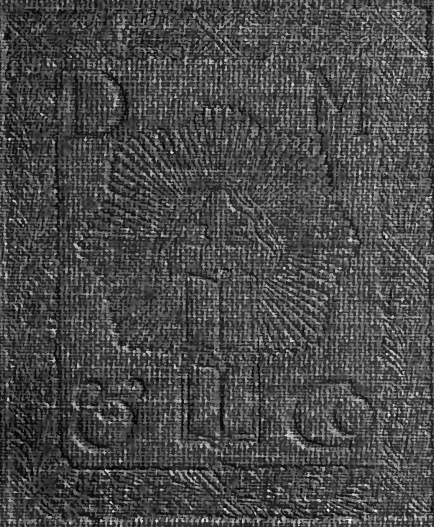
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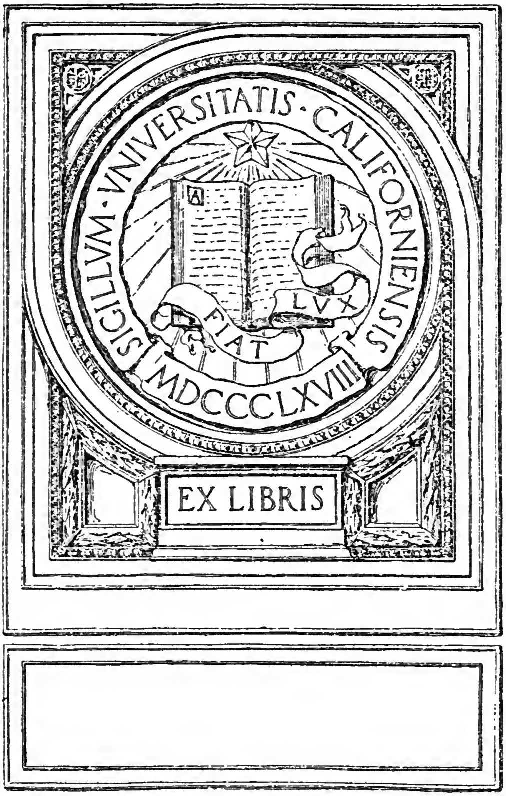

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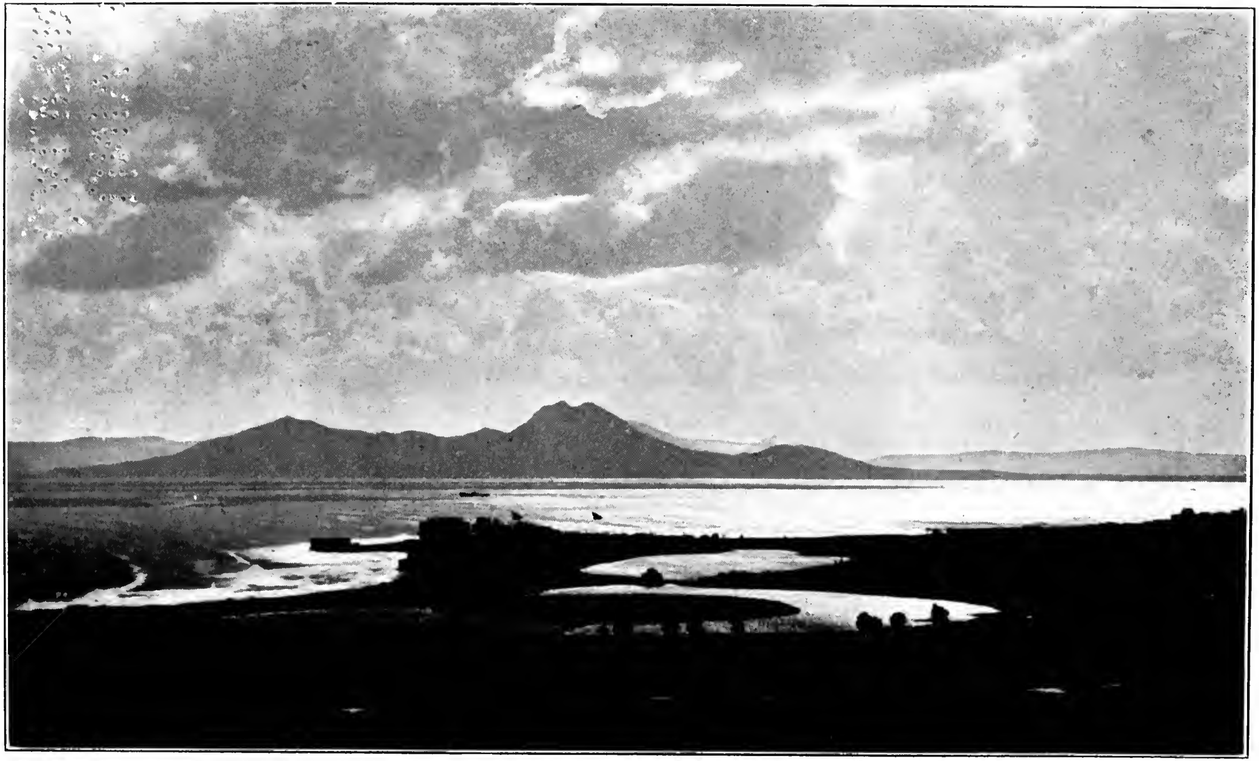

CARTHAGE: THE ANCIENT HARBOURS

The Mountain of Bou Kornein in the background

# BARBARY

## THE ROMANCE OF THE NEAREST EAST

BY

A. MACCALLUM SCOTT, M.P.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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1921

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TO

MY WIFE

500244

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# PREFACE

ONE thought runs through every chapter of this book. It is the Eternal Conflict, through all the ages, between Europe and Africa, between the organised conquering energy of Europe and the invincible passive resistance of Africa.

The Barbary States, or the Maghreb, are that portion of North Africa which lies between the Syrtes and the Atlantic, the Sahara and the Mediterranean. It is a high plateau, supported by the Atlas Mountains, and with fertile valleys and plains along the Mediterranean shore. It is almost European in its climate and in its vegetation, and ethnologists maintain that the indigenous native stock, the Berbers, are a branch of that same Mediterranean race which is one of the main sources from which the population of Europe is derived.

For five centuries the Romans laboured to Europeanise this country. For centuries it seemed that they had been completely successful. The standardised Roman civilisation, the Roman arts and science, and the Roman Church were supreme in Africa. They burgeoned and blossomed, but they struck no roots. Almost at one blow they were utterly exterminated by the Mohammedan invasion. In our own generation, amid the colossal skeletons of Roman civilisation, France has essayed the task of reclaiming this lost outpost of Europe. Consciously and deliberately, with the clear logic of the French mind and will, she has set out to accomplish the task of Rome by the methods of Rome—the Europeanising of Barbary.

And in the very word "Barbary" there is conveyed a hint of the futility of the task. Barbary! There is in Africa something alien to Europe—something intractable, something "barbaric," something that cannot permanently be brought within the European pale. In the chapter on "The Task of France," I end with this reflection:—

"Why should the Roman tradition have survived the Mohammedan domination in Spain and not in Algeria? It is the sun which claims Africa as its own. The great tropic heart of Africa can never be Europeanised. Africa is the land of the camel, the palm, the cactus, the desert, the mirage, the Koran. You cannot teach the palm to branch like an oak. It is true that Spain is in climatic respects almost identical with Morocco and Algeria; but the heart from which it draws its blood is European. Its reservoirs lie not in the South but in the North.

"Europe has once more laid hold of Africa as she has laid hold of Asia at intervals since the first beginnings of history. She has conquered, she has taken possession, but in the end she has always recoiled. To conquer is one thing, to assimilate is quite another. The assimilator may be assimilated. The struggle is not merely a physical one but a spiritual one. The soul of the conqueror is in danger. Western Europe was saved from being Byzantinised by being cut off from Africa and Asia. In spite of our great possessions in Asia and Africa, the salt estranging sea has saved us so far. We sup with a long spoon with the East and the South. But France lies only a few hours' sail from the New France which she is endeavouring to create in Africa. Her success has been marvellous. Africa has responded to the stimulus of stronger will and character. But—but we have yet to see whether there will be any reflex action."

This is the thought which continually besets me as I travel South through the changing cities —London, Paris, Avignon, Marseilles, to Algiers. This is the thought which obtrudes when I first sight, across the Mediterranean, the mountains of Africa; as I listen to the Moorish music or watch the Moorish dancers, and the orgies of the dervishes who pierce their flesh with swords; as I pass through the *Grande Mosquée* built of the wreckage of Rome; as I wander through the ruined Roman cities; as I trace on the Roman frontier the same plan that can be traced along the walls of Hadrian and Antonine in Britain; as I look down from the mountains upon the sandstorms sweeping across the Sahara; as I follow the footsteps of the Phœnicians, and of that older race which has left us Stonehenge; as I climb the Mountain of Two Horns, the High Place whereon stood the Altar of Baal; as I stand by the tomb of the Priest of Baal and listen to the bells pealing from the great Cathedral with which Cardinal Lavigerie has crowned the Bursa of Carthage;

as I feel the spell of the Old Gods and look back into the pit from which we have been dug.

In the buried past and in the thronging present I have tried to divine the soul of this Debatable Land. Mr. Wm. Miller of Algiers has been most helpful. I have learned from others whom I met upon the way, from the Wandering Englishman who might have been Browning's Waring, from the antiquary who was deciphering the story of the Dolmens, from the Glasgow artist who knew the mysteries of the Souks, from the perfume seller of Tunis, and from others too numerous to specify. Nor have I been neglectful of books, and in separate chapters I have indicated my debt to Mr. Belloc, Mr. Hichens, and Flaubert. The works of reference which I have consulted may be found in any bibliography of North Africa, but I would specially mention "Roman Africa" by Gaston Boissier, and "Roman Africa" by Alexander Graham.

1st October, 1921.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

# BARBARY

## CHAPTER I

## THE FIVE TOWNS

FROM London to Algiers is but a journey across France. It can be accomplished with comfort and ease in three days. In these short swallow-flights one passes from frost and fog to wreaths of almond blossom and golden fountains of mimosa bathed in brilliant sunshine. But there is a more remarkable transformation during this short journey. It is almost as if one were passing through Italy, and through the Levant, to the land of the Thousand and One Nights. The stages present sharply marked contrasts. The different belts of civilisation do not gradually merge into one another, but are shut off by revolving doors: Paris is of the North, Avignon is a Roman city, Marseilles is a Levantine seaport, Algiers might be Bagdad.

The spirit of Paris, though it differs in many vital respects from the spirit of London, agrees with it in this, that it is best expressed in Gothic architecture. It is the spirit which broke up the ancient Empire of Rome and built up Feudalism from its ruins; which created the Reformation in England and the Revolution in France;

which invented the representative system as the machinery of government for democracy.

Westminster Abbey in London and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris are the most eloquent expressions of the spirit of the two nations. The English cathedral has grown with the nation, and it has something of the irregularity, the freedom, the unconventionality of a natural growth. The French cathedral is more passionately logical. The English built in order to get a church for their worship. The French were quite as much concerned to exemplify a principle of architecture.

Behold this glorious church of Notre Dame. It was built at a time when the new principle of building construction which we know as " Gothic " had at last, after several generations of experimental pioneering, been fully grasped. The architect realised that the buttress was the key to the whole problem—that Gothic was simply a skeleton framework of buttresses supporting a roof, with the interstices between them walled up with stone or glass. This was the secret which enabled the Gothic architect to build a cathedral loftier, and wider, and lighter than any of his predecessors. He gloried in the idea, and he said : " I will build a great church which will proclaim to all the world that the buttress is the essence of the whole structure."

Notre Dame represents the apotheosis of the buttress. The architect, having grasped the principle, has reached the limit of its structural achievement by the most simple, direct, and logical means. The glow of admiration and of wonder at those beautiful forms springing direct

ALGIERS: FROM THE HARBOUR

out of the heart of Nature, like the parabola of the flight of a stone, was still so fresh that he saw no need to superimpose upon them any decorative elaboration that would distract attention from their essential purpose, which was that of supporting a roof of stone.

The building rises in tiers and terraces, one above another; first the row of little buttress chapels, then the outer aisle, then the inner aisle with the triforium gallery above it, then the central nave with its row of clerestory windows and its ridge vault of stone. It is to support this vault that the long, delicate arches of stone have been thrust out, like reaching arms from the massive shoulders of the main buttresses below, spanning everything else, defying distance and the law of gravity.

It is a triumph of logic and reason, a typical product of the Northern mind, adventurous, challenging, questioning, attacking its problems with a resolute concentration of purpose.

In Avignon we step into another world. It was my first sight of the South. Bright sun, a blue sky, and dry, bracing, exhilarating air—that is Avignon of to-day. The whole aspect of the town is Roman. On one side of the river the towering bulk of the Palace of the Popes dominates everything. It seems invincible from its sheer dead weight. Across the river, beyond the new suburb that is growing up, a vast mediæval fortress, capable of sheltering an army, crowns the hill. The battlemented city walls stretch unbroken along the river side.

Our hotel was the ancient palace of a noble family. White walls, low-pitched, red-tiled roofs, narrow streets, the olive trees, the cypresses, the vines trained to form a trellis over doors and windows—they all fitted into a picture that showed no break with the Middle Ages. The stamp of eternity was on everything. Avignon still lies under the shadow of Rome.

If Avignon is Roman, Marseilles is Byzantine. It belongs to the Levantine end of the Mediterranean, where the races of three continents blend—a hybrid city. Its appearance is curiously non-European. The great cathedral which raises its cluster of domes near the harbour, and the church of Notre Dame du Garde which crowns a solitary crag like a pinnacle, are both modern erections, but they are purely Byzantine in style. They speak of a fatalism that has nothing in common with the eager questioning of Gothic. In the streets the swarthy races of Asia and Africa jostle Europe, and the turban and red fez are constantly to be seen. Marseilles is one with Tyre and Sidon. The Phœnicians and the Saracens have left indelible traces. It is still Europe's great gateway to the East.

