the chase again, overtakes and captures the assassin.

And the French police, unrivalled in detective work, are not long in finding his accomplice; and the two Arabs face red-robed judges in the big Palais de Justice not far from the scene of their crime and hear their death sentence pronounced.

But they cheat the guillotine in the end; for their lives are spared, and they are sent overseas to a convict settlement in French Guiana.

Chained together they climb the side-ladder of the prison ship that is to take them across the ocean. And, ere they step on its deck, they check for a moment to look on the glorious panorama of white city, gay gardens, green hills and snow-clad mountains that make the last Algerian picture on which their eyes will ever rest.

## CHAPTER VI

### FROM ROSE TOWN AND THE STREAM OF THE MONKEYS TO THE KSAR OF BOGHARI

THE Square de la République in Algiers is already full of animation, although the small clock near the Municipal Theatre shows that it is not yet nine o'clock in the morning. Under the bamboos and banyan trees of the shady Public Gardens passes a cosmopolitan throng—Frenchmen in straw hats and black suits, Arabs in long, flowing burnouses, white-shrouded Moorish women veiled to the eyes and neat little shop-girls, French, Maltese, Sicilian, Spanish, in short skirts and silk stockings. A barefooted Arab boy in a ragged blue gown, his only garment, on his head a checchia, runs across the square with a bundle of newspapers under his arm and calls out "*La Dépêche! La Dépêche Algérienne!*" as he goes.

From the front seat of a big motor diligence with the words "Boufarik—Blida" painted on the sides, I watch the other passengers for these two inland towns climb up to their places. There is an officer of a Tirailleurs Indigènes regiment in khaki, Sam Browne belt and gold-ringed *képi* with its distinctive broad band of pale blue. Then a stout Frenchwoman with a restless,

noisy child which starts at once to make itself a nuisance and is deservedly well slapped for it. Two Arabs follow, their rounded head-dress covered with the *hlafa*, a thin white veil which, bound round above by coils of brown, camel-hair rope, hides the back of the head and neck and the cheeks, and is tucked away under the *gandaura*, the long garment worn under the burnous, the white woollen cape with a hood hanging down the back. With them is a woman enveloped in the ample white, shrouding cloak worn by Arab females which conceals her pink jacket and baggy trousers. Her face is hidden by the lace-trimmed *adjar*, a veil that hangs below the eyes. But the solemn infant that she carries is clothed in European knitted baby-clothes. Two straw-hatted young Jews in blue suits and a swarthy-faced Maltese in a bowler make up the rest of the passengers, most of whom are going to Blida, the pretty little garrison town 32 miles away at the foot of the Atlas Range. I am bound for it myself, for it is the end of the diligence's journey; and there I must find some other conveyance to take me on to the Gorges of the Chiffa, the river that cuts its way through the great Atlas Mountains and forms a famous and lovely pass.

Beside the big vehicle stands our driver, a sandy-haired, blue-eyed Kabyle, with the light complexion that so many of the Berber race owe to the Vandal blood in them—for the Vandals, who carved out a kingdom in North Africa after the Byzantine monarchs, came from Germany. This descendant of theirs wears the red checchia of the Moslem; but his blue overalls and the wrist-watch which he compares with the Square clock are significant of the progressive spirit of his race, so

infinitely more go-ahead than the stagnating Arabs. He climbs up to his place at the steering wheel, while his young assistant in checchia and a ragged store suit cranks up the engine. Then with a warning squawk of the motor-horn the long vehicle moves off slowly, dodging electric trams, hired victorias and seven-horsed carts, while Arab newsboys and Jew street vendors of gold-embroidered bags, cheap Kabyle jewellery and imitation Moorish scimitars, skip out of the way.

Around by the railings of the tree-filled gardens in the Square until the view of the sea bursts on us, past the arcaded sidewalk of the splendid Boulevard along the wall over the harbour; and then the diligence quickens its pace until up a steep slope it turns away from the sea and stops beside the General Post Office, the dazzlingly-white and splendid pile of domed buildings in the Neo-Mauresque style. Here is the loveliest part of New Algiers, the wide square with a shady thicket of pollarded trees, on one side a view of the harbour and the sea beyond and the steep slopes of Mustapha Supérieur, on another the terraced public garden gay with palms and flowers below the green hill topped with the high obelisk to the memory of the dead soldiers of Africa that crowns the city.

Postbags for villages not on the railway and one or two more passengers are taken aboard; and on we start again, up the long Rue Michelet which, lined with cafés, shops and flats, leads out of the city to the beautiful suburb of Mustapha Supérieur clinging to the steep hills that rise above the blue water of the sunlit bay. Up between green gardens splashed with the brilliant reds and purples and pinks of bougainvillea, poinsettia

and roses clothing the white walls of the red-tiled houses. By the lovely Bardo, the ancient Summer Palace of the Deys of Algiers, by the modern one of their successor, the French Governor-General, guarded by picturesque Spahis in scarlet uniforms draped with long white burnouses. On by the imitation Moorish architecture of the English Church, by villas and hotels, swinging round the sharp curves of the zigzagging road, passing electric trams, automobiles and other big diligences coming in from a dozen different routes ending in this road. At length we reach the pinewood of the Bois de Boulogne that tops the hill and the small obelisk of the Colonne Voirol where the view of inland valley and mountain replaces the glorious panorama of sea, shore, and the climbing houses of Algiers now left behind us.

Down the sharply-curving road skirting a deep wooded ravine, by terraced fields on the steep hillsides, on between hedges of wild roses or the sharp spikes of aloes. The East and the West meet. Here are white houses of typical Moorish architecture, once the country mansions of Algerine pashas and now the residences of rich French colonists. There are red-tiled farms with hangars and sheds sheltering mechanical reapers and motor-traction ploughs or lines of the huge metal tanks that replace the wine casks in a modern vineyard. Here are palms, orange and fig-trees and the broad, drooping leaves of the banana contrasting with pines, cherry and apple trees and fields of the homely cabbage. There the familiar red of poppies, here the dull green of exotic cactus and aloe.

We have entered the Mitidja Plain, the marvellously productive belt of cultivation between the ridges above

Algiers and the cloud-capped chain of the Atlas Mountains that now stretches along to our left not many miles away. Its fertility is beyond belief. It rivals the famous Conca d'Oro around Palermo. In the days of Sallust it was the Granary of Rome and under the Emperors, the Byzantine and the Vandal rule its harvests helped to feed Europe. But when the Curse of God fell on North Africa in the shape of the Arab Conquest its ruin began. Gradually greedy Moslem rulers taxed the husbandman out of existence, agriculture languished and died. The land no longer cultivated became a jungle, its rivers spread into fever-breeding marshes, famine and pestilence reigned supreme. When the French took Algiers in 1830 the Mitidja was only a poisonous waste; and in subsequent years Algeria's soldier-rulers tried to dissuade its daring pioneer-colonists from trying to reclaim it, for they grudged the soldiers needed to protect the outlying farms from Arab attacks and had no faith in the agricultural future of the colony. "This poisonous Mitidja!" said General Duvivier in 1841, "Let us leave it to the jackals, the brigands and to Death. It will never be made healthy and habitable."

But—all honour to the farmers!—they persevered; and France and Algeria are their debtors to-day. Wide-stretching fields of waving grain, vast vineyards producing excellent wines, and large orange groves, replacing the feverish marshes and jungles of less than a century ago, are the glorious monument of these gallant colonists of France who sleep now under the battlefield on which they vanquished the combined forces of Arabs and Nature.

The well-kept road sweeps down to the sleepy, tree-shaded *place* of a little town, as French in its character as though it were in the Mother Country; although its name, Birmandreis—in Arabic, “The Well of the Captain”—tells of its Moslem origin. Then up a long slope again and on to another and busier wayside village, Birkadem, or “The Well of the Negress,” from its fountain built by Hussein Pasha in 1797—and the white folk coming to the doors of café, shops and blacksmith’s forge, the short-skirted girls with Marcelle-waved hair standing on the sidewalk to see us go by, again create the illusion of a provincial town in France. Indeed, only the Kabyle labourers in the fields ploughing with mixed teams of oxen, mules and horses between long rows of vines or sprinkling the green leaves with sulphate of copper, anywhere remind us that we are in Africa. Or the work-hating Arab sleeping contentedly in the shade of the roadside tree.

A lonely school, with small white boys and girls playing beside it, makes me wonder where its pupils come from, until I note the big farmhouses scattered among the fertile fields near it. The road still runs on parallel to the mountains for miles, then turns sharply to the left and, heading towards them, enters Boufarik, a well-laid-out, prosperous European town of eight or ten thousand inhabitants. Its tree-shaded streets, cafés, public gardens, church, and the big market-place, would do credit to the Mother Country; and it differs in appearance from a French provincial town only by its modern aspect. The diligence pulls up in it for a ten minutes’ halt; and some of the passengers leave us here.



On again by cornfield and vineyard—and now by orange groves as well—past a memento of the days when every foot of this ground was watered with French blood, a monument to the gallant young Sergeant Blandin who in 1841 with twenty-two youthful soldiers at Beni-Mered held three hundred Arabs at bay for hours until only five of his party were alive when help arrived.

Soon by the roadside two-storied villas bowered in flower-filled gardens announce that we are approaching Blida; and the diligence passes through a gateway in the wall surrounding the pretty little town at the foot of the Atlas Mountains, the town dear to the heart of Arab poets of bygone days, the town that Sidi Ahmed ben Yousef called "The Little Rose."

Although the history of Blida dates back far beyond the French occupation it is now a typical inland French-built Algerian town. For it was destroyed by an earthquake in 1825 and, though soon re-erected a little distance from its former site, the Arab edifices were again shaken down in another earthquake in 1867 and only the new and more solidly constructed buildings of the invaders survived. And they have been added to and improved, until Blida is now a charming little town of wide streets and squares lined by typically French colonial houses, villas, shops, hotels, cafés and barracks; and one has to hunt in odd corners to find anything essentially native. Like most other Algerian towns it is surrounded by a loopholed wall sufficient for defence against ill-armed insurgents; but as the Pax Gallica rests on the land the wall is now falling down in places.

Blida was one of the first inland towns captured by the French after the fall of Algiers.

Built at the foot of the Atlas Mountains at a height of nearly 800 feet above the sea and on the Oued-el-Kebir stream which flows into the larger river the Chiffa close by, Blida is well supplied with water; and the country around it is noted for its fertility and its numerous orange groves, vine nurseries and gardens. In the flourishing days of piracy in Algiers the town was the favourite holiday resort of the corsairs who came there to recuperate after the hardships of the sea and the turmoil of battle and spill their ill-gotten gold into the laps of its courtesans. For it was a hotbed of vice. Its brothels were filled with the women of all nations of Europe, Africa and Asia, captured at sea or in coastal raids or brought by caravans from the interior. Arab poets lauded it to the skies for the beauty of its situation, for its climate, for its sensual delights that were a foretaste of the Moslem Paradise, for its lovely flowers that earned for it the titles of "The Rose Town" and "The Little Rose."

But even among the followers of the Prophet there were ascetic and holy men; and one of them anathematised Blida and asked Allah to rain destruction on it.

"They call thee Little Rose. I term thee Harlot," he cried, as he prayed that ruin might befall it. But the pirates still flocked to it in carriage, on horseback or in litters borne by wretched Christian slaves; and the wine-bibbers and courtesans mocked at the holy man. But when the mountains shook and seemed about to fall on them, when the earth gaped and the

houses tumbled in ruins about them they remembered his words and prayed for his intercession—too late!

The memory of the punishment of its sins has faded from the minds of its native inhabitants to-day; and, although the European town is decorous and well-behaved, there is in the Arab portion a quarter that shelters the successors of the gay ladies of pirate days, a quarter of whitewashed houses with flat roofs, blank outer walls and iron-studded doors with small grated openings in them a foot or so from the sill. And when the narrow lanes are dark light streams through these peepholes and shows the pretty, painted faces of girls seated on the ground and peering through at the burn-oused Arab or turquoise blue-uniformed native soldier who bends down and begs Fathma or Ayesha or Zohra to admit him. Or through the gratings the laughing women exchange banter with squatting groups of jesting men outside.

And suddenly the disciplined tramp of soldiers rings through the whitewashed alleys; and a night patrol of Tirailleurs Indigènes on regimental police duty marches through the quarter of the Daughters of Joy. And the corporal in charge halts them while he stops Arab civilians in flowing robes and takes from them the wire-bound heavy sticks—*matraques* they are called—that against town regulations they carry and which are as effective weapons in a street riot as the Indian *lathi*. And when female shrieks and male voices raised in oburgation ring out from a closed house near by the *sous-officier* pauses to listen with ear trained to distinguish between a mere brothel brawl and a murderous outrage by an angry Arab with a ready knife.

By day this quarter is peaceful and picturesque. On the flat roofs, by the doors, sit groups of girls in pink and yellow and blue silk jackets, baggy trousers and gaudy skirts. Here at a doorway one is playing draughts with a bearded, elderly and most respectable-looking Mussulman; and benevolent-looking men squat beside them and follow the game intently.

The open door gives an attractive glimpse of a white courtyard inside shaded by trellised vines. A group of dark-eyed girls with whitened faces and rouged cheeks and crosses tattooed on chin and forehead are lounging at the entrance, gay as tropical butterflies in their flimsy silken garments of bright colours. Should you signify a desire to inspect the establishment they smile on you and show white teeth between reddened lips as they pray you in French and Arabic to enter. Pass through the doorway into the little hall that opens on the square court, across which a vine has been trained to give needed shade from the summer sun. Around the court are little cells with colourwashed walls, one for each girl. Enter one of them. In a recess a high, hard Moorish bed with glittering brass frame. A foot from the ground in another recess a low, cushioned masonry bench. On the wall a few photographs of Arab girls in gala dress and one of some favourite native soldier in uniform, smirkingly self-conscious and mindful of the photographer's instruction to strike an attitude. Over these is hung a thick candle three feet long, bedizened with gold leaf and coloured paint and paper flowers and ornaments. A "marabout candle" this, to be burned before a shrine or the tomb of a Moslem saint to bring a blessing.

And on another wall is a framed printed paper in French—a warning of the danger of disease and advice as to how to guard against it; official instructions ordered by the municipal authorities to be exhibited in every room of these Houses of Joy.

But this quarter is placed discreetly to one side of Blida; and the respectable citizen and visitor knows nothing of it. For them the band of the *Tirailleur* regiment in garrison plays in the *Place d'Armes*, the pleasant, tree-shaded square in the centre of the town where the café tables are laid under the arcades of the side-walks and the motor-diligences come from and go to Algiers and *Medéa* and the luggage-laden omnibus rattle up from the railway station to the hotel with its windows looking out on the square. There is, too, the lovely *Jardin Bizot*, a bower of wonderful foliage and flowers which takes its name from its creator, an Engineer general who was killed in the trenches before *Sebastopol* in 1855 at the age of 70. And further out is the *Sacred Wood*, where gnarled olive trees shade the tomb of the holy *Sidi Yakoub* to which devout Moslem pilgrims come to pray.

Blida possesses a renowned Government horse-breeding establishment where one can see the finest specimens of pure-bred Arab and desert stallions procurable.

Although its proximity to Algiers and the frequent service of trains and motor-diligences make it a spot to which most travellers find their way, one to which the hordes of transatlantic tourists from the big American steamers are whirled in their one-day visit to Algeria, Blida is not a town merely for sightseers, but an

important agricultural and mercantile centre with a civic life of its own, a town that will grow with the years.

It was founded in 1553 by a famous traveller, Ahmed-El-Kebir—Ahmed the Great—a holy marabout who had visited Mecca, Damascus, Aleppo, Stamboul, Cordova and Andalusia, but was nowhere tempted to linger until he was captivated by the beauty of the site on which he built Blida, which means “The Little Town.” But many termed it Ourida, “The Little Rose.” Barbarossa, the famous pirate Kheir-ed-Dinn who was ruling Algiers, was his friend and helper, and peopled Blida with Andalusian Moorish refugees, driven out of Spain in 1499 by the victorious Christians. Their descendants can be to-day distinguished from their Arab and Berber fellow-citizens. A very holy man was this Ahmed and gifted with the miraculous power of making water gush from rocks when he struck them with his staff. So says the pious legend; but the truth probably was that he had learned hydraulics and irrigation from the Spanish Moors, past-masters in the art, and applied his knowledge for the benefit of his townfolk.

To these Andalusian refugees in the sixteenth century is attributed the introduction of the orange, in Arabic “narandj,” which is a source of wealth to the district around Blida. Yet some folk believe the “Golden Apples” that Hercules sought in the Hesperides to be simply the yellow fruit of the orange trees growing in the shadow of giant Atlas now as in that vanished age.

The mountains tower high above Blida; and from the cedar-clothed summit of the Abd-el-Kader, 4,887 feet high, there is a glorious view over hill, plain and

sea. Away to the east are the Djurdjura Mountains with the 7,500 feet Lella-Khadidja queening it among their snow-clad peaks. To the west are the imposing mass of the Chenoua and the Mouzaia and the two Zaccar, to the north is the ocean, and to the south the Ouarsenis and the fort-crowned Boghar keeping its watch towards the far-away desert.

No need for the inhabitants of Blida to cross the Mediterranean for winter sports; for above their heads on the snowy slopes of the Col of Chr ea, 4,491 feet above the sea, ski-ing has been introduced. And to add to the amenities of life they have their own mineral water from the springs of Les Glaci eres seven kilometres away, water that in chemical constituents resembles the Eau d'Evian (source Cachet).

I drove away from this favoured little town in a carriage drawn by two lean but tireless Arab horses on an excellent road like most in Algeria, passing between rose-bowered villas, fields of corn, barley, oats and tobacco, groves of orange, mandarine and lemon trees, vineyards and vine nurseries. To my left rose up the long chain of the Atlas Mountains a mile or two away, their lower slopes terraced by the industrious Berber hillmen into green fields, their summits veiled in clouds. Occasionally their continuity was broken, and from deep ravines rivers flowed out into the plain. From bank to bank of each French engineers had thrown fine bridges, the first of which was over the Oued-el-Kebir. Beside this stream higher up are the tombs of the holy Ahmed and his sons.

Farther on road and railway were thus carried across the deep and broad bed of the Chiffa which comes from

a wide opening in the mountains as seen from the plain, giving no hint of the dark and narrow defiles through which it has passed. As we followed its windings among the hills it seemed to sink lower and lower as the route rose higher and the slopes grew steeper, until we were fairly in the famous gorge, hemmed in by tree-clad walls several thousand feet above our heads. And with a warning blast of a horn a big motor-diligence swept by us crowded inside and out with passengers on its way to Medéa, a town fifty-two kilometres from Blida and 3,000 feet above the sea.

A historical route this road that clings to the precipitous slopes and revetted sides of the deep ravine and links up, not only Medéa, but also Berrouaghia, Boghari and the southern deserts with the Mitidja and the coast. Pick in one hand, musket in the other, French soldiers good and bad began it in July heat in 1842—the good were the ever-famed Zouaves and the 53rd Infantry, the bad the army's hard bargains of the Devil's Own, the "Companies of Discipline," to which were sent the scoundrels and scapegraces of the military world. Good and bad, all worked and fought well; for the mountain-tops swarmed with fierce Berber tribesmen sworn to keep out the Christian dogs. But the road went on, the railway followed it; and the Beni-Salah, whose forefathers fought the French infidels as their forebears had done the Andalusian Moors of Ahmed-el-Kebir, True Believers though they were, come down to-day to earn French money from their high hills where they cultivate and irrigate their small fields and orchards in ways learned from those same Andalusians. And they have well applied the knowledge





*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

THE GORGE OF THE CHIFFA.



brought from Spain, as their loaded fruit-trees, peach, fig, grenadine, orange, lemon and vine, attest.

A rumble, a roar—and out of an unseen tunnel below us at a bend of the road rushes a train on its way to Boghari. Before the last carriage comes into view the engine has plunged into another tunnel. For the railway has not time to follow the windings of the hills and bores straight through them. At one spot it crosses the gorge by an iron bridge that simply links a tunnel in a rocky cliff with one piercing the opposite cliff on the farther side. At the entrance to the most attractive part of the Pass is a lonely little railway station, Sidi Madani, seven and a half miles from Blida, and another at the end of the gorge, Camp des Chênes.

The carriage-road is not so pressed for time and plays hide and seek round the shoulders of the hills clothed with wild fig, wild olive, cork-oak, sweet acorn oak and other trees springing up from dense and tangled undergrowth. Wherever a patch of ground can be seen wild flowers of brilliant hues abound. Five or six thousand feet above the rocky bed of the river the peaks of the Atlas Mountains tower; and cool breezes sweep down from them between the rocky cliffs of the winding gorge.

Where the road is carried by a bridge over a ravine coming down to the Chiffa the driver checks his horses and points up.

“*Le Ruisseau des Singes* (The Rivulet of the Monkeys),” he says.

Down the recessed cleft in the steep mountain side a stream tumbles swiftly, leaping from rock to rock, eddying and swirling in little pools and plunging down

again in miniature cataracts ere rushing lost to sight through tunnels of arching greenery. On either side the trees lean out to meet over the precipices or hang helplessly by their bared roots in the brown scars of landslips. And above the white water roaring incessantly among the rocks and dropping in a gossamer fall as it nears the road is a small hotel in this picturesque setting that the Japanese would love as a site for an inn or a tea-house. It takes me back in memory to many a *yadoya* in the mountains around Nikkho and Chuzenji.

The carriage turns into a levelled space before this hostelry, the Hôtel du Ruisseau des Singes. And with the silver laughter of the stream ringing in my ears I sit down at a table outside the building and order lunch.

The young French waiter after taking my order asks:

“Would you like to see the monkeys?”

Then, a basket of nuts in his hand, he looks up at the green-clad slopes and calls. High above us, right and left, the branches of the trees are agitated, then little brown faces peep out at us from leafy screens and soon, leaping from bough to bough, swinging hand and foot and springing across the voids, come the monkeys. They perch on the roofs, on the balconies, on the rail of the hand-bridge across the stream. They drop to earth around the waiter, they spring on his shoulder, they snatch at his basket. Small, doglike, tailless apes, like their kindred at Gibraltar, with pretty, sad faces and soft, plaintive cooings as they beg for titbits.

But suddenly they scatter and leap away for safety.

“*Ah! voila Zigomar!*” exclaims the waiter.  
“*Bonjour, Zigomar!*”

A big brown ape comes down with stately deliberation, walks on all fours like a dog across the level to the waiter, then stands on hindlegs and pulls impatiently at the man's arm to bring the basket within his reach. Both hairy paws are plunged into it; and he crams the monkey-nuts into his mouth and stuffs them into the pouches under his jaws. And, when the waiter pulls free of his clutch and throws a handful of nuts towards the little apes, the tribal bully snarls at him with bared teeth, then charges menacingly at his smaller brethren who have rushed to scramble for the scraps from his feast.

A couple of automobiles drive in; and the ladies in them exclaim with delight at the sight of the monkeys. The occupants of the cars get out and demand baskets of nuts to feed the hairy visitors, which swarm around them, and, to the dismay of the ladies, spring on their shoulders and grab at their hats when attempts are made to shake them off. One of the chauffeurs comes over to see the fun, and is enjoying it when, chancing to look towards his automobile, he sees that it is invaded by monkeys big and small, some of which discover his lunch and, tearing the package in pieces, pull out and devour the bread, throwing the meat away.

On a big stone a mother ape sits pensively nursing in her arms a tiny, pink-eared, blackfaced baby. She extends a hand to take nuts offered her. One of the men visitors stoops down to touch the infant—and Zigomar bounds swiftly across to him, leaps at him and bites his arm savagely. The astonished man shakes him off; but the fierce ape, baring his formidable teeth, is ready to renew the attack, until the waiter snatches up a stick and drives him away.

This incident scatters the monkeys, which retreat up the hillsides or spring into the trees and disappear.

But a little later on they came again when summoned—but they always made sure first that the caller had food to offer them. I stayed for a few days at the *Hôtel du Ruisseau*, and entertainment was never lacking when my simian neighbours were visible. The arrival of a carriage or automobile generally brought them to the trees close to the hotel, ready for a summons. But often without that they played about the buildings, sat on the roofs and balconies or walked like dogs on all fours to the road. When food was offered them there was no limit to their daring. They searched my pockets, jumped on my shoulders, clutched at my hat, sometimes biting me if I delayed to give them the nuts or bread that I had for them. But they never permitted any familiarities; and an attempt to touch them was angrily resented and drove them away.

The Gorge of the Chiffa practically ends about four miles farther on from the Stream of the Monkeys at *Camp des Chênes*, where there is nothing but the railway station and a little hotel.

I had seen the Gorge previously on another occasion from the window of a railway train when on my way to *Boghari*. The line passed through many tunnels, which prevented me from getting more than the briefest glimpses of the attractive scenery. But it was raining with almost tropical vehemence, and the clouds and mists hid the mountain-tops.

The Chiffa in spate was rolling its brown and turbulent waters swiftly, filling its bed that when I next saw it held but a shallow stream. The month was March,

and my companion and I welcomed the foot-warmers that were put in our compartment; for it was bitterly cold up in the mountains, and the rolling-stock was old and out of date. We passed *Medéa* thirty-one miles by rail from *Blida* and situated on a plateau over three thousand feet above the sea, a commanding position on which the Romans built a garrison town called *Ad Medias*. The Duc d'Aumale captured *Medéa* in 1840 from Abd-el-Kader's followers; and it is to-day just a typical example of a thriving French Algerian inland town with a population of some thousands. It is surrounded by fertile and well-cultivated country which produces wine, corn, olives, cattle and wool.

After another and a smaller town, *Berrouaghia*, also built on the site of a Roman military post and in a populous and well-tilled district, the train passed through more fine mountain scenery and, entering a plain in the valley of the *Cheliff* River, reached *Boghari*.

It was raining heavily and the prospect was dismal; as with my companion, the well-known Canadian poet, Charles G. D. Roberts, and a couple of very pleasant Americans whose acquaintance we had made on the train—one a magazine writer, the other an artist—I trudged up an exceedingly muddy road towards what was just a long European village of one street. Above it on a bluff was the *ksar* (which means "a fortified village"), the native town, while behind us across a stretch of plain rose up a steep hill crowned with a fort. This was *Boghar*, "the Balcony of the South," as it is named, a mountain eyrie from which the French eagles have for many years kept vigilant watch towards the once troubled and mysterious Sahara.

It was still raining and bitterly cold as, after a wash and a meal in the little hotel, we committed ourselves into the hands of a guide, who led us through more mud up to the Ksar of Boghari. Little known as this name is to European travellers in Algeria it is a loadstone through days and nights of weary marching and camping to the camel-drivers and traders of the caravans that come north from the desert. In toil and privation and danger it draws them on; for it promises a rich reward of rest, refreshment and pleasure, of a wealth of love, venal love, in the embraces of the dark-eyed, passionate daughters of the Ouled-Nail, the tribe that sends its girls forth to gain their dowries in debauchery and wantonness. The steep and narrow streets of this mountain village are lined by inns and cafés where to shrill, strange music the dancing-women will posture and move in lascivious measures to delight the gaunt, hard-bitten men of the desert and send the hot blood rioting through their veins. From many windows, by scores of doors, bold-eyed courtesans will beckon enticingly, alluringly, to these sinewy sons of the Sahara whose passions run high after weeks, months, of a hard and ascetic life.

The ksar with its tiled roofs, strongly-built two-storied houses and narrow, evil-smelling lanes is reminiscent of an Italian mountain village. And the black-haired, handsome women looking out from every casement or standing outside every house are not darker than Southern Italians. Indeed, many are quite fair and decidedly good-looking even to European eyes.

They are mostly Ouled Nails—*ouled* means "tribe"—whose country stretches from the Zab, the



district around Biskra, to the Djebel Amour with, as the administrative centre, Djelfa, where the railway ends seven and a half hours from Boghari. It is their custom to allow their young girls to go far afield as dancers and courtesans in order to gain money for their dowries; which object achieved they return to the tribe, marry and settle down. This license originated hundreds of years ago, they say, in the time of a tribal chief famous both for his valour and his sense of justice. Having married a young wife he confided her as a sacred trust to his dearest friend when he had to go forth to lead his warriors to war. The vicissitudes of campaigning kept him in the field for years, at the end of which time he returned home. He was furious to learn that during his absence his wife had been false to him with his faithless friend. His first impulse, as an Arab's would be, was to seek a bloody revenge. But his sense of fair play made him realise that it was too much to expect a young and beautiful woman to exist so long without love—so he pardoned the offenders and refrained from interfering with their amour. This tolerance of light conduct by their revered sheikh encouraged the other women of the tribe to demand similar freedom from moral restraint; and it was granted them.

Their dancing girls turn the money they earn into gold coins mounted as necklaces, circlets for the head and other ornaments, and carry their fortunes in this portable form. But this display of wealth is often their ruin; for some of them are murdered for it by their temporary lovers, lawless Arabs from the wild desert. So Tragedy as well as Romance stalks at night through the narrow lanes of the Ksar of Boghari.

## CHAPTER VII

### KABYLIA AND THE KABYLES

FROM Algiers look east across the bay to the jumbled peaks of the snow-clad Djurdjura Mountains white against the blue sky as the setting sun streams on them! You are gazing at the home of the descendants of the aborigines of Algeria, the liberty-loving Berbers who took refuge among these inaccessible heights when the tide of Arab invasion swept over the land. There through the long centuries of Moslem conquest they preserved their independence and their individuality.

But in time they adopted Mahommedanism and thus gained from the Arabs the name of Kebail—which is the plural of Kabyl, a word signifying “He who accepts”—because they had accepted the religion of the Prophet. Hence they are known as Kabyles; and the French call their country La Grande Kabylie, this rugged maritime district where the mountains come down to the sea. The old name of Berber is now not often used in common parlance to designate these hillmen or their kinsmen of the Dahra and the Mozabites of the *chebka* of the M'zab or yet the tribes of the Aurès Mountains near the Sahara who

are usually known as the Chaouias (pronounced Shaouias), a name which means "nomad shepherds," because the lack of cultivable land in their sterile hills obliges them to wander with herds of sheep, goats and cattle in search of pasture. These Chaouias, like the better known Kabyles of the Djurdjuras, have preserved the purity of the Berber stock by their isolation in their remote mountains.

By even the most careless observer the Kabyles are easily distinguishable from Arabs by their lighter colouring of skin and hair, which is frequently reddish or sandy. They are usually of medium height with square heads (possibly a heritage from Vandal ancestors of the forests of Germany), prominent features and sturdy frames. Their dress is similar to that of the Arabs, though the headgear is simpler. They are industrious and tireless workers, hardy, unrivalled walkers and moderate in feeding. Their food consists mostly of barley cakes cooked in oil, couss-couss, lentils, dried peas and figs, milk, butter, honey, fowl and eggs. They only eat meat when sheep are killed for some big feast.

Long ages of incessant warfare, either inter-tribal or against external foes, have taught them to build their villages in commanding positions on the summit of hills, with small fields hedged with cactus or thorns. These villages consist of stone huts, generally roofed with tiles, divided by narrow, filthy lanes. Their dwellings are poor and almost bare of furniture—a few sleeping-mats, some earthen vessels, a handloom.

The scarcity of arable land in the mountains has

made the Kabyles a race of careful husbandmen and gardeners, who go in extensively for fruit and vegetable growing. With iron-shod, wooden ploughs and diminutive but strong oxen they turn up the stony soil in their small, terraced fields in the mountains. They cultivate figs, tobacco and olives, the last for their oil, of which large quantities are produced annually, every village having its oil-presses.

Though mainly agriculturists and market gardeners there are among the Kabyles smiths, cobblers, embroiderers and makers of silver or white metal ornaments—brooches, ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets.

The Kabyles, who owing to the difficulty of making a living are economical to miserliness, are ready to go far afield in order to make money. They descend to the plains to work on European-owned farms at harvest-time, which is naturally earlier there than in the hills. Before compulsory service for natives was introduced during the Great War they used to enlist in the Tirailleurs Indigènes to earn a pension which would enable them to return to end their days in their beloved mountains. Many go to Algiers to work in the docks or do other heavy labour that no Arab would attempt. They do not hesitate to cross the seas if beyond them there is a chance of making money. You will see them in Marseilles, in Paris, in London even, selling rugs and carpets in the street. Since the war they go to France to work in factories. But always their fixed purpose is to return again to their hilltop villages.

Like most Orientals the family is the sacred unit to which all its members owe duty and allegiance.

For it they sink their individuality; for it they toil. To it all their earnings go. The old, feeble and sickly are not turned out to starve but are supported by the others. The property of a family may be said to be owned in common; and every member of it has a right to subsistence.

The Kabyles have many admirable qualities, but they have their defects, too. They are patient, energetic, sober, intelligent, hard-working and attached to the soil—the last so much that a note of warning has been sounded by the Algerian press to call attention to a danger similar to the Mozabite peril. The Kabyles, having made much money during the World War by their agricultural produce, are devoting it all to buying back the land confiscated by the French after the rebellion of 1871. So that there is a fear that they will oust French husbandmen as the Mozabites are supplanting the small shopkeepers in the towns.

Although as Moslems they are permitted by their religion—and French laws which are careful not to interfere with it—to have four wives and as many concubines as they please, they content themselves as a rule with one spouse from motives of economy. The rich dress and live as simply as the poor.

Among their bad qualities are selfishness and litigiousness and the constant dissensions between tribes, villages and families that have throughout their history always cost them dear when fighting external foes. For though the tribes used to band together momentarily against a foreign enemy they soon quarrelled and broke away from each other. They

have their blood feuds to-day. In times of scarcity hunger drives them to brigandage.

They are more or less fanatical, but not practising, Mahommedans and have always been ready to follow fresh schisms. They eat the flesh of the wild pig. But, although they do not give a slavish obedience to the precepts of the Koran, they pay much respect and give in to their marabouts, who are almost a priestly caste like the Brahmins of India by virtue of their descent.

The position of Berber women in Kabylia, the Aurès or elsewhere, is not enviable. They are the slaves of their husbands, or male relatives if unmarried, must labour in the fields or as beasts of burden. They cannot inherit property—or indeed own any. They are only entitled to subsistence and clothes—which latter they must make for themselves. Although allowed to be unveiled they have little more freedom than Arab women. Their only recreation is the daily gossip at the fountain when young and old gather there to draw water in earthenware vessels shaped like the *amphoræ* of the Romans from whom their forebears learned the design. Berber females are reputed very immoral, which accounts for the fact that their husbands are notoriously jealous. They know their women-folk.

The Kabyles group in families or *kharoubas*, several of which make a hamlet or *touffik*. The *touffiks* of a district form the *thaddert* or village, and several *thadderts* make up the tribe. They used to be autonomous. Each village or tribe had its *djēmaa* or council, which was the centre of power. It was the

folk-mote of which every male adult was a member, and which elected its president, the *amin*. The presidents of a district or of a number of tribes banding together for war formed an inner *djēmaa* and chose the *amin amina*, the president of presidents. But the decisions of either council were only binding so far as they could be enforced. This ancient system was allowed to exist under French rule, until, as a punishment for the Kabyles' insurrection in 1871, it was taken from them and they came directly under French administrators. But they are still permitted to have their special tribal laws known as *kanoums*.

They have always been fierce warriors, and were never conquered by Roman, Vandal, Arab, or Turk, and they fought savagely for their independence against the French. They were guilty of cruel atrocities against the European settlers in the last rebellion, for which they suffered the confiscation of the land that they are now buying back.

They are superstitious, and believe firmly in second sight. But the future generation will perhaps be more enlightened; for, unlike the Arabs, their boys greedily seek the education that the Algerian Government offer them.

A distinguished member of the *Société de Géographie* of Algiers, Captain Raymond Peyronnet of the Algerian Army, a noted authority on North Africa, disputes the figures of the census of 1911 which declared the native population to consist of 3,626,574 Arabs and Arabic-speaking races, and 1,084,702 Berbers, comprising Kabyles, Mozabites, and Touaregs. He believes—and his opinion carries

weight—that of the present population of nearly five million and a half native inhabitants, a little more than half are of Berber stock. In Grand Kabylia alone, between Ménerville and the Soumam, there are nearly five hundred thousand Kabyles.

The Kabyles are better liked and respected by Europeans who come much in contact with them than are the Arabs. It is but natural that they should have more affinity with white men; for, besides their far-away European origin, there is the mixture of Roman, Vandal, and Byzantine blood in their veins, greatly diluted, of course.

Owing to its proximity to Algiers Grand Kabylia is much visited by foreign travellers; and, besides the railway to the capital, Tizi Ouzou, and the regular service of motor diligences, tourist agencies run automobile excursions to and through it frequently. Its seaport, Bougie, is a thriving one, though fallen from its high estate of the eleventh century when it held a population of a hundred thousand.

It is usually the foreign visitor's first introduction to the interior, and fills him with a sense of adventure as he leaves the city and the sea behind and is carried towards the lofty range of mountains that have tantalised him with the constant sight of their snowy peaks during his stay in the Algerian capital. It seems as though one were about to explore an attractively new land peopled by a strange race. The railway station of Algiers, from which all trains go out bound east, west or south, is built down by the harbour; and one descends to it from the Boulevards above the wharves by the steep zigzag roads or the



giant lifts in the tall stone towers that are such prominent objects on the "front." At first the line runs between the harbour on the left and the high wall that rises like a cliff to the climbing city; but soon the docks and wharves give place to the sandy beach and sparkling waters of the bay, while the level space on the right, crowded with the warehouses and factories of the manufacturing district of Belleville, grows wider as the Sahel Hills draw back, their scarred and scarped sides crowned with green fields and gardens set with red-roofed, white-walled villas. Then buildings below yield to the verdant, luxuriant foliage of the Jardin d'Essai, its palms contrasting with the dark pines of the Bois de Boulogne topping the hill above. At Hussein Dey, on the level between the railway and the sea aloe hedges, cacti and high pampas grass strike a tropical note in the scenery; while on the right the line of hills runs on with fewer houses and more cultivation. But it ends where it sinks into the narrow valley of the Harrach river at Maison Carrée, a bright little business town of factories and houses with gardens ablaze with flowers, and a low knoll crowned with a prison.

Here our train turns away from the sea and the valley opens, giving a view of a fertile inland plain backed by the wall of the mountains. We are entering the rich Mitidja valley rioting in vines, oats and corn. And in the fields Kabyle labourers and white men are cutting the crops. It seems early for it—for to-day is the 6th May. But we are south of the Mediterranean. Everywhere there are sheets of wild flowers of all hues. The peonies in the garden of the little station

of Oued-Smar are a blaze of colour. Among the vines tall palms lift their plumed heads, ornamental but as unproductive as the flowers; for these trees need the Saharan climate to bear well.

In the field near the station of Maison Blanche a white bird stalks solemnly—the first stork to be seen, for its race avoids Algiers; although elsewhere in Algeria in breeding time their nests crown every church tower and minaret, and in Constantine no roof in the native town is without the bundle of dry sticks from which little heads and gaping beaks greet the long-legged parents.

After Maison Blanche more vineyards; and low, well-cultivated hills run along on the right. Everywhere fine farms, their red roofs and whitewashed walls showing up against the universal green; and the owners' residences are often splendid villas set in lovely gardens. Wells with machine-pumps provide water. Between the lines of half-grown vines Europeans or Kabyles are ploughing with mixed teams of horses, bullocks and mules yoked together. The landscape is seamed with long straight lines of trees bordering the good roads with the usual traffic of automobiles, heavy wagons, motor diligences and little donkeys bearing tall natives.

Here is Rouïba, a fine little inland town which looks newly-built, though the large cemetery says otherwise. On all sides gardens gay with flowers. Here are glossy-leaved banana trees; and eucalyptus is seen everywhere. Apparently no railway station in Algeria is considered complete without a bunch of these ragged-barked, melancholy trees.

At Reghaia we are getting into undulating and wilder country as we draw nearer the big hills. To the left there is a sudden glimpse of the sea. Then we run through a forest with many cork-oaks. After Alma come hillocks that are the first outposts of the mountains; and soon we are among the foothills, which are carefully cultivated. But a steep green slope over the railway blazes with pink, purple, yellow and white flowers and the bright red of the poppy. Then come sheets of purple thistles. Just before Belle Fontaine the fields of growing corn, here still green, ripple in the wind like shot silk. The garden of the station is bounded by high hedges of glorious geraniums. As the line winds on among the foothills the main road that keeps the railway line company is bordered in one place by an extraordinarily long hedge of red roses; and by it goes a clumsy horse diligence packed in and out with natives. The red garments of Berber girls working on the land adds to the varied colour of the scene.

Hitherto we have been passing through big European-owned farms where everything is on a large scale; but now we begin to be among the small Kabyle fields which the barelegged owners are ploughing with rough wooden ploughs drawn by undersized bullocks. We cross a deep ravine in which is a mill-house with a huge water-wheel; and in the garden, watching the train go above them, are the French miller and his wife, while a young Kabyle nursemaid in red holds their baby.

After Haussonvilliers the hills open and disclose a glorious panorama as the line sweeps around them

above a wide valley through which the River Sebaou meanders. And beyond rise up the snow-clad Djurdjura Mountains that have been hidden from our sight for a long time, now so near that we can distinguish terraced fields, villages and woods climbing up towards the white peaks shining in the brilliant sunlight.

The little station at Mirabeau would delight a painter with its vine-wreathed building and the high hedges of scarlet geraniums enclosing the tiny garden in which grow orange and banana trees, while a graceful palm outside it contrasts with a group of eucalyptus over which a white stork soars. Then comes a long, tree-lined, dusty white road which with the grass huts beside it, herds of goats, a tethered donkey, clumps of thorny cactus and the red garments of passing Berber women in the bright sunshine brings back to my mind so many pictures of India.

Flocks of storks follow men ploughing in the fields of a large European farm. After a patch of jungle thick with willows we see above us up in the hills a hamlet with a little church, looking like a bit of Italy—so alike is scenery the world over. Then we are near the Sebaou River again. The cool air, grateful after the heat of the valleys, tells us that we are among the mountains, as we run into the terminus of the line, having taken four hours for the journey of sixty-seven miles.

Tizi Ouzou—the name sounds like a fragment of lovers' or fond mother's talk—is quite an important little place as the capital of Upper Kabylia and the seat of a sub-prefecture, with a good hotel, a Catholic

## KABYLIA AND THE KABYLES 131

church and a mosque. Situated at a height of eight or nine hundred feet above the sea on the slopes of Djebel (or Mount) Belloua it is a centre for the Kabyles' export trade of oil, olives and figs and fruit which flows down to it from the mountains around.

But the traveller will not delay in it but pass through to the native quarter on the hillside beyond it, usually his first sight of a Kabyle village. It is a typical collection of low whitewashed stone or mudwalled huts with red-tiled roofs and small gardens with cactus or dry reed hedges divided by narrow lanes furrowed deep by the heavy rains. It resembles an Indian village, even to the filth and foul smells that possess it and the bright-eyed children playing in the dirty alleys. Here are a group of little girls clad in girdled, flowered cotton gowns and wearing many silver ornaments. They are playing a game of "tig." There three or four small boys clad simply in red checcias and shirts toddle with a gravity befitting their grandfathers down the principal lane. A woman goes by in red and black garments, carrying on her back, holding it over her shoulder, a red-painted clay water-jar modelled on a Roman amphora ornamented with designs and having two handles. At the fountain she lays it down and gossips with the other women and girls already there awaiting their turn to fill their graceful vessels.

In an open space among the huts men are sitting on the ground with their backs against the walls, some drinking cups of coffee filled from a copper pot balanced over a few embers by an open-air vendor.

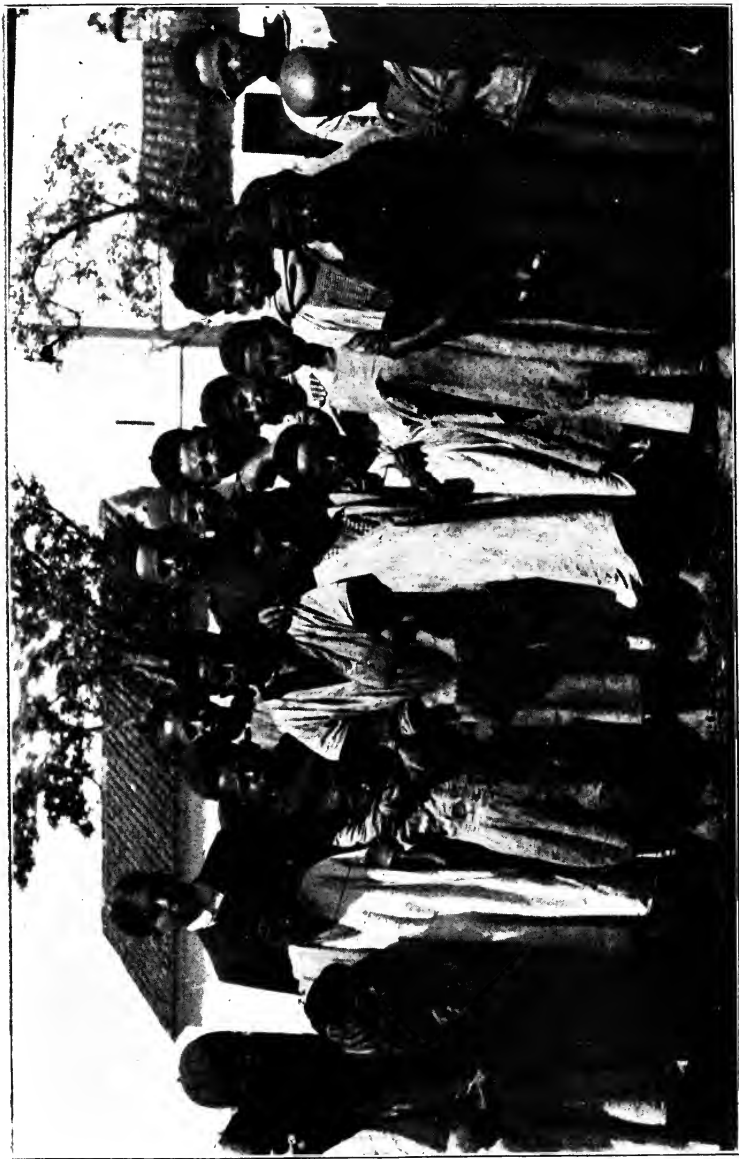
Into the clearing lounges a drummer who squats near the rest and with his hand beats the parchment-covered end of his instrument made from a hollow gourd. From a hut near by comes an echo, the monotonous tapping of another drum amidst the "yu-yu-yu-ing" of women, the strange, soft sound of cheering and applause that Arab and Berber women make by wagging their tongues in their open mouths. Probably a wedding or some other family feast is being celebrated in the hut. Four or five men come into the village from their fields, mattocks or hoes on their shoulders. All have laced canvas sandals or foot-bandages, such as one sees on the peasants in the Balkan States. One or two wear wide straw hats, the others checcias or turbans of coloured cloths twisted round their checcias.

The village mosque looks very unorthodox; for unlike the sealed pattern white dome it has a gabled and red-tiled roof, over which rises the minaret. While I was photographing it one afternoon the village school broke up for the day and a score of boys of all ages and in various apparel from well-made European jackets and trousers and leather shoes to cotton nightgowns and bare feet, but all wearing the red checcias, gathered about me. They began to talk to me in good French.

One aged about thirteen or fourteen said :

" Will you photograph me, *m'sieu?* How much a dozen do you charge? "

While I was politely declining to make a bargain, another said boastingly in French to a small friend beside him :



*Photo. by the Author.*

KABYLE BOYS, TIZI OUZOU.





“ I paid fifteen francs a dozen for my photos in Algiers.”

When I wished to take a group of them they fought to be in it and each one endeavoured to get into the front rank. In Algeria neither Berbers nor Arabs object to being photographed; unlike in Morocco where the Moslem inhabitants consider it contrary to the law of the Koran that forbids the making of images or pictures of living beings.

A few little girls had gathered to watch the proceedings; but when I attempted to take a picture of them they fled in alarm amidst the jeers of the boys.

From the village there was a fine view across the narrow valley of the Sebaou to the steep green, cultivated and wooded line of hills beyond; and over them peeped distant snowy summits. In the foreground the European village with its houses and gardens, its church and a new mosque built on the orthodox plan, sloped down.

Every Saturday morning a fair is held at Tizi Ouzou to which flock the dwellers in mountains and plains all round. As many as ten thousand attend it; and the big, tree-shaded fairground near the station is crowded with the turbaned Kabyle men—their women do not come. In tents large and small, new and old, under brushwood shelters or laid on the ground in the open, the dealers set out their wares. I noted among them sellers of cotton goods, of haberdashery, socks and soap, of carpets and rugs, of matches and cigarette papers, of leather amulets blessed by marabouts, of Arabic printing—prayers or passages from the Koran—and pictures of Mecca,

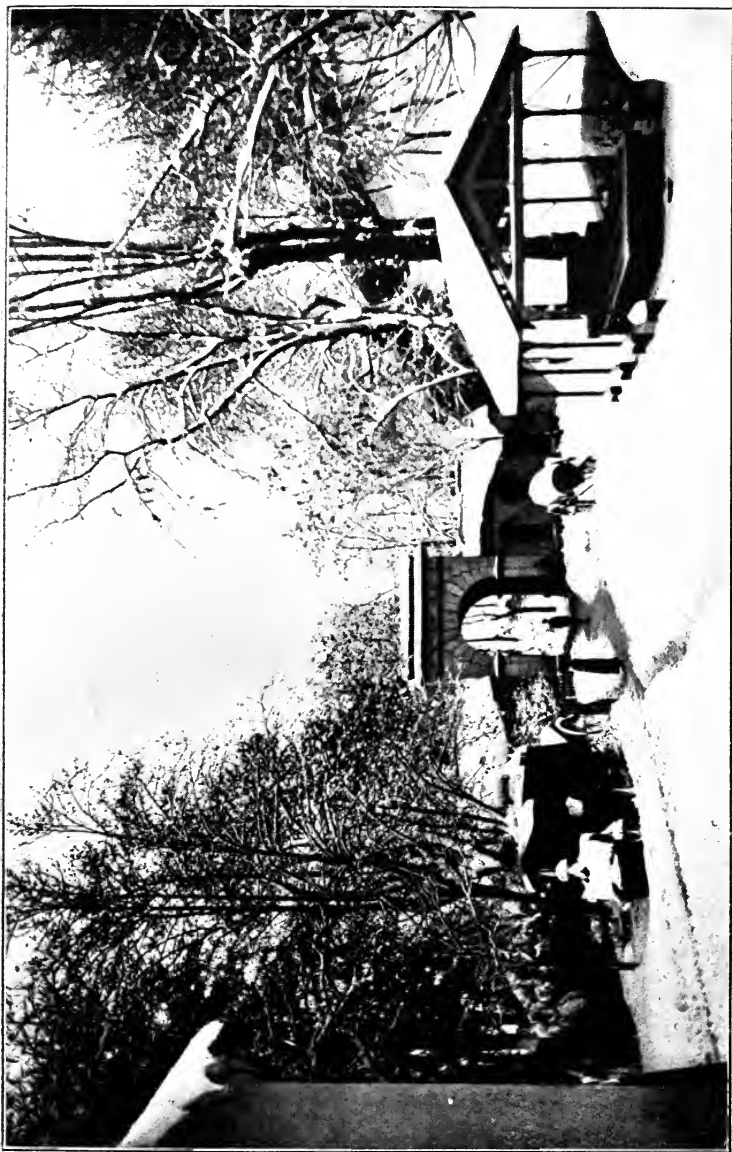
of famous mosques or of Moslem heroes. Here were two men bargaining over a heap of fresh-clipped wool. There a blacksmith shod donkeys. Open-air coffee stalls did a roaring trade, their customers squatting on the ground around the brazier on which the pots were heated. There a man sold leather shoes and red peppers, a curious combination.

The owner of a peepshow knelt at prayers, prostrating himself at full length on the ground, rising, bowing and kneeling again, so absorbed in his devotions that he failed to see the small boys relieving each other at the peepholes of his show and enjoying the free entertainment.

One corner of the spacious fairground was filled with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep; and the Kabyle farmers poked the animals with their sticks and felt them in the way of farmers the world over. And close by numbers of cows were being slaughtered and their carcasses cut up and sold by butchers, until the air reeked with the acrid smell of blood. Little donkeys were being driven off bearing whole quarters of fresh killed beef on their saddles.

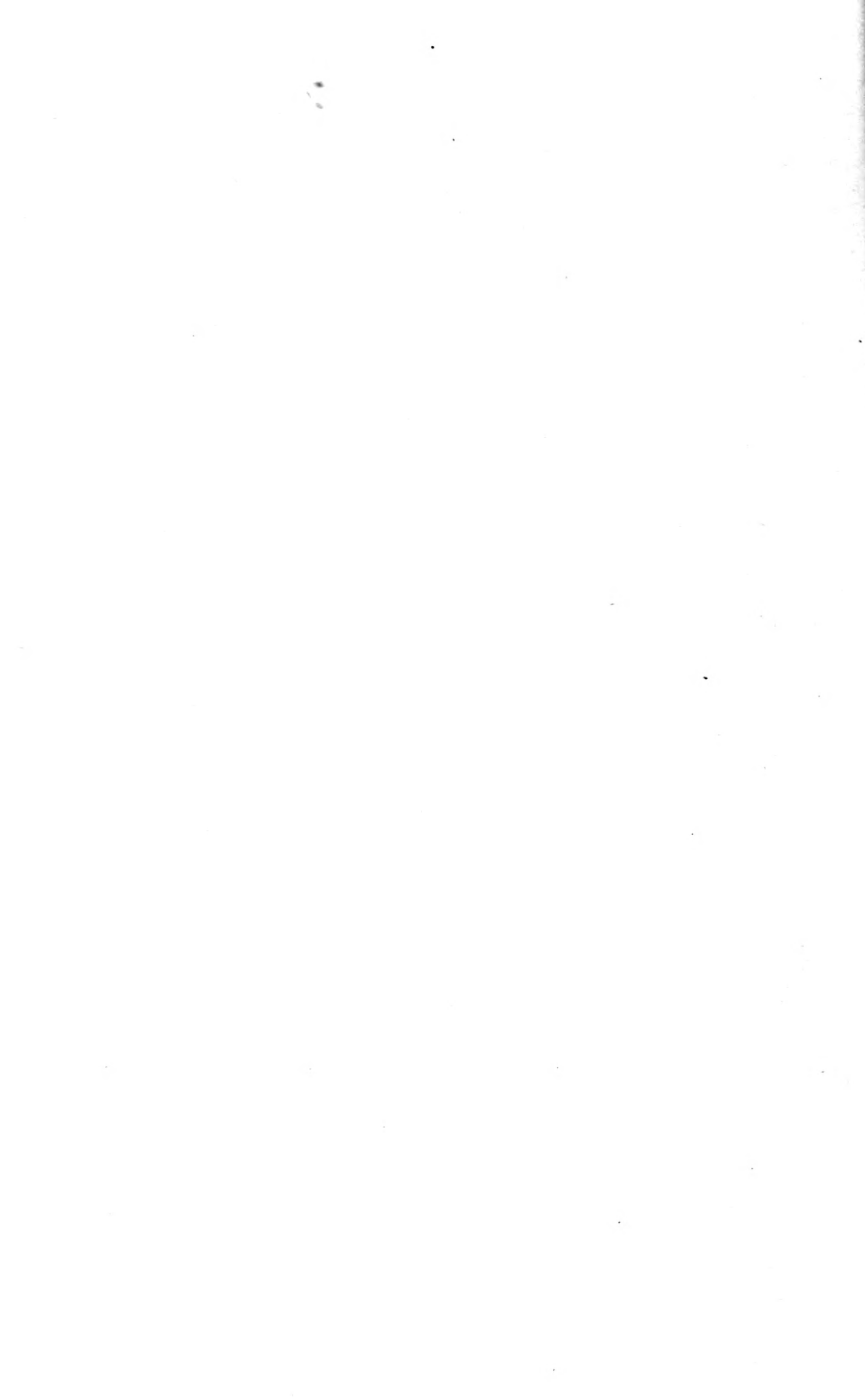
Very few Europeans were present at the fair; and it was a proof of the efficacy of French pacification to see an occasional white woman moving freely alone and in safety among these thousands of native men.

From Tizi Ouzou an excellent road, originally made in twenty days by the French troops in 1847 and now considerably improved and shortened from twenty-three to seventeen miles, slopes down to the valley, crosses the winding Sebaou river on two bridges



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

AFRICAN SNOW—FORT NATIONAL IN WINTER.



and climbs 2,300 feet up through Kabyle villages to Fort National. This fortified town was first called Fort Napoleon—the natives term it in Arabic Souk-el-Arba, or “Wednesday’s Market.” Perched 3,000 feet above the sea it was built in 1857 to control the restless Kabyle tribes in the hill villages around. It is most picturesquely situated on the steep slopes and precipices; and the views over valley and mountain are superb. In winter it can be very cold, and snow covers it with a white mantle.

A charming road leads to Michelet twelve and a half miles away, whence the traveller can continue on to reach a railway again and by it leave Kabylia behind. But not the Kabyles; for wherever good money is to be earned by hard work the men of that industrious race will be found throughout Algeria.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME ALGERIAN CITIES

A GIANT rock a thousand feet high and on it a city. On two sides it towers up above the valley; but north and east a deep ravine separates it from another rock higher still. And down that ravine between sheer cliffs of gleaming stone, under monster natural bridges and man-made slenderer ones, tumbling through lofty dark caverns and rushing out into the light again to leap in cascades is a river. Rummel, the River of Sands! And in the terrific chasm that it has carved for itself through the ages it flows half round this city of Constantine that it has guarded against Roman, Arab, Turk and Frenchman.

Not always successfully, though. The town got its name from the great Emperor who captured it in the fourth century in one of the many sieges that it has undergone—four score of them. The last two were laid by the French. They were beaten the first time—in 1836 it was. But they came back again the next year with more success. There is a painting of the taking of Constantine in Versailles among the splendid battle pictures that illustrate the conquest of Algeria. But the capture was a difficult task; how difficult you will realise if you look across the thousand foot-deep gorge of the Rummel, and even more if you climb down into it

and look up at the wall of rock rising sheer above you to the houses built on the very brink. Then you wonder how it was ever captured before aeroplanes were invented.

The man-made bridges across the abyss are wonderful. There is one of many arches perched on piers colossally high. There is another that swings across the void like a spider's thread—a graceful suspension bridge this, 670 feet above the river and 180 yards long. There are the remains of one dating back many centuries with a wide-arched iron one above it.

It is an important city this, worthy of its long history, of the great Emperor whose name it bears. It had its own Bey in the days when the French attacked it.

If you want to go from Algiers to Tunis by railway you must pass through Constantine; and as the trains run, it will keep you for a night at least. But it is worth a longer stay. Even in the days of the Arabs it was a fine city, as you can see for yourself; for most of the old town remains and the Palace of the last Bey, El-Hadj Ahmed, built just in time to provide handsome quarters for the French general, is there to be seen. So are the old mosques with their white marble columns, their coloured tiles and their pulpits of carved marble or cedar. Go into the Cathedral and you will see what the old-time architects and workmen of Constantine could do; for it was the mosque of the Market of the Gazelle once. Look at its arabesques, its carvings, its tiles of many colours. They were artists indeed!

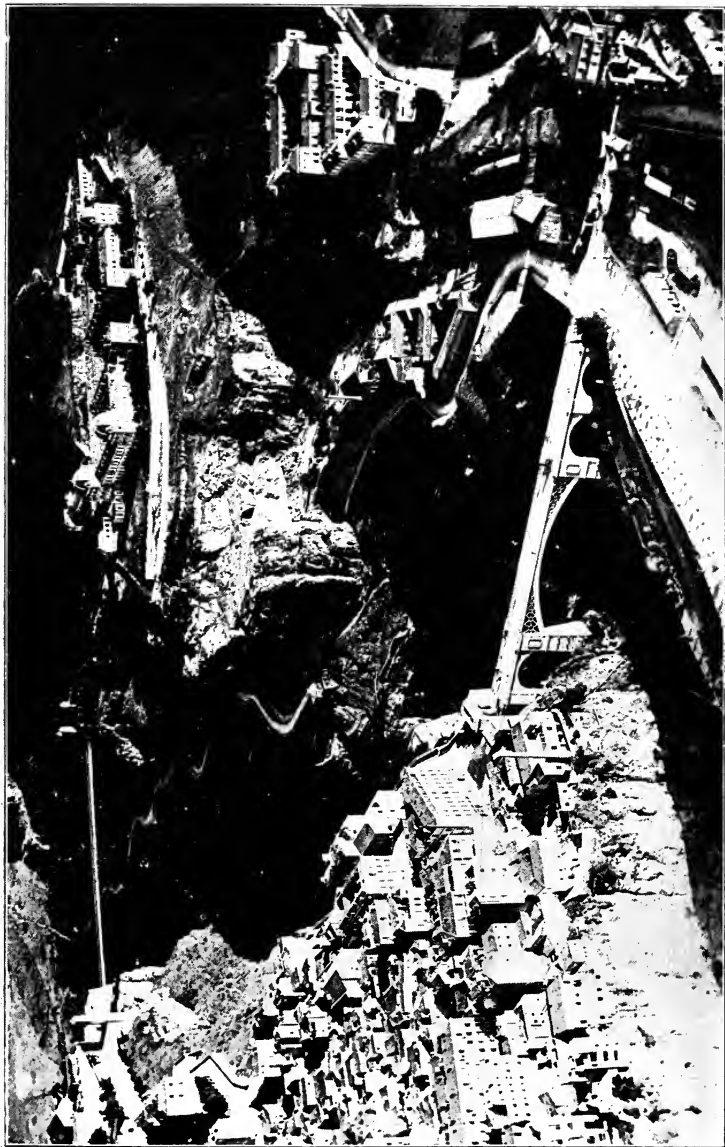
You can go to Constantine from the seaport Philippeville, a thriving town built by the French who

found it a heap of old ruins—it used to be the Roman city of Rusicade—which is fifty-four miles away. The train takes over three hours to do the journey, for it has to climb up and down the mountains that lie between the sea and Constantine 2,500 feet higher. You can go from Algiers nearly 290 miles away, or from Tunis, about the same distance.

Seen from the railway station, which is on the wrong side of the gorge of the Rummel, this city on a rock presents a picture of red-tiled houses sloping to the very edge of a sheer precipice, every roof, every chimney crowned in breeding time with a stork's nest, a bundle of dry sticks on which a black and white feathered body squats, while its mate flaps heavily just over your head on his way to look for the family's daily bread in the field below. As you drive or walk across one of the bridges you gaze down into the gloomy depths and scarce can see the river tumbling over its rocky bed well-nigh a thousand feet below. Across the bridge the red-roofed, stork-crowned houses of the native quarter close in on you on the right, contrasting with the imposing buildings of the new French town ahead of you.

You pass through the loopholed iron gate, flung open wide nowadays, and enter this City of Contrasts. Here is a caravanserai of squalid huts beside a patch of open, muddied ground on the brink of the precipitous slope that falls down towards the river; and hobbled camels, tethered mules and gangs of patient, loaded donkeys crowd the narrow level space. And above it rises the handsome, tall edifice of a very modern hotel, motor-cars before its door, in front of which the





*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

CONSTANTINE AND THE GORGE OF THE RUMMEL FROM AN AEROPLANE.



hill-city still rises in pretty public gardens, cafés, shops, high buildings, bordering narrow streets of the European quarter so different to the dark alleys and tunnelled lanes of the native town unchanged since the days of the Beys, where the street-life with its shrouded women haggling across outdoor stalls of vegetables, scraps of meat, flat loaves or cast-off clothing, might be in Arabia or Persia.

But the two overlap; and you can buy from a French shop, pass a mosque, drink coffee in a *café maure* and see Jewesses squatting in rows on their doorsteps, all in the same street. Europeans and native inhabitants are about equal in numbers—39,391 of the latter to 38,829 of the former, according to the census of 1921.

Should you see in Constantine groups of pretty, dark-eyed little girls with curious conical black hats on their heads, such as you have hitherto associated with broomstick-riding ladies, do not fancy that you have found a seminary of young witches. They are merely little Jewesses. This was the only town in North Africa in which I saw this peculiar headgear. It may have been worn by Israelite women in Tunis, but I did not notice any with it.

So circumscribed is Constantine, perched on its rock, that it does not take long to walk round it; though ever and anon one must pause to admire the wonderful views from every point of it—here, with a craning of the neck and an involuntary shiver, a glance into the fearsome abyss of the Rummel, there a sweeping panorama of plain and distant mountain. Few cities in the world are so strangely, picturesquely, situated.

But nothing in or about it exceeds in interest the river gorge that civic enterprise has made easy of access to visitors in constructing in it the Chemin des Touristes, the like of which I know only under Niagara.

Steep paths and stairways lead down into its gloomy depths, at first—if you enter from near the great, many arched bridge—preparing you gently for the wonder that you are about to encounter. You walk on a track carefully and not needlessly fenced in many parts beside the swift stream brawling over rocks or swirling in oily pools where you find a native fisherman casting his circular net into their depths. On either side the walls of this rocky canyon rise sheer up, and you can just glimpse the houses perched perilously on the very edge of the precipice. You see an endless wire rope running swiftly up and down to and from one—giving motive power from the rushing waters to a mill in the city above.