Algiers is almost wholly Oriental. The town is like a veiled woman from the harem wearing a pair of high-heeled Parisian shoes. The quarter round the harbour is French, with spacious boulevards, gay Parisian shops, open-air cafés, and electric cars. But the old town, which climbs up the steep hill-side, terrace by terrace, to the kasbah, or fortress, is as Oriental as Bagdad.

It is a secret land. The women are veiled, and the soul of this people is veiled also. The two races, of Europe and of the Orient, mingle in the street and in the market-place. In fez and turban, in Moorish or Arab dress, with curious European adaptations, the native toils contemplatively and traffics philosophically, undisturbed by all the mechanical ingenuity of Western and Northern civilisation. The two streams flow placidly in the same channel, touching each other, but never mingling. The Moorish or Arab soul looks out upon an alien world through narrow loop-hole windows like the eyes of the women peering out through the slit between the veil and the haik.

The Arab town is almost incredible to a European. Streets there are none. It is difficult to find a word sufficiently diminutive to express these precipitous passages of communication which burrow between and beneath the houses. "Alley" and "lane" are words of far too spacious an import. These burrows seem hardly human to our Northern eyes. A rabbit warren and the subterranean galleries of an ants' nest are the closest similes that suggest themselves.

No wheeled vehicle can penetrate this labyrinth—no horse or even mule. Tiny donkeys with panniers are the beasts of burden, and when one meets them climbing nimbly up the cobbled steps one must stand aside flat to the wall to let them pass in Indian file. A narrow streak of sky is sometimes visible far overhead, through a crack in the shell of the human hive.

The Moorish house is typical of the secret life of the people. The blank walls which it turns to the street reveal nothing. There is no attempt at decoration. The plain, plastered, whitewashed walls are unrelieved by windows save, perhaps, by a narrow slit like a loop-hole. The doorway is severely simple, save, perhaps, for a narrow band of tiles or a moulded plaster pattern round it. There is no " front," no " façade," no portico, no loggia, none of that ostentation and public display in which Europe delights.

But these Moorish houses are like a coat of sackcloth with a rainbow-coloured, silken lining. They expose their back to the world, but their real front is turned within. Each house is built round a central courtyard open to the air and to the sun. A fountain trickles dreamily in the midst. Each of the four sides consists of a double row of arcades arched in the Moorish fashion, the upper arcade having a balcony with a parapet of intricate arabesque pattern. The walls are gay with coloured tiles. Here with the world shut out is decoration, here is colour, here is the domestic life which no outsider may see. Our civilisation beats around these walls like surf upon the barrier reef of a coral island.

ALGIERS: RUE DE LA KASBAH
A street in the Native Quarter

## CHAPTER II

# ICED SUNSHINE

IN January, three days' journey from London, we are in the garden of the Hesperides. It is the land of perpetual summer and sunshine. The seasons are all confused. Golden oranges and lemons load the branches of the trees, and on the same bough the blossom is being put forth for next season's crop.

Along the Riviera, on the *Côte d'Azur*, it is summer also; but the weather is variable. When the Mistral blows a shiver runs through all the gay holiday people. But here, on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, the Mistral is unknown. Sometimes a cloud passes over the sky and a tropic rain bursts upon the thirsty earth; then the whole land smiles and looks up like a giant refreshed. But mostly Algiers basks in sunshine, stretched out upon the steep hillside, garlanded with groves of orange, lemon, palm, olive, cypress, and pine, festooned with roses, geraniums, clematis, mimosa, and bougainvillæa, and dipping her unsandalled feet in the clear waters of her sheltered bay.

We crossed the Mediterranean in halcyon weather, and in the heat of the afternoon we sighted, very faint and almost like clouds touched by the sun, the snow-capped range of the Djurdjura Mountains. Gradually they took shape through the vapour which clouded the horizon, sharply cut, deeply serrated, with snow-filled gorges clearly defined, like a range of Alps—ominous and mysterious mountains like the giant guardians of some secret—the bastions of Africa. A hundred miles to the South stretches another range, the frosty Atlas, shutting off the desert like a wall, and on the high table-land between them winter reigns, winter high above the smiling sun-kissed coast. Has Europe ever really conquered the land which lies beyond that barrier ? Will it ever make it other than an implacable foe ? There is in Africa something wild and untamed—vast as a Djinn who has been shut up by a magician in a bottle for a thousand years but who will emerge again when the Fates decree.

Mustapha Supérieur is the garden—or orchard—suburb of Algiers. It lies along the steep hill-side to the South, its domed palaces and arcaded villas shining like snowy nymphs among the woods of a hundred little glens, or gills, or *ravins*. In the wilder parts there are steep cliffs and unpassable hedges of cactus. No road can go straight in this Parnassus. The Rue de Telemly, which follows the line of the ancient Aqueduct, is nearly level, but in order to follow the contour of the hill-side it has to take a multitude of " hair-pin " bends. The Chemin-Laperlier, which climbs up the hill, winds about among the houses, loop above loop, like the trail of an aeroplane doing stunts. Hearing a motor-car clattering beside you, you look round apprehensively and see it skimming along many feet below on the other side of an orange grove. Its noise dies away and you have forgotten about it, when suddenly, honk! honk! it rushes past you from behind, and disappears round the bend in front. Hark! there it is again, not returning, but just above you, separated from you by another garden.

In the first week of January the sky is an unclouded blue, paling to turquoise towards the horizon. The sun shines brilliantly and strongly, too bright to look towards, and dazzling even by the light reflected from the hill-side. This plenitude of clear, radiant light is a new experience to Northern eyes. It is delightful to sit and bask in the sun, to soak in the warmth and light, amid a hundred shades of green; for in spite of the beating sun there is a cool caress in the air, a tinkle of ice in the wine-glass, just a faint suggestion of the snows of Atlas far to the South. The shadows can almost be felt like a cool leaf on the cheek. It is a tonic air.

Behind Algiers a great plain, the Mitidja, stretches inland and Westwards. A ridge of small hills, or downs, cuts it off from the sea. On the other side of it the Djurdjura Mountains and other ranges of the Tell seem to rise like a wall, sheer and precipitous. Down this wide, Westward-reaching valley, the splendour of sunset comes pouring like a flood. The terrace of the golf club beyond the eucalyptus wood, on the brow of a Southward-looking hill, is the best vantage point from which to view this pageant.

As we sat there and watched the sun dipping behind the near Western horizon, the whole landscape was invaded by an opalescent radiance. A silhouette of trees and shrubs with an occasional domed roof stood out in startling relief against the kindling sky. Southwards and Eastwards the near ridge fell clear away, revealing the plain. The gulf was filled with a dim rosy light streaming East. The feet of the mountains were lost in this luminous vapour, but as they rose out of it the rosy glow was gradually transmuted into purple, deep and pure in tone, out of which the snows of the upper valleys shone vividly. The jagged line of peaks pierced the sky in which, behind the clouds, some vast celestial conflagration was spreading. Molten gold burst and splashed through the shattered walls of the crucible of clouds. Spears and flambeaux of light were tossed far into the firmament. As the sun disappeared the colours became more splendid. The gold flushed to rose, and the rose to scarlet, and the higher clouds were all edged with crimson. The gulf of the plain was now filled with gradually darkening but still luminous purple, and the opalescence was rising higher and higher up the mountain sides till finally it passed from their peaks into the sky. The shades deepened rapidly, the light faded, the celestial fire was quenched. The African night swiftly swept across the landscape like a shadow. The vision was gone.

The fabled Isle of the Lotus Eaters has been identified with Djerba, some hundreds of miles further along the coast, beyond Carthage. The ancient Greek mariners, who before the dawn of history ventured beyond the rim of their world, knew the delights of this coast, and the epic tales of Ulysses and Æneas are but echoes of their reports. There the Argonauts ate of the lotus, the date, the sweet fruit of the palm which is produced in abundance without any labour of man. There they found a land where it was always afternoon and where life passed like a dream. Algiers in winter is a lotus land which the modern Argonauts may visit without fear of being enervated. But for the palms and the Arabs one could almost believe it was Europe—Europe of the brief Northern summer of the high latitudes. It is iced sunshine.

## CHAPTER III

# FÊTE MAURESQUE

THE *Grande Fête Mauresque* was held for one night only at the *Nouveau Théâtre*, Algiers, and among the promised attractions were Arab music, Moorish, Ouled Naïls, and Kabyle dances, and a performance by fakirs, who would thrust needles through the tongue, cheeks, and throat, drive a nail into the head, pierce the belly with a dagger, pass their hands through fire, slash themselves with a sword, and stand with the naked feet upon the sharp edge of a sword.

The theatre was not in the fashionable part of the town, and the dearest seats were six and a half francs each. It would seem, therefore, that the fête was not designed for what in London we should call a West-end audience. There had been a run on the tickets and we were just in time, on the previous day, to secure the last two seats in not a very good position. When the curtain rose the house was jammed absolutely tight full, even as regards standing room. The heat was stifling, the atmosphere was fœtid, and the whole place throbbed with suppressed excitement. A sprinkling of tourists, French and English, had been attracted by curiosity, but the mass of the audience were obviously the native product of the town—Arabs or Moors, Jews in large numbers, and acclimatised French, Italians, and Spaniards. It was an audience of small shop-keepers, tradesmen, mechanics, shop-boys and shop-girls, and representatives of all the mysterious middle trades, hangers-on, loafers, and touts which flourish in the East. It hummed.

The performance was a dreary and tenth-rate thing. The music was interesting, but a very little of it went a long way. The dancing was eccentric, and stimulating chiefly to the risible faculties. The fakirs were beastly and revolting. And yet the vast audience were moved to increasing transports of enthusiasm. They stamped with their feet on the rare occasions when the music grew quicker; they joined with hilarity in the nasal refrain which was repeated at frequent intervals; they audibly sucked in their breath with admiration when the dancers came forward; they roared with applause when they bowed their adieux; and they watched with breathless excitement the sordid atrocities of the fakirs.

A London audience of a similar class would have hooted the whole performance off the stage. Cockney taste may be far from refined, it may be vulgar, it may sometimes be gross; but it is never merely vacuous, or merely monotonously rhythmical, or merely gruesome. There is always, in a popular entertainment in London, an intellectual interest of a sort, a broad humour, a play of wit, a vivid portrayal of character, a rude moral. It is always stimulating. But in the whole of this African performance no trace of intellectual interest could be detected, at least by Northern eyes. It was cataleptic. One felt as if one were under the influence of some hateful drug.

Not that there was any element of indecent nudity in the performance. Madame Yamina's troupe of female musicians and chanters, who occupied one side of the stage, were well stricken in years, and almost as closely veiled as if they had come direct from a harem. They sat stolidly on their low stools, scraping at their fiddles, picking at their guitars, or thrumming at their tambourines and tom-toms, and humming their monotonous nasal refrain, like a subdued drone of bagpipes, with an air of the most complete indifference. Not an ankle was to be seen. One member of the troupe was dressed in what seemed to be an ancient Victorian blue silk dress, with a turban of the same colour. She squinted horribly, but she gave more sign of enjoyment than any of the others. Madame Yamina, herself, the leader of the troupe, was a determined-looking matron of some fifteen stone, probably a Jewess, and, therefore, unveiled. She was obviously a favourite with the crowd. The male members of the troupe were dressed in their shabby, European, every-day clothes, but, with the exception of the leader, a burly, elderly Frenchman, they all wore the Arab fez. One with protruding white teeth, like *L'Homme Qui Rit*, wore a fixed grin as if his lips had been cut away. None of the violinists played in the European fashion, but, holding the instrument at arm's length on the left knee, they sawed away at it listlessly with the right hand. No wonder men are fatalists who have to listen to this monotonous, hypnotic drone.

The dancing was equally un-European. No

twinkling toes. No display of agility. No tossing of shapely limbs. Nothing of the spirit of Terpsichore. The dancer, enveloped from neck to ankle in a loose jacket and voluminous, baggy trousers of gaily coloured and spangled silk, hobbled twitteringly on her feet, imparting a continuous wiggle-woggle to the lower part of her body. She shook like a jelly-bag in violent agitation. Her face was absolutely expressionless, but she pirouetted slowly, advanced and retired from the Arab pipers who accompanied her, and very languidly waved a coloured kerchief in each hand. Baya, in her " Mauresque " dance, was plump and placid. Fatmah, of the Ouled Naïls, looked more savage and barbaric. If the performance were meant to be indecently suggestive, it was a failure so far as the European visitors were concerned, for most of them merely laughed at the ludicrous spectacle. A male Kabyle dancer, however, who gave what seemed intended for a parody of the two previous dancers, was more violent in his abandon, and provoked a corresponding degree of applause.

Of the performance of the Fakirs it can only be said that for those who like that kind of thing it was just the kind of thing they would like. Into the Spanish bull-fight there enters a large degree of skill and sporting hazard, but there was no redeeming feature in this orgy of self-torture. Yet the spectacle of an aged ragamuffin, with his face bristling like a porcupine with great pack-sheet needles and hat-pins, which transfixed his cheeks, tongue, and throat, was hailed with a chorus of appreciation. Some larrikins, who had responded to the invitation to sit on the stage to guarantee to the genuineness of the feats, beamed with exuberant delight at each new bestiality; but the visitor requires a strong stomach to sit through the performance. To emerge into the cool air and the African night was like a deliverance of the soul.

Africa, from the Desert to the Mediterranean, is studded with the ruins of numerous Roman cities. They are the mute witnesses of a mighty empire, of a resplendent civilisation, and of a great Church sanctified by the blood of martyrs. The deluge passed over them and swept everything away save these dead stones. To-day France, the inheritor of a Roman tradition, has come again in the footsteps of the Romans. Will her work be more enduring? Will she succeed where Rome failed? She has been less than a century at work, but Rome was five centuries.