Deep in the gorge there is a platform on which doors open into squat, solid buildings. Within on tiled floors steaming water gushes—for these are natural hot springs and baths used by Roman and Arab in the past centuries.

But you are going lower all the time, deeper and deeper into the abyss. Even the narrow strip of sky that you have seen above you when you craned to see it is shut out. And clambering up and down wet and slippery iron ladders and along railed galleries you now move awe-struck and impressed through vast, lofty caverns, where the swift river tumbles over rocks, as though, like you, eager to be out in daylight again. And you emerge with it into the unroofed canyon once

more. It rushes on to fall in white cascades down into the plain and then move windingly, slowly now, on the level. But you must climb wearily, pantingly, up the steep and weary way to the spider's thread across the sky, the suspension bridge that will take you over the dark gorge into which you look down now with a familiarity that breeds no contempt for the marvel of Nature that you have explored.

And below you plane the eagles that you have just seen soaring high above your head or swooping down on the countless birds that are flying ceaselessly between the rocky walls of the abyss.

Constantine is no place to linger in in winter. Should that season find you there you will have no kind feelings to the tourist agencies of Europe that describe North Africa as a land of endless sunshine. Visit it rather in autumn or in late spring—at the latter season for choice, were it only to see the blaze of wild flowers that cover the countryside through which you pass to reach it.

Should you go on from Constantine to Tunis it is a long day's journey by train—fourteen hours or so—but while daylight lasts you will not weary. For the scenery is ever changing and always charming. Not as magnificent or awe-inspiring as the line between Algiers and Constantine with the snow-clad summits of the Djurdjuras towering above it and the frowning canyon of the Portes de Fer. But not without its hills, its river gorges, its varied vistas of mountain and plain. And a new note is struck in the forests of cork-oaks where the wild boars roam still—as is attested by stiff, grim corpses with the white tusks seeming to grin

defiance even in death, half a dozen of them heaped up on the platform of some station passed.

You are sure to have seen ere this either on the railways or the quays of Algiers high piles of sheets of the bark of this useful tree on their way to be converted into better-known forms. But now perhaps for the first time one beholds a forest of cork-oaks, the trunks to a height of eight feet or so stripped of their thick bark and showing white, yet flourishing and ready in another few years to be denuded afresh of the new covering that will replace it.

Sixty odd miles from Constantine, in a varied setting of hills and plain and wooded slope, from the train is seen a rushing stream hurling itself in cascades over a rocky fall. And up from the leaping waters rise dense clouds of steam that hang suspended in mid-air. For here are famous hot springs, Hamman Meskoutine or "The Accursed Baths," that were known and used by mankind as far back as Punic days. The bath-loving Romans built quite a settlement around them. The Arabs made use of them for centuries. And to-day there is a fine hotel and bathing establishment to which visitors from Europe flock; for the fame of these healing springs is widespread. From the windows of the train the falls with their steamy canopy present a strange and striking spectacle. Some of the springs have a temperature of 205° Fahrenheit. The waters of Hamman Meskoutine are very advantageous in diseases due to uric acid. The native name is derived from the presence of tall cones of deposits of carbonate of lime, some forty feet high, which bear some resemblance to petrified human figures and have given rise to a legend

that they are men and women turned to stone for assisting at the unlawful marriage of a rich Arab who was about to wed his own sister.

The country through which the line passes is rich in Roman remains and ruined cities of the far-spreading, long-vanished Empire with triumphal arches, baths, heathen temples and Christian basilicas in various states of preservation. And the train goes through a well laid-out modern little town, Souk Ahras, on the site of the ancient Thagaste where St Augustine was born in the middle of the fourth century. And a few stations farther on comes Ghardimaou and the Tunisian frontier.

Until the French came there were no roads in Algeria. Road and Flag went together; and as they pushed their conquering way forward their soldiers wielded pick and shovel as well as gun and linked up the ground they gained with Algiers. The fighting navy and the mercantile marine helped them where coast towns were concerned and saved them weary marches. It was so in the case of Oran, Algiers' future rival in the west, second city in numbers and importance in Algeria, and seaport second only to the capital.

Long miles—about 260—lie between them; but now there is a good road if you wish to motor and a railway if you do not. I have said nothing of the Algerian railways hitherto; but they link up Algiers with Morocco on the west and Tunisia on the east; they join the Mediterranean to the Sahara. And they have little to learn from Europe. Sleeping and restaurant cars of the Compagnie des Wagon Lits, comfortable carriages, first, second and third class, well-

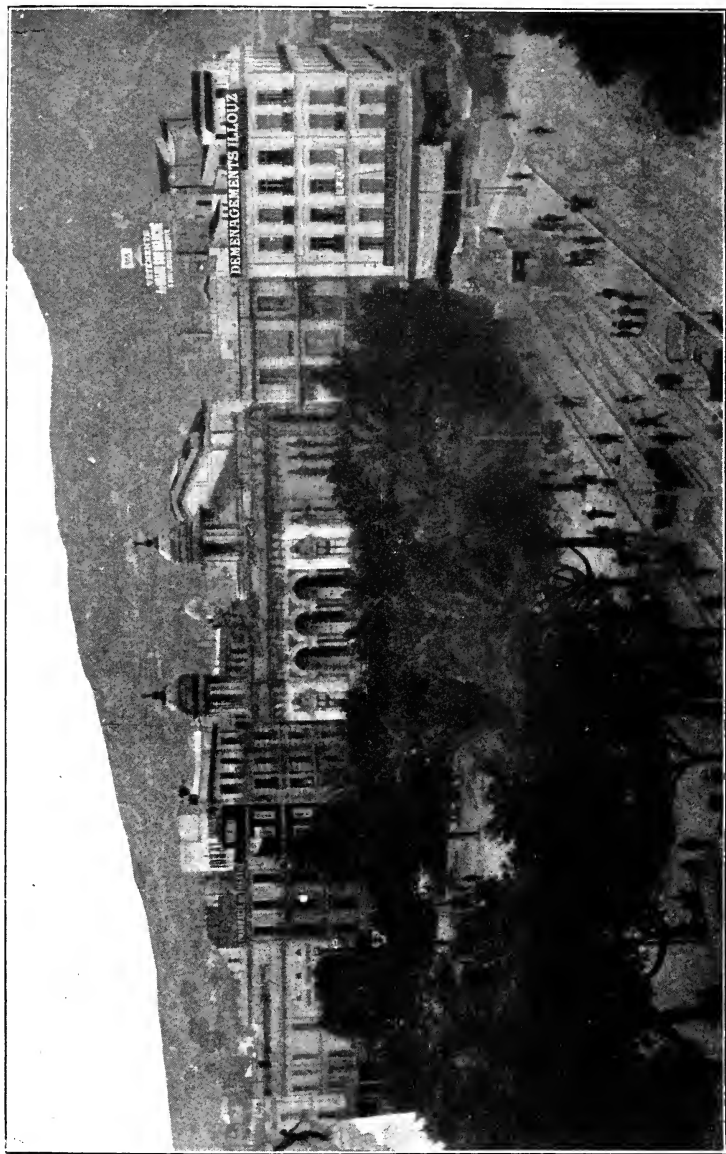
laid road-beds, fine bridges over wide watercourses where for the greater part of the year shallow streams trickle through gravelly deserts, but where in the winter rains surging torrents sweep to sea, rushing full-fed from bank to bank.

The line from Algiers to Oran, cleverly traced to follow valleys and avoid the heights in the mountains as much as possible, will give the traveller a favourable impression of the fertility and agricultural progress of the land. It serves a succession of small towns and villages all the way; and at every station European passengers of both sexes and all ages enter or leave the train and make one realise that this is a white man's country, one where he can and does live and breed.

Oran to the traveller in search of Oriental colour is disappointing, for it is almost entirely a European city; but to the French Algerians it is a source of pride, encouragement and hope from its prosperity, progress and possibilities. Perched on high cliffs framing a picturesque bay it nestles under a high hill on the west that culminates in a peak falling precipitously nearly 2,000 feet to the shore. From a good, though small harbour, protected by stone breakwaters from the stormy north winds, a road with a tram-line on it leads up to the high-sited city of modern construction, a place of shady squares, busy steep streets, European shops, cafés, offices and dwellings that have little or no trace of Africa about them. It might be a thriving seaport of Southern France.

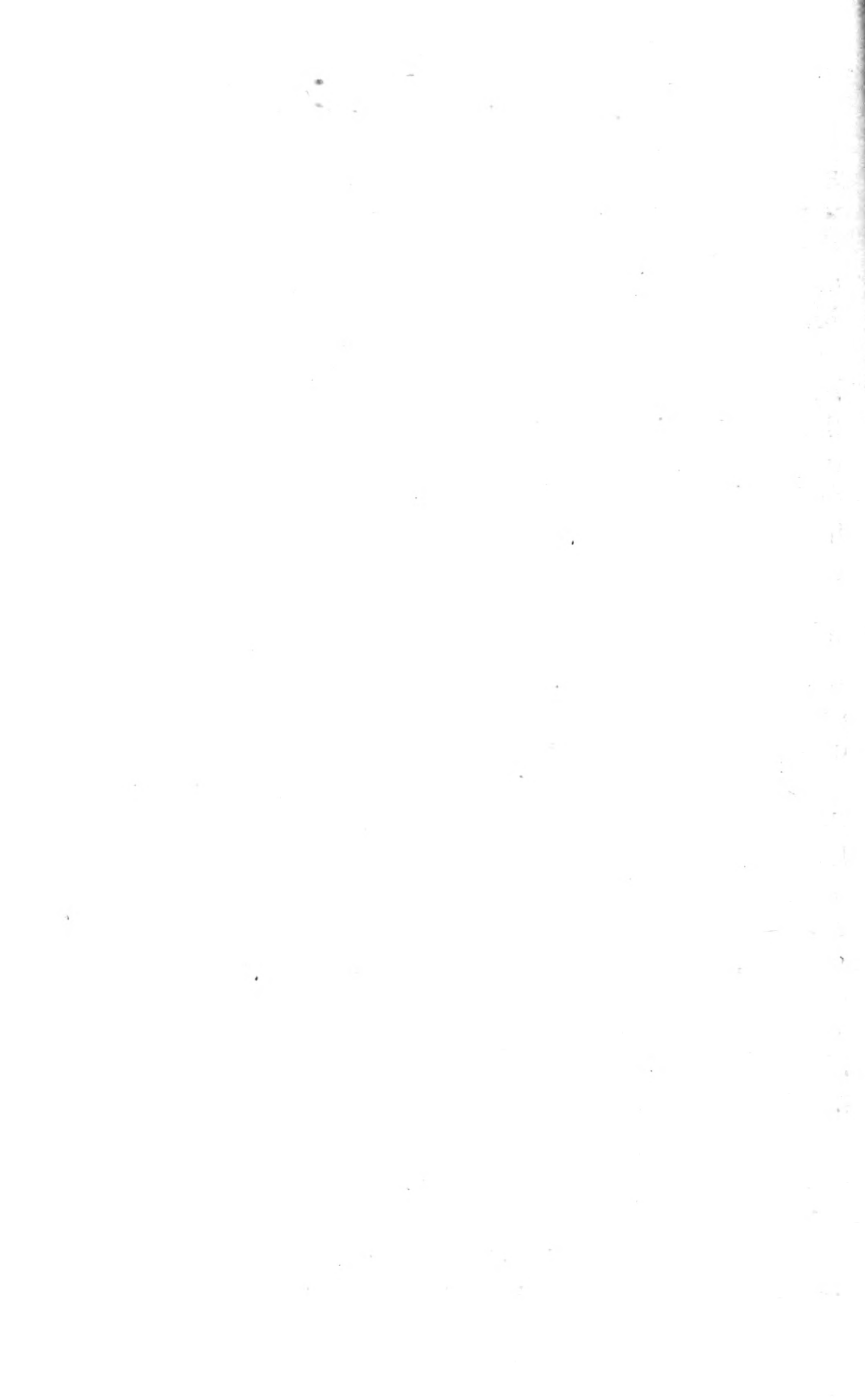
But it would be almost equally at home in Spain, so large a proportion of the inhabitants, especially of the lower classes, are Spaniards. For centuries it was





*Photo. by the Author.*

ORAN.



a Spanish outpost, colony and convict settlement to which criminals and political prisoners were sent, and the old fort and walls were built by them and by Arab captives taken in the constant fighting with the Moslems outside the city gates.

Spain is not far away—Cartagena is but ten hours by steamer—Spanish emigrants still flock to Oran, and their language is almost as much heard as French among the lower classes. France, realising that she cannot find among her own children colonists enough to people her North African Empire, wisely does not discourage the immigration of hard-working Southern Europeans of Latin races who will become, if not French, at least Algerians, Tunisians or Moroccans, according to the land for which they have elected. Her first aim is to get white inhabitants to develop the countries and counterbalance, without displacing, the native element.

There is little in Oran to attract the tourist, but for the business man much; and its inhabitants confidently look forward to their city supplanting Algiers as the leading town in Algeria. Its population is now 119,628 Europeans, 15,043 natives. (Census of 1921.)

There is nothing for the seeker for Oriental architecture to see. But a large theatre in the fine principal square, streets lined with good modern buildings, an excellent tramway service and flourishing export and import trade console the citizens for the disappearance of historic mosques and narrow, foul alleys of the by-gone Arab town of the days when Oran was a Moslem kingdom.

There is a marked dissimilarity between its environs and those of Algiers; for, unlike the capital, Oran has

no suburbs of villas bowered in gardens, but ends almost abruptly at the unimposing, loopholed brick wall that bounds it. And the country around, although well cultivated, looks bare from the absence of trees and houses.

But the railway going south-west towards the Moroccan border passes through fertile and well-tilled land, by vineyards and cornfields and prosperous farms.

The first town of importance that it reaches, about fifty miles from Oran, is quite a modern one that to outsiders is best known as the headquarters of the famous Foreign Legion. It is called Sidi Bel Abbès, and has a population, chiefly European, of close on 30,000. It is well laid out with wide roads, shady squares, a few small hotels, fine barracks for the Legionaries and for a regiment of Spahis and a big military hospital. Sidi Bel Abbès is a good example of the well planned, well built, sanitary if unpicturesque modern towns that France has dowered Algeria with, towns that may be disappointing to the tourist in search of Orientalism, but that are much pleasanter for their European inhabitants to live in than artistic but unhealthy Eastern-built cities.

Fifteen hundred feet above the sea it is embowered in gardens, trees, vineyards and fertile fields in a wide valley watered by the Mekarra river. And from it the railway runs through an equally rich, well-cultivated and prosperous countryside, dotted with European farms and villages. But the ground rises as the train goes on, until it becomes a range of hills around the curves of which the line winds, looking across a broad plain to mountains stretching into Morocco to the west. Through tunnels, by rugged and rocky ground, over

long viaducts, past cascades, circling around a glorious amphitheatre adorned with gigantic red boulders enshrining a waterfall, it goes under forest-crowned summits to a town crowded with minarets and domes and perched, 2,500 feet above the sea, on a steep hillside overlooking a vast, cultivated plain.

It is Tlemçen, the city of Algeria richest in treasures of the days of Arab supremacy, of dynasties that flourished for centuries and fell swift to ruin, remembered now only by monuments built to commemorate their glories. There is a mosque that was new when the Normans ruled England. There are others that were old when Columbus sailed across the Atlantic. When Henry the Eighth lived Tlemçen was a flourishing city with a population of 125,000, its civilisation at the zenith, the arts cultivated, saints and scholars filling its mosques and medersas, its commerce extending to the Levant. Once a Sultan, Abou Yakoub, laid siege to it in the leisurely fashion in which wars were waged in A.D. 1302. No muddy dug-outs, no ruined houses to shelter him and his warriors in the seven years of siege—he built a city over against Tlemçen, Mansoura, the City of Victory, with a noble palace in it with marble courts, shady gardens and luxurious chambers for the beauties who filled his harem. There was a mosque with a minaret a hundred and twenty feet high—you can see it to-day, shorn of its glories and its lavish adornments. There were Moorish baths to refresh the tired warriors and caravan-serais for traders. The besieged might sally forth and take their enemies unawares, so Abou Yakoub erected a wall nearly forty feet high with towers a hundred and

twenty-five feet ; and it stands there still, although the city has vanished and tilled fields and fertile gardens fill the three hundred acres of its site.

The European portion of Tlemçen is not impressive. The streets are narrow and mean, the buildings unimposing. But the white population is only about five thousand, compared with twenty-five thousand Moslems and Jews. So the native quarter is much larger and important, but not worthy of the imperial city of the Past with its history reaching back to the days of the Romans.

But the great mosque, the Djama el Kebir, founded in 1136, with its minaret over a hundred feet high, its many-columned interior, its arcaded court, is fit for any city. And the busy life of the streets, the dyers' shops with the big vessels of steaming coloured liquids, the tailors' booths with the small boys standing outside and straining tight the long threads that their fathers are sewing quaint garments with, the thronged markets, the dim, cavernous heated chambers of the Moorish baths, enthral the visitor. The townsmen are mostly Koulouglis, men of Turkish blood, not Arabs, with whom they formerly were at feud. Their grandsires fought against the Sultan of Morocco to hold their town for the French, when the latter first came to Algeria ; and they were opposed to the cession of Tlemçen to Abd-El-Kader, when the newcomers handed it over to him twice. To this day they will emphasise to a stranger the fact that they *are* Koulouglis.

French officers and soldiers now reside in the citadel, the Mechouar, where kings and imperial governors lived in luxury, such as one reads of in the Arabian Nights.

But the luxury has vanished with the sultans; and there is as little trace of it now as there is of Abou Tachfin's silver tree, its branches crowded with song-birds fashioned in gold and silver, that once stood in the gallery paved with onyx and marble.

But a visit to the house of some rich Moslem citizen of Tlemçen with its tiled courts and marble balustraded galleries, its many chambers deep-carpeted with the work of the looms of the town, its pierced brass lamps lit now by electricity, will give an idea of how the nobles of the city lived when sultans ruled.

As Tlemçen stands over 2,400 feet above the sea it has its full share of cold and of rain in winter time. But it is always charming, perched on the steep hillside under the forest-crowned summit and with the glorious panorama of mountain and valley spread before it. Its interest does not end with its ancient walls; for beyond them lie the walls of the ruined city of Mansoura and the glorious shrine of the sainted Sidi Bou Medine, born in Seville in 1126, with its carved wooden tomb covered with gold and silver brocade, its sculptured ornaments, its metal-work of bronze, its hanging ostrich eggs and gaudy banners, its marble-columned arcades. Its mosque with bronze and carved cedar doors, tiled court and onyx fountain, the tall minaret faced with glazed tiles.

To reach it one must go a mile and a half through olive groves, old cemeteries and shady woods. But there is a fine mosque to another saint from Seville just outside the gates of Tlemçen, as lovely a building as any in Algeria. It was built to soothe the soul of the holy man, who was a maker of sweetmeats and a preacher

and was put to death by a jealous Grand Vizier who in punishment was buried alive in a block of mortar.

There is indeed much at Tlemçen to compensate the traveller in Western Algeria for his disappointment in finding Oran and Sidi Bel Abbès too civilised and modern.

From this storied town the railway runs on southwest over hill and plain to the Moroccan frontier and across the border ends at Oudjda about sixty miles away. All the way in Algerian territory it passes through fertile, rich, well-cultivated country with villages and farms dotted thick, a testimony to the security and justice of French rule for nearly a century.

But cross the border and beyond Oudjda see the trackless waste that the Moroccan countryside is—not so bad now since this territory has of recent years also come under French rule. But it still is bare, little tenanted, an eloquent witness to the anarchy and misgovernment of native rule. On one side of the boundary prosperity, on the other poverty, desert. And as Morocco is, or was ten years or so ago, so was Algeria when the French took Algiers in 1830, lawless, little cultivated, given up to brigandage, lawlessness, never-ceasing internecine war waged by nomad tribes. And as she is now so Morocco will be. In the ten years since the French Protectorate was established by the Convention of Fez France has worked wonders in the Shereefian Empire, as I saw and marvelled at when I wandered through that land from Algeria to the Atlantic, from the Atlantic to Marrakesh and the Grand Atlas Mountains.



## CHAPTER IX

### FROM THE SEA TO THE SAHARA

ALGERIA is divided into three zones—the Tell,\* the fertile strip of plain and low hills from thirty to a hundred miles deep, backed up by the Atlas Mountains, secondly the Haut Plateaux, which is the stretch of high tableland reaching to the Aurès range, and thirdly, the Sahara, the vast and varied desert of sand, gravel, rock, jungle and rugged hills extending to the Soudan.

Naturally the climate differs greatly in each region. On the sea-coast it is generally mild, even pleasantly warm, in the winter months, and very hot from June to the end of October. In the mountains and high ground of the Hinterland, snow, rain and cold in winter and spring is matched by great heat in summer. In the Sahara rain is unusual at any time in the year, except in the far South; and when it comes does so in sudden heavy storms of short duration. Yet snow is found on the mountain-tops, and has even fallen, though very rarely, in the region of Biskra in the north of the desert, where in winter the nights and early mornings are chilly. But the summer heat is appalling.

\* From the Latin "tellus."

Unfortunately the annual rainfall in the inhabited regions is sometimes deficient and, as Algeria has no mountains covered with snow all the year round and thus able to keep the river beds full in summer, there is not much irrigation ; so a lack of rain spells famine and misery. Not only do the crops of the Tell suffer, but the pasturage on which the nomads feed their flocks dries up and husbandman and shepherd are ruined. The big farmer, generally European, loses heavily, but the poor native starves and animals and human beings die. The French are doing all they can to remedy this state of things.

The vegetation of Northern Algeria is similar to that of Southern Europe at like elevations. Palm-trees are rare and cultivated more for ornament than use. Vines, orange and other fruit trees, vegetables, corn and barley flourish in favourable seasons. Pines, eucalyptus (introduced from Australia) and the profitable cork-oak abound, cedars grow in the Aurès Mountains, cypress, mountain ash, gum and acorn oaks and other useful trees are found.

The great tableland stretches of the Hauts Plateaux are treeless and uncultivated ; but on them the nomads pasture their flocks and alfa (or esparto grass) grows freely and wild and is gathered and exported largely for use in paper-making.

In the Saharan oases palms, fruit trees and vegetables are grown, coarse tufts of vegetation are found even in the sandy deserts, tamarisks and gum-trees in the hills, and in the south there is both thick jungle and cultivation.

To see Algeria in all its phases there is no better

way than to journey by train from Algiers to Biskra; for the railway line traverses the three zones and exhibits the varied nature of the land. It reveals marvels of scenic beauty as by a triumph of engineering skill it passes through deep gorges and under awe-inspiring cliffs when it winds among the mountains that, rent by dreadful chasms, tower high above it.

In about seventeen hours it brings the traveller from the sea to the Sahara, from the coastal fertile strip, through the rugged region of hill and plateau, to the great desert.

But to see it all one must journey by day; and this will take longer. For there are but two trains from Algiers by which to go to Biskra. The night mail leaves in the evening and eleven or twelve hours later reaches El Guerrah, where its passengers for the south change to another train, reaching Biskra in time for lunch, while it goes on to Constantine. The day train starts from Algiers about half-past seven in the morning and at six in the evening drops its south-bound passengers at El Guerrah, where they pass the night and wait until next morning to be carried on to the desert. But it is worth the delay to see Algeria by daylight, to view the fields of corn, the orange groves, the trim rows of interminable vines, the green hills and the grim mountains with their rocky walls and snow-capped peaks and the level stretches of the tablelands with their grazing camels and the striped tents of the nomads.

All trains leaving Algiers, either bound west or east, start in the same direction, going southward for a few miles along the coast and turning away from the

sea where the Sahel Hills open at Maison Carrée. There ours for El Guerrah and Constantine or the Sahara heads for the east through cultivation, vineyards, groves of orange trees sheltered by high cypress hedges, rapidly drawing near the lofty mountains of Grand Kabylia ahead. Red-roofed, white-walled farmhouses—fine villas, indeed, some of them—dot the fields in which Kabyles labour, the red headgear or dress of their women splashing a note of vivid colour in the green landscape. Trim little towns inhabited by white colonists, tree-shaded roads on which motor-diligences crowded with Arabs pass five-horsed carts loaded with huge wine-barrels, and swift automobiles with European passengers fly by natives afoot or jogging along on diminutive donkeys.

We pass Maison Blanche, Rouïba and the forest of La Réghaïa, Alma that saw grim fights in 1839 and 1871 when the French soldiers defeated overwhelming numbers of Arabs and Kabyles, Ménerville with its branch line to Tizi Ouzou. We are in the Djurdjura Mountains now; and the line bores through them in many tunnels that all too swiftly end the glimpses of the brawling river far below in the deep ravine of the beautiful Gorge of the Isser.

The train stops at a little town on the banks of this stream. Palestro, the scene of a cruel massacre of colonists, men, women and children, in the Kabyle revolt of 1871. For days a handful of ill-armed civilians held out heroically against overwhelming numbers of Berbers and Arabs. In one of the three houses held for defence more than forty Europeans

of both sexes surrendered on the promise that their lives would be spared; but their treacherous foes slew them all. Another party of two score in a second building were captured and were only released when the uprising was crushed.

The train rushes on between the rugged walls of the Djurdjura Mountains. A late snowfall has whitened them well-nigh to their base; and the air is chill in the bright sunshine. But bushes and sturdy trees cling to the steep slopes; and in every tiny terraced field Kabyles are industriously working. At Maillot we pass near the gigantic pyramid of the highest point of the Djurdjuras, Lella-Khadidja, 7,500 feet high. From the village of Maillot a good carriage road leads through the hills to Bougie, the seaport of Grand Kabylia, and another goes to Michelet, Fort National and Tizi Ouzou. At the next station, Beni-Mansour, there is a branch line to Bougie; and, roundabout as it is, this is the only way by rail to it from Algiers.

On still among the mountains growing wilder every minute until desolation culminates in the gaunt and fearsome walls of rock of the passes called the Portes-de-Fer, rising sheer for thousands of feet above the line and the tumbling waters of the Hammam River. Some terrible upheaval in past ages has forced the rocky strata into an almost vertical position, and the precipitous cliffs seem formed of stone palisades with saw-toothed tops outlined against the sky. There are two of these Iron Gates—La Grande Porte and La Petite. And through the latter grim defile in 1839 a Royal Duke of France led an army where no army had

ever before penetrated, not even the world-conquering Romans.

Then a tunnel pierces the mountains and the train emerges on the vast monotonous stretch of the Haut Plateaux, dreary, depressing, wearisome to the eye. They recall the level western prairies of the United States more than the wide expanses of the plains of India; for the latter are cultivated and dotted with countless villages and groves of trees, whereas the Algerian tablelands are mostly deserts with sparse vegetation like so much of the land in the Western States of North America.

Their solitude is broken only by a group of pasturing camels, a herd of sheep in charge of a bare-legged boy, an occasional Arab on a lean horse with flowing tail cantering over the plain. Here and there white storks in ones and twos stand solemnly on stilt-like legs, stalk majestically about or, if near the line, rise and flap heavily away to a safe distance.

The direction of the railway, which at first was south-east, is now practically due east. A walled town with four towers lies beside the line, Bordj-bou-Arredj, destroyed by the Mokranis in the rising of 1871, but rebuilt and prosperous, for it stands in fertile country. A long stretch of flat, monotonous land—more than three thousand feet above sea-level, though—separates it from another town enclosed by a fortified wall pierced by four gates.

A town most modern in appearance with its church, theatre, cafés and tree-bordered streets this, 3,500 feet above the sea. Setif it is named. But many centuries ago the Romans called it Sitifis; and the representa-

tives of the Empire lived in stately palaces in it when it was the capital of the province of Mauretania. It was three miles in circumference then; but the hand of God and of man fell heavily on it. An earthquake wrecked it, but did less damage than the Vandals and the Arabs who came after them; for between them they wiped the Roman city off the face of the earth.

On again over the mournful tableland, and away on the right a few mountain tops show above the horizon. They are peaks of the Aurès Mountains, that great barrier between the desert and the midlands of Algeria. But evening is closing in; and soon the train pulls up at a wayside station with scarcely two buildings to be seen outside it. But, unimportant as it seems, several passengers descend from the first and second-class carriages; for it is El Guerrah, and here we must stop for the night, while the train goes on, heading due north now, to the rock city of Constantine.

The light is fading fast; and, as one steps out of the station, the hotel, a long low building, confronts the astonished traveller who sees no other houses near, no town, no lights from windows even. For the small village is some distance away, and all that concerns him is this unpretentious but not uncomfortable hostelry where he must pass the night.

The air is chill; and the hotel dining-room, into which the outer door opens directly, feels cold; for like all Algerian dwellings it is built more with an eye to the heat of the summer than to the less warm seasons. But far from civilisation as it seems it is lit by electric light; and an Anglo-Indian traveller may well wonder how it is that the French can manage to bring this illu-

minant with them wherever they go in North Africa, even in the heart of Morocco to which they penetrated only ten years ago, while up-country in the India that has been in English hands well-nigh two centuries the European resident must content himself with oil-lamps. And, too, were this small junction in India instead of Algeria he would find only a bench in a railway waiting-room or at best a bedstead in a dak-bungalow, where no food is supplied, to pass the night on, instead of this hotel where a well-cooked dinner and a bottle of red or white Algerian wine thrown in awaits him, with a comfortable bed to follow.

From Constantine, twenty-three miles away, a train comes next morning to carry on the travellers southward bound. Not all are for the desert and Biskra a hundred and twenty-five miles farther on; for on the way lies Batna, a French-built town dating from 1844, the seat of a sub-prefecture and the headquarters of a General of Division. Several officers and civilians are bound for it, for their homes are in it. But with them, when they quit the train, go tourists from many lands.

For it is the starting place for excursions to two ruined Roman cities that can rival Herculaneum and Pompeii and write in stone the history of the doings of that wonderful Empire through so many centuries in North Africa. Six or seven miles from Batna is Lambessa, the ancient Lambæsis, where the Third Augustan Legion had its headquarters and where the ruins of temples, triumphal arches, theatres, baths, forums and the columned Prætorium tell of the glories of this far-flung outpost of Imperial rule.

But they fade into insignificance compared with the



remains of Timgad sixteen or seventeen miles farther on. Thamugadi the Romans called it. A splendid city it must have been; and as one stands on the rising ground behind the theatre in which more than four thousand spectators could find room, and looks over the wide vista of ruins that mark where temples, thermæ, law courts and council chambers stood, amazement is mingled with admiration for the marvellous race in that bygone age which so far from its native land could mark its dominion with cities such as this.

Against the sky stands up the square-topped, three-arched gateway known as Trajan's Arch, of sandstone with marble Corinthian pillars. A broad stone-paved road leads to it between two rows of columns still standing.

Surrounded by the ruins of the Temple of Victory, the Curia and the Court of Justice is the paved and colonnaded Forum where the orators thundered and busy lawyers pushed their way to the court through lounging crowds of Roman citizens who had never seen Rome. It all brings home to one, as no book ever could, the marvellous work of those empire builders and colonisers who could spread the dominion of their race so far afield, could make these deserts bloom like a garden and build these wonderful cities where desolation now reigns.

Great as is France's achievement in creating this new colonial empire, yet she has done it in the age of steam and electricity and breech-loading rifles. How more remarkable then were the deeds of the Romans whose frail ships bore them through the Mediterranean storms to tread with their sandalled feet the long road

over valley and mountain, through hostile tribesmen and fierce wild beasts, under a burning sun and in blinding snowstorms, to plant their eagles thus far in the inhospitable land of Africa!

How tame and commonplace Batna seems after these impressive ruins!

On with the train again over the once seemingly interminable tablelands; but the rugged crests of the Aurès Mountains coming nearer show that they are ending. The railway line is now more than 3,500 feet above sea-level. In winter these Hauts Plateaux are sometimes covered with snow; and tourists to Timgad, who have cherished the delusion that Africa is always a land of burning sunshine, consider themselves aggrieved at meeting with frosts and snow, not realising that at such altitudes it is not to be wondered at.

Here is a small, unnoticeable station with a strangely mixed name, Aïn Touta Mac Mahon. But it is remarkable as the scene of the last uprising against the French, which took place during the Great War when conscription for natives was introduced into Algeria. Up to that time the ranks of their indigenous regiments were filled by voluntary enlistment. The revolt was of little importance. A mob of discontented Arabs gathered together, burned a couple of buildings and killed a Frenchman or two, but were easily dispersed by a handful of troops.

For some time the barren Aurès Mountains have been gradually closing in on us on either side and now join straight ahead, so that the train appears to be rushing to destruction against a rocky wall hundreds of feet high. But at the last moment the lofty barrier is

seen to be cloven from summit to base in a V-shaped rent; and the famous gorge of El Kantara (The Bridge) opens before us.

El Kantara, Gateway of the Desert, portal through which Roman, Arab and French conquerors have in turn entered the Sahara, gap in the mountain boundary between the second and the third zone of Algeria, between the Tablelands and the Sahara. Beyond it lies the fabled waste of sand and gravel and rock, the region of palm-shaded oasis and golden dune, where the devils of the mirage dance on the salt lakes and the bones of camels whiten the caravan routes. Over this pass mail-clad Roman soldiers kept guard; and across the rushing torrent that through the ages has breached the mighty barrier their engineers threw the arched bridge that may still be seen, the bridge that gives the gorge its Arabic name. The gaunt cliffs on either side rise sheer four hundred feet above it and only between one and two hundred yards apart. In the deep ravine a small hotel lies bowered in a pretty garden and shelters inquiring tourists who come to climb the rugged Aurès Mountains around them and see the strange Chaouia race who, secluded from the world in their remote villages and caves, have altered little through the centuries from their Berber ancestors of pre-Arab days.

The train halts for a few minutes at the small way-side station of El Kantara half a mile from the gorge; and the passengers can get out and look about them. Behind lie the Hauts Plateaux, on all sides rise the strangely-formed peaks and worn summits of the mountains, in front is the gate that once passed will reveal to them the wide desert that they have come far to see.

Train and travellers go on. Tantalising glimpses between the tunnels of river, road and hamlet deep in the ravine, then the three hundred and fifty yard long gorge is passed; and the Sahara lies before us.

For the moment there is almost a feeling of disappointment in those who have expected to see a vast dead plain like the dry bed of a vanished sea, a barren expanse of golden sands heaped high in wind-ribbed dunes. For great stretches of the waving plumes of date-palms, beneath which mud huts shelter among fruit trees, and bright green fields of barley patch the reddish brown soil, and between us and the horizon similar oases dot the desert. Behind the steep wall of the Aurès Mountains stands up gapped with the V of the pass and curves towards us east and west, still hemming us in.

More palms, little mud-walled gardens, more huts, then quite an imposing building and long lines of houses of sun-dried brick in front of which fuzzy-haired negresses with bright-coloured garments stand with little naked black babies astride their hips. The women-kind of the Senegalese Battalion that now inhabits these barracks which during the Great War sheltered German prisoners who, if they suffered from heat in summer, were spared the rain and snow of the European battlefields in winter.

The train runs beside a dry river-bed at times filled with water when a storm breaks on the Aurès Mountains which still seem to encircle us, thrusting out their long arms east and west into the Sahara. The surface of the desert is not the sand that one would expect to find in it, but reddish clay and stones. Wherever we

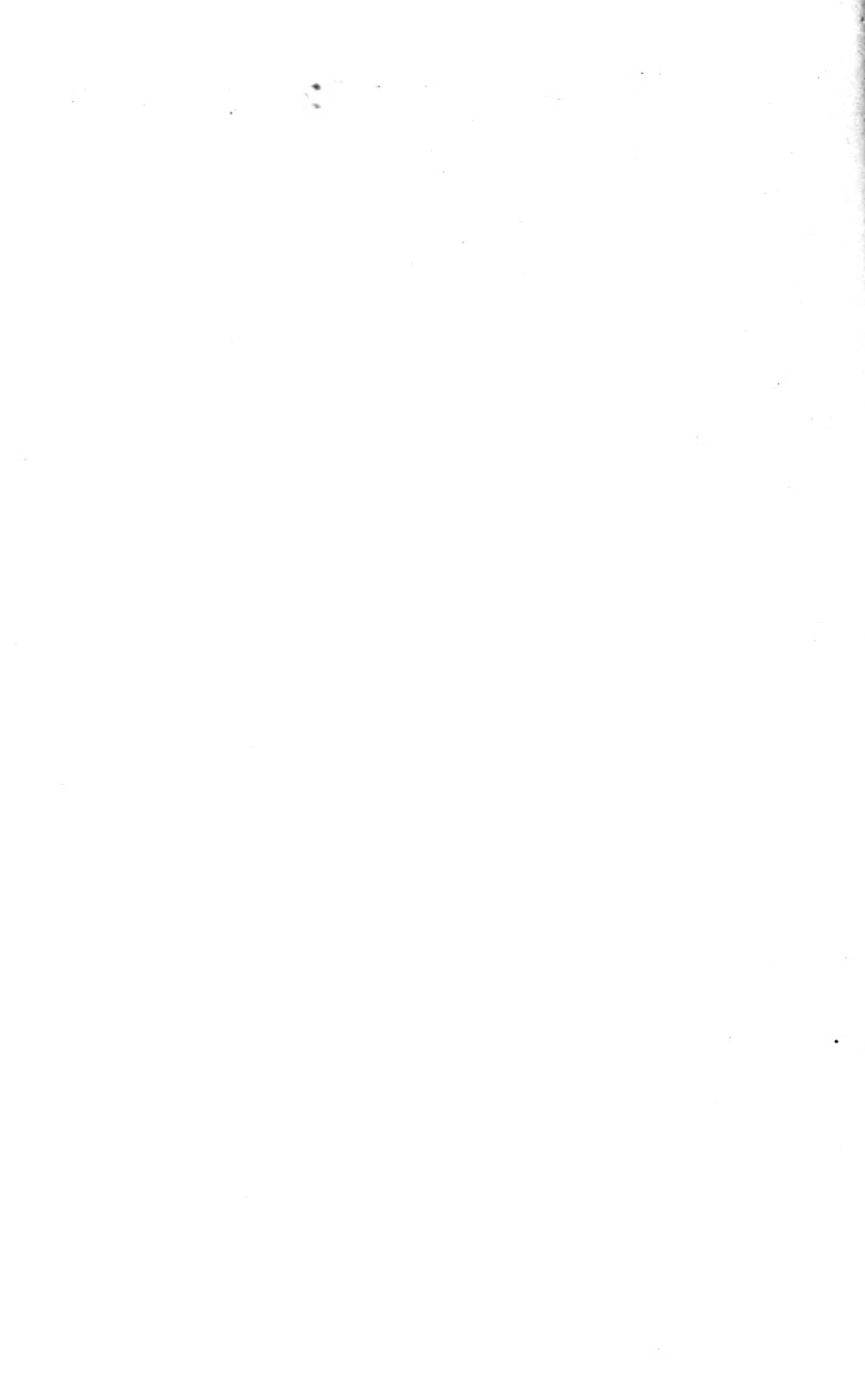


*Photo. by the Author.*

THE GORGE OF EL KANTARA AND THE AURÈS  
MOUNTAINS FROM THE SAHARA.



*Photo. by the Author.*



look it is dotted with oases ; and the dark green palm-groves stand out against the naked wall of the distant mountains. They and the little gardens of huts or of the small railway stations show that all that the desert needs is water to make it productive.

To create an oasis either water has reached the surface naturally or wells, native, hand-dug wells and others bored by scientific means to depths of perhaps over a thousand feet, provide it, and it is used to irrigate and fertilise. The Algerian Government and private French enterprise have done much for the Sahara and its inhabitants by engineering aid to reach the life-giving water where no Arab well-diggers could hope to penetrate to it. Where it is available shoots of date-palms are planted ; and in fifteen or twenty years the trees bear fruit. Under them as they tower high,

“With feet in water and crowns in the sun,”

as the Arabs say, for their roots require constant irrigation, lesser trees grow and wheat, barley and vegetables are cultivated ; and villages of sun-dried brick spring up in the oasis.

Thirty-five miles of sun-steeped desert dotted with these shady centres of human and plant life lie between El Kantara and Biskra. Across the horizon the dark blur of a sea of foliage, a straggling caravan of shambling camels driven by a couple of Arabs, two French gendarmes in blue uniforms riding on white horses over the unfenced track, *douars*—groups of striped brown tents—in increasing numbers, announce our approach to the Saharan town that is becoming a favourite winter

resort with health and pleasure-seekers from America and Europe.

Then houses, gardens, and a railway station ; and the train comes to a stop after a journey of nearly four hundred miles through Algerian plain, mountain, table-land and desert. And the traveller new to the land is surprised to see white hotel porters and touts in uniform on the platform and large motor-cars and luxurious hotel automobile omnibuses outside the station, while his ears are deafened by a babel of many languages.

The Biskra of to-day is a small modern town of hotels, offices, European dwellings and shops that cater for tourists, with a native quarter joined on ; while " Old Biskra," a mile or two away, is a huge, well-watered oasis of nearly half a million date-palms sheltering seven villages of dingy mud houses. Yet they say that a city of 60,000 inhabitants stood here before the days of the Vandals.

On emerging from the railway station the traveller is confronted by a long, rectangular public garden with leafy trees, flowering plants and a band-stand, hemmed in on the left by the high, loopholed wall of an extensive fort containing barracks, hospital and military buildings, and capable of sheltering the European residents in the case of a native uprising. On the other side two-storied buildings line the road, the side-walk passing under arcades before most of them. Behind lie small streets of private residences, a quaint little square, the Mairie and gendarmerie. Beyond the gardens are a few European shops where the tourist can purchase photographs, picture post cards,



Algerian rugs and carpets and native jewellery, with an occasional café where the French resident can drink his *apéritif*. There are several hotels, all good, and two at least luxurious and expensive enough to suit the rich transatlantic globe-trotter. Then in its own garden stands the Casino, where dances, concerts and cinema performances are held, gambling may be indulged in and a good orchestra plays to the patrons sipping their drinks around little tables. So the French inhabitants can feel that they are still in touch with civilisation. And to help them to do it the town crier beats a drum in the street before he reads out municipal notices. But the tourist who resents the existence of so much Europeanisation and seeks the Orientalism that he has come far to find, has only to turn off the one street of the "white" town to be plunged into native life and surroundings; for the Arab and negro population of Biskra far outnumber the Europeans, and their quarter lies just behind that of the latter. French municipal organisation sees to it that their narrow streets are clean and the market-place well kept.

Two long lanes of dingy houses with crazy wooden balconies at the windows are known as the "Streets of the Ouled Nails," as in them live the dancing girls, who sometimes perform on the stage of the Casino. The globe-trotter in search of local colour prefers to see them in the native cafés; and American and European ladies and even children will sit contentedly for hours in these small and smelly establishments and think that they are watching the soul of the East as they stare at the painted and bedizened courtesans whose real trade is not the languid posturing and dancing on a platform

for a few francs a night. The majority of these girls do not belong to the Ouled Naïl tribe, but are half-castes, Jewesses from Algiers and Constantine, negresses and Arab women from all parts of Algeria. The European who does not understand the difference and who probably considers the words to be a generic term for a native dancer terms them all Ouled Naïls.

A few fields and a quarter of blank-walled mud houses separate the town from the chief attraction of Biskra, the beautiful garden of the Villa de Benévent, a delightful bower of foliage fronting the bare desert. A wealthy Frenchman, Comte Landon de Longeville, has made a unique dwelling for himself in the form of several detached bungalows—one a drawing-room, another a dining-room, a third the bedrooms, scattered about in grounds of several acres planted with an endless variety of trees and flowering shrubs from Europe and the tropics. Tall palms rustle their fronds above the wistaria-clad buildings, orange and other fruit trees cluster thick beside the trim paths, the silver sound of running water in tiny irrigation channels rivals the songs of the birds in the dense foliage. And the deep, cool shade is welcome after the glaring sunshine steeping the stony desert that stretches from the garden wall to the naked hills of the Aurès range bleak against the blue sky. A lovely spot, a fairyland that itself alone is almost worth the long journey from the sea; and the hospitable owner opens it for a nominal fee to the European traveller who seeks for peace and repose in the shadow of its wonderful foliage.

A mile or two from the town brings one to the vast oasis, "Old Biskra," with its mud-walled houses and its

palms in hundreds of thousands shading the gardens, the crops in which prove the fertility of the Sahara when it has water. Irrigation channels run beside the narrow roads hemmed in by high earthen walls that confine the fields and the orchards of palms that produce as fine dates as any in the world. The villages in the oasis consist of dwellings built of mud bricks, all of the universal Eastern design which presents a blank wall to the outer world but groups the rooms around a small inner court on to which they open.

About four miles from Biskra are sulphur springs and baths which the Romans used in bygone days—Ad Piscinam, they called them—and the Arabs have followed their example for centuries. And to-day visitors from Europe go out to them in motor-cars or the one-horse tram that rolls slowly over the rails laid on the desert; and La Fontaine Chaude is quite an imposing establishment with restaurant and accommodation for persons desirous of taking a course of the baths. The water, which is declared beneficial for rheumatism, tuberculosis, skin disease, stomach and lung troubles, gushes from the ground at the rate of about twenty thousand gallons an hour and a temperature of  $115^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit.

During one stay in Biskra I personally observed its curative effect in the case of an acquaintance, a Swedish cavalry officer, who on arrival was so crippled by rheumatism as to be almost unable to walk, but was nearly normal before I left.

About thirteen miles from Biskra there nestles under the wall of mountains that bound the desert to the north a small village very sacred to Moslems; for it

bears the name and enshrines the tomb of the first Arab invader of North Africa, Sidi Okba. On sacred festivals the followers of the creed that this fiery missionary spread throughout North Africa from Egypt to the Atlantic gather from many miles around to pray; and the impressive sight of the thousands of white-robed men standing immobile with faces turned towards Mecca, then simultaneously prostrating themselves on the sand, is one that enchants the tourist from Biskra who is new to the ways of the Orient and Mahommedanism.

Biskra is the capital of the district called the Zab, in the plural Ziban, and was first occupied by the French under the Duc d'Aumale in 1844. A small garrison was left in it; but, as soon as the main body marched away, the neighbouring tribes swooped down on it and annihilated the defenders. But the town was promptly recaptured.

It is inseparably connected with the prominent and noble family of the Ben Gana, the head of which, the Sheikh-el-Arab of the Zab, backed up the ex-Bey of Constantine, Hadj Ahmed, against the French after the second siege and fall of his city. But the victorious invaders scattered the tribes and chased Bou-Aziz-ben-Gana into the bleak Aurès Mountains until he made his submission, when in 1838 they invested him with the dignity of Sheikh-el-Arab under their suzerainty. To-day his descendant is Bach-Agha or Chief of the districts and tribes of the Ziban over which he exercises authority in the name of the Algerian Government.

His brother, Caid Ali-ben-Gana, a handsome and courteous gentleman, a splendid specimen of the high-



IN THE BISKRA OASIS.

*Photo. by the Author.*



CAÏD ALI BEN-GANA.

*Photo. by the Author.*



born and well-bred Arab, is a gallant soldier who fought with the Algerian cavalry against the Germans in the Great War and bears on the breast of his burnous decorations won on the field of battle. One must know men like the Ben Gana brothers to understand the respect and admiration that warrior chiefs of their race like the great Abd-El-Kader won from the French in their fierce struggle for independence.

## CHAPTER X

### FROM BISKRA TO TOUGOURT

PASS on from Biskra, for the true Sahara lies beyond ! The railway that runs another hundred and thirty miles to the south has not yet vulgarised the sand wastes, the great palm groves and the vast dried salt lakes over which the Fairies of the Mirage dance. And the little desert town of Tougourt at its end is still unspoilt.

Those who would savour the real life of the Sahara may yet travel to this outpost of civilisation by camel and caravan and spend half a dozen days in doing so. But the wise who do not disdain the advantages of modern transport take the one train, white-painted against the heat, comfortable and up-to-date, that pulls out from Biskra every second day and reaches Tougourt in eight hours, returning on the morrow. In winter it goes by daylight; but in the dread summer months it steals over the desert in the night hours to escape man's enemy there, the sun.

A motley and interesting crowd of travellers it carries. A stately, olive-faced Arab in flowing white burnous, a *hlafa* or thin cloth covering the high felt cap on his head bound round by many turns of a brown string of camel-hair cord and falling to his waist, stalks to a third-class carriage followed by what might be two automatic upright white bolsters were it not for the fair foreheads and the beautiful black eyes appearing above



the *adjar*, or veil which covers the rest of the face, and the bare ankles and the little feet thrust into heel-less slippers. They are his wives carefully shrouded against profane male gaze. Behind them come a couple of men who, but for their red checcias and semi-Arab dress might be Scotsmen by their blue eyes, fair skins and sandy moustaches. They are Kabyles, in whose veins runs the mixed blood of aborigine, Roman and Vandal. Two Tirailleurs Indigènes, smart, dark-complexioned soldiers in their turquoise blue Zouave jackets and baggy trousers, salute a handsome subaltern officer of the French aviation service in dark blue tunic and breeches and black gaiters. On his breast are the Legion of Honour and the Croix de Guerre, the latter with two metal palm branches across its ribbon to show that it was won thrice. And over his left shoulder the aiguillette cord of the *fourragère* tells that he has belonged to a corps whose standard has been decorated for bravery. A fair-skinned, black-bearded Mozabite in Arab dress, one of the small but industrious race from the towns and oases in the Sahara below Laghouat scowled at as heretics by devout Moslems, climbs up into a second-class compartment behind a stout Frenchwoman on her way to rejoin her stationmaster husband half-way down the line.

Energetic hotel-guides conducting parties of American and European travellers push aside bewildered groups of desert-dwelling women with unveiled faces, mere bundles of odd garments. A horn squeaks, and the train slides quietly out into the desert. First it passes high, mud-walled houses, tall palm trees, a loop-holed stone tower on a hillock facing out towards the

wild and the aviation hangars from which the military aeroplanes fly out to keep watch over the waste. Then Biskra and its environs and its oases are left behind, and the true Sahara appears.

But where are the glaring plains of drifting sand, the golden dunes heaped up, the dread bareness of lifeless desert that the untravelled—aye, and the man who has seen Egypt and the dead shores of the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea—expect? For here and almost everywhere along the way to Tougourt the ground is heaped in tiny hummocks crowned with foot-high bright green bushes, clumps of grass eighteen inches long or drier stuff that resembles *alfa*. Although close to the train one can see the sand between the bunches of vegetation, yet gazing farther away towards the horizon the eyes seem to be ranging over a dark stretch of gorse-bushes and in the distance the tops of the trees in a pinewood.

Lifeless? Dotted among the hummocks are camels grazing, camels brown or black, in ones, in twos, in dozens, sometimes in charge of a small Arab child, oftener alone. The universal donkey, too, in groups, and herds of lop-eared goats are busy; and it is evident that in this part of the desert at least there is good feeding for hardy animals. Here and there dunes do crop up, and farther along the railway are lines of bare sandhills. But as a rule the undulating ground is dotted with little clumps of green plants, and the surface of the sand is hard. Between the bushes it is strewn with loose stones glistening like mica, which mineral is found plentifully between Tougourt and Ghardaia. But the sand, ridged as on a seashore, shows that when a strong wind blows over the desert it can rise in suffocating clouds.

So far from being absolutely dry little streams and narrow pools and here and there bigger ponds are visible from the train. But the ground is covered in very many places with snow-white patches of magnesia or mineral salts, which show that the earth is everywhere impregnated with them, so that the surface water is brackish and undrinkable. The oases of date-palms that dot the desert owe their existence to the artesian wells sunk deep, sometimes many hundreds of feet below the surface.

The month is March and the sun shines brilliantly in the clear blue sky, yet the heat is not great. In fact, with the windows of the carriages open even the European travellers in the train wear furs and overcoats up to noon. The nomad Arabs who wander far south in the winter months to return northward when the scorching sun of summer drives them back, are still absent, though occasionally low tents of striped cloth guarded by fierce dogs dot the desert here and there; beside tethered camels lazy, white-burnoused men lie on the ground and gaze indifferently at the passing train. But the women of the *douar* are too busy to raise their eyes towards it, for they are doing all the hard work of the encampment.

The Aurès Mountains are not yet lost to sight. They thrust forward on either flank and seem to hem the railway in. At their feet are frequent great palm-groves, oases nourished by the water flowing down from the hills, and though lost to sight underground only waiting to be tapped by wells. But at last the mountains sink beneath the horizon and sandy hillocks blot them from sight.

The train runs past a well-built European house beside the line, the dwelling of some French platelayer, and his wife stands on the verandah to watch us go by. Near the door is a pump, and by it is tethered a great horned sheep. Farther on a well-peopled oasis lies close to the railway. Above the flat roofs of the blank, mud-walled huts the tall palms rustle their fronds in the light breeze. From the village an Arab on a thin brown mare, closely followed by a foal, ambles down the sunk road white with magnesia that leads between earthen banks to the line.

And then the train slides in alongside a building that, owing to its whitewashed walls and its dome surmounted by a gilt crescent, looks like a mosque or a holy marabout's tomb, but it is only the first station out from Biskra, Oumache. The blue-uniformed railway officials in it look sadly out of keeping with its Oriental appearance. One feels that they should garb themselves in burnous and *hlafa* like the expectant travellers on the platform. But then, to look the part also, the train would have to disguise itself as a camel. It certainly behaves like one in the station; for it stops with as much noise and grumbling and shows as little indecent haste to move on again as the long-necked, bad-tempered animal that it is replacing in the desert.

And when at last it departs from Oumache and sees before it a river, like the camel it swerves out of the straight line to seek the narrowest place to cross. An iron three-span bridge stretches over the wide, almost empty river-bed which, however, often fills so suddenly by a spate from the hills that it drowns unwary travellers

and women washing clothes in it. And this is the Sahara that one pictures as a waterless waste!

Now comes Chegga station, another cement building with dome and golden crescent, where on one side of the line a garden of flowers and vegetables, of tamarinds and young palms, blooms to show what water can make of the desert soil. The European passengers crowd to stare over its wall into a mud-brick house sheltering a Sahara gazelle, a pretty, slim-legged creature with short, curved horns.

Beyond Chegga there are more streams, pools and ponds; but the water in them must be brackish, for everywhere between the tiny bushes the ground is white with magnesia or mineral salts. The desert is still the same, undulating, covered with low vegetation, or at intervals dotted with the clustering palms of oases.

Traditional pictures are not wanting. A herd of camels stalk by, shepherded by a couple of Arabs on horseback and a third man afoot with gun slung on his back. They pass a string of the same supercilious, long-legged beasts heavily laden, a caravan on its way south with flour from Biskra; for though the railway runs to-day the Arabs use the transport that their forefathers did centuries ago. And the desert takes its toll of man and animals as of yore. Not a hundred yards from the iron road lies the complete skeleton of a camel with the big white skull still adhering in some way to the cervical vertebræ. And half a mile farther on is another, fallen to pieces this one. And though the troopers of France patrol the Sahara raiders still swoop down on caravans in the south and men's life-blood stains the hot sand.

More oases, more stations. Some of the latter vary in architecture from the first ones, though still presenting the Eastern touch.

And now far away to the left of the railway lies a large lake, a truly magnificent sheet of water bordered by sandy cliffs, dotted with islets; cliffs and islets reflected clearly in the shining water. Farther on the far shore runs out of sight and horizon and water blend. Here and there are large fishing-boats. The tourists crowd the windows of the train corridor to gaze in wonder and admiration at the beautiful expanse of water. It stretches for miles parallel to the railway; and our surprise is great that so vast a lake lies so far inside the Sahara. Guide-book maps are consulted. Yes, here it is in all of them, marked by a wash of blue, one of a chain of similar coloured patches extending to the Gulf of Gabes in Tunisia. The guide-books term them Chotts and call them salt-lakes. Small inland seas they must be. This one is the Chott El Melghir, 170 miles long.

Astonishment, unbelief, are evinced by the tourists when fellow travellers who reside in Tougourt or elsewhere along the line declare that there is practically no water, fresh or salt, in this beautiful lake, that its shining expanse with its faithful reflections of islets, cliffs and boats is all delusion. It is a mirage. What we see is the bed of a dried-up lake covered white with magnesia. We cannot believe it until the railway line passes over a portion of it—here, they say, sixteen metres below sea level. It is over these Chotts that the Mediterranean Sea is to be brought into the heart of the Sahara when the scheme is ripe—some day, perhaps.

This mirage is beyond belief. I have seen many in India, but I stared long at this Chott before I could realise the truth.

Water, real, fresh water, comes, and strange to say comes unwelcome to the desert. Only the day before a storm had swept over the district, torrents of rain fell, river beds filled to the brim, and for several kilometres the railway had been undermined or even swept away. But it had been promptly repaired—it is no difficult task to bank up sand and lay sleepers on it—but over those doubtful kilometres the train crawled slowly, while gangs of Arabs and Kabyle navvies stood aside to let it go by.

Storms in the desert! Last July the motor diligence from Ghardaia to Tougourt, both places over a hundred and fifty miles inside the Sahara, ran into one. The lightning and thunder were tropical, and hailstones fell, not such as dwellers in temperate climes know, but sharp-edged bars of clear ice two or three inches long, each enclosing a round, clouded hailstone such as is ordinarily seen. They pierced the tarpaulin cover of the diligence as though they had been bullets, they battered and bruised the driver's arms, hands and body until he was forced to pull up and wait for a couple of hours. And even when the storm had passed he was unable to proceed at once, for the ground for miles was slippery with the ice particles. Ice in the Sahara in July!

Near each railway station on the line to Tougourt there is at least one large oasis, if not more—for the oasis is the *raison d'être* of the station's existence. In many of them the villages are large and boast quite

imposing mosques, the white minarets rising among the tall dark palms. The extent of the high walls of sun-dried bricks surrounding the crowded dwellings is surprising; as are the other evidences of prosperity in the vast number of palm-trees—close on two hundred thousand in some cases—the ground cultivation of vegetables under them, the herds of goats, sheep and donkeys, as well as the crowds that gather for the weekly markets.

Astonishing too, is the number of oases visible from the train all the way between Biskra and Tougourt. The popular idea that the whole Sahara is a vast, desolate, sandy desert inhabited only by wandering tribesmen is erroneous; for in other parts beside this which is served by the railway there are large oases with many villages containing a numerous settled population.

An oasis, as I have said, is simply a spot where water is found on the surface or more usually by sinking wells; for then irrigation will allow palms to grow, and where they are life can be supported. So villages of mud bricks spring up as if by magic. For the palm-tree means everything to the desert-dweller. It gives him almost his only food, the date and the edible pith. From the date is distilled a liquor something like anisette. Trees that do not bear fruit well are tapped near the leafy crown, and every morning the exuding sap is collected in earthen vessels tied under the incisions. When fresh it forms a harmless drink, but when fermented it is a strong intoxicant. "Lakmi," the Arabs call it; in India it is termed "toddy," and to produce it palms are extensively cultivated along the coast near Bombay. This tapping of a tree has a good effect on it, causing it to subsequently bear better fruit.



A date palm, although it does not produce a crop for the first fifteen or twenty years of its existence, is nevertheless a good investment; for it lives more than a hundred years, and even when dead its roots, trunk and leaves are useful for a variety of purposes. It is not usually grown from date-stones, but from slips. Palms are either male or female, and trees of the latter gender must be fertilised from the former.

They only fructify in the Sahara zone. The principal regions which produce dates in Southern Algeria are the Oued Rhir, the Ziban, the Souf, Ouargla, the Tidikelt, the Zousfana and the Saoura. There are very many varieties of this fruit. The finest quality, and the one usually exported for foreign consumption in cases, wooden and cardboard boxes, is the transparent Deglet-Nour.

The produce of the oases of the Souf and the Djerid is considered the best; and the crop is purchased entire by merchants even before the dates ripen.

The soft dates called Rhar, which the natives consume largely, are sold compressed in goatskins. The Horra and Degla-Beida are eaten by the bulk of the inhabitants of the Sahara and the Hauts Plateaux. Other varieties are the Mouchi-Degla, Koutichi, M'hentich, M'tima, Alaoua and a host of others. The harvest season is in November.

The staple, if not the only diet of the nomads is couscous, dates and camel's milk. Only on rare occasions, such as feasts, are sheep slaughtered for food—and then they are roasted whole. But dates from their portability—they are packed tight in goatskins sewn up—form the principal nourishment of a wandering Arab;

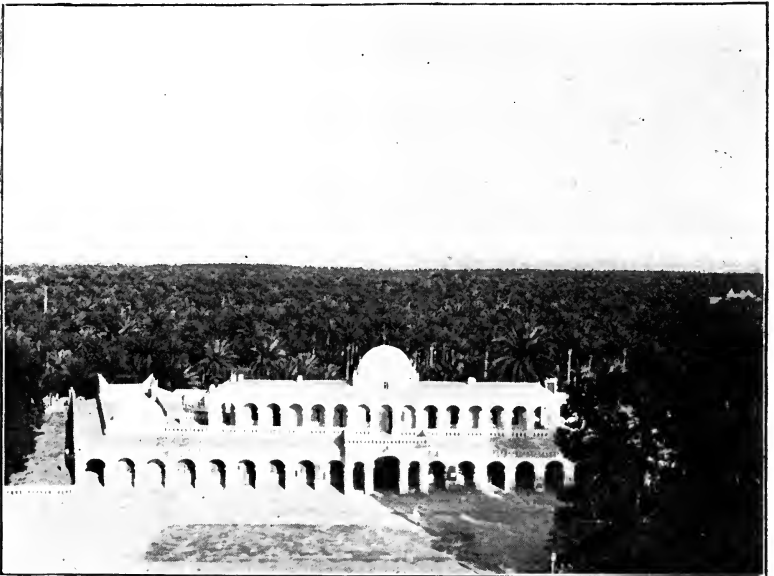
and without the palms the desert would be uninhabitable to him. But these trees require much water. Here the French come to the aid of the Arabs and sink artesian wells by machinery for them, naturally boring to depths that the old method of digging by hand could never reach. Indeed, all this land, and not only the Sahara, owes much to its rulers, who have developed its resources astonishingly. The man who thinks that the French cannot colonise should visit Algeria. He should see the farms, the cultivation, the vineyards of the northern provinces and the oases that are springing up in the desert thanks to French companies and the money they spend in developing them. It comes as a surprise to the tourist to see at a little wayside station in the Sahara the motor-car or the pony cart of one of their employees with his wife and children sitting in it. These vehicles look as out of place among the tethered camels, mules and donkeys as do their occupants in their European dress among the drapery and flowing robes of the Arab men and the picturesque though tatterdemalion figures of the female desert-dwellers with unveiled faces.

After El-Berd, where a solitary loopholed picquet tower rises above the desert and a few well-shaped Arab horses with gaily decorated high-peaked saddles were made fast to hitching-posts near the little station, there were several other stops before the train at last reached Tougourt. A real desert town this. Here one saw the bare, uncovered, unmistakable sand. Though around and about are many shady oases in which to hide among the palms, Tougourt stands up naked and unashamed against the sky, perched on a low hillock of



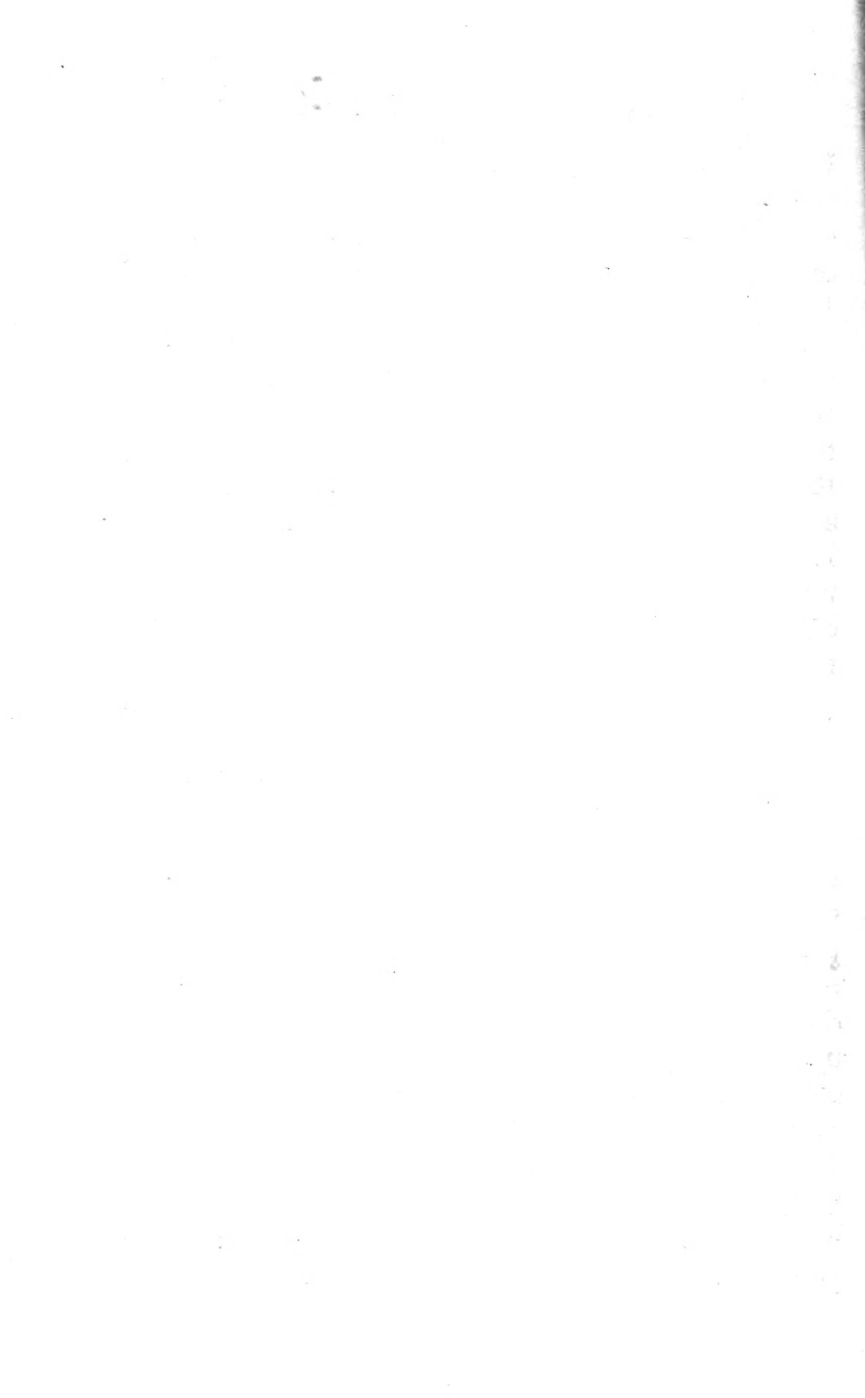
*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

TOUGGOURT FROM THE AIR.