In all these ruined Roman cities the most conspicuous feature is generally the Amphitheatre, capable of seating ten, twenty, thirty, even fifty thousand spectators. What went the people out for to see—Greek tragedy—Latin plays—or beast-fights and slaughter? The native stock has changed little in the past two thousand years. They have preserved their separate language, their separate habit of life, their separate temperament, and they have armed themselves with a religion which seems impregnable to the attack of Christianity. The Desert, the sun, the climate, preserve the type, and there is a steady process of assimilation of the European. In three generations the French Colonists become Africans rather than Frenchmen. The chains of law and custom and tradition still hold, but in some subtle way they are not Europeans. The audience which packed the *Nouveau Théâtre* at this *Fête Mauresque* was not European. Africa with its black heart claims them.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE LOST CITY

CHERCHEL is a tiny Arab and French town, with a good harbour, about seventy miles West of Algiers. It is built upon the site of the ancient city of Cæsarea, the Athens of the West, a city where once the descendants of the Ptolemies and the Pharaohs reigned amid a brilliant court, surrounded by all the luxuries and refinements of Roman and Greek civilisation. The modern town occupies only about one tenth part of the ancient site. The splendour has vanished; only the ruins of the Baths, of the Amphitheatre, of the Circus, of some villas, of the City Walls, and of the Aqueduct, attest its former existence. For thirteen centuries the ruins have served as a quarry for Arab builders. The fairest statues have been shattered by fanatics; the exquisite marbles and pillars, their place of origin forgotten, now adorn the mosques and Moorish palaces of North Africa; and the richest finds of modern antiquaries have been removed to Paris and Algiers. But some beautiful green pillars may still be seen in the Military Hospital, which was formerly the Grand Mosque, and in the local museum there have been collected sufficient statues, sculptured fragments, and mosaics to prove that this was one of the great artistic centres of the Ancient World.

Cæsarea, to give it once more the name of pride which it bore for five centuries, was a city on the frontiers of civilisation, a city of the far West. It marked, in its early days, the extreme limit of Roman advance into the wilds of Western Africa. Beyond were the savage Mauri, matchless horsemen, who could always find a refuge in the impregnable valleys and passes of the Atlas. The city grew with all the mushroom rapidity of an American pioneer town. Like San Francisco it occupied a site of great natural beauty, it had an excellent harbour, it tapped the trade of a rich and fruitful hinterland, and it increased in wealth amazingly. Fortune gave it for its earliest rulers, a generation before the Christian era, an enlightened King and Queen, who not merely inherited the noblest blood in Africa and Europe, but who, by strange chance, had been trained in the noblest traditions of Roman and Greek art and letters. Craftsmen and schoolmen, artists and philosophers were attracted to the new metropolis, and received there no lack of encouragement and patronage. For five centuries its lamp burned brightly, and then suddenly it was extinguished.

Behind the rocky promontory of Algiers, from the low sandy shore of its bay, there stretches inland and Westwards the great plain of the Mitidja. It is separated from the sea by a narrow belt of low hills, one might almost call them downs. This rich alluvial land has afforded one of the first and best fields for French colonisation and agricultural development. It produces grapes, figs, oranges, lemons, almonds, vegetables of all kinds, and cereals in great abundance. For centuries before the Roman name was known here its fertility was renowned. The Phœnicians founded their trading stations along the coast, at Rusguniæ (near Cape Matifou), at Icosium (Algiers), at Tipasa, and at Jol, which was the still more ancient name of Cherchel and Cæsarea.

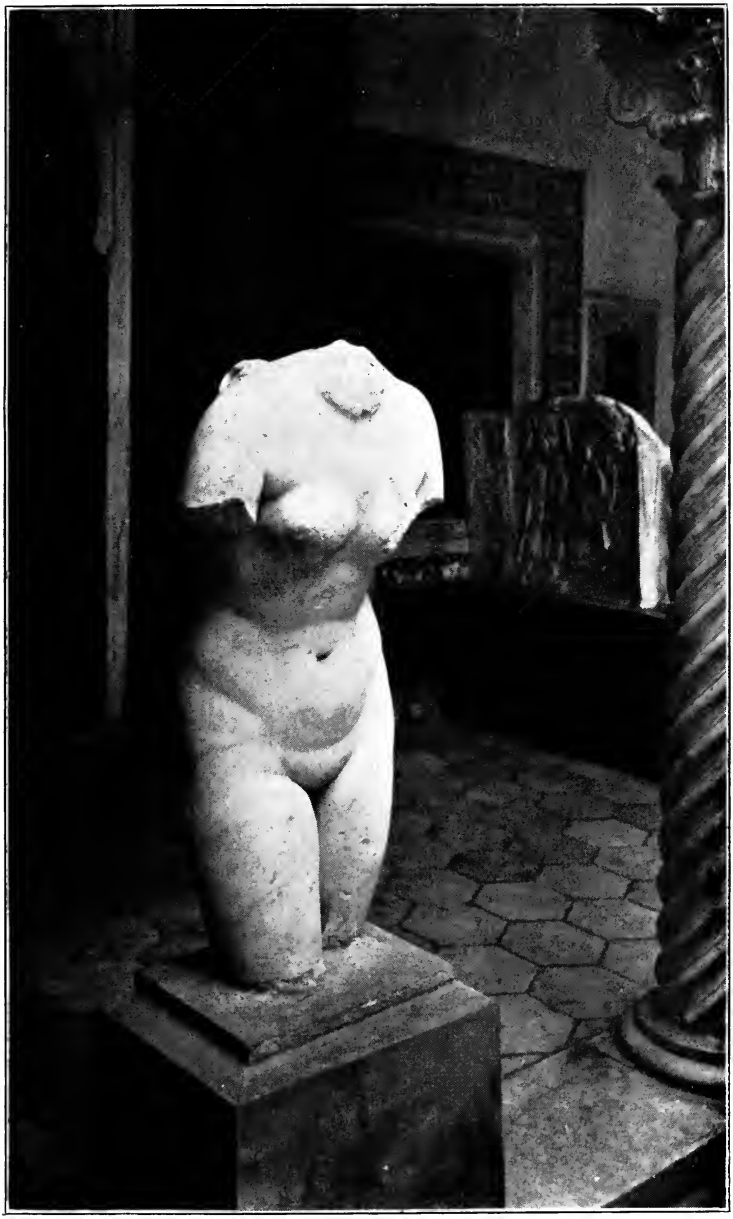
Algiers lies at the Eastern extremity and natural outlet of the Mitidja Plain; but the character of the plain determined that Cæsarea, at the Western extremity, rather than Algiers, should become the capital in Roman times. The lower part of the plain, towards Algiers, was marshy and infested with malaria. The upper part, towards the West, was well drained and healthy, and there was easy communication through the low hills to the harbour of Cæsarea. Algiers had the better harbour, and under the Arabs it became the chief port; but this was due to extraneous causes. Its prosperity was based not upon the agricultural wealth of the Mitidja, whose lower levels were still infested with malaria, but upon the piracy of its Corsair fleet, which required above everything the strongest and most sheltered harbour. The French have drained the marshes and banished the fevers, and the first-class harbour of Algiers has now drawn all the trade of the country to itself. The stately Cæsarea conceals its identity in the village of Cherchel.

After the Romans had destroyed Carthage they were forced, in spite of themselves, by the logic of events, in order to gain security on their frontiers, to advance ever further and further into the interior and Westward along the coast. Their policy was at first one of buffer states and protectorates, like the Native States of India. They had no desire to penetrate into the remote recesses of the Atlas Mountains, inhabited by wild tribes whose poverty was their protection. But these nomads were awkward neighbours, well skilled in the practices of Rob Roy. If they were not to be subdued by Rome the buffer state was necessary as a protection for the rich Roman farms and villages and cities. Even that system had its dangers. The native dynasty, as it waxed strong and secure, was apt to pursue a policy of its own. In time of civil strife in Rome it was tempted to throw its alien strength into the scales in favour of one faction. The Imperial Power gradually absorbed the more settled portions of the country, erecting them into Roman provinces, and pushing the buffer state ever further West.

The great native dynasty of Numidia at the commencement of the Roman occupation of Africa was that of Masinissa, the Berber Chief whose romantic career, first as the enemy and then as the ally of Rome in her struggle with Carthage, won for him the crown of Numidia, with his capital at the great rock fortress of Cirta or Constantine. His grandson, Jugurtha, an ambitious and able prince, usurped the throne and led a revolt against Rome. The story of his long struggle and final defeat has been told in great detail by Sallust. His great-grandson, Juba I, who succeeded Jugurtha, took the side of Pompey in the civil war. Cæsar in person led the campaign against him and inflicted upon him, at Thapsus, so crushing a defeat that, rather than be taken captive to grace a Roman triumph, the royal fugitive committed suicide. Then fate and romance and the subtle policy of Augustus conspired to produce one of the most interesting chapters in African history.

Juba's infant son, the second Juba, fell into the hands of Cæsar and was taken by him to Rome. After he had been borne through the streets in the train of Cæsar's triumph the problem arose of what to do with the royal child. He was adopted by Octavia, the wife of Antony, one of the noblest and most generous-hearted of Roman matrons. This great and gracious lady had also adopted the child, a little girl, whom her rival in her husband's affections, the ill-fated Cleopatra, had borne to Antony, and who was without a protector. The two children were reared together in the atmosphere of the Roman Court, which had not yet been corrupted, and under the influence of a good woman. All that was best in Greek and Roman art and letters was brought to bear upon their education. He was of the blood royal of Numidia, a Moor, as swarthy as Othello. She had in her veins the blood of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies. Her mother had named her after the Moon Goddess, Selene Cleopatra.

Augustus had to settle his African policy. The Eastern territory of which Cirta, the old Numidian capital, was the centre, was absorbed into the Roman Empire, but he still felt the need of a buffer state further West. He marked off new limits for the State of Numidia, with its



THE VENUS OF CHERCHEL
Algiers Museum

capital at Cæsarea. A prince was at hand, in the person of Juba II, a youth of bright intellect, trained in the best traditions of Rome. And then there was the fair daughter of Egypt with whom he had been brought up. It occurred to Augustus as a master stroke of policy to marry these two and to give them the new Kingdom to govern. And thus, twenty-six years before Christ, commenced the long and happy reign of Juba and Selene.

With the aid of Roman arms and Roman discipline order was preserved among the Berber tribes. The rich plains and valleys on the coast were cultivated. Trade poured into the harbour. Wealth accumulated with marvellous rapidity, and a city of palaces and temples began to spread out around the harbour. It seemed that a new Carthage was growing up which might become the sovereign city of the Western Mediterranean, a Carthage in which the baleful influence of the Phœnicians had disappeared. Juba and Selene were determined that the inspiration of their capital should be Greek and Roman, and it was a purely European city that grew up. One or two fragments which the spade of the excavator has revealed, show that Selene had not forgotten the ancient and mystic land of her birth or the worship of Isis, but the unmistakable impress of Greece, the nobility, the calm, the perfection of beauty, is found everywhere. Of the Venus of Cherchel, which now, with all its mutilations, is the chief glory of the Algiers Museum, Monceaux has said that " by its plastic elegance it bears comparison to the Venus de Medici." In the little Museum at Cherchel there may be seen numerous other statues in bronze or marble, copies made to the order of Juba and Selene of originals belonging to the golden age of Greek Art, the age of Phidias and Praxiteles. The creative spirit had departed, or could not be evoked to order, but the love of beauty and the joy in exquisite form remained. The artists imported from Greece were copyists and imitators, but they copied the best models, and in the numerous statues of Athena, Diana, Venus, Hercules, Æsculapius, Pan, Bacchus, and other classic subjects, we may still see reflected the glory that was Greece.

For forty-five years Juba reigned. Twenty years before his death there was born into the world, in a stable at Bethlehem, a Babe whose name became mightier than Rome, whose Gospel has survived the ruin of Empires, and whose faith to-day is the faith of the whole European race wherever it is to be found. One curious link there is between Cæsarea and Palestine. The daughter of Selene, Drusilla, became the wife of that Felix, Governor of Judea, who trembled before the preaching of Paul, and said, " Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Juba was succeeded by his son Ptolemy. Two portrait busts in marble have been preserved of this grandson of Antony and Cleopatra. They were discovered, one at Cherchel, the other at Hammam R'ira, and are now to be seen in Paris among the treasures of the Louvre. They show him, a young man, with a fillet across his curling hair, handsome to look upon, with distinct traces in his features of the Egyptian dynasties whose blood he inherited along with his Berber and Roman blood. Unfortunate youth! He was not destined to continue the dynasty. The wild tribes became too turbulent for a buffer state to control. He stood in the path of Rome, and he was removed. Summoned to the Imperial City he was thrown into a dungeon where he starved to death, and his kingdom was incorporated in the Empire.

Twenty-five miles east of Cherchel, and near Tipasa, a remarkable monument crowns a summit among the huddled hills which line the coast. As one motors through Tipasa it is the most conspicuous feature on the Eastern horizon. It stands out sharply defined against the sky like a truncated pyramid or blunt cone, an Egyptian shape. It is solid and enduring like the work of the Romans, but it lacks their dominating utilitarian motive. The architectural details are Greek, the pillars round the base being of the Ionic order. Exploration has revealed that its purpose is sepulchral. It contains deep in its heart, approached by a labyrinthian gallery, secret chambers similar to those of the Pyramids. This is the so-called *Tombeau de la Chrétienne*, a mistranslation of the Arab title, Kbour-er-Roumia, " Roum " being the Arab word for " Roman," or Christian. The monument, however, is certainly pre-Roman.