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

THE PALMS OF TOUGGOURT.



loose sand, which drifts up against the deeply crenelated wall on one side of the arched gateways and on the other the barer, uglier one over which peep the flat roofs of the houses and the minarets of a score of mosques. It looks to-day much as it has for centuries, this Tougourt, brought in touch with civilisation at last; as the railway attests, as do the little Catholic church outside the town and the miserable horse dragging a small tram along narrow rails below the sand dune and up the one broad, deep-arcaded street that holds a hotel and a few offices. But nothing detracts from the Eastern look of the town. Certainly not the white-washed arches and walls of this main street, at the head of which, backed by a hundred palm-trees rising behind white, open balustrades and bordered by arcaded, one-storied buildings with an occasional domed roof, is the market place.

Here the sellers, when not engaged in animated disputes with bargaining buyers, squat or lie full length on the ground, comfortably awaiting custom beside their wares. Piles of dried bush-stumps for fuel and bundles of coarse desert grass for fodder are for sale. On cloths are spread—for stalls there are none—dates, grain, native bread and flat cakes and cooked food. Patient donkeys stand with drooping heads. Camels bunched up on the sand survey the passers-by with supercilious, evil stare and fill the air with burbling complaints when urged to uncurl their long legs and rise. On Fridays the market is filled with them; for the desert carpet-weavers have come in with their weird, gaudy wares for sale, strips and squares of fascinating colours, blues, greens, reds, yellows, purples, magentas, in clashing,

impossible contrasts, yet subtly harmonising in some strange way.

Unromantic though a market be, ordinary the actions of all in it, yet this market place of Tougourt is picturesque, and its tones of subdued green from the background of palms, of yellow from the sand that fills it, of white from the buildings and the dress of the chaffering groups, with over all the vivid blue of the Saharan sky, would delight a painter. Lazy, dishonest, immoral though the Arab may be—and I have never met anyone to defend him—the flowing lines of his robes give him a stateliness and a dignity to the eye at least.

After the market-place comes a square. On one side is a long, white, two-storied building of many-arched verandahs surmounted by a dome, the Bureau Arabe. Similar arcaded houses fill up two other sides; while the fourth is bounded by the grim, loopholed, bastioned wall of the fort and barracks in which the French Algerian troops are quartered. Above it a tall tower pierced for rifles and machine guns rises high in the air dominating town and desert, a sign for all, nomad or street-dweller, a warning symbol of the Dominant Power—"Lest They Forget."

In the square is a large, covered well with a stand-pipe from which gushes warm, almost hot water, springing up from a depth of over seven hundred and fifty feet where the French boring-tools had found it and discharging an amazing quantity of water every hour—water so strongly impregnated with magnesia as to have unpleasant effects on the Europeans in Tougourt—about fifty or sixty all told—who are obliged to drink it.

Opposite the fortified wall of the barracks is the Great Mosque—there are nearly a score of these edifices in the small town.

And now all picturesqueness ends; for the rest of Tougourt is just narrow, gloomy streets, mere lanes of loose sand, running between high, brown, sun-dried brick walls, blank, but for one small door for each house. If open this door allows a glimpse of a deep courtyard in which a camel is tethered or perhaps a palm-tree towers, hemmed in by mud-coloured buildings where external stairs lead up to the dwelling rooms over the stables on the ground floor. The streets, like all Eastern streets of private residences, are dull, for the town Arab will have no windows through which the outer world may pry into his home life. "He does not live in the street" as he says the European does.

Even the houses of the two great men of Tougourt, the Marabout or Holy Man and the Caïd—the secular chief—present the same depressing external aspect. But when I visited the latter a door in the wall led me into a bright little courtyard where a shapely white horse was tethered and a group of Arab and negro servants lay or squatted against the house. And the room in which, reposing on a white mattress and propped up by pillows, the caïd, suffering from a sprained knee, received me, was light and cheerful. And in it we drank coffee and discussed Pierre Benoit's "L'Atlantide"; for the author had spent three months in Tougourt when writing the book, and the caïd, a charming and educated man, *decoré*, and speaking French fluently, had known him well.

Tougourt has played its part in the history of the

Sahara and could boast its Sultans, whose tombs stand lonely and ruinous in the sand outside the town. One dynasty ruled it from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth when Sultan Ben-Djellab-bou-Lifa acknowledged the French suzerainty. His young grandson, Abd-el-Kader-ben-Djellab, a mere boy, was the ruler in 1854 and was murdered by an ambitious relative, Ben-Sliman-ben-Djellab, who seized the power and joined forces with Mohammed-ben-Abd'Allah whom the French had driven out of Ouargla, another desert town and small state a hundred and seventy kilometres south-west of Tougourt. Against them the Algerian Government sent four very mobile columns under Colonel Desvaux, Commandant of the Sub-division of Batna, reinforced by the *goums* (native irregular contingents) of Biskra, Bou-Saada, Laghouat and Géryville under Commandant Marnier. The confederate Arab force was defeated at Megarine on November 29th, 1854, losing a thousand men; and the French entered and took possession of Tougourt on 2nd December.

I think of this as I leave the caïd's house and try to picture this small town and the waste of sand around it as an independent kingdom. A Saharan Sultan must have been but a very small potentate.

Legend tells that the Tougourt of to-day occupies a different site to the Tougourt of the past. North of it was the village of Tala, now in ruins, in which lived a beautiful courtesan named El Bahadja (La Joyeuse), for whose favour all the young men of Tala contended. Driven out of the village as an evil-doer she sought to enter Tougourt. Refused admission she was obliged to shelter in a hut of palm-branches hurriedly con-



structed by her lovers, who followed her in a band and pitched their tents around her dwelling. Shortly afterwards a very holy man, the Grand Marabout of M'Sila, came to Tougourt to beg for his religious school; but as the ruler and people of the town belonged to a different sect of Mahommedanism they refused him admission, too. But the Gay Lady was more charitable and sheltered the venerable greybeard when night found him stranded in the desert; and she and her young men showed him so much kindness that he blessed his hostess, and prayed, "Allah! protect El Bahadja! May her humble cabin become a palace and the inhospitable houses of Tougourt fall in ruins!"

And the marabout's prayer was heard. Civil war set the inhabitants of the town at each other's throat and eventually destroyed the Tougourt of that day. But La Joyeuse's cot had been replaced by a fine building; and other houses sprang up around it and developed into the Tougourt of our time.

The afternoon wanes. From the high tower of the fort one can gaze out over the desert, beyond the bare, brown village outside Tougourt, across the jagged tops of the palms in the oases around and watch the sinking sun fill the heavens with glowing reds and pinks and yellows.

Night comes swiftly, and the air is chill; so that I wear an overcoat as I walk to the little restaurant with the French aviation officer who was my fellow traveller and is to be my guest. But the dark sky is pierced with a million points of brightness, the stars that shine over the desert with a brilliancy that Europe never knows. And the Saharan day is done.

## CHAPTER XI

### SHEIKHS, SAINTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES

BISKRA railway station is gaily beflagged and decorated; and on the platform civilians raise their hats and officers salute as the special train glides out on the Tougourt line—and it is all in honour of the kindly-faced, handsome old gentleman with the flowing white beard, who, seated in the centre carriage, is bowing in reply. For he is a Personage. No less than the Governor-General of Algeria;\* as important an individual as the Viceroy of India, but much more approachable.

He is going to meet the Arab chieftains of the wide Saharan district of the Zab at the little desert town of Tolga about sixty miles from Biskra. Around him in the carriage sit the members of his Cabinets Civil et Militaire, together with the principal officials of the Province of Constantine, in which Biskra lies. That exceedingly smart officer with the gold oak-leaves embroidered on the scarlet band of his *képi* is the General of the Batna Division; for this part of the military zone is under his command. Those two good-looking men in dark-blue uniform with silver oak-leaves round their caps are the Préfet,

\* The late M. Abel.

or Governor, of the Constantine Province and the Sous-Préfet of Batna.

In the next carriage are some officers of the Biskra garrison; while in a third are a few guests fortunate enough to be invited to witness the great gathering of the desert chiefs and their tribesmen. There is a handsome French countess with her son. There with his family is a British Major-General, who is also a peer, who knows North Africa east and west, from the Suez Canal to the Atlantic, better than most people. He saw the ending of the Mahdi's power when the deryish hordes were blasted off the face of the desert by the rifles of Gatacre's white soldiers and Macdonald's blacks. He played cricket with Sultan Abdul Aziz in the Imperial Palace at Fez long before the coming of the French to Morocco. The white-haired man to whom I am talking was a retired colonel of the Canadian Army when the Great War broke out. They said that he was too old for re-employment in August 1914—so he went to England, enlisted as a private soldier, fought through the campaign, won the Distinguished Conduct Medal, refused a commission; and when the war was over Sergeant-Major Bliss went back to the Retired List as Colonel Bliss.

Beyond the rocky knoll on which the square watch-tower outside Biskra stands up lonely and untenanted the train passes the aviation hangars by Beni Mora, from which an aeroplane sweeps up into the blue sky to show why the tower is empty. For nowadays the Watchers in the Air keep guard over the peace of the desert; and these winged

wardens of the Sahara fly over sand dune and waterless stony waste where the camel-soldier scarce can go. The Governor-General's train would be well guarded now were there any need for it. But France's sway is undisputed and this zone is peaceful, so His Excellency requires no escort.

Outside the oasis with its sea of palms the unpromising-looking soil is green, bright green with wide, unfenced fields of growing barley that mock the legend of an unfertile Sahara. Fresher than ever it appears; for unusual rain has actually fallen in the Biskra district during the three days of the Governor-General's visit; an unwonted phenomenon that makes the Arabs nod their heads solemnly and opine that Allah must regard the Great White Sheikh with special favour since He sent this blessed water to welcome his coming.

Beyond the barley the desert at first is bare and white with magnesia but soon is dotted with little clumps of Saharan vegetation on which camels, donkeys and goats are grazing. We see the mosque-like dome of the first station out, Oumache; and the train pulls up beside the platform crowded with a bizarre throng. Rows of gaily-clad Arab women with unveiled faces greet our arrival with their soft, shrill "yu-yu-ing" cry of salutation. Behind them a rank of white-garbed desert warriors raise their guns and fire welcoming volleys, while banner-men hold bright coloured flags aloft. And up and down the platform dances an unkempt old woman with straggling grey hair, waving a naked sword above her head, while a man, also brandishing a curved sabre,

hops after her in weird steps to the shrill strains of Arab musicians.

And lifted high in air behind them all is a closed palanquin covered with a silver cloth; and I learn that to-day the son of the Sheikh of Oumache has been married and has brought his bride—hidden from gaze in the palanquin—and the wedding guests to greet the Governor-General in his passage.

On again, and the line branches off from the main railway to Tougourt. We go over waste stretches of desert, by grazing herds, by fruitful oases with mud-walled villages, by date-palm nurseries where the young slips are planted in lines to grow in time into tall trees and form more oases. A few more stations and then gardens, mud walls and scattered huts tell us that we are nearing our destination. Then we reach Tolga. A small group of Europeans awaits the Governor-General on the platform; and a little French girl presents him with a bouquet of flowers. Flowers in the desert!

We follow His Excellency out through the station and a wonderful scene bursts on our view.

The mile or so of sand lying between the railway and the town is packed with a mass of humanity, men, women, children, in fluttering white or coloured garments.

In the centre a broad space is filled with massed bodies of armed horsemen and foot-soldiers in all the colours of the rainbow. There is a troupe of cavaliers in scarlet burnouses embroidered in gold or silver—sheikhs or tribal leaders. Their slim, sinewy horses, mostly greys or whites, are gaily adorned with

saddle-cloths red, blue, purple, crimson; their stirrups, spurs and bits are of solid silver, their reins of scented leather are thickly encrusted with gold or silver, their saddles and saddle-cloths of velvet heavy with gold bullion, and the empty scabbards dangling against their chargers' flanks are of precious metal. With the long lines of horsemen behind these black or grey-bearded riders are their sons, nephews, grandsons, in gold-embroidered velvet or fine cloth garments, green, blue, mauve, purple. Their trappings too, are of silver or gold. Many of them command sections and sub-divisions.

The compact bodies of footmen are variously clothed and equipped and carry many gaily-coloured flags. They and the horsemen are the followers of the various caïds and sheikhs and constitute the *goums* or native irregular contingents which are ready to fight for the Republic in war and in peace time help to police the district ruled by their leaders. For the conquest of Algeria was aided by many chiefs who sided with the French; and in regions assigned throughout the country for the occupation of certain tribes their leaders are entrusted with the control and are responsible for the maintenance of law and order. They are formally invested with authority by the Algerian Government and dignified with the titles of Sheikh, Caïd, Agha, Bach-Agha or Khalifa.

They are allowed to maintain a military household, like the retainers of a baron in feudal times, to act, as I said, as police or if need be as soldiers. The chiefs have not judicial powers; and it is often a source of great dissatisfaction to them that law-



*Photo. by the Author.*  
TRIBAL CHIEFS IN TOLGA.



*Photo. by the Author.*  
IN TOLGA.





breakers of their tribe arrested by them and tried by French judges profit by the many loopholes of legal intricacies and the perhaps unwise leniency of the European tribunals, are acquitted and return to the tribe free men to jeer at their discomfited caïd, whose authority is thus diminished and his prestige shaken.

In war tribal leaders command their *goums* under the control of French officers. And now this assemblage of desert warriors before us takes its orders from the white man in gay uniform draped with a scarlet burnous who gives the word to salute when the Governor-General advances towards them from the station.

From a scenic point of view the spectacle is a brilliant and impressive one. The serried ranks of these armed Arabs whose forefathers had fought alternately against the French and their own countrymen, their picturesque garb, the restless lines of long-maned, long-tailed desert horses, neighing, plunging, straining at their bits, seeking to savage their neighbours, the countless gaudy banners fluttering in the breeze, the masses of white-robed men, of "yu-yu-ing" women, of half-naked children, with the background of brown earthen walls under the rustling plumes of the tall palms, and the desert stretching away behind us to the distant hills, all make a fascinating picture, every detail of which stands out clearly in the vivid light of the Saharan sun.

But interesting as it all is as a spectacle, it is equally impressive as a testimony to France's sway over the Sahara and its tribes. The Arab chieftain

in scarlet burnous covered with glittering decorations who sits on his beautiful horse at the head of the army, the Bach-Agha of the Zibans, the leader of this host, is the lineal descendant and successor of the Ben Gana who fought beside the fallen ruler of Constantine against the Franks, and later made his submission and consented to hold his position as Sheikh-el-Arab of the Zab from them. Another Ben Gana faltered in his allegiance in the fateful year of 1871 when through Tell, tablelands and desert swift ran the word that France lay in the dust so low that none need do her reverence. But the Ben Gana to-day and all who bear his name and follow his banner have served her faithfully in more direful straits; and those who have lived through the storm have seen their faith and loyalty justified.

And east, west and south of them in this far-stretching Sahara the tens of thousands of similar swift desert riders of clean-limbed horses and fleet camels, burnoused Arab and veiled Touareg, know that the lawless days have gone for ever and that their master is this white-bearded benevolent old gentleman in civilian garb—because he stands for France.

The salutes given and returned, the inspection over, the Governor-General and his staff entered two-horsed victorias and drove towards the town, the flat roofs of which were white with cheering women. The masses of cavaliers swept after them in clouds of dust, the footmen followed at a run and the swarming crowds of Arabs hurried behind, scrambling, jostling, shuffling through the deep sand in flapping babouches or with bare feet. The two or three carriages provided for His

Excellency had exhausted the transport resources of Tolga; and the remainder of the Europeans had to walk. In the open plain this was no hardship; but when we got into the narrow lanes of deep, loose sand between the mud walls of the houses of the town and tried to hold our own and make our way through the scuffling swarms of humanity all hurrying in the same direction it was unpleasant. For the heat was terrific, the buildings shut off all breeze, but gave no shade, the dust rose under the eager feet in blinding, suffocating clouds, as buffeted and jostled we slipped and struggled through the yielding sand, going we knew not whither.

At last we reached a small open square in front of a small, semi-European building standing in a dusty garden behind a wall, and learned that it was the one hotel of Tolga, and in it the municipality of the town was to entertain the Governor-General to lunch after his official inspection and his visits to the mosque and the Grand Marabout, the chief religious personage of the place. As we saw that the troops of sheikhs and their cavaliers had halted and dismounted in the square and as we had been hopelessly left behind by the carriages bearing the staff, most of the French officers and guests stopped here and waited on events. His Excellency being long in coming, most of us, as we were not included in the invitation to lunch, wandered about Tolga, which I found differed from other Saharan towns that I had seen by attempts at little gardens, by great vines climbing the whitewashed houses or trained across the tiny courtyards and narrow alleys. The mosques were small and unimposing. In the box-like small shops was displayed a certain amount of European goods, such as kerosene oil lamps, sewing thread,

English cotton goods, cheap mirrors and imitation jewellery. Outside a small eating house a huge cauldron of what looked like thick tomato soup was being boiled.

As I wandered, camera in hand, about the town I encountered an Arab friend. He was mounted on a white horse and was accompanying a burly, spectacled compatriot wrapped, despite the heat of the day, in a thick woollen burnous and perched on a high saddle on a still bigger mule. Greeting my friend I was informed by him that his companion was His Holiness the Grand Marabout. The latter consented to pose for me to photograph him. That a man of his sanctity and religious position should permit this is an instance of the Algerian Moslem being superior to the prejudice that many Mahommedans elsewhere, particularly in Morocco, have against being photographed, holding that it is contrary to the law of the Koran which forbids the making of pictures or images of living beings.

As it was understood that the Arab cavaliers were to display their skill before the Governor-General in a fantasia or "powder play," we all later made our way to the stretch of desert between the town and the station. We found several of the troops of the *goumiers* assembled there. Most of them had dismounted and stood about chattering and smoking cigarettes.

A slight, handsome young horseman dressed in dark green velvet heavily embroidered with gold waved his hand, swung himself out of the saddle and came forward to shake hands with me. He was a friend whom I had made in Biskra, a Ben Gana, the nephew of the Bach-Agha. Like all educated Arabs—and indeed most



*Photo. by the Author.*

THE GRAND MARABOUT OF TOLGA.



*Photo. by the Author.*

HAMMA-BEN-GANA.



Arabs of no matter what condition—he spoke French fluently. In his rich dress with silver-scabbarded sword, the fine linen *hlafa* shading his face, his long boots of soft and scented leather adorned with massive silver spurs, he was a picturesque and chivalrous figure.

Soon more mounted men and footmen came up until all the *goums* of the Zibans were again assembled; and to pass the time until His Excellency's arrival many of them began the fantasia.

A horseman, standing erect in his stirrups, would gallop *ventre à terre* over the desert, armed with a double-barrelled gun loaded with blank cartridges. As his straining steed bore him past his watching comrades he would fire his gun at the ground, as though hunting jackals, and with a wild yell twirl it round his head before bringing it down, dropping back into the saddle and reining up. Then another and another followed, doing much the same thing. One man had two guns, fired them in turn, caught both in his left hand, drew his curved sabre with his right and brandished it aloft.

One cavalier was riding a mare accompanied on parade by its foal. The little animal constantly tried to force its way into the ranks to get beside its mother, but had to be contented with standing behind her. When it came to the rider's turn to perform the foal followed the mare; and when the latter stretched to a mad gallop her offspring bounded after her with all the speed of which its slim legs were capable, whinnying in deep distress because it could not keep up. The display was not impressive and needed no great skill in the riders. Unfortunately the fantasia as arranged did not take place, owing to the other claims on the

Governor-General's time ; and I cannot say if it would have afforded finer exhibitions of horsemanship.

Riders now dashed wildly up with the news that His Excellency was coming. Cavaliers and footmen formed along either side of a track across the sand in a chequered mass of humanity with waving banners and flying drapery, while the "yu-yu-ing" of the women sounded quaintly on every side. An Oriental crowd of men does not cheer ; so no harsher sounds broke in on the soft, not unpleasing voices of the ladies.

The Governor-General passed on ; and we learned that we had an hour or two to wait before he would return and the train depart for Biskra. So we tramped across the sand to the railway station ; and those who had taken the precaution to bring food lunched in picnic fashion. Then we sat in our carriage until the arrival of the victorias escorted by the Arab chiefs on their beautiful horses, accompanied by swarms of cavaliers. The caïds and sheikhs followed His Excellency into the station, lined up along the platform and took their farewell of him as he passed down their ranks shaking hands and saying a few words to each.

Then the train departed, bearing us all back to Biskra. But at Oumache it halted again ; for the wedding party was still there, waiting to greet the Governor-General on his return journey. They were all present, dancers, cheering women, standard-bearers, musketeers. Even the palanquin ; and I pitied the young bride if she had been shut up in its stuffy interior for all those hot hours. His Excellency was unusually favoured ; for when he got out again to thank the festive reception party the young husband led him to the cage that held the captive bird and, opening the curtains, let



him peep in and address a few words to the fluttered occupant.

This was the last ceremony of an interesting day; and half an hour later we reached Biskra. I was glad to have beheld Arab chieftains, whom hitherto I had only seen at official receptions, in their houses, sitting around tables in cafés or staking their money on the gambling tables of the Casino, now in situations and surroundings in which they appeared to greater advantage—in the saddle at the head of the warriors whom they would lead, had led, in war. The grave, reposeful Arab aristocrat in white woollen burnous and lazy babouches slipping off his stockinged feet, sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes at marble-topped tables around the Place de la République in Algiers was a transformed being on the back of a pawing, prancing stallion with a troop of lean, lithe desert-riders behind him on the sands of the Sahara.

The Moslem is by religion a democrat. "All True Believers are equal before Allah," said the Prophet. And the desert preserved liberty and saved its nomad tribes from tyranny. Yet these same tribes had their aristocracy, their ancient families held in honour and respect, powerful often, though not always, from their wealth in camels and herds and family alliances. From them the chiefs—leaders, but not rulers—were chosen to guide the people in council and in war. The French found them in Algeria, haughty allies or deadly enemies of the Pirate Lords of Algiers, and dealt with them sometimes wisely, sometimes not.

The chieftain of the tribe has, as I have mentioned, his retainers, usually the hardest, best-trained fighting men, who wait on him in peace and guard him in war,

whose wives are the foster-mothers, whose sons are the devoted foster-brothers, of his children, who hand on their service to their offspring and know no other career, no other obligation, than their duty to him and his. They compose what is termed the *zmala*, an individual being called a *zmali*, in plural *zmoul*.

The Arab aristocracy was formed from three classes:—those noble by reason of their descent from Fathma, the daughter of the Prophet, or from his uncle, Ali-ben-Ali-Thaleb. *Sheurfa*, in the singular *Shereef*, they are termed; and, no matter how low in worldly fortune their descendants may have fallen, anyone in whose veins runs this sanctified blood is honoured by all Moslems and dignified with the title of Sidi.

The present ruling dynasty of Morocco are *Sheurfa*, and the country is spoken of as the *Shereefian Empire*.

There is a *military nobility* derived mostly by descent from the Prophet's tribe or from the Beni-Mehal, the victorious warriors who followed him and his companions. And a third aristocratic class, a veritable *religious nobility*, is formed from men renowned for their piety and holy way of living, saints in fact—and their descendants. For they pass on to their children's children the reputation for sanctity and the title of marabout that they have acquired by their virtue.

Members of all these classes of aristocracy, saintly or military, may be found to-day among the poorest Arabs.

The native chieftains, especially those invested with authority by the Algerian Government, are no longer lawless, fierce and ignorant desert warriors. On the contrary they are usually well-educated and often cultured men. I have mentioned my discussing with



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

A GOUMIER.



the Caïd of Tougourt the literary merits of Pierre Benoit's "L'Atlantide," which was then all the rage in France. And when a day or two after the Governor-General's visit to Tolga, I was dining with Caïd Ali-ben-Gana, brother of the Bach-Agha of the Zibans, at his comfortable house in Biskra I found it almost hard to reconcile the courteous, pleasant-mannered gentleman who talked with knowledge of European politics and countries or his light-hearted nephew, Hamma, who related humorously his ill-luck at *petits-chevaux* in the Casino, with my remembrance of them galloping swiftly over the desert sand at the head of their fierce tribal warriors, like figures out of some old-time chronicle of desert chivalry.

There was nothing Eastern about the well-laid dinner table with its dainty napery, porcelain and silver, or the wines of France filling our glasses. But the cooking was both exquisite and Oriental, though served in European fashion. Fish, couscous, *mechoui* or sheep roasted whole—but this dish was not to my taste—honey cakes and other confections that recalled the Arabian Nights. Our hosts were good Moslems and avoided the wine. Would that all their co-religionists in Algeria followed their example! I remember the surprise and disgust I felt at beholding the first drunken Mahommedan that I had ever seen. He was reeling about the streets of Blida—a painful sight to me who had respected the Mussulmans in many Eastern lands for their adherence to the Prophet's law that forbids them wine.

Caïd Ali's brother, the Bach-Agha, also lives in Biskra, where he inhabits a fine residence set in lovely gardens among the palms of the great oasis.

The Arab chieftains are not confined to the Sahara. They are found in the Hauts Plateaux and the Tell, even close to Algiers. I number among my pleasantest recollections of Algeria a visit to the Caïd of L'Arba. An electric tram from Algiers brought us—a party of ten or so—to Maison Carrée, where we changed into a steam tram which conveyed us to the small, clean and bright little, thoroughly French town of L'Arba. Here we were met by the Maire, who was a relative of a lady with us. He and his young son joined us.

Retainers of the caïd were awaiting us with horses and mules gaily caparisoned and bearing big, high-peaked native saddles. A ride of a few miles into the foot-hills of the Atlas Mountain chain brought us to an extensive mansion perched on the steep slopes, a building to which the red-tiled roofs, yellow walls and tall cypresses gave the look of a villa on the hills overlooking Florence.

Our host, his brother and nephew received us with true Oriental hospitality. On arrival we were served with Moroccan tea flavoured with mint and later on given a sumptuous meal, cooked, we were told, by the ladies of the family. The dishes were innumerable. Couscous and *mechoui* of course figured on the menu; and the exquisitely flavoured honey-cakes and other sweets alone would have made a banquet.

After lunch we drank coffee in the guest apartment, from the windows of which there was a fine view over the Mitidja Plain and the Sahel Hills to half-hidden Algiers.

The room was furnished in the European style of the seventies with common French carpets on the waxed floor, gilt mirrors, an alabaster clock and a

Chinese blackwood table inlaid with flowers and butterflies in mother of pearl.

Our host showed us beautiful gifts made to his father by Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugenie when they visited Algeria, among these a wonderful gold watch set with diamonds, rubies and pearls, and a tiny gold and steel pistol encrusted with diamonds.

The ladies of our party were taken into the harem where they were welcomed by the caïd's wife, daughter and niece, fair-complexioned and good-looking, dressed in the bright-tinted silken and costly garments of wealthy Arab ladies. They were regaled with very luscious cakes made of almond meal, rice and honey.

I had just been photographing the caïd; and my camera was sent for for a picture to be taken in an inner courtyard of the harem, a picture of the international group of pretty Moslem, French and English women. And afterwards no objection was made to my developing and printing the film on which were shown the unveiled faces of these Arab ladies.

The Mahommedans of Algeria are not lacking in spiritual, as well as temporal, leaders. Their religion has no ordained clergy, no priests as we understand them. Even those who conduct the services in the mosques—the *muezzin* who greets the dawn from the tiny galleries of the minarets when he calls the faithful to prayer before sunrise, the *imâm* who recites the five daily common prayers, the *khetib* who on the weekly holy day, Friday, prays for the welfare of the ruler of the state—are regarded more as officials of the mosque than as clergy.

But perhaps nowhere more than in North Africa are found the Moslem religious confraternities that through-

out Islam aim at making the Faith a priest-ridden one, contrary to the Prophet's intention and teaching. Originally charitable associations they set themselves to establishing their authority over the laity, reforming and purifying the faith and championing it against all unbelievers. And among them fanaticism and antipathy to Christian nations are quickly bred.

It must be remembered that among all who profess it Mahommedanism is a bond of union that often proves stronger than feelings of nationality. Something that affects the Moslems in Turkey or Syria may inflame their co-religionists in India or Morocco. And as many of these confraternities are in reality secret societies spread over many countries and acting as channels of communication between followers of the Prophet in these lands it results that they may be powerful influences politically for good or evil where Moslems are ruled by Christians and must be reckoned with accordingly by the Governments.

The ordinary resident or traveller in the French African Empire hears little and knows less of these powerful religious organisations which honeycomb it. It is a fascinating subject, this question of vast secret societies that, nominally or really originating as great mutual benefit associations, may at any moment urge their adherents against their rulers and perhaps all Christians in a Sacred War. It has inspired more than one French or English novelist. But romance pales before reality. The guide who leads you through the mud-walled lanes of Old Biskra, the Kabyle waiter who serves you at table in Algiers, the praying Arab who scowls at you in the mosque at Kairouan, the trader who sells you a leather bag in the souks of Fez, may



all be members of a vast organisation that any 'day might bid them flock to the sacred green banner of Islam and slay you and your brother heretics. But on the other hand they may not.

Yet do not forget that all Mahommedans are bound by the teachings of their founder to consider themselves always at war with non-believers. That is, a Djehad, or Holy War, exists until all men believe; i.e., in God and in Mahommed who declared "My mission is to fight the infidels until they say 'There is no God but God.' . . . Finish my work, extend everywhere the House of Islam. The House of War is God's; He gives it to you. Fight the infidels until they are exterminated. Make war on those peoples of the Bible (the Christians and Jews) who do not believe the Truth. When you meet the infidels kill them; slaughter them. Slay them whenever you find them."

The Prophet divided the world into Dar-el-Islam (the House of Islam) and Dar-el-Harb (the House of War, i.e., the countries of the unbelievers). But his followers are allowed to temporarily cease the perpetual war where they are not strong enough to wage it, but on the understanding that they shall resume it when they are able to do so.

Some of these confraternities act as hearths on which the sacred fire of the Holy War is ever kept burning, ready to be fanned into a devouring flame when opportunity offers. And so, where they exist in countries ruled by Christians, they need careful watching. The world has heard something of the best-known of these, the sect of the Sennoussi, which is an avowed enemy of non-Moslems and is a dangerous one from the extent of its secret influence in Africa, where several years ago

it was supposed to have 10,000,000 adherents, and the number has certainly not grown less. The political chief of the Order used to be all powerful in Tripoli and in the district of Benghazi had 30,000 men under his orders, and sent his emissaries to Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, to the Niger and the borders of Senegal.

The Sennoussi having turned their attention to the idolaters of Central Africa through affiliated members among the Touareg (a race not much disposed to religion) are spreading in the region of Lake Chad, where they convert to Mahommedanism the immense black populations of Darfur, Kanem, Oudai, Baghmiri, Bornu and Sokoto. They oppose the whites in the Soudan and the Cameroons and dispute this part of Equatorial Africa with European influence.

Although their founder Mahommed ben-Si-Ali-ben-Snoussi-el-Khettabi-el-Hassani-el-Edrissi-el-Medjahiri was born in what is now Algeria in 1792 at the Hillil near Mostanagem, the sect (which is doubtless closely but unobtrusively watched by the French authorities) is supposed to have few adherents in this country, most of them frequenting the Zaouia of the Hillil. For one thing they hold that it is unlawful for a Moslem to live in Dar-el-Harb, that is any country in the power of infidels. They are opposed to the rulers of Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco because these submit to or are friendly with unbelievers. Their principal doctrine is the necessity of the Djehad; and they are against all modern progress. They desire to return to the universal Imâmat of the first Caliphs, when the Chief of the State was the Head of the Church; and they acknowledge no temporal power outside Theocracy or the government of their own Grand Master.

In the Libyan desert at Djaraboub near the oasis of Sionah lie the bones of this man of many names, Mahommed-ben-Si-Ali-ben-Snoussi, who died in 1859 after a chequered career and many wanderings in Morocco, Tunisia, Tripoli, Egypt, and Arabia. He said that he was the "Moulai-Saah," "The Master of the Hour," the mysterious being sent by Allah to regenerate Islam. But his tomb is there in the desert not far from the ancient temple of Ammon and thousands of armed believers guard it. And around it is the headquarters of this powerful sect, so hostile to Christianity and modern progress; and from it go out the missionaries to add black millions to the fold and teach them hate of the Christian.

Over two hundred years ago a holy man was preaching one day outside the city of Meknes in Morocco. A workman complained to the saint that he was a-hungered. Others of the audience echoed his complaint. "Eat, then! Eat what you find on the road," said the preacher, pointing to the stones littering the rough track. His hearers with touching faith took up the stones, caught the scorpions and the snakes that sheltered under them and ate them, rocks, venomous reptiles and all—and—a miracle!—found them a delicious feast.

And now you may see to-day in Algeria wandering men who before audiences eat poisonous serpents, scorpions, broken glass, and thorny branches. They are the followers of that long-dead saint, Sidi Mahommed-ben-Aissa, who handed on to his disciples the power to work miracles, cure all ills, and preserve from poisons. They form a big sect now, these Aissaoua. Their doctrines embrace a continual expansion towards

the Divinity, an ardent mysticism, and a complete personal abnegation. Their practices are sobriety, abstinence, and hardening to physical pain. They invoke the Deity in loud tones on a rapid rhythm sustained by the beating of drums, always quickening until the excitement and giddiness occasion a physical insensibility and delirium that causes hallucinations and induces a state of religious ecstasy in which they are capable of performing almost incredible acts.

These devotees do not always scorn money as their founder did; for all the riches heaped on him by the Sultan in Meknes he gave away, keeping only a leopard-skin to sleep on. This is carefully preserved in two places far apart in Morocco—for it has been miraculously doubled, and there are now two skins. This is not very much of a miracle compared with that connected with another holy man, called for short Sidi Mahommed Abder Rahman Bou Kobrin, whose body was doubled after death so that it lies in two tombs, one the Kouba on the tram-line to Hussein Dey outside Algiers, the other in the Djurdjura Mountains. He, too, founded a religious sect.

When the great Arab leader, Abd-el-Kader, warred in Algeria against the French in the first half of the nineteenth century he did them a good turn when he quarrelled with the sect of the Tidjanias. For in revenge they offered their friendship to the invaders, and have ever since been faithful. And the alliance or the enmity of these powerful associations is of great moment to the ruling power.

But there are other societies as rabid against Christians as are the Senoussi. The Khadrya—called Djilala in Morocco—is a very rich order spread

throughout all Moslem countries, ardent propagators of Islamism and very hostile to European domination in Mahommedan countries. They have extended their influence over the West Coast of Africa from Senegal to the mouth of the Niger.

Equally opposed to the Christian authorities in Dar-el-Harb are the Chadelya, from whom are derived the Derqaoua, the Madanya and the Youssefya (these last founded by Ahmed-ben-Youssef-el-Miliani, whose sanctuary is at Miliana in Algiers. He was an ardent opponent of women's rights.)

These four religious orders have different mother-houses or headquarters in Cairo, Bou Beih (Morocco), Grib and Tiout (Algeria); but they all follow the same rules, and are supposed to have a head, an Imâm reputed to be hidden in Cairo.

None of all these confraternities can be called monastic orders—such things are opposed to Moslem practices. But they have a head, the Sheikh, his subalterns called Mokaddems, who are authorised to collect arms and direct the consciences of the members, who are termed Khouans (brothers). Each confraternity has its special formula of prayer, the Dikr, which is the shibboleth, the distinguishing sign, of its members. The Sheikh gives it out through his mokaddems; just as one day he may give the word to begin the Holy War and set Islam aflame.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SAHARA

THE popular conception of the Sahara is a vast flat and trackless waste stretching unbroken to the torrid zone, waterless, treeless, save for a rare oasis, scorched by a pitiless sun in a brassy sky, unpeopled, a desert where human or animal life can scarcely exist, and then only in swift passage, a sea of burning sand that before the deadly breath of the simoon rises in suffocating clouds to overwhelm, smother and entomb the men and camels of ill-fated caravans.

The reality is far different. The Sahara is certainly not a delectable land; but it is not quite as bad as it is painted. A vast waste truly; but flat and trackless, no. Its nomads can find their way unerringly from well to well for hundreds of miles, though to the eye of the uninitiated there is no road. Its traders pass regularly from north to south, from east to west, even to and from Algeria, Tunisia, Tripoli, and Morocco, bearing dates, tea, salt, sugar, tobacco, cloth, grain and weapons to barter for camels, sheep, goats, saddlery and leather bags. Its wandering Arab tribes, men, women and children, drive their live-stock before them as they migrate to the north in summer to escape the great heat of the south and go back in winter to exchange the

chilly heights of the Algerian Hauts Plateaux for the sunshine of the desert. And cold is not unknown even in the heart of the Sahara; for there are high ranges on which the snow rests for months, mountains nine thousand feet in height. There are broad river-beds along which after heavy rainstorms surging torrents of water sweep, filling them from bank to bank, drowning men and beasts unlucky enough to be caught in them, and then, although perhaps in a few hours sinking from sight, only vanishing to form an underground stratum of water needing merely to be tapped by wells to give drink to animal and human, and life to luxuriant vegetation.

There are oases where the palm-trees are counted by hundreds of thousands and below them oranges and apricots, wheat, barley and vegetables ripen. The Sahara supports a population, nomad and sedentary, of half a million or more. Armies ten, twenty thousand strong have crossed it and found subsistence on the way. Kingdoms have flourished for centuries in it.

There are indeed vast stretches of its surface covered with sand, level or heaped up in dunes, rising in suffocating clouds before the impulse of the hot wind, the *chihili*. But not in dense masses that overwhelm and bury from sight the unfortunate wayfarers; although anyone luckless enough to be caught in a sandstorm may be excused for imagining that this is to be his fate. The dunes that are sometimes five or six hundred feet high are generally caused by some natural obstruction arresting the flying sand and thus gradually building up a hill. Between the dunes are corridors of hard soil called *gassi*.

There are wide, flat tracts of fine grit or gravelly

soil, termed *reg*, on which nothing grows. There are chains of barren sandstone mountains cloven by gloomy ravines in which the thirsty wanderer stumbles unexpectedly on *ghedirs*, pools of water left by sudden spates and ringed round by a green margin of reeds and vegetation. And in the hills are scattered trees, thorny as a rule, but yet their spikes provide food for camels, while their seed-pods offer sustenance to men.

Even in the sandy deserts there is vegetation, as in the stretch between Biskra and Tougourt. *Drinn* or *arthratherum pungens*,—*neçi* or *arthratherum plumosum* and *arthratherum floccosum*, *had* or *cornulaca monocantha*, *dhamrane* or *traganum nudatum*, all furnish food for camels and other animals. A shower of rain has a magical effect in the desert and causes plants to spring up as if by enchantment and fresh leaves to appear on others eaten down to the wooden stems by grazing beasts.

But in the Aïr and the Damergou—in the far south of the Sahara—there are tracts of almost impenetrable jungle full of birds and wild animals of many species.

Bands of antelopes and gazelles of various kinds wander over apparently inhospitable desert and cause wonder as to where they find food and drink. The Arabs believe them to be the property of devils that live underground and come up at night to feed and water their flocks. But the truth seems to be that these animals can cover great distances in search of pools left by local storms, and also can quench their thirst effectually by eating green plants as camels do.

Tiger-cats, foxes, the fennec, hares (*lepus atlanticus*), the goundi, rats, the jerboa, and other



animals manage to exist in the sandy tracts of the Sahara. Geckos and scaly lizards like small crocodiles, chameleons and more dreaded reptiles—the horned viper and other venomous snakes—are found everywhere. And bird-life is common in the oases and the mountains. In the jungle of the South the bush teems with guinea-fowl and other feathered game.

Wherever water is found, either as a result of irregular rainstorms or of man's labour in sinking wells, life human, animal and vegetable, can be supported in the Sahara. The depth of the underground aqueous stratum varies immensely. In some places it is only thirty feet, in others two thousand; and although the desert tribes are skilful in tapping it, naturally only the modern methods of sinking wells and pumping that the French are introducing can reach it at great depths. There is a well-defined system of river-beds (all to-day dry except for a few hours after heavy local storms), which give rise to the belief that formerly down them flowed steady streams from the mountains of the Sahara to the ocean. Possibly, although the climate of North Africa has not sensibly changed in historical times, there has been a gradually drying-up of the land, and vegetation has diminished and forests disappeared.

The theory that the Sahara is the dry bed of a former inland sea—hence the sand—is strongly combated to-day. Shirmer denies it absolutely. "Its geology is very simple," he says. "The formation of the different ages shows itself in regular strata over enormous distances. It is perhaps the desert in which evaporation has left most traces. Nowhere the drying and dissolving action of the winds has more influenced the climate and even the very nature of the soil. In

fact the formation of the dune is partly due to the erosive action of the winds." He explains how the sudden changes in temperature from the intense heat of the day to the cold, to the frosts even, of night in the tropics causes sudden contractions that crack and break up the hardest rocks, split stones and reduces them to powder—and thus form the sand. The table-shaped plateaux met with frequently in the desert have steep sides ravaged by expansion, and the erosion of the wind has done more damage than the erosion of the rain.

It is not difficult to understand the action of the sun and wind on the rocky face of a sheer cliff. The intense heat of the day expands the molecules of the stone, the sudden cold after sundown contracts them rapidly and splits off sheets of rock which fall to the base in shattered fragments to be later on similarly still further reduced. The wind scours the rocks with the flying sand and grinds them down.

I have described the character of the Sahara for the first hundred and sixty odd miles, from the Aurès Mountains to Tougourt—a clay or stony soil as far as Biskra, sand from it to Tougourt. South of the Chotts, the dried salt lakes, and east of the railway Biskra—Tougourt is the sandy desert of the Souf stretching to Tunisia, dotted sparsely with towns or villages in oases, El Oued with its gardens, Guémar with its Zaouia or monastery of the Order of the Tidjania, and others.

At Tougourt, despite the desert of sand in which the town is planted, is proof enough that the Sahara is not an arid, waterless, burning waste. The great oases with their hundreds of thousands of date-palms are con-

vincing, with their labyrinth of irrigation channels; and in the suburb of Nezla are the little lake of Tatahouine and the larger and water-fowl-haunted one of Merdjaja, of unplumbed depths, for they are outlets of the artesian stratum.

A few kilometres beyond Tougourt is the old-world village of Temassine, where there is a fortified Zaouia, half monastery, half scholastic institution, of the Order of the Tidjania with many disciples, and in it the silk-covered tomb of the holy Hadj Ali, in defence of whom when attacked by the army of the Sultan of Tougourt countless palm-trees turned themselves into machine-guns and discharged as many bullets as they bore dates.

A hundred and seventy kilometres of sandy desert lie between Tougourt and Ouargla south-south-west of it. Another surprising Saharan town this, dominated by a minaret of earth over two hundred feet high, the tallest edifice of sun-dried clay in existence. Water is not lacking there, for it has over nine hundred wells to irrigate the oases.

Formerly a negro kingdom, peopled exclusively by blacks and subject to the French since 1872, the soil now owns new masters; for the tenacious, hardworking Mozabites have in the last fifty years gradually supplanted and ousted the lazier black race, not one of whom now possesses land, which has all been bought up by the Beni-M'Zab.

The route to the south from Ouargla passes at first through a region of gravelly plateaux, dunes and chains of sandhills separated by gassi, corridors of hard soil, or *feidj*, sandy valleys. There is vegetation of *had*, *drinn* and *neçi* to feed animals, and occasional rain

causes momentary but luxuriant growth. There are fair quantities of gazelles and antelopes. Wells exist and give enough water to supply caravans. In the valley where the wells of El Biodh are there is usually good grazing. South of it, after more *reg* (gravelly plain) and sand dunes, is the oasis of Timassanine where the water-bearing stratum rises near the surface. Farther on to the south the caravan route passing the wells of Tabalbalet leads on, with a mountain to the west and dunes to the east, to Ain-el-Hadjadj just north of a chain of hills. Here one approaches the country of the Touareg tribes. Then the dry bed of the Samene with sparse vegetation and a few gum trees in it runs between frowning walls of rocky, barren sandstone hills rising one and two thousand feet above it, on one side split by dark ravines, saw-like and with sharp peaks of strata vertical instead of horizontal, the result of a terrible upheaval, the other perpendicular but more regular. The Samene itself at Inimani is 1,620 feet above the sea.

The hills farther south in the Azdjer country are over four thousand feet high.

Still farther south the Hoggar or Ahaggar Mountains are nine thousand feet high, with water, vegetation and cultivation in places and with much snow in winter. East of them are the mountains of the Anahef, between three and four thousand feet in height.

All this is the land of the strange veiled race of the Touareg, of whom I will speak more fully later.

By the time that the 20th Parallel is reached the Sahara along this route is seamed with dry river-beds filled with gum and other trees. There is a veritable jungle of *Korunka* (*calotropis procera*) and much

Abisga with its disagreeable and peppery smell. This is a big bush, the leaves of which give off the penetrating, almost nauseating odour; but camels eat them greedily. Its seeds are small and globular in bunches, and, although they too have a sour and peppery smell, they are edible. They are dried and soaked in water for hours, which produces a liquid like dark red wine with a not unpleasant flavour. The Touareg are fond of it.

Between the 20th and the 15th Parallels is the Air, the first and most northerly village or collection of villages of which is Iferouane (which, in Targui, means a "tree-covered place") in the valley of the Irhazar (in Targui "valley or river") and has several hundred inhabitants. A very few huts are of clay and rectangular as in the Northern Sahara; but the majority are round, made of mats of the stalks of the *nirokba* or thin sticks, with roofs of various shapes, flat, conical, or flattened cones, and are usually surrounded by a hedge of interlaced branches. Huts used as granaries are built on stakes four feet from the ground as a protection against insects.

Sometimes three or four dwellings are grouped in the same enclosure. The fences are generally made of *korunka*, the wood of which bush is light but of little strength.

In the bed of the Irhazar are date-palms producing poor and scanty fruit; but under them are hedged gardens of millet, barley, sorghum, a little wheat, and the korna or jujube-tree and an occasional big gum-tree.

The natives water their gardens from wells by dipping-poles worked by hand or by zebus (small oxen). Small quantities of vegetables are grown—onions,

carrots, peas, Soudan haricots, tomatoes, pumpkins and water-melons—also a little tobacco and henna.

The villagers possess some cows and zebus, the Saharan sheep—called *denmane*—with hair instead of wool, goats and hens. To caravans they sell fresh and sour milk in calabashes, the cheese of the country known as *kemaria*, camel-saddles, vegetables and wooden spoons, and ask for payment in *malti* (an inferior English cotton stuff, apparently manufactured for barter with the people of the Sahara and the Soudan).

The men of the Air generally wear blouses of the blue cotton of the Soudan called *Saye* and long trousers of blue or white cotton. Children, negroes and half-castes wear generally only breeches made of a piece of tanned leather wound round the waist, brought between the legs and up behind and fastened by a belt, the almost universal garment of youths and negroes in the Air; though a few wear as well a large, wide but short, sleeveless shirt made of cotton manufactured in the Soudan. Others are quite naked. Children and boys go bare-headed, the hair cut either very short or in a sort of crest from forehead to nape of neck. I have seen little children in Marrakesh in Southern Morocco with their hair trimmed in this latter fashion.

The Tingué or Timdje Mountains, between 2,500 and 3,000 feet above the Irhazar Valley, are a compact and isolated mass; and east of them lies a formidable region of dunes, waterless and without vegetation, which must be crossed by the caravans that go periodically to Bilma for the salt that is there produced and sent everywhere through the Sahara.

Several days' march south of Iferouane is a city of

sun-dried brick, Agadez, ruled absolutely until the coming of the French by a Sultan who called himself "The Prince of Believers." And south-east of Agadez the more or less fertile region of the Damergou dotted with villages of straw huts, stretches to Lake Chad. And below the Damergou is the Soudan.

Many hundreds of miles west of Agadez the River Niger—the city of Timbuctoo almost on its most northerly loop—flows through a region of dense jungle in the beginning of its long and leisurely progress to the Atlantic Ocean, leaving behind the land where the once powerful Songhay Empire flourished and where in our day the remnants of the Songhays were enslaved and plundered by the Touareg until the French came to give them safety and freedom.

Between it and Morocco there long existed a regular caravan route with wells at regular intervals, over which armies passed, constant intercourse was kept up, and an important import and export trade of slaves and other commerce flourished for centuries.

This cursory description of the Sahara along a route more than a thousand miles from north to south will give some idea of its vastness, its variety and the diversity of its soil and natural features.

Daring French explorers paved the way into this great desert for equally courageous military and naval officers—for the Navy had its share in the conquest of Central Africa, and a lieutenant with a small gunboat pushed incredibly far up the Niger and in boats attacked and captured Timbuctoo. From Algeria the Army gradually made its way down, and its heroic officers advanced with apparently totally

inadequate forces, constructed and held absolutely isolated posts for long and weary years, fought cruel and treacherous enemies, and eventually won for their motherland the empire of the Sahara.

In the Northern Sahara the inhabitants, nomads and sedentary, are chiefly Arabs or Arabised Berbers who have long lost sense of their Berber descent. In the centre and extending to the south are the tribes of the strange Touareg race; and in the south towards the Soudan there is much negro blood, although negroes are found in all parts of the Sahara.

The sedentary Arabs inhabiting the northern oases cultivate and sell their dates, grain, vegetables and fruit to the nomads in exchange for live stock or for other necessaries, clothing and luxuries brought by the wanderers. They live in villages of huts of sun-dried brick, build mosques and possess a certain amount of civilisation, especially where they are in touch with Europeans.

Certain inhabited districts or groups of villages, cut off from the rest of the world by long stretches of desert, are practically islands in the sandy ocean of the Sahara; and their populations are naturally very insular in their manners and customs, differ from Arabs elsewhere, and lead a life of their own. The region of the Touat (west of In-Salah and between the 25th and 30th Parallels), the administrative centre of which is Adrar, furnishes a good example. It consists of a number of ksour (plural of ksar) or fortified villages split up into nine districts and having a total population of between fifteen and sixteen thousand divided into the *Ahrar* or whites (Arabs) and the *Ousfane* or blacks. The latter are formed of negro slaves and of the *harratines*, who



are the descendants of freed slaves, and may have some Arab blood in them.

Until the coming of the French the *Ahrar* were lazy proprietors of the soil which they compelled the *Ousfane* to till for them; and even now, regarding labour as derogatory, they refuse to toil and are letting the land slip from them through purchase by the industrious *harratines*.

Intercourse with the outer world is maintained by caravans of nomad Arabs and Touareg. The latter exchange their sheep—before the French came they brought negro slaves—for dates, tobacco and “dokalis,” a sort of large haiks or head-shawls. The Arab traders bring from the Tell wool, butter, corn, barley, dried flesh and money in exchange for the dates.

From the merchants of Adrar the Touatians purchase European goods—cloth, sugar, tea, soap, oil, candles, etc. They sell their corn, tobacco, raw cotton and henna to the neighbouring territories of the M'Zab, El Golea, Aoulef, Tidikelt and others, and buy from them woollen goods, cloth and food.

In the *ksour* of the Touat the manufacture is carried on of dokalis, gandauras and other garments, of clumsy jewellery, embroidery, crude pottery, and baskets. In the gardens of the oases shaded by the tall date-palms barley, corn, onions, carrots and other vegetables are cultivated in spring, cabbages, haricot-beans, sorghum, maize, grapes, melons, henna, tobacco, and cotton in summer. In autumn figs, dates and tomatoes ripen; in winter, lentils, luzerne, flax and a second henna crop.

The Touatians breed a certain amount of sheep, goats, donkeys and a few camels.

All the inhabitants of a *ksar* of the same race regard

themselves as members of one family. The young girls have more freedom than elsewhere among Arabs and move about freely unveiled and with one shoulder bare. When a man desires to marry he sends his parents or goes in person to demand the hand of the maiden from her parents; and if they accept him as a suitor he is allowed to frequent his betrothed's house and join in the family meals in her presence. When the wedding day is fixed he sends her dowry—which varies from thirty to fifty francs for the better class and less for the *harratines* and negroes—and her trousseau of garments, ornaments, purse and perfumes. On the day of the marriage the bride goes to his parents' house; and the bridegroom follows her in, having arrived himself with a sabre to show her that he can protect her. Then the happy pair do not separate for the seven days of the honeymoon—with the Arabs—three with the *harratines* and negroes.

The wife is expected to bring to her new home one or two goats and all the cooking utensils. She generally has no rival; for, owing to their poverty, polygamy is rare among the people of the Touat.

A widow's mourning is marked by some strange observances. On the day of her husband's funeral she sits at home and receives visits of condolence from the villagers. As each one enters she bites a silver ring held in her hand and presents it to the visitor to bite, too. On the fourth day of mourning she swathes her head in a fragment of her late husband's winding-sheet and goes into seclusion for two months and ten days, abstaining from seeing anyone, from perfumes, the wearing of jewellery, etc.

At the end of the customary period of mourning

she washes herself, changes her garments, and leaves the house preceded by a woman beating an old saucepan and crying out that "So-and-So has finished her mourning. Hide yourselves. Get out of her way, lest her glance should fall on you and bring you ill-fortune." Then the widow goes to a spot called "The Hole of Mourning" and there buries the piece of the winding-sheet that she has worn round her head. Then in the evening she returns home and resumes her normal life.

The nomad Arabs roam with little apparent plan about the desert with their herds of camels, sheep, goats, and donkeys, their movements regulated by the necessity of finding grazing for their beasts. They live in tents formed of strips of camel-hair or woollen cloths sewn together, supported on low poles and held down by cords to pegs or stones. If they purpose to remain in one spot for any length of time a back wall of earth or stones is built up and a hedge of dried thorn to keep out intruders and keep in their flocks is erected around.

About them savage, semi-wild dogs maintain effective guard, sleeping by day unless a stranger approaches, watching by night. Their fierceness has to be seen to be appreciated. I had once a very narrow escape from being badly mauled, if not killed, by a troop of these brutes when I incautiously approached a cluster of nomads' dwellings.

A number of tents of members of the same family or community may be formed into a square, openings inward, enclosing a central space for their live-stock and surrounded by an outer zarefa. This is called a *douar*.

These wanderers do not confine themselves to the

desert. Their encampments may be seen on the Hauts Plateaux where they come to graze their animals, and even farther north. The beauty and picturesqueness that poets and artists find in the tents of the Arabs are not evident to the prosaic-minded observer who sees their filth, squalor and wretchedness.

The Arab is no fit subject for romance. The unwashed and vermin-covered Bedouin may look picturesque in his flowing burnous, gun slung on his back or lance in hand, as he sits on a lean, desert-bred stallion, half-starved but full of endurance. His bold-eyed, unveiled women are often handsome—even to critical European eyes. But a closer acquaintance with Arabs destroys the illusion. They are as a race vicious, immoral, treacherous, thieving, bloodthirsty, cruel and cowardly. This is a crushing indictment; but I am certain that it will be endorsed by everyone who knows them intimately.

Brought up from childhood to steal they would plunder their nearest relatives and rob the corpses of their dearest. A husband will tear the ornaments from the still warm body of his dead wife lest her family should claim them. Children will pilfer from their parents; and the latter might only praise them for their dexterity in thieving, for a father is proud to call his son a skilful thief and a clever liar.

In a douar the men from a tent will sneak in the dark to steal from the neighbouring one belonging to a friend; and, if one of them gets shot in the process, the rest will swear, by the Prophet, that this friend came to rob them and slew the unfortunate wretch when he tried to guard their property. And then they will claim the blood fine.

The children from the earliest age are no strangers to any vice; for no attempt is made to conceal the knowledge of evil from them. For the Arabs are immoral to the core. Venereal disease is universal. To minister to their vicious desires old men purposely marry girls who have not reached the age of puberty. Married women are as unfaithful as the fear of their husbands' wrath will let them be.

The courage of the Arab is rated very low by those who know him, so that he has not even this redeeming quality. To sum up I have found no one—not even Arabs themselves—who had a good word for the race.

In an Arab family the father's word is law; and wives and children are cruelly punished if they fail to obey him. The best of everything is reserved for him. At meals he eats alone or with other male adults of the family; his spouses (for he may have several) and offspring must wait until he has finished. The children receive no instruction whatever and from an early age are sent out to herd the goats, sheep and cattle. All the menial work is performed by the females of the family, who in addition weave the cloth for garments, tents and rugs, while the lord and master sits and smokes in the sun.

The food of these nomads consists of dates which are carried pressed into a sticky mass in goat or sheepskins, milk of camels or other animals and cheese made from it, and couscous. The base of this last-named universal Arab food is semolina or other flour worked between the hands into the finest dust, then steamed and—if there be any available—made palatable by the addition of vegetables or even meat. But

meat is a rare luxury to the poorer Arab. Only at wedding or other feasts is a sheep slaughtered and then for the *diffa* or banquet roasted whole on a spit over a fire built in a shallow trench. This dish is called *mechoui*, and is greedily devoured by the feasters. I have tried it at more than one caïd's house, but was not impressed by it; for owing to the method of cooking portions of the meat were charred, while others were half-raw. But couscous can be very appetising.

The sheikh of a tribe or a rich man can have separate tents for each of his sons and their families and for each of his own wives and her children; but a poor man must be content with one shelter for all, the women sleeping one side, the males the other.

As with all Easterns the family is the unit; and all the members of it stand together against outsiders, whatever be their internal dissensions.

The position of women among Arabs is far from enviable. A maiden must accept the husband selected by her father, who disposes of her to the highest bidder; so that usually a very young girl becomes the wedded slave of a rich old debauchee. When his passion is sated and he tires of her he can divorce her by a simple pronouncement or else relegate her to join the other wives that she supplanted and be, like them, merely a servant.

A divorced woman, even if she returns to the paternal tent, has the right to be consulted if it is proposed to marry her again.

The religion of the Saharan tribes is Mahommedanism; but they are very ignorant and know little of the teachings of their faith which never restrains them from indulging in any vice or committing any crime.

At the statutory times of praying one sees the desert Arabs wherever they are spreading their mats on the sand outside their tents, near their flocks or beside their tethered camels, kneeling, bowing to the ground, prostrating themselves, rising and kneeling again and muttering what they know of the prescribed prayers. For the ablutions they use sand instead of water. They are superstitious and firm believers in witchcraft; and it is interesting to realise that the European beliefs in witches flying on broomsticks through the air, casting spells on human beings and animals, causing persons whose deaths were desired to suffer and to die by making wax or clay figures of them and sticking pins in their images, all have their counterpart in the Arab superstitions, from which indeed they must have been derived. For all these originated in the East and are found to-day in India and Burma.

Before quitting the subject of the Sahara I must record two interesting facts concerning it. The first is that a French *savant*, M. Ch. de la Roncière, of the Bibliothèque Nationale, has recently made the remarkable discovery by means of researches in Genoa and elsewhere that Timbuctoo and the principal oases of the Sahara were known to and visited by Europeans in the Middle Ages. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century commercial relations were established with the great centres of the Niger and of the Soudan. Spanish merchants and Italian artists were acquainted with the Saharan routes that were thought to have first been discovered by nineteenth century explorers. Andalusian architects built, and Genoese painters adorned, palaces on the banks of the Niger, palaces that have long ago disappeared, but of which the sites

and foundations have been traced. M. de la Roncière has shown me maps made in those far-away centuries that plainly indicated the Hoggar, Adrar and other spots in the Sahara, the discovery of which in the nineteenth century was hailed as a great triumph of modern exploration.

The second fact is not less interesting and is more profitable. Hitherto the sole means of transport in the great desert has been the camel, slow, insecure and unreliable. The French are planning a Trans-Saharan railway; but many years must elapse before it comes into being. The automobile held out no hope of being useful over the sand dunes into which its wheels would sink deep, the rugged mountains, the waterless spaces, and in the torrid heat in which petrol would evaporate too quickly. But a French firm, the Citroën Company, has evolved a type of motor-car which has achieved the impossible. Three of these vehicles, in which the two rear wheels were replaced by four smaller ones provided with caterpillar bands, on which four small pulleys on either side work, went into the Sahara from Tougourt in the beginning of 1922, covered over 20,000 kilometres in several months' trials, purposely seeking out the worst possible ground, the spaces of softest sand, reaching In-Salah and the Touareg country, and in awful heat returning safely to Algiers, where I saw them defile before the President of the French Republic at his review of Algerian cavalry.

Inspired by their success the head of the firm, M. André Citroën, has sent out in the winter of 1922-23 four 10-h.p. three-seater automobiles of the same type to attempt the crossing of the Sahara from Algeria to Timbuctoo. To help them in their task three similar



cars have been sent by sea to Dakar, on the West African Coast, to go by land to Timbuctoo, and from there continue north to lay out supplies of petrol and other necessities at posts as far as the boundary between the Niger Territory and the Territory of the Saharan Oases. Other cars are going south to do the same at the posts of Ouargla, Inifel, and In-Salah.

Then the four expeditionary cars will be left to their own resources for a stretch of over 3,600 kilometres. Each will carry 300 litres of petrol in two reservoirs; and they will have between them 120 litres of water to enable them to cross the desert of Tanezrouft, "The Land of Thirst," where no wells are found. The twelve members of the expedition will be armed with rifles and two aeroplane machine-guns; the cars will carry food, spare parts, medicines, and folding tents, while one is fitted up with a complete cinematographic apparatus.

It is hoped to effect the journey between Tougourt and Timbuctoo in a month. If the expedition is successful—as there is every reason to hope that it will be—the Sahara will have been conquered at last; and before long regular automobile routes will be established, and traversing the Great Desert be no longer a superhuman feat. And France's North and West African territories will be effectually linked up.

Since the above was written the Sahara has been vanquished. The cars of the Citroën Mission under MM. Haardt and Audouin-Dubreuil, which left Tougourt on December 17th, 1922, reached Timbuctoo on January 7th, 1923, having traversed 1,700 miles of desert in three weeks.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE TOUAREG

DEEP in the heart of the Sahara are the tribes of the strange, almost legendary race of the Touareg, the last of its nomads to submit to French rule, which as yet sits lightly on them. Until this generation they were hardly known to the outer world; although a few travellers brought back tales of the veiled men who scoured the desert on swift white camels and spread terror, ruin and desolation as they passed.

The German explorer Barth penetrated to them early in the nineteenth century, and lived to return; and Duveyrier reached the Azdjer Touareg in 1861 and actually resided with them for two years. From these men first came reliable accounts of this race of bloodthirsty robbers who raided from Timbuctoo to the confines of Algeria, plundered and enslaved all other peoples and kept the seclusion of the desert almost inviolable.

The two travellers mentioned were singular in gaining their friendship; for, fearing the extension of French influence and clinging fanatically to their freedom, the Touareg usually murdered any explorers that the Sahara had spared. Colonel Flatters and ten European companions with a weak escort of native

soldiers were massacred by them in 1881; the Marquis de Mores and his Arab friends and servants were treacherously slain in 1896—and these were but two of several.

It was generally believed that their strength and prowess, aided by the extraordinary difficulties of the country, would render their conquest an almost impossible undertaking. But a French civilian named Foureau, who had spent years in the Sahara learning their language and ways and exploring the approaches to their territory, induced the Government of the Republic to entrust him with the leadership of an expedition consisting of several white officers and some hundreds of Algerian native troops with camels, horses and two guns, and conducted it safely from Ouargla to the Soudan, eventually reaching the coast of West Africa and returning by sea. He passed right through the regions inhabited by the Touareg, who only once ventured to attack and were then so severely handled that they never again interfered with the expedition.