Archæologists are generally agreed that this is the veritable tomb of Juba and Selene, and although no direct proof such as an inscription, or funerary remains, can be cited (the tomb was rifled by the Arabs centuries ago), there are certain strong indirect indications. The shape and style show the mingled influences of Egypt and of Greece. The Arab title " Roumia " may, in this case, have been borrowed from the Phœnician " Roumiah," signifying Royal. Furthermore, there is a reference to this structure in the works of Pomponius Mela, a geographer who wrote in the first century, possibly during the life of Juba. He describes it as " *Monumentum commune regiæ gentis.*" There is a similar structure, the " Medrassen," about fifty miles South of Constantine, the original capital of the native dynasty. The Egyptian influences are more pronounced in it, but it has undoubtedly furnished the model for the tomb near the Western capital. If it is indeed the tomb of Juba and Selene, it is strange that the approach of death should have brought their thoughts back to Egypt.

Under direct Roman administration the prosperity of Cæsarea continued. As its trade increased the city spread over a wider area. The Arabs have obliterated it. Of the ancient city hardly one stone remains standing upon another, but without the walls, some four miles away, there still remains a noble fragment which bears eloquent testimony to the vanished power and magnificence. It is the aqueduct which brought down to the city by the sea the water from the mountain cisterns of Marceau, fifteen miles distant. The aqueduct follows the gentle slope along the left side of the River El Hachem, but before reaching Cæsarea it had to cross the tributary valley of the Oued-Bellah. This magnificent bridge, spanning the gorge on three tiers of arches, rivals in its solidity, in its towering grandeur, in its challenge to eternity, the aqueduct of Carthage and the Pont du Gard of Nîmes. It strides like a Colossus across the gap, an emblem of the indomitable will which created the city and nourished it with the waters of the distant mountains. Where all else has vanished it endures, pointing dumbly and inexorably towards a forgotten goal.

## CHAPTER V

## TIPASA

WHO hears now of Tipasa? There were scores of Roman cities in North Africa of greater renown, seaports through which Rome drew her corn and oil and the coloured marbles of Numidia, rich cities of the valleys and plains, strong cities among the mountains and on the frontiers, cities which rivalled any that could be found in Italy or Gaul. There were Carthage, the rival of Rome, and Leptis, the birthplace of that great Emperor, Septimius Severus, and Hippo, the seat of St. Augustine, and Thysdrus, the native city of the Gordians, whose amphitheatre could seat sixty thousand people, and Bulla Regia, and Thugga, and Gigthis, and Sufetula, and Theveste, and Thumagadi, and Cirta, and Cæsarea, the Athens of the West, and many others whose names to modern ears are but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. These were not mere villages or isolated outposts of Empire. They were great, wealthy, proud cities. Very few modern cities of Europe are fit to be compared with them for magnificence and luxury, and modern Algiers and Tunis are but mushroom provincial growths. And yet they are no more. The spade of the archæologist is busy clearing their sites of the debris of the oblivion of centuries and revealing their vast foundations. Their names are forgotten, and the lizard crawls over stones that record the names of Emperors of the World. Of all these cities Tipasa was one of the smallest.

Tipasa was only twenty miles distant from Cæsarea, the brilliant capital of Mauretania. It was outshone by its powerful neighbour, but it was no mere satellite or handmaid of Cæsarea. It had a separate life and occupation of its own. It became a centre of Imperial power, a ganglion in the vast system of law, religion, and military force which held Africa and Gaul and Britain and the provinces of the Danube, Thrace, and Asia Minor in subjection. Judging from the extent of its walls, the lay-out of its houses, and the size of its theatre, its population must have numbered over twenty thousand. The population of Cæsarea numbered over one hundred thousand, but if we wish to gain some idea of the superabundance of Roman wealth and power, and of the depth of the roots which Roman civilisation had struck in African soil, we cannot do better than visit the ruins of this secondary little town of Tipasa.

The road from Algiers to Tipasa lies along the coast, at first amid market gardens, and then amid vineyards, and through numerous prosperous little coastal villages, an ideal motor run of fifty miles. The sun in January beats hot and strong, and there are golden oranges and lemons hanging on the garden trees, but the air has a tang in it. It is a tonic air, like the strong clear wine of the country. The approach to Tipasa is picturesque. The low hills running down close to the shore are clad in eucalyptus, pine, and scrub cedar, scenting the air with their aromatic essences. The Mediterranean, a sheet of vivid green and blue in the distance, laps the shore in clear shining ripples without a stain in them. The purple profile of Chenoua in the background forms a classic background that suggests the epic age of Greece, and the youth of the world. There on the shore is a solitary pillar; there in a field are some massive hewn stones. In a flash we are through the trim street of the modern village, laid out with French mathematical exactitude, past some enormous shattered walls and vaults of Roman brick, and pull up at the excellent little Hôtel du Rivage.

The ancient town of Tipasa stood upon three small promontories which jut into the Mediterranean, making two small bays. The central promontory and the little bay to the East of it formed, no doubt, the site of the earliest Phœnician settlement, the centre round which the town grew. Here, on the highest point, burned the fires of Baal Moloch, and here also were worshipped Ashtaroth, under her Phœnician name of Tanit, and all the host of heaven. Here, later, was the Roman Capitol in which the same gods were worshipped, identified with Saturn and Diana. The massive ruins of the temple have been uncovered. Only the foundations and the lower courses remain, but they are on a scale that rivals the work of our cathedral builders. By the end of the fourth century they would be appropriated for Christian worship.

Behind this temple lies the forum, a vast rectangle paved with heavy flagstones. A solitary base for a statue stands in the middle near the Northern end. Otherwise the expanse of floor is unbroken by any indication of monument or pillar. It was completely open to the sky, a place of meeting, promenading, bargaining, discussion, oratory. To the East and South it is flanked by ancillary buildings, municipal offices, law courts, academies, and doubtless wine-shops and gambling houses. On the Western side, at a lower level and approached by a flight of steps over an arched passage, is a large basilica. The lower courses of the walls remain, and the two long rows of pillars, constituting the aisles, in a fragmentary condition, are still *in situ.* It originated, no doubt, as a public hall, but some tombs indicate that it was a Christian church.

The power and wealth of the early Church are indicated not merely by inscriptions and Christian symbols frequently found among the ruins, but by the number and size and situation of the churches. Across the little bay, on the Western promontory, stand the ruins of a Basilica of unusual size, a veritable cathedral. It is 170 feet long by 147 feet broad. It has a nave, with four aisles on each side, separated from each other by eight rows of pillars supporting arcades. On the third promontory, the Eastern one, just beyond the town wall, stood another church, dedicated to Saint Salso, a young girl of Tipasa, who in the days when Paganism was still supreme, had overthrown an idol and paid the penalty of martyrdom. These churches, crowning the three promontories with their pillars and their mosaics and marbles, with their baptisteries and sepulchral chapels, and other ancillary buildings, are on a scale which rivals anything our cathedral cities can show. Alas, they are but ruins excavated from the ground. The more beautifully worked stones, the inscriptions, the sculptures, the marbles, the most perfect mosaics, have either been destroyed or looted or removed for security to various museums.

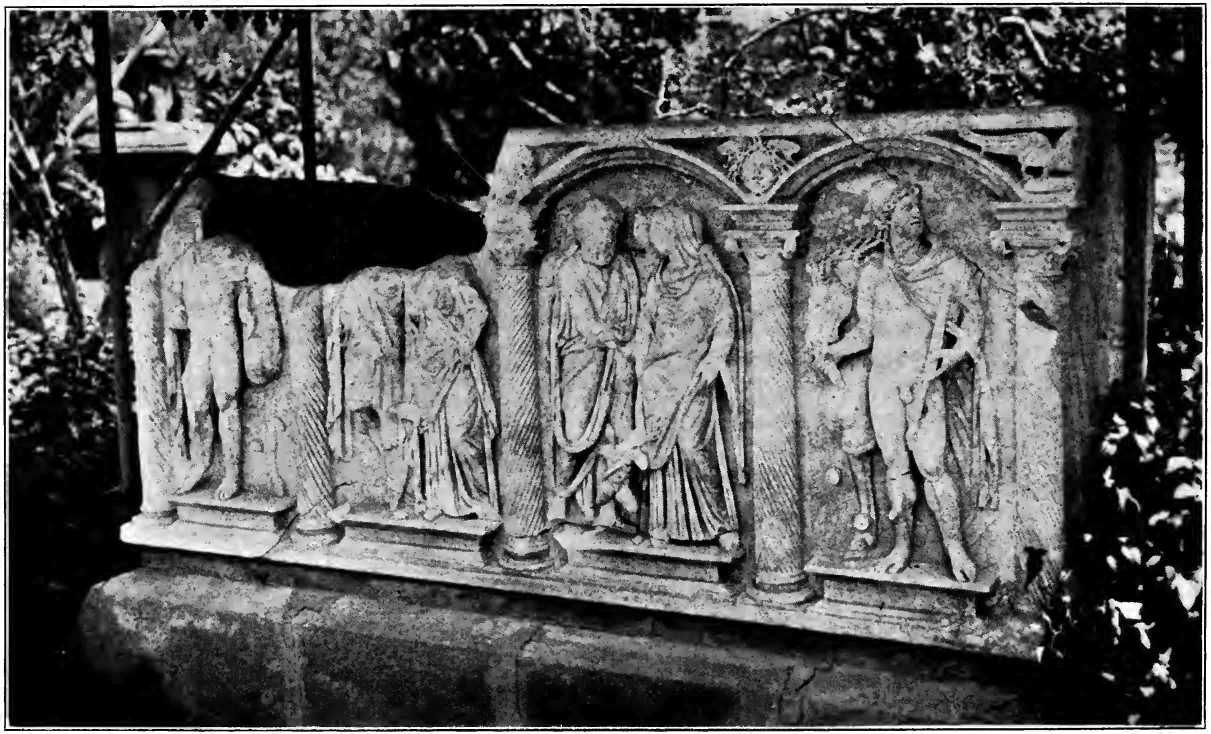
And now for the other public buildings and works. The baths we have already remarked in passing through the village, massive walls and vaults of Roman bricks which, though the walls have been rent asunder, seem to possess the quality of indestructibility. One can still see on them the prints of the makers' fingers. In the garden of M. Trémaux, where the earth sounds hollow as one treads over long-buried vaults, excavation has revealed many interesting sites. A *château d'eau*, the centre for the distribution of the water supply which had been brought from the hills by an aqueduct, sets a standard of architectural art which not one of the waterworks of our utilitarian age could surpass. Little is left of the theatre save the excavation on the hill-side for its tiers of benches. The pillars and the marble were plundered long ago. In the middle of the garden a large and deep excavation has revealed the foundations and lower courses of a building which is remarkable not merely for its size but for the solidity of its construction. The huge blocks of which the plinth is constructed have been carefully dressed and the moulding has been executed with great symmetry and exactness. Down a long stretch on the West side the pillar bases are *in situ.* Even in their ruin and desolation these fragments have upon them the stamp of majesty and of dominion.

Passing through the garden we descend through olives and myrtles to the shore of the little Western bay. On every vantage point upon the slope are found the ruined palaces and villas of the wealthy and powerful, still displaying the unmistakable evidences of culture, refinement, and luxury. The walls show the plan of the domestic arrangements, the atrium or central court, with its fountain, the living rooms, the bedrooms, the baths, the heating and drainage systems. A large arched sewer, *cloaca maxima,* up which a man could walk, has been cut deep down into the solid rock, and is carried far down into the sea. Numerous manholes open into it. Here is a tessellated pavement, there a fragment of mosaic, revealing a classic pattern, and there again a bay window looking out Westwards across the bay towards the sun setting in orange and crimson splendour behind Chenoua. The choice of sites for these villas and their disposition, reveal a love for natural beauty which is sometimes denied to the Ancients.

Over all the ruins the soil has accumulated to a depth of from ten to fifteen feet. The greater part is still unexplored. Wherever a trench is dug there is a generous display of relics. The garden of M. Trémaux is a museum of them—of amphoræ of gigantic size, which might well have been part of the plant of a wholesale wine merchant, of pillars re-erected, of capitals delicately chiselled into luxuriant foliage, of memorial stones, dedicatory inscriptions, votive tablets, altars, friezes, cornices, and two beautifully carved marble sarcophagi, one pagan and the other Christian. The soil from which all these have been exhumed is itself a compost of anthropological debris. Every spadeful that is thrown up contains a dozen fragments of pottery, brick, or tile, and bits of bone. The shards vary from pieces of coarse amphoræ to bits of fine Samian ware, and a little collection can rapidly be made to represent a wide variety of patterns and glazes—black, reddish brown, yellow, white, and green. With the exception of the public halls and temples, and the principal villas, the upper courses of the buildings seem to have been constructed chiefly of rubble, pressed earth, and concrete, with binding courses of brick, and with bricked lintels, corners, and arches. Hence the ruins, as they subsided, have formed the present compost.

And this is Tipasa, this city of temples and mansions, one of the smallest of the Roman towns in Africa, which flourished for five centuries and was blotted out fourteen hundred years ago. Algiers, the modern French capital, is larger, but Tipasa was better equipped in all its public institutions, and in the amenities of life it did not fall short of the highest modern standard.

Lunch at the Hôtel du Rivage, in the garden, under the gnarled branches of a naked fig tree, and surrounded by pillars, capitals, amphoræ, and inscriptions in the language that is suited best of all for epigraphy! Alfresco in January!



ROMAN SARCOPHAGUS AT TIPASA

"Bride and Bridegroom"

These fields can still grow a rare wine, and the vegetables, the oranges, and the almonds are beyond compare. The hotel is for sale. One thousand pounds will buy the goodwill and the stock-in-trade. It is very attractive. What a life for an amateur antiquary.

Returning to Algiers, about two miles East of Tipasa we sight again the pillar, on a small eminence near the shore, which first attracted our attention. We halt our car near the Villa Demonchy, in the midst of a eucalyptus wood. Here we note at the side of the avenue a large stone basin with two circular rollers of stone. It is a Roman oil mill for pressing the olives. We are therefore near the site of a Roman farm. On the terrace of the villa looking towards the sea is preserved a magnificent white marble sarcophagus, a real treasure of art, representing a scene from Greek mythology, carved in high relief, full of life and action, and boldly imagined details. Descending through the trees we reach a little sandy beach on the West side of the promontory, an ideal spot for bathing and for gathering shells and all the curious debris of the sea. The promontory consists of a lava stream still showing the shape of the successive waves of its viscid current, and forming little lagoons where it has been suddenly congealed by the sea. The lava rock is of a curious spongy texture, like the familiar rubber sponges, full of bubbles, large and small and with extremely hard and sharp cutting edges. Walking over it is like walking over a sponge of iron slag.

On the highest edge of the promontory, looking Westwards, are the ruins of a palatial mansion.

Many mosaic and tessellated floors are exposed. Part has already been washed away by the sea and the waves are doing the work of excavator. This was not part of the town of Tipasa. It must have been the manor of some wealthy proprietor who contrived on this site to enjoy all the luxuries both of town and of country. Down at the edge is the most remarkable feature of this spot, a great tank or cistern, about 80 feet long by 40 feet wide, cut out of the rock, with only a narrow unbroken wall of rock left between it and the sea. It is obviously a swimming bath. The edges have been hewn to form benches for resting, and the bottom shows squared bases for pillars or statues. On the East it communicates with a larger and deeper basin, also rectangular, which in turn communicates with the sea, and which may have served as a harbour.

We know the name of the lord of this manor by the sea. He was Sædius Octavius Felix, and he was a great man at Tipasa. He was Duumvir or Mayor of the town. We can fancy him returning in the evening with his wife and family from some fête at Tipasa. They would look back upon the same scene that we see returning to Algiers. Behind Chenoua the sun is sinking into a far-spreading zone of orange, deepening into fiery tones of russet, bronze, rose, scarlet, and crimson. The Western waters reflect the hues of heaven. Against this background rises the *massif* of Chenoua, purple and violet, dim and dreamlike, with a shimmering opalescent flush on its summit. Inland stretches an olive and dark green trail of vineyards, groves, and forests, with white walls and red roofs shining vividly here and there. Across the calm water move some large fishing boats manned each by eight rowers who stand up to their work and fling their weight forward rhythmically on their oars. Even so might the boat of the Lord of the Manor return from Tipasa seventeen hundred years ago. The ladies would recline on gaily coloured cushions. Their silken scarfs would flutter in the breeze caused by the motion of the boat. A fair arm would hang over the boat's edge, and dainty fingers trail idly in the crystal water. The tawny elegant youths would discuss their bets on the chariot races. Snatches of song would float over the water. The sturdy slave rowers would strain at the oars. And if they were late a lamp would shine to guide them to the landing stage.

## CHAPTER VI

## " THE GARDEN OF ALLAH "

THE popular success of Mr. Robert Hichens' novel, "The Garden of Allah," is unquestionable. It has run into twenty-eight editions since the publication in 1905, and it has had a long run on the stage. It brings hundreds of visitors every year to Biskra, the desert town of Algeria, in which the plot of its spiritual drama is laid. It has created an atmosphere which, for all tourists who have been drawn hither by it, envelops the place and colours their vision. It is the tourists' handbook to Biskra, just as " The Lady of the Lake " is the handbook to the Trossachs, or " The Raider " to Grey Galloway, or any of the novels of Thomas Hardy to Wessex. Biskra has become " Hichens' Town." His name is on everyone's lips. Every guide claims to have served him and to be able to identify all the sights and persons mentioned in the novel. He, rather than Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the White Fathers for the evangelisation of the Desert tribes, whose statue looks out upon the Desert he longed to conquer for Christ, is the Patron Saint of Biskra.

It requires genius, through the medium of printed words, to stamp one's personality upon a place, to envelop it in an emotional atmosphere for other people; and the feat is all the more surprising where the material is so unpromising. Here are none of the romantic accessories dear to the heart of the fiction writer. Here are only palm trees, and mud huts, and hotels, in an oasis on the edge of the arid Desert that stretches monotonously league after league towards the sun. Out of the sand he has spun the ropes of his enchantment.

The book struggles under the physical disadvantage of being prodigiously long, more than twice the length of the ordinary " six-shilling " novel. The action is slow and is protracted by long descriptive passages. In fact, the book is both a guide-book and a novel, and that is perhaps the secret of its success. With the most systematic thoroughness every feature and aspect of Biskra and the Desert is sought out and described. The only thing the volume lacks to make it complete is an index. Everything is there, if the mere casual tourist only knew where to find it in the five hundred pages—the railway journey, the guides, the tips, the palms, the gardens, the native cafés, the Ouled Naïl dancing girls, the bazaar, the perfume seller, the sand diviner, the fakirs who eat glass and put their hands in fire and pierce themselves with skewers and knives, the musicians, the little Catholic church, the mosques, the statue of Cardinal Lavigerie, the sunsets, the camels, the desert caravans, the mirage, the sand-storm, the scattered oases, the camping place by the solitary well, the track blazed by the bones of camels, the desert town. If I proceed I shall soon have compiled an index.

All these details have been observed and recorded through the medium of a temperament which has coloured them and transfused them with its own emotional vibrations. Domini, the heroine, is an athletic young woman (if one may so describe the daughter of a Peer) who has reached the age of thirty-two without ever having been in love. She is a Catholic, deeply religious by instinct, but with no vocation to be a nun. She falls in love, though she is slow to recognise it, on the railway journey to Biskra, with a strange man—strange in an emphatic way. With the sight of the stranger comes an access of religious emotion, and she experiences profound spiritual thrills in the little Catholic church. Within a month or so they are married, and set off in a caravan of their own to spend their honeymoon in the Desert. They trek from oasis to oasis, then, after some months of Eden, the mysterious lover confesses that he is a monk who has broken his vows and has just escaped from a Trappist monastery where he has been an inmate for twenty years. Domini persuades him to return to the monastery, and the book closes when she leaves him at the gate. The Biskra of the book is the Biskra seen by Domini through all the kaleidoscopic emotions of this period.

The spiritual drama takes the place of the drama of action and incident. It takes two to make a quarrel, says the proverb. Mr. Hichens shows how one may make a quarrel, for the soul of man or woman is a house divided against itself.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain used to say, in the privacy of his family, that his party was a party of one and that party was divided against itself. The drama of this book is not the mutual falling in love of Domini and her Trappist monk, their marriage, and their parting. It is the conflict within the soul of Domini before she yields herself to the stranger and the further conflict before she leads him back to the monastery gate and leaves him there for ever. Nothing happens on the stage. Everything happens in the soul of Domini.

Domini, in spite of her athletic proclivities (she can hardly restrain herself from laying violent hands upon disrespectful Arabs), is of an introspective nature, always thinking about and analysing her own emotions. She has fled from a placid existence at home in the hope that face to face with the immensity of the Desert "she might learn to understand herself," and her prayer on arrival is "Give me power to feel keenly, fiercely, even though I suffer." Forthwith she begins to feel with astounding vividness. It is not really Biskra that is described in the book, it is what Domini felt about Biskra and the Desert, and how they affected her spiritual and emotional development. There is no simple, direct observation of Nature. From sunrise to sunset, and in the watches of the night, Domini is interposed between us and the smallest detail. We cannot hear the muezzin call from the minaret save charged with the ecstatic emotions of Domini. We learn what the Desert is like through the impressions which it made upon the mind of Domini.

Domini spends her first day at Biskra, or "Beni-Mora," as it is called in the book, in the garden of Count Anteoni, a mysterious Italian Comte de Monte Cristo, who hovers in the background of the story and who ultimately becomes a Mohammedan. In real life this is the *Jardin Landon*, a wonderful oasis which a wealthy French nobleman has created on the edge of the Desert. It rivals anything that may be imagined about the hanging gardens of Damascus where sultans took their delight. It is an Elysium in the Desert, a Paradise of shade and greenery, of rippling streams, of long vistas and winding paths. For fruit there are date palms, fig vines, and orange trees, and, besides, there is a wealth of all shade-providing and flowering trees and bushes. There are palms of many varieties, and pines, and eucalyptus, and rubber trees, and bananas, all evergreen, and a thick undergrowth of bamboos, shrubs, dwarf palms, creepers, geranium, hibiscus, and mimosa. The Desert is shut out by ramparts of foliage. The sun is filtered through lair after lair of greenery. The only sounds are those which soothe—the rustling of the leaves and the rippling of the water which flows in a hundred channels through the thirsty sand. This is not Nature. It is all artifice. Infinite labour was required to lead round these fertilising waters, to plant and prune and tend those trees, to make these walks, and to preserve them in such meticulous order.

It is only those who have not read the book who mistake this for the Garden of Allah. The mistake is natural, for it would be difficult to find a more perfect realisation of the popular conception of the Garden of Eden. But the Garden of Allah is something very different from this man-made Paradise. It is vast, empty, terrible, majestic. The Arabs have a saying, explains Count Anteoni: "The Desert is the Garden of Allah."

The Desert draws Domini with mesmeric power. "A conviction was born in her that Fate meant her to know the Desert well; that the Desert was waiting calmly for her to come to it and receive that which it had to give to her; that in the Desert she would learn more of the meaning of life than she could ever learn elsewhere."

I quote two passages as illustrative of the descriptive method of the book. In each the subject is the Desert seen under different conditions.

> "It was gigantic. There was even something unnatural in its appearance of immensity, as if it were, perhaps, deceptive, and existed in their vision of it only. So, surely, might look a plain to one who had taken hashish, which enlarges, makes monstrous, and threateningly terrific."

And again:—

> "Red deepened and glowed in the gold behind the three palms, and the upper rim of the round moon, red too as blood, crept through the Desert. Domini, leaning forward with one hand upon her horse's warm neck, watched until the full circle was poised for a moment on the horizon, holding the palms in

> its frame of fire. She had never seen a moon look so immense and so vivid as this moon that came up into the night like a portent, fierce yet serene, moon of a barbaric world, such as might have shone upon Herod when he heard the voice of the Baptist in his dungeon, or upon the wife of Pilate when in a dream she was troubled. It suggested to her the powerful watcher of tragic events fraught with long chains of consequences that would last on through centuries, as it turned its blood-red gaze upon the Desert, upon the palms, upon her, and, leaning upon her horse's neck, she too—like Pilate's wife—fell into a sort of strange and troubled dream for a moment, full of strong, yet ghastly, light and of shapes that flitted across a background of fire."

Is the book true ? Does it give an adequate picture of Biskra and the Desert ? The question is futile, and the answer will vary with the reader. The book is too highly subjective to be judged by the canons of objective reality. One visitor, after a week of palm and sand, will be bored stiff. Another will revel in the minute self-analysis of Domini, and, like her, see all his own moods reflected in the sand. Hichens is like the sand diviner who figures in the story. He carries more than sand in his bag. But not all believe in divination.

There are many to whom this kind of introspection is antipathetic. They are content to skip all these self-communings, if only they can learn, in the first place, whether she married the man, and, in the second place, what she did when she discovered that he was an escaped monk. So far as they are concerned, if the book were cut down to about one-third of its present size, it would be both a better novel and a better guide. They look askance at Domini as if she were a kind of monster. Mr. Hichens refers to these critics in the preface published in the later editions. They are "very angry with Domini for 'taking back' Boris to the monastery. They declare that a woman who really loved a man would never voluntarily part from him, and that Domini had no right to conceal from Boris the fact that she was going to have a child." But even by their protests they show that the book has for them the interest of a problem.

But no doubt it is precisely the fusion of religious and erotic emotion which gives the book its chief attraction for many other people. They would not be willing to sacrifice a single one of the twenty-eight pages devoted to the conscientious explication of Domini's emotions on her wedding night. It is easy to understand the growth of the Hichens' cult. The Hichens' pilgrims come trooping to Biskra with their copies of "The Garden of Allah" in hand, hoping to experience the mystic thrills of Domini. They are a pathetic band, these "seekers"—seeking they know not what, a revelation, a vision, a new life, perhaps only a mirage. Alas! they often go back unsatisfied. The Desert is but sand and sun. The eye sees what the eye brings with it.

## CHAPTER VII

# A DESERT CITY

BISKRA, the City of the Sun, the Queen of the Desert, the fairest of all the oases of the Sahara, lies on the edge of the Desert at the foot of the Aurês Mountains which rise like the wall of a furnace. It is a mistake to think that the Desert is utterly unpopulated. All the drainage from the Southern slopes of the great Atlas range flows into the Sahara in numerous rivers fed by the rains and the eternal snows. None of them ever reaches the sea. Their waters filter through the sands and are lost in vast underground reservoirs. Here and there these hidden stores of life-giving water burst forth, or have been tapped by artesian wells, and the Desert blossoms in forests of palm, the tree which bears the harvest of the Desert. The prosperity of Biskra is based upon the date palm. Not only has it 250,000 palm trees in its own oasis, but from all directions throughout the Desert, wherever there are oases, caravans of camels laden with dates converge on it as the central depot and market.

Biskra is the centre of a group of oases in which artificial irrigation has been highly developed. Wheat is cultivated successfully over large areas. The palm forests straggle out along the broad dried-up river bed, and in the midst of each oasis small villages of hovels built of sun-dried mud bricks have grown up. In these huts, life is reduced to its simplest proportions. There are no windows and the interior is as dark as a cave. A pot, a family dish, a water jug, some rugs and mats constitute all the furniture that is required. Biskra itself is a town with something of the complexity of town life. It has a French quarter, with boulevards, and cafés, and shops, and hotels, but for all that it is an African town, a desert town.