Foureau's success showed not only that the Sahara could be traversed by large bodies of men, finding subsistence in it for themselves and their animals—history had long before proved it—but also that the Touareg were not formidable when opposed to disciplined and well-armed troops.

But even then the French Government was slow to move, being loath to engage in what seemed a profitless expenditure of men and money; and not until the twentieth century had almost dawned were the gallant officers of the Algerian Army, who had long chafed at being held back, allowed to act. Fierce and warlike

as the Touareg are, they never attempted to oppose a serious resistance to the French when in force, their want of cohesion and their tribal jealousies preventing them from uniting in strength against the hated invaders. And their fighting-men are not numerous. In the war between the Azdjer and the Ahaggar from 1875 to 1878 neither side ever mustered more than 800 combatants. The combat of Tit with the French in April, 1902, in which a hundred of them were slain, led eventually to the submission of the Ahaggar Touareg. Lieutenant Bisset's raid on the Azdjer tribes in 1903 and the efforts of Commandant Laperrine (who when a General perished tragically in 1920 when his aeroplane was stranded in the Sahara) taught these tyrants of the desert that the white men were too strong for them. But even to-day the Touareg can scarcely be called pacified yet.

The name "Touareg" (which in the singular is "Targui") was given this race by the Arabs, because the first Berber tribe that they met with when they invaded the Fezzan (south of Tunisia) was called "Targa." But the Touareg term themselves "Imohar" or "Imochar," which means "raiders."

There are two great divisions of the tribes of the North, the Azdjer and the Ahaggar, and others are found as far south as the country through which the Niger flows near Timbuctoo. It is generally agreed that all Touareg are of Berber origin, descendants of the aborigines of North Africa, who at the time of the great Arab invasion already inhabited the Sahara or retired into it to preserve the independence that their race has always so jealously guarded. Like their kinsmen in the Djurdjura and the Aurès, as well as

in Morocco, they embraced Mahommedanism after a time, and also like them abjured it often and have never known nor cared much about it.

They have always been bitterly opposed to the Arabs, and waged war on them on every occasion. From the Algerian frontier to the Soudan they swept in swift and destructive passage, leaving a trail of blood, rapine and ruin behind them, destroying kingdoms but creating none, always the same masterless tribes of cruel robbers, ever at war with the world and each other. Merciless, their very name was a menace. Such terror clung to it that the mere sight of one or two would empty a village and send its affrighted inhabitants fleeing without thought of resistance, abandoning all they owned.

And indeed there is something sinister in the appearance of these men, tall, gaunt, draped in sombre garb, stalking with hidden faces over the sand like spectres or passing swiftly on fleet camels.

Their manners and customs, although they may vary somewhat in different fractions of the race or in different districts, are in the main similar. Whether of the North or the South the tribes are divided into two categories, noble or vassal. That is, a more powerful tribe is classed as "noble," and has one or more weaker tribes called *imrad* depending on it and paying it tribute, termed *tioussé*, in dates, grain, milk or booty won in a raid, for protection against aggression by external foes or by the other "noble" tribes. These *imrad* are not serfs in any way and, although they are bound to follow their protectors in war, are not obliged to labour for them. Both categories have their own slaves, generally negroes

or half-castes, either born in captivity or prisoners made in raids.

The singular of *imrad* is *amr'id*. In the south there is a third category, serf tribes composed of slaves, in most cases the progeny of Touareg masters and captive women of the Songhay race which once ruled an empire in the Niger region but was crushed by the Touareg. These serf tribes are called *Elkillan* in the tongue of their masters, *Bellah* in Songhay. They are brown-skinned, smooth-haired and have regular features; the girls are pretty and the men brave and always well to the fore in battle or in the hardly less dangerous pastime of hunting lions and wild elephants in the Niger jungles.

The "noble" tribes consider themselves of a superior clay to the *imrad*; and the men wed in their own caste and would regard a marriage with a "vassal" girl as a misalliance. The offspring of such a union would be *imrad*; for children among the Touareg take the condition of the mother. Thus, if a "noble" woman marries an *amr'id* their children would be "noble"; for this people hold the doctrine that "the womb ennobles," and rank and dignities descend in the female line.

In practice the distinctions between the tribes become somewhat confused, especially in the south. An *imrad* tribe will only pay the tribute if its supposed protectors are strong enough to enforce it. It may happen that the positions may be reversed by the *imrad* tribe defeating the "noble" one. And often a vassal tribe may have one or more weaker ones depending on it as its *imrad*.

The chieftain of a Targui tribe is termed *amr'ar*

and his symbol of authority is the drum, *tobol*, which is beaten to call together the members of the tribe and its *imrad* for council or war. Hence the word *tobol*, which is of Arab origin, designates all who obey this chief's rule.

A confederation of "noble" tribes with their dependent *imrad* will choose one such *amr'ar* to lead them all. He is termed *amenokal*; and like every *amr'ar* his authority depends on his power to enforce it. Theoretically he can fine or wound, but not kill, an offender against his decrees. In each confederacy a certain dominant tribe usually has the right to supply the *amenokal*.

The position of the *amenokal* is partly hereditary, partly elective. He is not succeeded by his son (at least among the Ahaggar) but—in order of inheriting—by his eldest brother, the eldest son of his maternal aunt, and the eldest son of his eldest sister. In practice, on the death of an *amenokal* his family in council decide which member of it is likely to be the best man to replace him. A meeting of the *tobol* is called; and a banquet is given to all who attend it. Sheep are liberally slain to furnish the feast; and the tribesmen, to whom meat is a rare luxury, eat heartily. When repletion has put them in a good humour the name of the selected candidate is mentioned, without being definitely put forward, and his praises sung by a paid *claque*—in the south this is done by the blacksmiths who act as heralds and bards. When a favourable atmosphere has been created the name is formally put forward, the *imrad* present having the right to speak first and signify their acceptance of him or the contrary.

If the assembly cannot choose between two candidates there may be a split in the confederacy and a second *tobol* may be created.

To-day the Algerian Government must approve of the *amenokal*; and if it does it will invest him with the power under its suzerainty. On him as a sign of dignity is conferred the sumptuous gold-embroidered scarlet burnous that is the official garb of an Arab caïd. It is an alien garment to the Touareg; but as they are vain and fond of splendour in dress it must be welcome to the recipient, whose womankind could never make for him such good cloth or so magnificent a robe.

The Touareg tribes, when not at war with each other, spent their time raiding the Arabs of the north and the negroes of the Soudan, the peaceable sedentary races of the Air and Damergou. Fighting and robbery are the only fit occupations for men in their opinion. Agriculture, the care of their flocks and the making of tents and garments devolve on the women, the slaves and the half-castes. The cultivation of the soil in the Ahaggar Mountains where water is found is left to the despised *Harratine*, mulattos from Tidikelt and Touat. Even the blacksmiths who repair the weapons purchased in the Air are looked down upon, and, since they live by fire, are supposed to be predestined to suffer eternally by it in hell. They form a separate caste; and Sheikh Ben Djellas says of them "They hate and betray God and his Prophet."

The Touareg, although they prefer to live by raiding and levying blackmail on trading caravans passing through their country, do a certain amount of com-



merce themselves. The men of the Ahaggar bring from the Saharan oases, from Tidikelt and Touat, dates, *chegga* (blue cotton cloth), *mahmoudi* (white cotton cloth), tobacco, snuff, tea, and sugar, and from Bilma to the east of them the salt there produced; and these they carry to the Air and the Damergou in the Southern Sahara and barter for camels, donkeys, *demmane* (sheep covered with hair instead of wool), weapons, saddlery and leather goods.

When moving in a caravan their camels are fastened in threes, one behind the other, as in India, instead of being driven in herds in the Arab way. Men ride only stallion camels and horses, the females being left for the women's use. A Targui's *mehara* (riding camel) is usually white, is speedy and full of endurance, and is trained to dash off at a gallop from standing still and to be absolutely silent, unlike the noisy grumbling beasts of the Arabs.

The Touareg men are excellent horsemen and camel-riders and are trained to the use of arms from their earliest youth. Their usual weapons are lance, sword, and dagger. The last is cross-hilted and is worn strapped along the left forearm, point towards the elbow, pommel at the wrist. The sword, swinging at the left side, has also a cross hilt and is straight and double-edged with rounded point. The long spear-shaft is of iron in the case of nobles, of wood with slaves, but the latter often have it of metal, too.

The shields are of antelope skin, generally of more than one thickness, but of course will not stop a bullet.

Until recently the Touareg had no firearms; but Turkish and Senoussi gun-runners from Tripoli have smuggled to them modern rifles supplied by the

Germans in the hope of adding to France's embarrassments.

The endurance of the men of this race seems more than human. Like their camels, and indeed all their domestic animals, they can exist without drinking for two or three days even in the hottest weather, and so can pass over waterless deserts where nothing lives. A handful of coarse, bitter flour, made from the dried and powdered bulbs of the *tazia* or the dried seeds of the gum-tree will satisfy their hunger. A Targui for the mere love of roaming will leave his tent and family and start off over the gravelly wastes or barren mountains for weeks at a time. When night overtakes him he hobbles his camel, eats his frugal meal, scoops out a bed for himself if the soil is not too hard and lies down to sleep in it, his weapons beside him, ready to wake at the least hint of danger.

The establishment of regular markets near the French military posts tends gradually to lessen the tendency of the Touareg to wander so widely; and perhaps in time they may learn not to despise agriculture where cultivation is possible, as in the Ahaggar Mountains. Their favourite pursuits, robbery and raiding for slaves, are being put a stop to and in the future they may take to living honestly.

In manners and customs the Touareg differ utterly from Arabs. Unlike all other Mahommedan peoples they are monogamous and their women are not only free and respected but are almost of more importance than the men. They usually go unveiled while the sterner sex conceal their faces. A wife's property is entirely her own; and the succession of dignities, rank, and fortunes pass to the children through her, not

through her husband; and if she and he come of different tribes her offspring belong to hers, not to his. She can divorce him at her will—he would earn universal obloquy if he divorced her, no matter what she did. She is never affronted by the presence of a second wife; but she can have her *cavaliere servente*, a male friend to be her knight, to obey her behests, laud her beauty openly and literally sing her praises in verses of his own composition at the musical gatherings of the tribe. She can receive visits from members of the opposite sex freely; and it would be unpardonable for the husband to show jealousy. Before the wedding a marriage settlement on her must be made by the bridegroom.

The unmarried woman not only must be consulted in the case of a proposal for her hand, but she can herself propose; and the man thus honoured would not if he were free dare to refuse. The liberty allowed girls is amazing, especially when their position in other Moslem or African races is considered. Chastity is not expected of them; and they can have as many amours as they desire before settling down to matrimony with husbands fully aware of their past.

There is a surprising amount of freedom between the sexes. Among uncivilised peoples as a rule there is little or no social intercourse allowed between men and women, especially if young and unwed. But the Touareg exceed most European races in this respect. They are passionately fond of "musical evenings," called *ahal*; and whenever there are a few men and women in an encampment they gather outside the tents after sundown, the ladies play the *amz'ad*, a single-stringed violin made of half a cala-

bash rind with a string stretched across it, and a long handle. The string and the cord of the bow are of horsehair.

The singing is generally left to the men, who chant ballads of their own composition extolling the beauty of their mistresses, satirising their enemies and vaunting their own prowess in war.

After the singing games of forfeits are played; for this amusement of civilised children is of great antiquity and known in the Far East.

The women elect a sultana, the men a sultan; and the royal pair decide the penalties to be inflicted on the losers in the trial of wit, which is the form that the games take.

All through the evening the lovers pay open and unrestrained court; and the girls are proud to flaunt their conquests before the eyes of everyone. They sit on their adorers' knees in sight of all and kiss the chosen swains—on their noses! For as the Targui man must not expose his face in public he only lowers his veil below his nostrils and presents his nasal organ to the lips of his inamorata. The *ahal* often lasts through the night and gives ample opportunity for intrigues—opportunities of which the married women as well as the girls avail themselves freely. All this will seem almost incredible to anyone acquainted with other African or Oriental uncivilised races, and, above all, Moslems.

The freedom conceded to a Targui woman is unique. Her position is indeed enviable. She does not need to work; for, no matter how poor she may be, she has always at least one negress slave to cook and undertake the menial labour for her. If married

her property is her own absolutely. She can divorce her husband by the simple process of leaving him. If she has an intrigue with a negro slave from which a black baby results no suspicion is aroused; as everyone will accept the standard explanation that some evil wizard has cast a spell on her and caused the poor infant to resemble the despised negro race.

Indeed if an unmarried woman becomes a mother it is politely assumed that the child's father is a spiritual being. It is no wonder that with the liberty allowed them the Touareg girls do not pine if they fail to find husbands.

For the men are not in a hurry to marry, since the necessity of making a settlement on the bride and of providing for the upkeep of the *ménage*—as the wife need contribute nothing to it, no matter how rich she is—makes the young man shy of embarking on matrimony. And he has many consolations; for not only are intrigues with girls and married women of his own race possible, but he can choose concubines from his negress slaves; or a widow or a divorced woman, enriched by her marriage settlement which she retains, may propose to him.

So it follows that among the Touareg the young men marry older women; while it is generally only elderly men who have accumulated wealth who can afford to espouse the young and attractive girls.

When a Targui decides to marry and has fixed on the lady he sends to her parents an embassy of two marabouts or tolbas with a couple of influential men to solicit her hand. The request is laid before her whole family; for even the most distant relatives both in point of blood and distance must be consulted.

And the girl's consent has to be obtained; because if her father marries her off against her will, she has only to refuse herself to her husband and he will arrange a divorce and let her return to her kindred.

When the wedding day is fixed the guests assemble at the encampment of the bride's family, the women on camels or donkeys and carrying their drums and one-stringed violins, the men in gala costume with their weapons and mounted on their best *mehara*. An hour after noon the male guests indulge in a *fantasia*—a sort of mounted sports consisting chiefly of discharging firearms from the saddle at a mad gallop, while the ladies urge them on by song and music. The bridegroom is present, seated on his camel beside a friend, but does not take part; while the bride is hidden in the tent of some female relative on the maternal side and carefully avoids looking at the spectacle, as her glance would bring bad luck on some rider or other and cause an accident.

The *fantasia* continues to sunset, when a deputation of four men representing the husband-to-be waits on the girl's father—or, if she be a widow or divorced woman, on the bride herself—and asks that someone be chosen to act for her, nominating at the same time a person to act for the man. These two nominees then join them; and the contract of marriage is settled and the dowry arranged. This the husband provides; for a noble it is seven camels, for an *amr'id* a camel or some sheep or goats, according to his means. He only hands over a part at the time and owes the rest. Beasts are slain for the marriage feast and prayers are said to call down the blessing of Allah on the happy pair.

Then the female relations and guests gather, provide music and prepare the nuptial couch, which is of sand or earth on which a cloth is spread. Then they proceed to erect a tent over it; but the men rush on them, seize the tent, raise it three times for luck before pitching it, and lead the bridegroom to it.

The women escort the bride towards the entrance; but before she reaches it a male cousin on the mother's side pretends to hold her back, crying;

“ I shall not let thee go from us until I have received a gift of sandals.”

A pair of sandals or some other present is given him and he releases her,

Then the women sing in chorus :

“ We are a-hungered!  
We are naked!  
We are afoot! ”

And the men reply:

“ Ye shall be fed!  
Ye shall be clothed!  
Ye shall be mounted! ”

Then the bride and the women chant a verse to the husband intimating that they expect him to behave like a strong and bold man and not as a child. After which admonition the bride goes into the tent to him; and they are left alone while the guests retire and feast.

The honeymoon consists of the new-married pair remaining in their tent for seven days, fed by the wife's family and cheered by frequent visits from their friends.

For a year afterwards they remain near the bride's

parents, to give her time to get used to parting from them.

Divorce is a much simpler proceeding than the marriage; and incompatibility of temperament is the most general cause. For usually it is the wife who seeks it, since a husband who gets rid of his spouse must pay her the balance of the marriage settlement. And public opinion is against him if he divorce her, even though he detects her in adultery. "Women's Rights" need no advocate among the Touareg.

This race has a superstitious dread of even the mention of death. When a Targui dies a marabout washes his corpse in warm water according to Mahomedan rites and sews it up in a clean white cloth. For his services he is rewarded with a cow and the deceased's clothes. The body is placed on its right side facing towards Mecca in a shallow grave on which branches are heaped to prevent jackals and hyenas scratching it up again; and tombstones are put at the head and foot. Then the grave is surrounded by one or two rectangles or ovals marked out in stones and, when the prayers have been said, the mourners leave it and go to the funeral feast; after which camp is struck and all quit the spot where death took place, for they consider that it must be unlucky.

Touareg turn aside if they come upon a tomb; and they never mention the name of a deceased person.

They are exceedingly superstitious and believe firmly in the evil eye, sorcerers, vampires, ghosts, and djinns. According to them sorcerers, called *akiriko*, are either male or female and are invariably vampires, who can suck blood without the necessity of going near the victim. It is enough to breathe in air while



thinking of him or her; and the poor wretch's blood passes invisibly into the *akiriko's* body to fatten him, while the victim grows weak for loss of it and will die unless the sorcerer relents. The children of the *akiriko* inherit their parent's magical powers.

These vampires are known by their habit of persistently licking their lips in the presence of human beings or horses—for they also suck the blood of the latter. When discovered they are punished by the confiscation of their possessions and by exile.

More terrible and less easily baffled are the djinns. These spirits, for the most part evil, live in big cities in the interior of the earth and among certain isolated mountains called Idînen on the caravan route from Ghadames to Rhat. They travel much, so they are frequently met with on the roads, but are usually invisible. They are in the habit of entering tents and joining in mortals' meals; and should any luckless wight try to sit on the mat, eat from the dish or drink from the cup that the unseen and uninvited guest is using, he will die on the spot. Unless, indeed, he has been careful to guard against evil by the pious utterance "Bismillai!"

Sudden deaths from apoplexy, heart failure or similar causes are thus accounted for. Accidents, such as a fall from a horse or camel, are attributed to some djinn's anger.

If a Targui hears at night any regular cadenced noise like the blows of a blacksmith's hammer he promptly flees in the opposite direction; for djinns often set up anvils to forge or sharpen their arms and generally do so near encampments. Any mortal who blunders on them then dies.

There are male and female djinns. They marry and have children. Sometimes they carry off human babies, if the parents have not fulfilled certain prescribed rites, and replace them by their own offspring.

As the gods and goddesses of old fell in love with mortals, so do the djinns male and female descend upon in their slumbers the men or women whom they honour with their affections.

Some of the djinns are the spirits of long-dead Touareg and they will foretell the future to human beings. So often women dressed in their best and wearing all their jewellery will pass the night lying on an ancient tomb, hoping that in their dreams knowledge will be granted them as to when their absent men will return. Occasionally one of them is found in the morning dead—strangled by the djinn, it is said. But as her jewellery has disappeared a more feasible explanation is easy to find.

The Touareg are nominally <sup>muslems</sup> Mahommedans, but hardly practising ones. They have no mosques and never make the pilgrimage to Mecca. They regard their marabouts with a certain respect, as long as these priests do not worry them about religion. But indeed the holy men know little about the faith that they profess. They have not much instruction, are acquainted with a few texts of the Koran which they make use of freely, and perhaps write a little Arabic. They receive no *zekat*, or tithe, from their flocks but are paid for marriages, circumcisions, and burials or for writing letters and numbering herds.

The marabouts belong to special tribes, such as the Kel es Souk and the Segokhanes, originally from

the destroyed town of Souk, and the Cherfig, descended from men of Marrakesh in the far distant days when the Sultan of the kingdom of Morocco—then only the region about the city of Marrakesh—conquered Timbuctoo.

As the clergy are so ignorant it is natural that the laity are more so. The women are more educated than the men and many of them know something of the *tifnâr*, the written characters of the Targui language—characters which are shaped like circles, squares, dots, crosses, and parallel lines—which is now rarely employed.

Every girl is taught to play the *amz'ad*, the single-stringed violin, as skill with it will add to her popularity in the *ahal*—the musical At Homes where the courting is done. If she is of wealthy parentage she will be crammed from earliest youth with fattening food like a Strasbourg goose; for fatness is considered beautiful by the men.

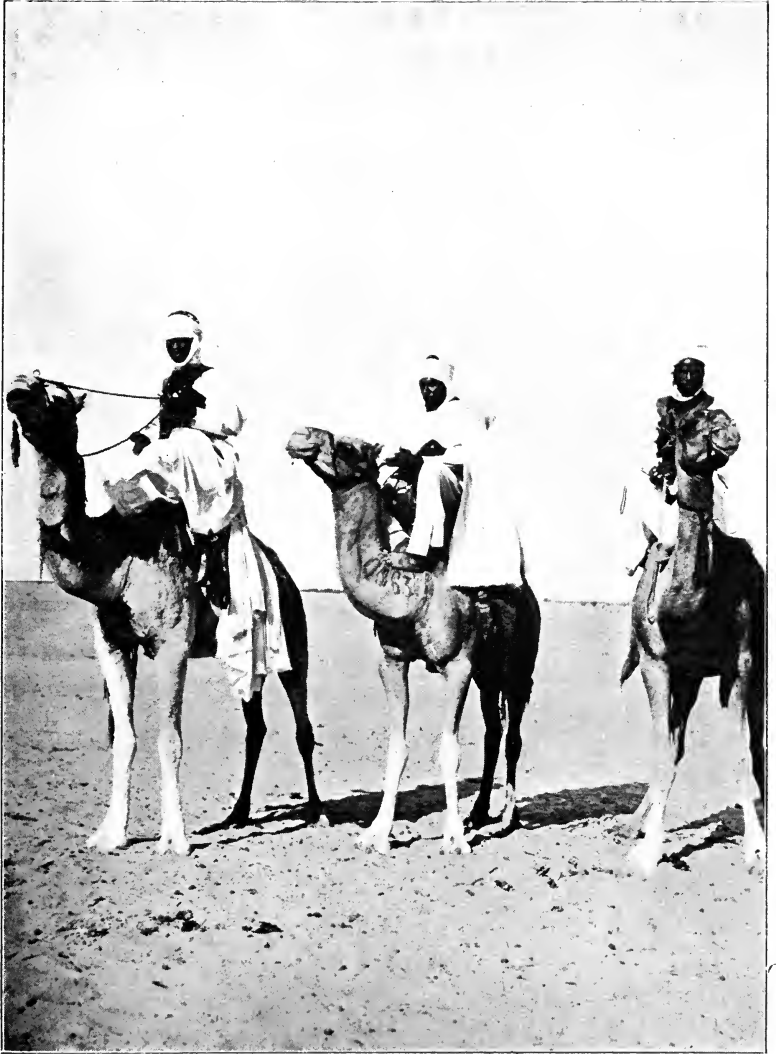
In dress as in almost everything else the Touareg differ from the Arabs. The garments of the men, made of dark blue, almost black, cotton, consist of a sleeveless inner gown—called *takarbast* by the Ahaggar—open at the sides, an outer one with wide sleeves, the *takammist*, and loose trousers gathered in at the ankles. The characteristic veil, the *tiedjelmoust*, is a long strip of blue cotton, one end of which is placed on the top of the head, the rest brought down to and across the lower part of the face, then up and across the brow, leaving the eyes visible, then wound around the skull. Their bare feet are thrust into broad, flat sandals. Everywhere about them they hang little leather bags or boxes containing amulets—

scraps of paper with a text from the Koran scrawled on it by a marabout, an inch or two of giraffe skin, a lion's claw or some other similar charm.

The women wear sleeved shirts or blouses, a *haik* and a skirt, and the *ikerhi*, a black veil which is never drawn across the face except in the presence of some elderly and important relative as a mark of respect. In summer they put on large hats to shade them from the sun. They load themselves with ornaments—bracelets of silver, glass or horn, rings, and large-hooped ear-rings—and like the men wear many amulets.

The reason of the men being veiled is lost in antiquity. The Arabs on their first introduction to the Touareg found them thus masking their faces and called them *Ahl-el-Litham*, the Veiled People. The Touareg say themselves that their ancestors adopted this fashion because the Prophet veiled his face before entering Mecca after its capture. But the truth probably is that the habit originated in these desert-riders' desire to protect their eyes from the glare of the sun and their mouths and nostrils from the sand. To-day a Targui thinks it shameful to expose his mouth to view. When entering an encampment of strangers he shrouds his eyes and in assemblies and council-meetings his whole face.

The Touareg, both noble and *imrad*, possess slaves, mostly negroes, either born in captivity or captured in raids. The males herd the flocks and attend their masters in war and in the chase. The females do the heavy work indoor and out, gather and shell the seed-pods of wild plants to make flour for couscous, weave mats, tan and dye sheepskins,



*Photo. Service, Government of Algeria.*

MEN OF THE CAMEL CORPS IN THE SAHARA.



make garments, fetch water from the wells and make cheese and butter.

The coming of the French has materially interfered with the national pursuit of raiding for booty and slaves. And to-day any slave who can reach a French military post can claim his freedom. Yet few desire it; for if born in captivity they are regarded almost as part of the family and are well treated. The women are often their master's concubines. Sometimes slaves liberated by the French have demanded to return to servitude in order to be among their friends and companions again.

The fog of mystery that for so long shrouded this strange race has lifted. French officers lead their camelry through the country and impose peace on it. Fortified posts dot it. Even as far back as 1887 warriors of the Taitoq clans raiding tribes under French protection and captured were brought to Algiers—some even to Paris. Veiled chieftains of the Ahaggar met a President of France in the Algerian capital, have driven behind him in stately procession, have accompanied him on warships in the bay, have seen and heard the guns on battleship and cruiser salute him, have been stared at by tens of thousands of white folk in the streets, and watched the rank, beauty and fashion of Algiers dance one-step and tango in the Summer Palace—and gone back again by train, automobile and camel on the long journey to the dark ravines of the Hoggar Mountains and the grim deserts of their motherland. The fierce eyes had gazed intently from the shrouded faces at Modern Civilisation—what did the brains behind them think of it?

## CHAPTER XIV

### ALGERIA TO-MORROW

I HAVE said much of the Algeria of Yesterday and To-day. What of the Algeria of To-morrow?

Its prosperity depends on its remaining under European control; for no one who knows Eastern or African Moslem races would have faith in the power of Algerian Arabs and Berbers to successfully conduct the affairs of the country if they won or were given their complete independence.

The French when they arrived found Algeria in a state of almost barbarism; and their achievement in ninety-two years of stress and storm is marvellous. They have made a success of it despite the vacillating policies of their statesmen, the doubts, the fears of the faint-hearted among them. If they have not succeeded altogether as colonisers they have certainly done well as organisers; and I do not believe that any other nation would have done better. I say that deliberately, having seen the Americans in Hawaii and the Philippines, the British in Egypt, India, the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong, the Japanese in Corea, the Portuguese in Goa and Macao and the Russians formerly in Manchuria. France has made mistakes, and grave ones, in Algeria; but others might have made worse.



The success, the future, of the land depend on her continued predominance. Is it threatened from within?

I quote from Captain Raymond Peyronnet's interesting article on the 1921 Census, in the Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger:—

“The European population of Algeria has increased by 21,000 in ten years. It has been proved on the other hand that in the same period the European element of the three large cities, Algiers, Oran and Constantine, has grown by 39,000. The conclusion forces itself on us that the French of the rural districts (“the *bled*”) are disappearing. They are 18,000 less in 1921 than 1911. And this is a grave matter. It is the solid framework of Algeria that is being weakened. If the European element in the country districts is lacking our domination is imperilled.

“A second fact proved is that the proportion between natives and Europeans is in each province substantially the same. In the Department of Oran there is one European to a little under three natives, in the Department of Algiers one to a little less than five, of Constantine one to twelve.

“It is in the Department of Algiers that the purely French are much the more numerous. In that of Oran there is a majority of French of Spanish origin, of Constantine many colonists are of Maltese or Italian origin.

“M. Demontes has proved that the annual increase of the Algerian population is in normal times 3,000 French, 6,000 Europeans or other races, and 60,000 natives. The native population has doubled in the last forty or fifty years.”

He points out that the security of life in Algeria given by the French occupation, which has put an end to tribal wars, and the decrease of infantile mortality owing to improved hygiene and the medical help available now tend to increase the disproportion between the two races which is becoming greater every day.

“ To have in Algeria a million Europeans against six million natives or two millions against twelve millions is not at all the same thing. But what when four million Europeans have to face twenty-four millions? ”

It must be remembered that Algeria does not stand alone, that Tunisia and Morocco with the proportion of one white man to twelve natives and one to twenty-eight (or if French-born Europeans only are counted, one to twenty-six and one to fifty-five) must be reckoned with if ever there were a big upheaval against white domination.

So Captain Peyronnet is of opinion that “ It is necessary to develop strongly the European immigration into Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. As France has a feeble birth-rate one must appeal to the Mediterranean European races that will readily be acclimatised in North Africa. But to prevent any danger from our national point of view it is necessary to prevent any one race becoming too numerous. In the Department of Oran which is crowded with Spaniards let us call in mostly Italians, in Tunisia counterbalance the existing Italian influence by Spanish immigration, in Morocco welcome equal numbers of Italians and Spaniards.

“ Let us appeal as well to prolific races which swarm

and which are not too far away from our mentality. We see two—the Czecho-Slovaks and the Poles. . . .

“ . . . If it is impossible to create in North Africa a race strictly French at least it is necessary that the race that will be formed there should be French by culture. . . . Let us at least fashion foreigners in a French mould. . . .

“ The European races should hold first place, no matter what happens. To do this they must be at least the quarter of the total population. Of the twelve and a half million inhabitants of North Africa there are 800,000 Europeans in Algeria, 150,000 in Tunisia, 150,000 in Morocco. Add 200,000 Tunisian and Moroccan Jews who will adopt French customs. This makes a total of 1,300,000 souls. There should be four million Europeans to twelve million natives. Can we create such a current of immigration? I doubt it. At least we could attempt it. . . . Why do not the many emigrants who turn their steps to the United States and South Africa take the road to North Africa? . . .

“ To attract the Italian, Spaniard, Pole, Czecho-Slovak, Bulgarian, Roumanian, one must ensure their finding land or work. . . . There is enough land in North Africa for new comers without dispossessing present proprietors and driving them to revolt.

“ . . . A policy of immigration will only succeed if linked with a programme of improving the soil—agricultural hydraulic works will be the first consideration in Algeria, ways of communication in Morocco.

“ . . . If at the end of ten years there are three million Europeans in North Africa, who will be six millions in fifty years and ten in a century, France will

have fulfilled her destiny. Facing these ten millions of Europeans will be forty million North African natives and thirty million negroes (i.e., the latter chiefly in French West Africa). . . . In a century Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and French West Africa will be made capable of supporting this population. The ten million Europeans could direct this mass of natives, greatly civilised and intimately associated with the conduct of their own affairs. . . .

“ . . . But . . . it is necessary that the European element in North Africa *should be from now on and before the lapse of ten years* much more important than it is. If not, the disproportion between Europeans and natives will only grow greater and more dangerous.”

M. Saurin, president of the Comité Bugeaud, a society formed to develop this Europeanisation, says:

“ Our North Africa is menaced. So many French soldiers struck down by bullets or by fever from the taking of Algiers to the pacification of Morocco will have died in vain.

“ The danger is the increasing insufficiency of the French population. The soldier, the official, the large proprietor, pass; only the peasant remains. We must therefore settle French peasants. Public opinion should insist on the creation of powerful Caisses de Colonisation charged with this mission.”

Captain Peyronnet, however, has wisely recognised the impossibility of securing a sufficient immigration of French peasants and has suggested a more practicable plan.

A former Governor-General of Algeria, M.

Lutaud, warns his compatriots, "If we do not people North Africa we shall lose it."

The passing of Algeria and its neighbours from European, that is, French, control would be a world calamity. For the sake of the generations that follow us let us hope that it will never happen. Their native populations would never keep these countries in the van of progress as France is doing. Look at Morocco! Ten years ago she was sunk in barbarism; and were European control removed from her she would relapse again. I was amazed at the work that France has already accomplished in her Protectorate. If anyone doubts its value let them compare it with the state of the parts of the land—in the Riff and elsewhere—still independent!

Algeria has advanced centuries since 1830 and will go much farther still. Her first and most pressing need is a remedy for the droughts when the rainfall is deficient; and that is irrigation. The water that sweeps unprofitably to the sea from the streams and rivers swollen by the rain when it does come should be stored to be used when required. This was actually done better in the days of the Romans than now. With a sufficient and dependable water supply Algeria could maintain a population vastly greater than the present one.