The French are still foreigners here. They maintain a garrison. They live under the shadow of the great Fort St. Germain which, in case of emergency, could contain the whole European population and stand siege. They have subdued; they have established law and order; they have introduced the elements of civilisation, but they have not changed the native. The stream of native custom, language, instinct, temperament, flows alongside, but absolutely distinct from the stream of French civilisation. The native craftsman squats cross-legged at his task in his little dark cave of a shop lit by an electric bulb. He has changed little in essentials from his ancestors who occupied the land thousands of years before the Romans. It is a strange and violent contrast, the manners and habits of four thousand years ago side by side with modern civilisation, Abraham jostling the Parisian.

The vogue of Mr. Robert Hichens' novel, "The Garden of Allah," brings thousands of sightseers to Biskra, but there is very little sight-seeing to be done. The street of the

Ouled Naïls, the ungainly and unsavoury harlots of the Desert, has been written up *ad nauseam.* Prim tourists, of both sexes, walk along the street, stare at the bedizened creatures sitting at their doors or in their balconies awaiting custom, and peep into the Moorish cafés to see the dull and unexciting dancing. Or they go and look at the disgusting antics of the Dervishes who eat glass and scorpions, and stick skewers through their flesh if a certain number of francs are forthcoming. One can wander through the palm groves, between the mud walls of the gardens, and inspect the picturesque but squalid-looking villages. One can watch the Arabs in the market, in their cafés, or at prayer, and the camel caravans arriving or departing. There are a number of beaten-track "excursions," to the Mosque of Sidi Okba, to the Hot Baths, to the neighbouring oases, to the *Jardin Landon,* to the sand dunes on the Desert and to the foothills to see the sunset. But the craving for sight-seeing will not find more than will satisfy it for three days at Biskra.

I bear my testimony against sight-seeing. The real attractions of Biskra appeal very little to the mere sightseer. They are the winter climate, the sun, the Desert, the restfulness, the driving back of the soul upon its own resources. One absorbs through all one's pores the Sun, the Master of life. The vast, empty, sun-drenched spaces of the Desert give a powerful impulse towards abstraction, and help one to cast aside the small frets and worries of life and to feel that one has an inner life of one's own. Biskra is an ideal place for a rest cure, but this is the last thing the sightseer desires. The person who requires to be “ entertained ” had better hurry back to London or Paris at once.

The great South Road, the Touggourt Road, leads direct into the Desert. For a few miles out from Biskra it passes between irrigated fields, on which, in January, the fresh green wheat is springing, and then, quite suddenly, the Desert commences in a huddle of wind-blown sand dunes. There is some kind of clay or marl beneath the sand which would, no doubt, be fertile if irrigated. Some tufts of dry, rustling, desert herbage cling to exposed patches with desperate tenacity, and a small creeping gourd sends its long tendrils burrowing deep through the sand. Its bright green and yellow fruit, about the size of an apple, lies scattered in scores over the mounds, half buried in the sand. These gourds are said to be poisonous, but they are not a source of danger to either man or beast. They are so inexpressibly bitter to taste that no one would be tempted to eat them. Suicide by such means would be too unpleasant. So there they lie, these Desert fruits, ripening in the sun, Dead Sea apples, alluring to the eye, but repulsive to the taste.

The sand dunes are like great waves of a petrified sea. They are carved by the wind into all kinds of whorls, ripples, eddies and ridges. The waves of this sea of sand are not mere undulations. They are carven by the wind. They are scooped, and edged, and scalloped. Here they are rounded like a whale’s back, here they show an edge like a shark’s fin, here they fall away sharply in a sand precipice. The abrupt slope is too steep to climb. One slips deeper and deeper at every step, and the loose sand rolls back, threatening to engulf.

Northward, in the direction of the mountains, one passes rapidly out of the arable belt into a land of rolling shingle hills. It is a desert of gravel, pebbles, stones, seldom as large as a man's head. It is like one vast river-bed or rather ocean beach. The stones are mostly flint, and hard limestone, quartz, and schist. Some are beautifully rounded, and others thin and flat. The quartz is delicately smooth, the limestone curiously corrugated with folds and contortions like a petrified brain; dull red, bluish grey, and slate are the prevailing colours, and one can understand from these stones how the distant mountains get their colours when the sun is shining on them. It is a desolate land, a heart-breaking land. In the sand desert one might sink and die in a stupor of apathy. But here, in this hard wilderness, one would beat one's head upon the stones in futile and unavailing rage. One sinks on the sand as on a soft couch, but on this stony bed one would be stretched as on a rack.

The loose friable sand forms a veritable ocean. It is fluid. It drifts and streams and flows with the wind. It rests in the calm and moves on in the storm, running like the sand in some gigantic hour-glass, flowing in currents and cascades and tides and whirling columns. The motion of the sand is quite unlike that of water. The sea tosses and undulates in huge waves; the Desert rises into the heavens in innumerable legions and travels on the wings of the wind.

THE DESERT: SAND DUNES

I looked down upon the Desert from a spur of the Aurès Mountains when the wind, not a gale, was blowing from the North, and I watched the flight of the sand in cloud battalions sweeping forward like wraiths with spectral robes trailing behind them. Swift as the flight of a shadow they passed over the surface of the Desert, gathering volume as they went, curving upward like a wave, or curling downward like a Djinn muffling its face in its arm, whirling in sudden vortices, darkening the sky, more terrible than an army with banners.

When a gale blows the world is without form and void. Chaos seethes and boils. The earth is resolved into its separate atoms and molecules, which stream once more through the primeval void waiting the compelling finger of the Creator to shape the world once more. To be caught in a sand-storm is not merely to be tossed and battered; it is to be submerged, enveloped, blinded, dazed. The Arab has good reason for regarding Hell as a place of pestilential winds.

Sand and stones, wind and sun, day and night, the immaculate blue vault and the canopy of stars, these are the elemental constituents of the panorama of life in the Desert. In this vast, slowly-revolving panorama there is so little in the external world to distract the attention that one is thrown back upon the inner life of contemplation and dreaming. These waves of sand, stretching into the dim immensity, are a fitting symbol of eternity, and a fit soil to nourish a sterile fatalistic creed. The conditions do not conduce to continuity and concentration of thought. This is the way to Nirvana.

## CHAPTER VIII

## "WHAT'S BECOME OF WARING?"

I WAS puzzled by the Englishman who sat by himself at a small table in a corner of the dining-room of the Hôtel du Sahara, at Biskra. He was generally first to enter the room, and always first to leave it. For an hour before dinner he would sit in the little drawing-room copying entries from a small notebook into a larger one, occasionally consulting a volume which lay beside him, and apparently oblivious to the rest of the world. At other times he vanished. He went none of the usual excursions. Once I thought I saw him in the dark recess of a little native café off the Market Square playing chess with a nondescript Arab. He gave me the impression of being a shy and somewhat uncouth man. He was obviously not a tourist, and he was very different from any commercial traveller I had ever met. He might have been a novelist of the microscopic, notebook type, in search of local colour, or, again, he might have been an eccentric scholar sent to breathe the desert air for the good of his lungs.

One evening, as we sat waiting in the drawing-room for the dinner bell, an American lady was intent upon a game of Patience. The cards would not come right. At the opposite side of the table sat the Englishman, absorbed in his note-books, and apparently oblivious to all else. Suddenly he leaned across the table, shot out his arm, and with his forefinger jabbed one of the cards. " Try that," he ejaculated, and before the lady could recover from her astonishment he was intent on his book again.

I also had a note-book in which I used to write before dinner. One day he looked up suddenly and asked me if I knew Arabic. He seemed disappointed when I said " No," but brightened perceptibly when I began to display an interest in the language. No, he could not say that he knew Arabic. He had only been working at it for some sixteen years. He spent two or three months every year like this, wandering among the Arabs and improving his knowledge. Why ? Oh, it interested him—it was his hobby. He would rather do this than play golf. The structure of the language was simple—very like English, indeed—but there was need for a tremendous amount of sheer memory work. The vocabulary contained many simple, definite words to describe composite actions, and often the word describing a particular way of doing a thing would be quite a different word from the general word for this action. Moreover, the plurals were what we would call " irregular," not expressed by the addition of a suffix or prefix, but by some structural change in the word itself, which had to be learned separately for each word.

He spent his days talking with the Arabs in the streets and cafés, in the market, or wherever he could meet them. He noted down any new word which he came across, and was careful to get its exact shade of meaning. Then, when he returned to the Hotel, before dinner, he transcribed his rough notes into a large note-book and verified them as far as possible from his Arabic dictionary. He was also keenly interested in Arab folk-lore, religion, ethnology, manners and customs. He had many friends among the Arabs. With some he merely gossiped in the cafés. Others he made his friends by teaching them English, which they were very anxious to learn. Others he hired as guides or attendants as occasion required, and some of these were acquaintances of many years' standing.

"What's become of Waring since he gave us all the slip ?" I said to myself. "Seems to have chosen land-travel rather than seafaring." Here was one of those strange Englishmen of whom Browning wrote, who love to dive into the unknown, and who reappear when the Empire has need of them, speaking unknown tongues. This man had served in the War, but he did not tell me where. He was not communicative on that subject, but about his beloved Arabs he would talk until the day dawned.

"The Arab mentality," he said to me one evening, "is very difficult to understand—the point of view, the attitude of mind, is so different from that of the European. And yet in some ways they are curiously like the English; for example, in their sense of humour. It is very different from the French sense of humour. The French love wit and epigram. They delight in the neat turning of a sentence. The Arab humour is much broader—more in the nature of joking. They love chaff and leg-pulling. They will roar with laughter at the smallest joke of this kind. If you chaff them, that is the way to keep them working in good temper. I have known a servant leave his master because he was too dull, too serious—never made a joke. To enjoy life an Arab must be merry.

" I met some soldiers on leave to-day at a café. They belonged to a regiment recruited in this district, and they were full of stories about the War. They did very well in the War, but they were little use in the trenches. They could not stand the wear and the strain of the life. They were at their best in a charge. They would go over the top and then be brought back to a rest camp to await fresh drafts. One of these men had the *Croix de Guerre :* he had been over the top eleven times, a pretty good record ! They asked me how the English soldiers did their drill, and I told them as best I could how we sloped arms, and formed fours, and so forth. They were greatly amused, and not a little scandalised. It was quite different from their way. ' And do they really do it so—on the left shoulder ? ' They seemed to regard it as wicked and heretical, and yet amusing. ' How peculiar.' They shook their heads over it, and went into peals of laughter.

" The Arab is not troubled by that spirit of unrest which can only be worked off by action. He has no itch for action. I have a young Arab friend out in the desert at Sidi Okba who has deliberately abandoned himself to a life of loafing. A cup of coffee, a game of dominoes, a gossip in the market-place, these are to be the substance of his life, his sole preoccupation from the cradle to the grave! His father has left him a little property, sufficient to satisfy his few needs for food, shelter, and clothing, and so he can dream away his life in the sun. There are many such. Hichens, in one of his short sketches, tells of a guide whom he employed to walk round with him and translate for him in the cafés. 'And what will you do when I go away?' he asked. 'Ah, that's when I shall have my little holiday!' the Arab replied, with the air of a man who had been performing the labours of Hercules. 'And how will you spend your holiday?' 'In the morning when I awake I will eat a couple of figs. Then I will go for a stroll in the market-place, and have a cup of coffee, and a talk with my friends at the café. Then I will return home about eleven o'clock for a meal. In the afternoon I will go again to the café and play dominoes and talk with my friends. After the evening meal I will go again to the café, and perhaps see some dancing and hear the talk of strangers. And then I will go to sleep.' Such a day would drive a European mad. I once met two boys I knew in Tunis and I found that one of them was going on a visit to Kairouan. I arranged to meet him there, and I spent with him a day very much like that."

"I remember," he said to me another time, "meeting some men who had just returned from the High Tell where they had gone with their tribe for employment on the harvest. They take with them on their march their wives and families, their tents, their camels, their sheep and goats, even their poultry. It was very hard work, they told me. Oh! very hard work! About five o'clock in the morning they would squat down in the market-place. Presently the farmer would come along, just as in the Biblical parable, and ask if they wanted to be hired. And they would say No, they had just come to amuse themselves in the market. Then the farmer would state his terms and they would make a bargain. They are paid not in coin but in a share of the crop. If the corn was growing very thick their share would be one in ten. If it was growing very thin it might be one in six. That is to say they would have one rick out of every ten or six. They would then thrash this corn themselves and sell the grain. They explained to me that they sometimes would scoop a little hole in the ground and build one rick over it, so that it would contain more. This they would include as part of their share unless the farmer was sharp enough to notice it.

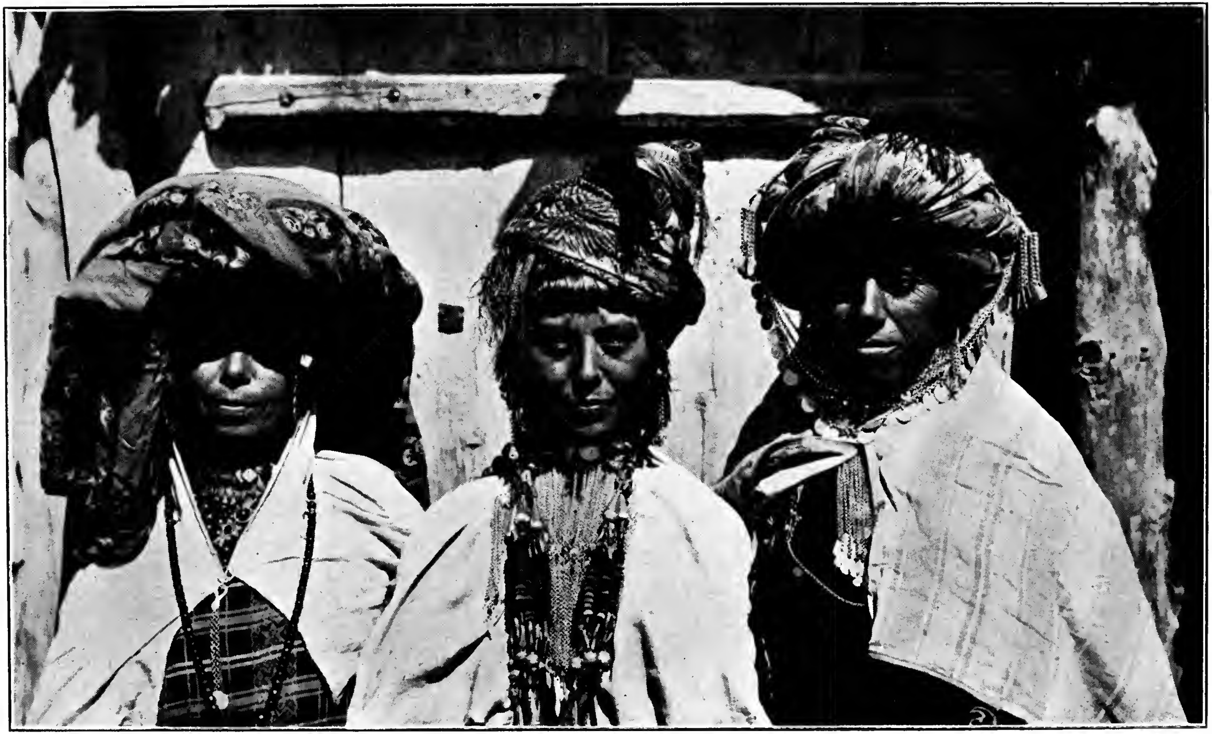
" I asked them how long they worked. Well, they started early in the morning and worked till eleven. Then they had their first meal—only a small meal. Then they started again and worked till one, when they had their chief meal. 'Then,' they said, 'we go to bed and sleep till nine o'clock.' 'Whatever do you do that for ? Don't you sleep at night ? ' 'Oh no, we sit up all night talking. If we were to sleep at night all our goods would be stolen. We must watch them very carefully. The women watch by day while we are sleeping, and at night they sleep while we guard.' I said that I might some day come for a holiday with them, but I would sleep in my tent at night. That would never do, they said.

When I awakened in the morning I would find only the sky above me. The tent would be gone."

"You ought to meet Hilton Simpson," he said again. "He could tell you much more about the secret life of the natives and about tribes who are almost unknown to Europeans than I can. I am only an amateur; he has penetrated to the heart of the mysteries of these mountains which lie behind us. I saw him three weeks ago at El Kantara, where he and his wife have a house. Where are they now? Up in the mountains with a big game hunter, Cotton, shooting mouflon, the Barbary wild sheep.

"Have you ever heard of the Shawiah? They are a tribe who inhabit that great *massif* of mountains which stretches from here to Tunis, the great barrier which was the frontier of the Roman Empire. You can see its barren peaks, red and blue and luminously opalescent in the sunset. Behind these baking furnace walls there are sheltered valleys and forests of cedar trees. There live the Shawiah. They are said to be the remains of a white race who occupied this country thousands of years before the Romans or the Phœnicians, and who have left their Megalithic Monuments, their Dolmens, and Cromlechs, and Menhirs, scattered along the shores of the Mediterranean and even in Britain. The Hilton Simpsons have spent months among these people, travelling from village to village, living their life, winning their confidence, studying their customs, collecting their folk-lore.

"Among other things Hilton Simpson has



SHAWIAH WOMEN: FROM THE AURÈS MOUNTAINS

made some interesting discoveries as to the survival of primitive medicine and surgery among the Shawiah. It has long been known that in ancient times, probably before the Romans, the native surgeons practised trepanning. There were rumours that the primitive art was still practised in the remote Aurès Mountains, but it was very difficult to get any evidence on the subject. The French discourage native surgery, and in consequence the natives will seldom reveal anything about it. Hilton Simpson made many efforts to discover what were the methods and instruments employed, and at last he found a native doctor who said he had performed the operation and who consented to show him his instruments on condition that he did not give him away to the French.

"The doctor produced a ring like a large wedding ring with a wire attached to one side of it at right angles. This ring was made red-hot and then applied to the part of the head on which the operation was to be performed. It cauterised the place, and probably deadened the nerves. Having burned a ring on the head the operator then proceeded to drill a small hole in the skull, taking care not to pierce the brain. Then he drilled another little hole near it in the line of the circular brand, and another. No more was done that day, but the work of drilling these small holes was renewed from day to day until the complete ring of bone had been perforated. The disc was then lifted out and the piece of bone or foreign matter which had been pressing on the brain was removed. The disc was then replaced and the head bandaged. The recuperative power of the native annealed the bone and healed the wound. It was a savage operation, and, of course, many patients did not survive, but it must have succeeded frequently, as the ancient tombs show."

I never met the Hilton Simpsons, but I see from the newspapers that they have since returned with a rich harvest. I have not met again the student of Arabic, but he gave me his card, and I note that his home in Essex is called "The Wilderness." The tame delights of home, however, will not satisfy their souls. They will feel the call of the wild, of the desert and the mountains, and some day their friends will ask again: "What's become of Waring?"

## CHAPTER IX

# AFRIC'S SNOWY MOUNTAINS

THE sun was shining hotly at Biskra in the January morning. We had our early café *al fresco* on the veranda, with the fronds of the date palm in the courtyard rustling in the fresh breeze that was springing up. In the market-place, where we bought some mandarin oranges for the journey, the Arabs were squatting on the pavement displaying their goods, but betraying no anxiety for custom. The half-naked children were running about chaffering with each other, or solemnly imitating their elders. It was the chief town of the Ziban, the Northern part of the Sahara, the central depot for the trade of the desert, whither came the long caravans of camels, laden with dates, and droves of sheep which pick up a living on the scanty herbage near the oases. It lies at the foot of the Aurès Mountains, one of the highest sections of the Atlas range, which rise precipitously from the Sahara, shutting it off from the rich Mediterranean lands.

At noon we took the train for Batna, which lies on the high table-land just North of the mountains. For an hour we followed the course of the oued, or river, which has burst through the mountains, bringing down the life-giving waters which make the oases, and which, distributed on every side by an elaborate system of irrigation, never reach the sea. On either side stretched vast expanses of ploughed land. For the present they were as naked as the desert, but by and by they will be clad in waving grain. Every now and again we passed forests of palm trees, and villages of sun-dried mud bricks scarcely distinguishable from the naked earth, and strings of camels and sheeted spectres seated on donkeys, and nomad tents like the upturned keels of boats. Soon we were among the outlying spurs of the mountains, red, flinty rocks, crumbling precipices, jagged peaks and ridges. It is a burnt-out land, from which Dante might have got his picture of the burning marl of Hell.

The mountains drew in closer and became more precipitous on either side, till quite suddenly we arrived at the Gorge of El Kantara, the Desert Gateway, a deep and narrow chasm, cut out by the river or torn by some convulsion of Nature. Behind us the rolling sands of the Desert stretched for thousands of miles towards the Sudan, towards the haunts of the wild Touaregs, towards Lake Tchad and Timbuctoo, the Garden of Allah, the unknown, the untracked, a more formidable barrier than the mountains. One moment, the vision is spread out towards the South; then the train rounds a corner and it is as if iron gates were clanged behind us, shutting out the illimitable distances. For half a mile the palm trees straggled after us, then they too ceased. We were in a different country, in the fastnesses of the mountains, climbing steadily till we reached a height of over 3000 feet.

Before we reached the corn lands of the plateau we passed through a harsh and bitter country. The earth was raw and metallic. It was dry and baked as in a limekiln. A withered tuft of starveling grass, here and there, only served to emphasise the failure of vegetation. There was no mould, no humus, no deposit of ancient growths. It was like a land of slag that had just been emptied from a crucible—a fierce land, a hateful land, a forbidding land, a land which could never be home, a land for nomads only. As we mounted, however, we approached the land of cedar and cypress forests, at first scrub and dwarf only, but the trees increasing in size in the higher altitudes. The distant hills were clothed in wood.

At Batna we were already 3400 feet above the level of the sea, having risen 3100 feet from Biskra. It was now six o'clock and dark. The cold mountain air caught us as we descended from our carriage. Clouds obscured the rising moon. "A fire in your room?" asked Mine Host of the Hôtel des Étrangers, as we arrived. "And a motor-car for Timgad to-morrow?" Certainly! We dined well in this simple but hospitable caravanserai, and after dinner we sat with Mine Host and his friends who all spoke English admirably, and talked for hours of Algeria, of the Mohammedan religion, of the Roman Remains, and of the vast resources of the country which might feed Europe. And so to bed.

In the morning we opened the Venetian

shutters to look out upon a new world. The veranda was an inch deep in snow. Every branch and twig of the trees which line the boulevard of this little French town was heavily loaded with snow, shining like silver filigree work against the dark walls opposite. The roofs were white, and around on every side the mountains encircled us with walls of white. It was a wintry landscape—a January morning in Scotland it might well be, but for the immobile Arab who stood muffled up in his white burnous leaning against one of the trees in the square.

Timgad lies twenty-three miles East of Batna, in the mouth of a valley running South into the Aurès Mountains. Our car climbed steadily upwards through a landscape that grew ever more wintry. At Lambèse we passed through the camp of the Third Legion buried in the snow. The great square block of the Prætorium, and the Arch of Septimius Severus stood up, black and forbidding, like stark sentinels of the vanished Empire, still at their post despite the lapse of centuries. A keen and piercing wind blew from the North. It penetrated the fibres of the thickest woollen overcoat. We gasped as it seemed to drag the very breath from our nostrils. We had need of all our furs and mackintoshes to keep warm. At Marcouna we had reached an altitude of over 4000 feet, the height of the summit of Ben Nevis. At the Horse-shoe Bend, in the January before the War, the snow drifted a metre deep, we were informed, and barred the way for a week, so that Mr. Lloyd George, whose signature is shown in the visitors' book at the Museum at Timgad, had to postpone his visit for some days. And even in the hotel at Batna he was beset by suffragettes.

From the formation of the snow we could see that the fields which stretched over the plateau were ploughed lands, and at the foot of the hills we could discern small clusters of huddled brown huts with an occasional larger farm-house. At a deserted spot on the descent to Timgad we suddenly noticed that a kerbed pavement ran along each side of the road. Side streets, similarly kerbed, ran off at right angles, and other streets ran parallel to the main road. A whole new town had been plotted out and the streets made. Three houses stood in a solitary block. Upon the front of one was inscribed the word "*Poste*," upon another "*Mairie*," and upon the third "*École*." Not another house was to be seen but those three advance guards of the Municipality that was yet to be, the Post Office, the Town Hall, and the School. Right in front of them in the naked field on the opposite side of the road a wandering nomad had pitched his tent. There he stood, immobile, in his turban and picturesque rags, like a Red Indian gazing over the solitude where one day New York was to raise its myriad voices.

By the time we arrived at Timgad the morning sun had melted the snow which lay lighter there and had even dried the paving-stones of the Roman streets. About three miles off we could discern, close up to the mountains, the two giant pillars, the only two remaining of the Capitol, like the tall steeples of some church. Here, in the midst of the conquered wilderness, fronting the unconquered mountains, an outpost of Empire, the Quetta of the second century, stood a Roman city. It was not a mere fortress in a native village, not a collection of the shacks of pioneers, not a group of houses near a camp, but a Roman City, on the model of Rome itself, built complete with all the resources of Roman town-planning science, equipped with all the luxuries of Roman civilisation, endowed with all the legal, municipal, social, industrial, and educational institutions which knitted the Empire together. It was as if one of the great Roman cities of Italy had been lifted complete, by some necromancer's art, and deposited in the wilds.

For the past thirteen centuries Timgad has lain hidden under ten feet of debris and accumulated soil. The Vandals plundered it, and after them the wild men of the hills had their will of it. The Byzantine soldiers took its stones to build their fortress outside the walls. After the Arab invasion it was deserted and the wilderness reclaimed it. There were no new cities or houses building in the neighbourhood for which its ruins might serve as a quarry. It was buried in its own ruins and in drifting sand and water-borne silt. And so the main substance of it has been preserved like Pompeii and Herculaneum. The strong foundations, the stone framework of the whole city, are as perfect to-day as when the Legionaries laid them in position. Modern excavation has uncovered the whole ground plan of the city. If it were determined to rebuild the city to-day the chief work would already be done.

We trod the paved streets; we explored the palaces and mansions; we lingered in the

Forum, and pictured the vanished life and gaiety and commerce and ambition; and we returned for lunch to the excellent little hotel which has been built beside the ruins. The head waiter had been for four years in the Piccadilly Hotel. But where was our car? It had returned to Batna with another party and would be back for us presently. An hour passed. No car! Ring up Batna and make anxious enquiries. It is all right! The chauffeur had lunched and set out for Timgad again. Patience! Another hour! A dark suspicion. Is it a plot to keep us at the hotel for the night? Cross-examine the manager. He is most distressed. It has begun to snow. Perhaps the weather has delayed him. Perhaps he has had a breakdown. Hope he had a spare tyre.

Another hour. Snowing heavier. Telephone again to Batna. Alas! The chauffeur has just returned to Batna on foot. He has had a breakdown, and had to walk back eight miles. Another car will be sent at once. Well, we must make the best of it. The hotel is comfortable, we have a roaring fire, and it is tea-time. It is now a regular storm. It is impossible to see across the road for snow and sleet. Night is rapidly descending, and a faint watery radiance shows where the moon is rising.

At last! Honk, honk! The car has arrived. The chauffeur appears, muffled up in a shaggy goat-skin coat, beating his hands on his breast to keep out the cold. A cup of hot coffee to revive him, an interval to light the lamps, and we are off.