Her mineral wealth has only been scratched as yet. When war-stricken France has more money to spare and her financiers and thrifty citizens can be induced to invest their cash in their own dependencies instead of Eastern Europe Algeria will return them ample dividends.

She has already proved a source of strength to

France in times of peril. In 1870-71 and in 1914-19 she sent her sons, European and native, to the help of the stricken motherland; and she will do so again in ever increasing numbers.

Some day the Trans-Saharan railway will be built and even if its main outlet be to the Atlantic through Morocco, it will be connected with the railways of Algeria and increase her wealth.

So the sky over this fair Department of France across the Mediterranean has but one cloud—the dark menace of an increasing disproportion between Europeans and the native populations. Let us hope that it will come to nothing and that the country that shouldered the white man's burden for a century may continue to reap the reward that she merits. In Algeria France has deserved well of the world—let those who doubt it visit this storied land!

## INDEX

- ABADITES, 47  
 Abd-el-Kader, 78, 169, 206  
 —, A descendant of, 50  
 —, Mount, 110  
 Abderrames, Rue des, 12  
 Abel, M., 186  
 Abencerrages, Rue des, 12  
 Abisga, 215  
 Abou Tachfin's silver tree, 149  
 Abou Yakoub, 147  
*Adjar*, 45, 100  
 Admiral's House, 29, 52  
 Adrar, 218  
 Ad Piscinam, 167  
 Agadez, 217  
*Agents de Sûreté*, 31  
*Agents de ville*, 31  
*Agha-bashi*, 76  
 Aghalik of Ouargla, 48  
 Agriculture, Sahara, 215; Kabyle, 122; Touat, 219  
 Ahaggar or Hoggar Mountains, 59, 214, 230  
*Ahal*, 237  
*Ahl-el-Litham*, 246  
 Ahmed-El-Kebir, 110, 111, 112  
*Ahrar*, 218  
 Ain-el-Hadjadj, 214  
 Ain Touta Mac Mahon, 160  
 Air, 215  
 Aissaoua, 205  
*Akiriko*, 242  
 Alaoua dates, 179  
 Alexandrine Greeks, Knowledge derived from, 72  
 Alfa, 57  
 Algeria under the Romans, 66; under the Turks, 76; to-morrow, 248  
 Algiers. Description, 10 *et seq.*; as a port, 56; as a winter resort, 58; history, 73 *et seq.*  
 Ali-ben-Ali-Thaleb, 198  
 Ali-ben-Gana, Caid, 168, 199  
 Alma, 129, 154  
 Almoravide kings, 72  
*Amenokal*, 233, 234  
*Amin amina*, 125  
*Amr'ar*, 232  
*Amr'id*, 232  
 Amulets, Touareg, 95, 245  
*Amz'ad*, 237  
 Anahef Mountains, 214  
 Andalusian Moors, 110, 112  
 Aoulef, 219  
 Arab learning, 72  
 Arabs. Street singer, 15; musicians, 16; funeral, 23; invasions of, 69, 71; nomad, 221; character, 222; food, 223; superstitions, 225  
 Argel, 73, 74  
 Aristocracy, Moslem, 197  
 Aroudj, 74  
 Atlas Mountains, 9, 40, 62, 66, 111, 113  
 Andouin-Dubreuil, M., 227  
 Augustan Legion, 66  
 Aumale, Duc d', 117  
 Aurès Mountains, 62, 120, 157, 160  
 Azdjer, 214, 230  
 BAB AZOUN, 34  
 Bab-el-Oued, 21, 23, 29  
 Babouches, 44  
 Badestan, 88  
 Balagnier, Ponce de, 34  
 Balearic slingers, 65  
 Barbarossa, 30, 74  
 Barbary coast, *Coloniēs on*, 65; pirates of, 72  
 Bardo, 102  
 Barth, 228  
 Batna, 158  
 Bedouins, 222

- Belisarius, 69  
 Bellah, 232  
 Belle Fontaine, 129  
 Belleville, 127  
 Ben Aknoun, 25, 58  
 Ben Djellab, 184  
 Ben Gana. Bou-Aziz, 168; the  
   Bach-Agha, 168, 192, 199;  
   Caïd Ali, 168, 199; Hamma,  
   199  
 Benghazi, 204  
 Beni-Hilal, 71  
   — Isguen, 48  
   — Mansour, 155  
   — M'Zab, 48, 213  
   — Mora, 187  
   — Salah, 112  
 Benzert, 65  
 Berbers. Origin of name, 62;  
   girls, 19; workmen in Algiers,  
   36; history of, 62 *et seq.*;  
   divisions, 64; struggles for  
   freedom, 68; religions, 69, 70;  
   character and customs, 121 *et*  
   *seq.*  
 Berrian, 48  
 Berrouaghia, 112, 117  
 Bey, 74; of Titeri, 74  
 Beylerbeg, 74  
 Bilma, 216, 235  
 Birkadem, 104  
 Birmandreis, 104  
 Biskra, 47; climate, 59; descrip-  
   tion, 164 *et seq.*  
 Bismillai, 243  
 Bisset, Lieutenant, 230  
 Blacksmiths, Touareg, 234  
 Blandon, Sergeant, 105  
*Bled*, the, 249  
 Blida, 100; destruction of, 105;  
   under the pirates, 106; its  
   Daughters of Joy, 107; history,  
   110; college at, 58  
 Bliss, Colonel, 187  
 Boghar, 111, 117  
 Boghari, 19, 117 *et seq.*  
 Bois de Boulogne, 40  
 Bone, 58, 65  
 Boniface, Count, 68  
 Bordj-bou-Arreridj, 156  
 Boulevard de la République, 30,  
   33  
 Boulevard Laferrrière, 37  
 Boulevard Sadi Carnot, 33  
 Boufarik, 104  
 Bougie, 56; Carthaginian Colony,  
   65; pirates, 72; captured by  
   Spaniards, 73  
 Bou Beih, 207  
 Bourbons, 10  
 Bou-Saada, *goum* of, 184  
 Bridge, El Kantara, 161  
 Bridges of Constantine, 137  
 Britain, Phœnicians and, 64  
 Bugeaud, Comité, 252  
   —, Marshal, 37  
 Bureau Arabe, 48; Tougourt, 182  
 Burnous, 17, 18, 44  
 Byzantines, 69, 72  
 CÆSAREA, 66  
 Cæsarean Mauritania, 66  
 Café Maure, 15  
 Caïds, 92, 94, 197  
 Caïd Ali-ben-Gana, 168, 199  
 Caïd of L'Arba, 200  
 Caïd of Tougourt, 183, 199  
 Cairo, 16, 207  
 Caisses de Colonisation, 252  
 Caliphs of Bagdad, 69, 72  
 Caliphs, Eastern, 71  
 Camp des Chênes, 113  
 Canton, 16  
 Carnival in Algiers, 55, 56  
 Cartagena, 145  
 Carthage, 65, 66  
 Cathedral, Algiers, 25; Constan-  
   tine, 137  
 Caxine, Cape, 74  
 Celtiberians, 62  
 Celts, 62  
 Cemeteries, Moslem, 14; El  
   Kettar, 23; St Eugène, 34  
 Ceuta, 70  
 Chadelya, 207  
 Chambre des Députés, 10  
 Chamba of El Golea, 48  
 Chamba of Metlili, 48  
 Chameau, Rue du, 12  
 Charles V., 24, 25, 34, 77, 79  
 Chaouias, 71, 121, 161  
*Checchia*, 16  
 Chegga (cloth), 235  
 Chegga, station of, 175  
 Cheliff, 74  
 Chenoua, 111  
 Cherchel, 66, 72  
 Chiffa, 111, 116  
 Chott El Melghir, 176  
 Chotts, 176



- Citroën, M. André, 226; Saharan mission, 227  
 Climate of Algiers, 58; of Algeria, 59, 151  
 Col de Chréa, 111  
 Compagnies de Discipline, 112  
*Concierges* in Algiers, 54  
 Confectioner, 17  
 Confraternities, religious, 201  
 Conseils Municipaux, 50  
 Constantine, 19, 57, 78, 136 *et seq.*  
 Constantinople, 13, 46  
 Convicts, Algerian, 32, 98  
 Cork oaks, 142  
 Costume, of dancer, 20; of men in Algiers, 44; Arab, 44; Arab women's, 45; Jews', 45; Jewesses', 45, 139; Air, 216; Touareg, 245, 246  
  
 DAHRA, 120  
 Damergou, 217  
 Dance, native, 20  
 Dancing girls in Algiers, 19  
 Dancing girls in Boghari, 119  
 Dar-el-Harb, 203, 204  
 Dar-el-Islam, 203  
 Dates, 179  
 Date palms, 178  
 Dattes, Rue des, 12  
 Daughters of the Dey, 26  
 Daughters of Joy, 19, 107  
 Degla-Beïda, 179  
 Deglet-Nour, 179  
 Delhi, 16  
 Dellys, 72  
 Demmane, 216, 235  
 Democracy, Moslem, 197  
 Demontes, M., 249  
 Dépêche Algérienne, 38, 99  
 Derbrouka, 16  
 Derqaoua, 207  
 Desvaux, Colonel, 184  
 Dey, 11, 39, 74  
 Dey Hassan, 77, 78  
 Dido, 65  
 Diffa, 224  
 Dikr, 207  
 Divorce, among Arabs, 224; among Touareg, 242  
 Diwan of Algiers, 75, 84  
 Djama El Djedid, 27, 29  
 Djama El Kebir, 28  
 Djama El Kebir in Tlemçen, 148  
 Djaraboub, 205  
 Djebel Amour, 119  
 Djebel Belloua, 131  
 Djebel Tarik, 70  
 Djehad, 203  
 Djelfa, 119  
*Djémaa*, M'Zab, 48  
 —, Kabyle, 124  
 Djerid, 179  
 Djezair-Beni-Mezr'anna, 74  
 Djidjel, 65  
 Djidjelli, 65, 72  
 Djilala, 206  
 Djinns, 243  
 Djurdjura Mountains, 24, 33, 37, 130, 155  
 Dokalis, 219  
 Don Juan of Austria, 83  
 Douar, 163, 221  
 Dowry in the Touat, 220  
 Dowry among Touareg, 240  
 Duc d'Aumale, 117  
 Duc d'Orléans, 27  
 Duvivier, General, 103  
  
 EDUCATION in Algeria, 57, 58  
 Eikoci, 65  
 Eikosion, 73  
 Eixosi, 73  
 El Ateuf, 48  
 El Bahadja, 184  
 El Bekri, 74  
 El Berd, 180  
 El Biar, 25, 40  
 El Biodh, 214  
 El Djezair, 10  
 El Golea, 48, 219  
 El Guerrah, 153, 157  
 El Hadj, Ahmed, 137  
 El Kantara, 161  
 El Kettar, 23  
 Elkillan, 232  
 Elissar, 65  
 Emirs, 72  
 Emperors, Berber-Roman, 68  
 Exmouth, Lord, 77  
 Exports, Algerian, 56; under Rome, 67  
 Eucalyptus trees, 22, 128  
  
 FAIR at Tizi Ouzou, 133  
 Fantasia at Tolga, 195  
 Fantasia Touareg, 240  
 Fatemide dynasty, 47  
 Father Francis, 87  
 Fathma, 198

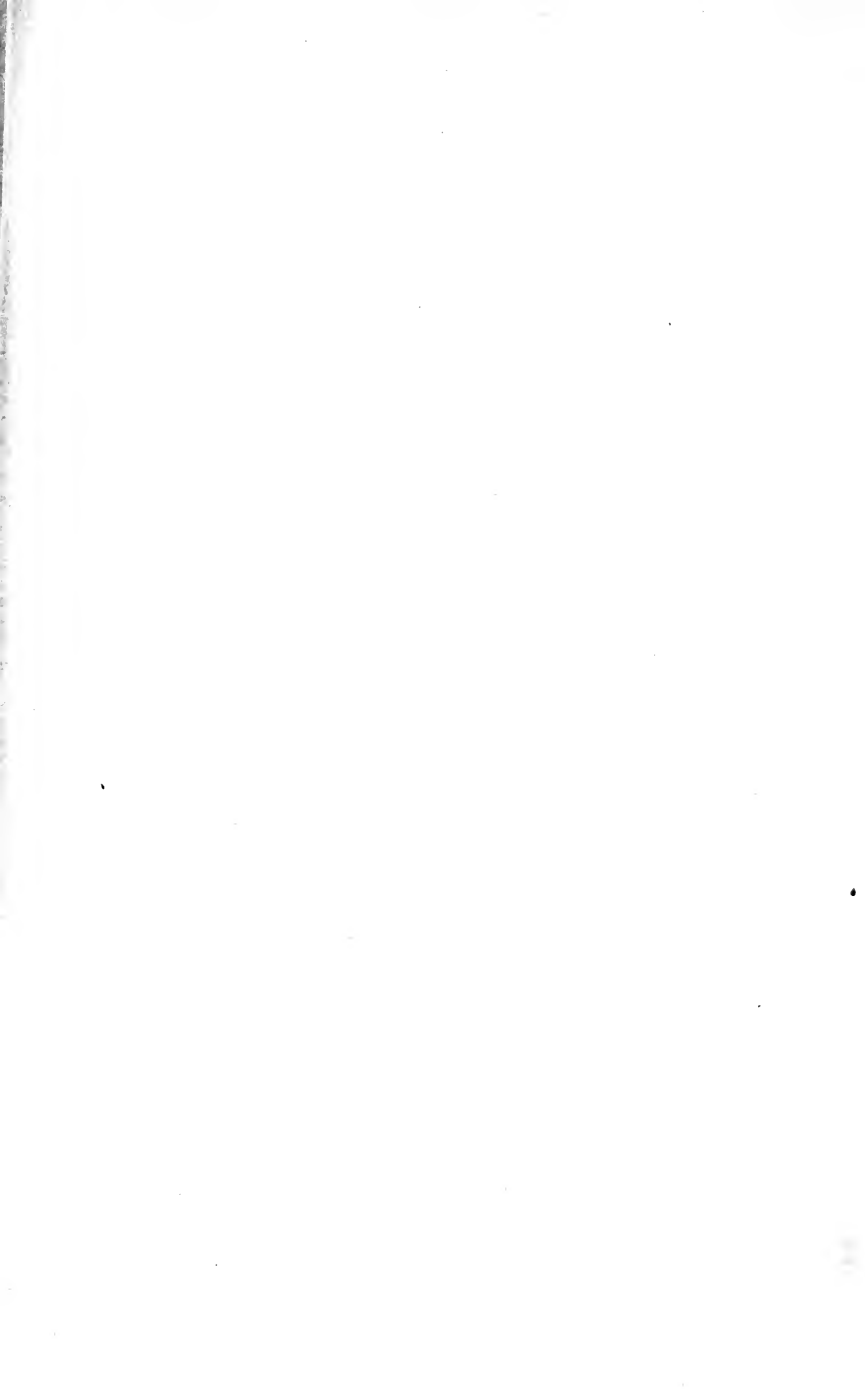
- Fathma, hand of, 18  
 Feidj, 213  
 Fezzan, 230  
 Fish Market, 33  
 Flatters, Colonel, 228  
 Flora of Algeria, 41  
 Flora of Northern Algeria, 152  
 Flora of Sahara, 152, 210  
 Fontaine Chaude, 167  
 Forfeits played by Touareg, 238  
 Fort Bab Azoun, 89  
 Fort de l'Eau, 24  
 Fort l'Empereur, 25, 37, 78  
 Fort National, 135  
 Fort of Tougourt, 182
- GABÈS, Gulf of, 176  
 Gandaoura, 18, 44  
 Garden of Allah, 24  
 Gauls, 65  
 Gassi, 213  
 General Post Office in Algiers, 38, 101  
 Genseric, 68  
 Géographie, Société de, 38  
 Géryville, *goum* of, 184  
 Getulians, 63  
 Ghaïta, 16  
 Ghardaïa, 48  
 Ghardimaou, 143  
 Girafe, Rue de la, 12  
 Giudicelli, Sanson Napollon, 83  
 Golden Apples of the Hesperides, 10, 110  
 Gorge of El Kantara, 161  
 Gorge of the Chiffa, 112 *et seq.*  
 Gorge of the Isser, 154  
 Gorge of the Rummel, 140  
 Governor-General. His position, 51; present, 51; visit to Tolga, 186 *et seq.*  
*Goum*, 190  
 Granary of Europe, 40  
 Granary of Rome, 103  
 Grand Marabout of M'Sila, 185  
 Grand Marabout of Tolga, 194  
 Greeks, 65  
 Grib, 207  
 Guerrara, 48
- HAARDT, M., 227  
 Had, 210  
 Hadj Ali, 213  
 Haick, 17  
 Hamal, 13
- Hamma-ben-Gana, 199  
 Hammam Meskoutine, 142  
 Harbour of Algiers, 10, 30  
 Harbour of Oran, 144  
 Harrach river, 127  
 Harratines, 218, 234  
 Hassan-ben-Kheir-ed-Din, 25  
 Hassan Pacha, 26, 39  
 Haussonvilliers, 129  
 Hauts Plateaux, 59, 151, 156  
 Hercules, 10; meaning of legend, 61; pillars of, 62  
 Hesperides, Golden Apples of, 61  
 Hilalian Invasion, 71  
 Hillil, 204  
 Hlafa, 17, 100  
 Hole of Mourning, 221  
 Horse-breeding at Blida, 109  
 Houses of Algiers, 53  
 Housewives of Algiers, 54  
 Hussein Pasha, 24, 39  
 Hussein Dey, suburb of Algiers, 127  
 Hycsos, 63
- IBERIANS, 62  
 Ice in the Sahara, 177  
 Icosium, 73  
 Iferouane, 215  
 Ifrikya, 69  
*Ikerhi*, 246  
*Imam*, 47, 201  
 Imâmat, 204  
*Imrad*, 231  
 Inimani, 214  
 Inner Harbour, 29, 30  
 In-Salah, 218  
 Invincible Militia, 75, 76, 84, 85  
 Irhazar river, 215  
 Irrigation, 67, 253  
 Islam, 27  
 Isly, Rue d', 35, 37  
 — Victory of, 37  
 Israelites in Africa, 69
- JANISSARIES, 43, 75, 76  
 Jardin Bizot, 109  
 Jardin d'Essai, 25, 41, 127  
 Jewellery of dancing girl, 20  
 Jewesses, 19, 139  
 Jews, 17, 25, 65, 69, 251  
 Judaism, spread of, 69
- KAABA, 46  
 Kabylia, 24, 29, 36, 62, 120, 126  
*et seq.*

- Kabyles. Appearance, 121; food, 121; agriculture, 122; family love, 123; character, 123; women, 124; tribal system, 124; number, 125  
 Kairouan, foundation of, 70  
 Khamsa, 18  
 Kanoums, 125  
 Kasbah, 11, 22, 24, 80, 89, 90  
 Kaya, 76  
 Keir-ed-Din, 29, 74, 110  
 Kel-es-Souk, 244  
 Khadrya, 206  
 Karoubas, 124  
 Khetib, 201  
 Khouans, 207  
 Kissing among Touareg, 238  
 Korunka, 214  
 Kouba, 206  
 Koudiat-es-Saboun, 24  
 Koulouglis, 75  
 Ksar of Boghari, 19, 118, 119  
 Ksour of Touat, 218  
  
 LAGHOUAT, *goum* of, 184  
 La Guyane, 32  
 Lake Chad, 204  
 Lalla Khadidja, 111, 155  
 Lalahoum, Rue, 12  
 Lambessa, 66, 158  
 Lamta, 65  
 Landon de Longeville, Comte, 166  
 Language of natives of Algiers, 43; French in Algeria, 57  
 Laperrine, General, 230  
 Leptis, 67  
 Les Glacières, 111  
 Libyans, 62, 63  
 Lutaud, M., 253  
 Lycées in Algeria, 57  
  
 MAGNESIA, 173  
 Mag'reb, 64  
 Mahmoudi, 235  
 Mahommed, 203  
 Mahommed-ben-Abd'Allah, 184  
 Mahommed-ben-Snoussi, 203  
 Mahommedanism in Barbary, 70; spiritual leaders of, 201  
 Mahonese, 52  
 Mahourim, 63  
 Maillot, 155  
 Maison Blanche, 128  
 Maison Carrée, 127  
  
 Malta, knights of, 34  
 Maltese, 13, 14, 29, 52  
*Malti*, 216  
 Mansoura, 147  
 Marabout, 198  
 — candles, 108  
 — of Tougourt, 183  
 —, Grand, of M'Sila, 185  
 —, —, of Tougourt, 183  
 Marine, Algerian, 76  
 —, Rue de la, 28  
 —, Turkish Minister of, 29, 75  
 Markets in Algiers, 14, 54; fish, 33; Tizi Ouzou, 133; Tougourt, 181  
 Marriage among Touareg, 239 *et seq.*  
 Marriage among Arabs, 224  
 Marnier, Commandant, 184  
 Marseilles, 10, 23, 36  
 Mathan of Tyre, 65  
 Matifou, Cape, 24  
 Mauretania, 63, 66  
 Mecca, 18  
 Mechouar, 148  
 Mechoui, 224  
 Médéa, 117; college, 58; diligence, 109, 112  
 Medersa in Algiers, 58  
 Mediterranean, 9  
 Megarine, battle of, 184  
 Mehara, 235  
 Mekarra river, 146  
 Mesplé, M. Armand, 38  
 Metlili, 48  
 Mez'r'anna, 73, 74  
 M'hentich, 179  
 Mica in the Sahara, 172  
 Michelet, 135  
 —, Rue, 38, 101  
 Militia, Invincible, 43, 75, 76, 84, 85  
 Millerand, President, 50; visits Algiers, 91 *et seq.*  
 Minepthah, 63  
 Mirabeau, 130  
 Mitidja, 9, 40, 102, 127  
 Mokranis, 156  
 Monkeys in Atlas Mountains, 114  
 Monument to African Dead, 25  
 Morbihan, 62  
 Moors, 63; origin of name, 63  
 Morès, Marquis of, 229

- Moroccans, 37  
 Morocco, 47, 64, 78, 150, 253  
 Moslems, 18  
 Mosque, El Djedid, 27  
 —, El Kebir, 28  
 — in Constantine, 137  
 — in Tlemçen, 148  
 Mostanagem, college in, 58  
 Mouchi-Degla, 179  
 Moulai-Saah, 205  
 Mouzaia, 111  
 Mourning in Touat, 220  
 Mozabite peril, 49  
 Mozabites, 17, 25, 47  
 M'tima, 179  
 Muezzin, 27, 201  
 Mussulmans, 17  
 Mustapha Supérieur, 24, 38, 101  
 M'Zab, 17, 120  
 NAPOLEON I. and Algiers, 77  
 Napoleon III., 10, 201  
 Natives in Algeria, legal position, 49; naturalisation, 50; education, 57  
 Navy of pirate Algiers, 76  
 Navy, French, in Algiers, 52  
*Neçî*, 210  
 Negresses, 19, 162  
 Neo-Mauresque Architecture, 37  
 Niger river, 217  
 Nineteenth Army Corps, 51  
 Nineteenth Dynasty, 63  
 Nirokba, 215  
 Nobles, Touareg, 231  
 Nomad Arabs, 221  
 Nôtre Dame d'Afrique, 21, 23  
 Nôtre Dame de la Garde, 23  
 Nuit, Rue de, 12  
 Numidia, 66  
 Numidians, 10, 63; cavalry, 65  
 OASES, 163, 178  
 Oasis, what is an, 163  
*Oda-bashi*, 76  
 Odjak, 75  
 Officers' Club in Algiers, 75  
 Okba-ben-Mafa, Sidi, invades Barbary, 69; builds Kairouan, 70; killed, 70; tomb, 168  
 Old Algiers, 11 *et seq.*  
 Old Biskra, 166  
 Opera House in Algiers, 34, 35, 55  
 Oran, 19; schools, 57, 58; pirates, 72, 73; captured by Spain, 73; description, 144 *et seq.*  
 Ottoman Porte, 75  
 Ouahbite Abadites, 47  
 Ouargla, 179, 213, 229  
 Ouarsenis, 111  
 Oudja, 150  
 Oued-el-Kebir, 106, 111  
 Oued Rhir, 179  
 Oued-Smar, 128  
 Oukil-el-Hardj, 29  
 Oukhilhardji, 76  
 Ouled, 118  
 — Nails, 19, 118, 119, 165  
 — Sidi Sheikh, 48  
 Oumache, 174, 189, 196  
 Ourida, 110  
 Our Lady of Mercy, Order of, 82  
 Ousfane, 218  
 PANNONIA, 67  
 Parthian Cavalry, 67  
 Pasha, 74  
 Peñon, 29  
 — de Argel, 73  
 Peyronnet, Captain Raymond, on Kabyle population, 125; on future of Algeria, 249 *et seq.*  
 Pharaoh, 63  
 Philippeville, 56, 137; college in, 58; Carthaginian Colony, 65  
 Phœnicians, 63, 64  
 Piracy in Algiers, 83 *et seq.*  
 Pirates, 11, 83 *et seq.*  
 —, Barbary, 72; Oran, 73  
 Pirate Town, 11  
 Place du Gouvernement, 27, 28, 33  
 Population of Algiers under the Pashas, 43; to-day, 50  
 Population of the Berbers, 125  
 Population, Constantine, 139  
 —, Oran, 145  
 Portes-de-Fer, 155  
 Ports, Algiers, 56; other, 56  
 Préfet of Constantine, 186  
 President, French, in Algiers, 93  
 Proconsul, 66  
 Proportion between native and European population, 249  
 RABAT, 72  
 Railways, Algerian, 143  
 Railway journey to Biskra, 153  
 Railway to Tunis, 141  
 Rainfall, 52, 152, 253

- Rain in Algiers, 59  
 Rain in the Atlas Mountains, 116  
 Rain in the Sahara, 151, 177, 188  
 Rameses, 63  
 Ranks in the Invincible Militia, 76  
 Reception of the Governor-General in Tolga, 189 *et seq.*  
 Redemptorist Orders, 82  
 Regency of Algiers, 74 *et seq.*  
 Reghaïa, 129  
 Regnard, poet and slave, 34  
 Rhar, 179  
 Roberts, Chas. G. D., 117  
 Romans in North Africa, 66, 159  
 Roncière, M. Ch. de la, 225  
 Rouïba, 128  
 Rovigo, Rue, 25  
 Ruisseau des Singes, 113; Hôtel du, 113  
 Rummel river, 136 *et seq.*  
 Rusicade, 138  
 Rus-Cuar, 65
- SAHARA**, 162; climate, 209; dunes, 209; flora and fauna, 210; water in, 211; theory of, as a dry sea-bed, 211; how sand is formed, 212; caravan route to the Soudan, 212 *et seq.*; inhabitants, 218; early intercourse with Europe, 225; the Citroën Mission in, 226
- Sahel Hills, 25, 38, 40, 127  
 Sacred Wood, 109  
 Salé, 72  
 Samene river, 214  
 Saoura, 179  
 Sanson Napollon, 83 *et seq.*  
 Sardinia, 67  
 Sarrasins, Rue des, 12  
 Saurin, M., 252  
 Savignac, Sire de, 34  
 Saye, 216  
 Sbahihis, 75  
 Schoolboys, Kabyle, 132  
 Schools in Algeria, 57  
 Sebaou river, 130, 133  
 Sebka of M'Zab, 48  
 Secretaries of State, 75, 84  
 Segokhanes, 244  
 Senate, 10  
 Senegalese, 31, 91  
 Senhadja, 74  
 Sennoussi, 203
- Setif, 156; college in, 58  
 Seventeenth Dynasty, 63  
*Shaoush*, 76  
 Sheikh of a confraternity, 207  
 Sheikh Ben Djellas, 234  
 Shereef, 198  
 Sheurfa, 198  
 Sicilians, 22, 29  
 Sicily, 30  
 Sidi Ahmed ben Yousef, 105  
 — Bel Abbès, 146; college, 58  
 — bou Medine, 149  
 — Ferruch, 78  
 — Madani, 113  
 — Mahommed-ben-Aïssa, 205  
 — Okba, 168  
 — Yakoub, 109  
 Sidon, 64  
 Sionah, 205  
 Siroccos in Algiers, 59  
 Sitifis, 156  
 Slaves in Algiers, 80 *et seq.*  
 Social life in Algiers, 55  
 Soap, Hill of, 24, 34, 37  
 Songhay Empire, 217  
 Souca, 65  
 Souf, 179, 212  
 Souk, 245  
 Souk Ahras, 143  
 Sous-Préfet of Constantine, 187  
 Souss, 70  
 Société de Géographie d'Alger, 38  
 Spahis, 36, 67, 93  
 Spain, 30  
 Spaniards, 13, 29, 52, 250  
 Spanish Moors, 110  
 Square de la République, 34, 99  
 St Augustine, 143  
 St Eugène, 34  
 St Louis, 72  
 St Sophia, 46  
 Stamboul, 13  
 Steeg, M., 51  
 Stoffa, 73  
 Storks in Algeria, 128, 138  
 Street Arabs, 95, 96  
 Sultan Kalassi, 25, 89, 90  
 Summer Palace, 39, 93, 94  
 Superstitions of Arabs, 225  
 Superstitions of Touareg, 242
- TABALBALET**, 214  
 Tabarka, 66  
 Tailors Street, 16

- Taitog, 247  
 Takammist, 245  
 Takarbast, 245  
 Tala, 184  
 Tanezrouft, 227  
 Tangiers, 65, 66  
 Tar, 16  
 Targa, 230  
 Targui, 230, 236  
 Tarik-Ibn-Ziad, 70  
 Tassili des Adjers, 59  
*Tazia*, 236  
 Teboul, 16  
 Tell, 151 *et passim*.  
 Temassine, 213  
 Thaddert, 124  
 Thagaste, 143  
 Théâtre, Municipal, 34  
 Thieves' Bazaar, 21  
 Thracian horsemen, 67  
 Tidikelt, 179, 219, 235  
 Tidjania, 206, 213  
 Tiedjelmoust, 245  
 Tifinar, 245  
 Tiharet, 47  
 Timassanine, 214  
 Timbuctoo, 217  
 Timdje, 216  
 Timgad, 67, 159  
 Tingué, 216  
 Tingis, 65  
 Tingitanian Mauretania, 66  
 Tioussé, 231  
 Tiout, 207  
 Tirailleurs Indigènes, 18, 21, 91  
 Tit, battle of, 230  
 Tizi Ouzou, 130 *et seq.*  
 Tlemçen, women of, 45; college, 58, description, 147 *et seq.*  
 Tobol, 233  
 Toddy, 178  
 Tolga, 189 *et seq.*  
 Tomboctou, Rue de, 12  
 Touareg. Intercourse with explorers, 228; conquest of, 230; name, 230; manners and customs, 231; tribes, 232; *tobol*, *amr'ar* and *amenokal*, 233; trading, 234; weapons, 235; women, 237; marriage, 239; superstitions, 243; dress, 245; the veil, 246  
 Touat, 218, 235  
 Tougourt, 180 *et seq.*, 212  
 Touffik, 124  
 Trajan's Arch, Timgad, 159  
 Tramcars in Algiers, 28  
 Transatlantic liners, 31, 109  
 Transport in the Sahara, 175  
 Trans Saharan Railway, 226, 254  
 Tribute to Algiers from European nations, 76, 77  
 Tunis, 16, 65; French expeditions against, 72, 73  
 Tunisia, Phœnician colonies, 65; Roman ruins, 66; a Roman province, 66; Arabs invade, 69; French Protectorate, 78  
 Turcos, 18  
 Tusca, 66  
 Tyre, 64  
 UNIVERSITY of Algiers, 38, 58  
 VAMPIRES, 242  
 Vandals, 10, 68, 69  
 Viceroy of Algiers, 75  
 Victoire, Rue de la, 21, 22  
 —, Boulevard, 21  
 Voiron, Colonne, 39  
 —, General, 39  
 WATCHERS of the Air, 187  
 Weavers, desert, 181  
 Well, artesian, in Tougourt, 182  
 White City of Algiers, 26  
 Wild boars in Algeria, 141  
 Winter Palace, 26  
 Women, dress of, in Algiers, 44; among Touareg, 246; position of, among Kabyles, 124; among nomad Arabs, 224; among Touareg, 236 *et seq.*  
 XIMENES, Cardinal, 73  
 YAKOUB, 47  
 Young Algerian Party, 50  
 Yoldash, 76  
 ZAB, 47, 168  
 Zaccar, 111  
 Zekat, 244  
 Zenetes, 47  
 Ziban, 168  
 Zigomar, 114  
 Zmala, Zmali, 198  
 Zmoul, 198  
 Zouaves, 21, 36, 91, 112  
 Zousfana, 179









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