The snow was driving thick and fast, and as we reached the higher part of the route it was lying four inches deep on either side. The road was covered with slush, and in the hollows there were great pools. Swish! A great wave went up on each side of us. We might be in a hydroplane. Splash! Another and a larger wave. "Oh, sailor, 'tis a dreadful night—there's danger on the deep." The lights were washed out. A halt to light up again. Before we had gone a couple of hundred yards they were washed out again. No use! We must proceed without lights. Fortunately the moon was up, although obscured by clouds, and the reflection from the white snow-fields afforded sufficient light to enable a careful driver to pick his way. Round the Horse-shoe Bend we swept. The snow was drifting. Again we were reminded of Scotland. We might be feeling our way across the Grampians in a snowstorm.

Through such storms the Roman Legions marched within a few stages of the Desert. There were among them men who had served in Scotland. Septimius Severus, who was Emperor from A.D. 193 to 211, himself a native African by birth, during his restless life led his Legions to every frontier in his Empire. He penetrated the Highlands of Scotland, and the wild passes of the Aurès Mountains. On the edge of the Desert there may still be seen a stone with an inscription commemorating his victories in Britain. He knew the snows of the North, and the snows of the South. His experiences in Africa must have prepared him for the worst in Scotland.

At last we were back in the Hôtel des

Étrangers. Dinner was waiting, and then, in the bedrooms, great fires of cedar logs. There is no fire so noble, so generous, so friendly, as a log fire, and of all logs, the cedar is the best. It sizzles and crackles and fills the room with an exquisite balsamic fragrance like incense. How eloquently it talks of the rest after the day's march by the camp fire. From the same forests came the cedar logs burned on the hearths at Timgad, and in the camp of the Legion at Lambèse. The tired soldiers stretched themselves after dinner just like us, and sniffed the smoke and watched the flames, and discussed their campaigns. It was another link with the past.

## CHAPTER X

# FRONTIERS OF ROME

AFRICA and Britain were both Roman Provinces, and there is a most interesting parallel between them which throws much light upon the early history of both countries. On the Southern shores of the Mediterranean and on the Northern shores of the English Channel the Romans found the trading settlements of the Phœnicians and the dolmens and megalithic monuments of another great pioneering race which, before the dawn of history, preceded the Phœnicians. The same great Emperors and generals, Cæsar, Hadrian, and Severus, led their legions there in person, and consolidated their conquests by the same methods. Throughout the Roman world the same system of military and civil organisation prevailed, and the same civilising agencies of road-making, bridge-building, and town planning were at work.

But the parallel goes much further. Both were frontier Provinces. In both cases, at the limits of their occupation, the Romans were brought into contact with wild mountain tribes whom they never succeeded in subduing, and who constantly broke through the defences to plunder the rich towns and farms of the Province.

The Picts and Scots in the North carried on the same guerilla warfare as did the Berbers in the South. In both cases the Romans were forced to defend their settled possessions by means of a strongly fortified line beyond which they subsequently erected an advanced line. Stranger still, when the Empire was breaking up in the fifth century, the Vandals who crossed over from Spain and fell with fire and sword upon the rich towns of Numidia were a branch of the Gothic race of pirates—to which also belonged the Saxon, Angle, and Danish pirates—who found in England their plunder ground.

There the parallel ends. The Vandals, having subdued the effete Romans, were themselves subdued by the climate, and were succeeded by the Arabs who brought with them a system of religion, and ethics, and of life which was alien to Europe. The Northern races took permanent root in Britain, and their soul was the soul of Europe. Mohammedanism became the religion of the South and Christianity of the North.

It was the Emperor Hadrian who, having succeeded to the throne in A.D. 117, set himself to consolidate and defend the rich new Provinces which the Romans had developed so rapidly during the previous century. Britain was his first care. The narrow isthmus from the Solway to the Tyne, some seventy-five miles across, was the defensive line which he selected, and he had it fortified with all the resources of the military science of his age. A great wall of dressed stone was built across, with a deep ditch on its North side and a line of earthworks on the South. Along the wall at intervals were strong permanent camps such as those whose remains have been uncovered at Housesteads, Corbridge, Chesters, and Birdoswald, which, with their residential suburbs and trading stations, assumed the aspect of towns and astounded the Barbarians with the spectacle of Roman civilisation and luxury.

Hadrian's Wall was not, like the Great Wall of China, a mere dead barrier between barbarism and civilisation. It was a fortress rather than a sharp boundary. It was a military stronghold from which a strong influence could be exercised over the territory beyond, and, indeed, there were strong stations and settlements to the North of it as at Birrens and Bremenium. The tribes sheltered by the Southern Highlands of Scotland, the Louthers, the Lammermuirs, and the Pentlands, continuing to give trouble by their raids, it was found necessary to advance further to the North and to erect a second defensive line across the still narrower isthmus between the Forth and the Clyde. This was carried out in the reign of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 138–161, by the legate Lollius Urbicus.

The Antonine Wall might rather be described as an entrenchment with an earthen vallum and a military road, and the military stations along it were fortified posts rather than towns. It held in check the wild Caledonians of the Northern Highlands. It was an advanced line which could be quickly reinforced or abandoned if necessary, but the real military base upon which the security of the Province depended lay along the line of Hadrian's Wall. Septimius Severus, A.D. 193–211, another of the great architects of Empire, came over like Hadrian to see to the defence of the British Province. Undismayed by age and sickness, he penetrated to the North of Scotland, borne in a litter with his army, suffering heavy losses among the inhospitable mountains. But finding no better frontier or no territory worth the cost of conquest he returned to the former lines and repaired and strengthened the works of Hadrian. Before he could return to Rome death ended his long Odyssey at York.

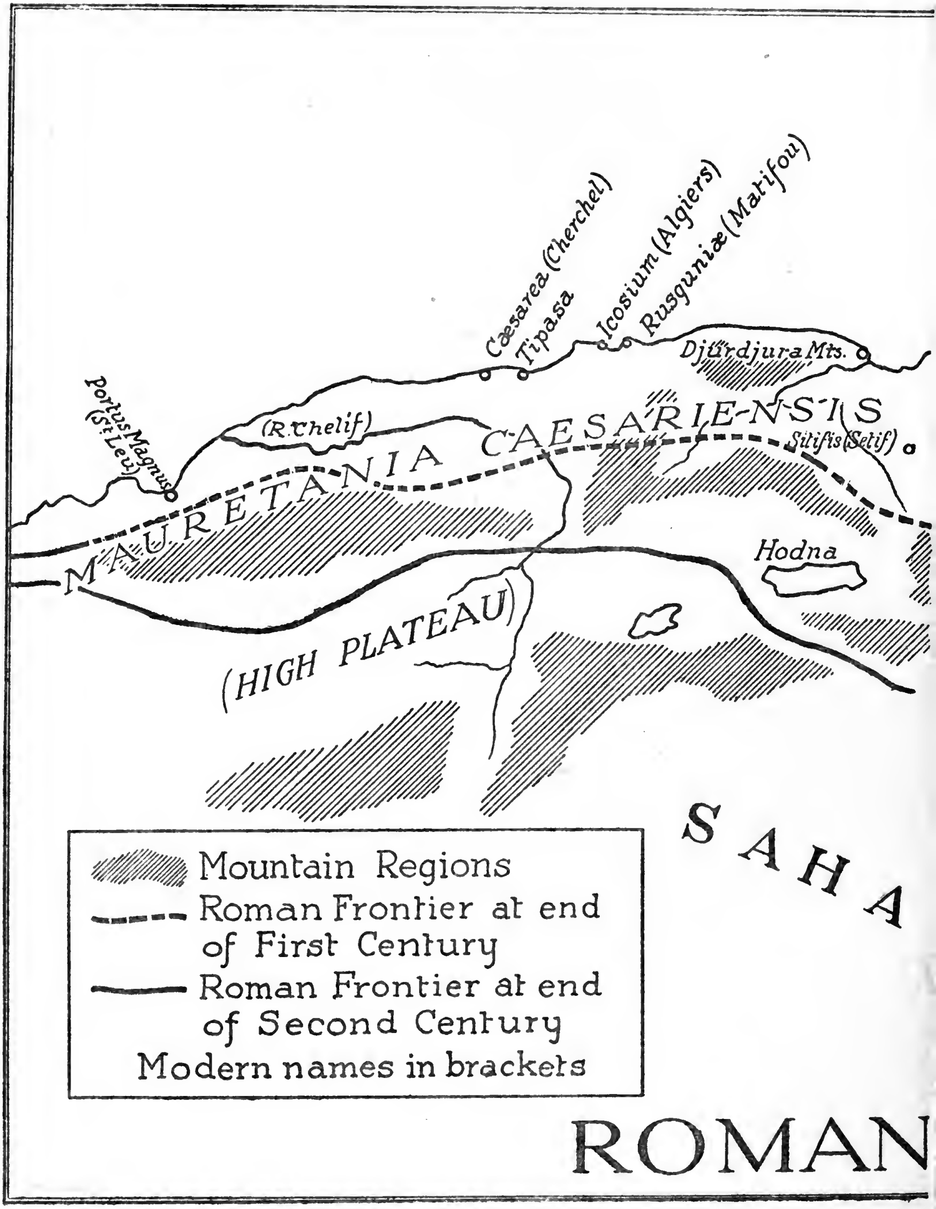
In Africa we find the same policy carried out in person by the same Emperors. The Roman occupation of Africa was gradual. They were forced to penetrate further and still further into the interior by the necessity of subduing the raiding nomad tribes. At first the politicians would have been content with Carthage and the surrounding country, but the colonists were attracted by fertile plains of the Medjerda Valley and of Southern Tunis, or Byzacium. It was a land of milk and honey, or rather of wine and oil. Then the lure of the rolling wheat lands of the High Plateau attracted them further inland, until they came to the mountain wall which supports the Plateau on the South and shuts it off from the Sahara Desert. This is the Atlas range which at its Eastern extremity gathers into a well-defined group known as the Aurès Mountains, containing some of the highest peaks. On their Northern side they rise some 3000 feet above the Plateau, but on their Southern side they fall almost 6500 feet sheer down to the Desert.

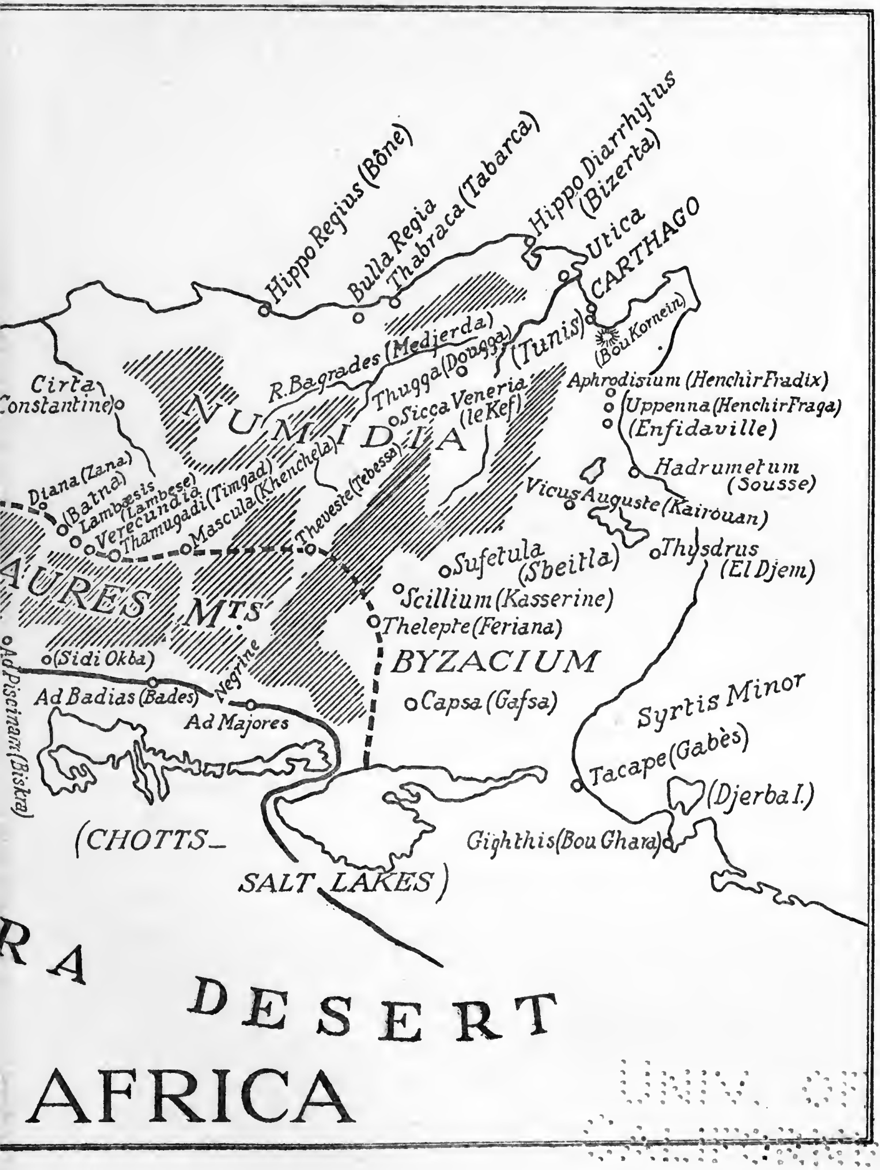
As they advanced into the continent the

Romans found no narrow isthmus like that between the Solway and the Tyne, but in the Aurès Mountains they found a wall already built. Here was the defensive boundary which Nature seemed to have fixed to their Empire. In the high valleys, sheltered by dense cedar forests, disdaining agriculture and living on their herds and by the chase, lurked the wild Berber tribes, as untamable and as inaccessible as the Caledonians, and beyond, through the Sahara, moved the still wilder tribes of Desert nomads. It was along the Northern base of this mountain range, therefore, that the Romans drew their defensive line and planted their garrisons in military strongholds. This line can still be traced by the ruins of the great cities of strength, and the fortified camps, and the military road with its stone paving and massive bridges which connected them, and along which reinforcements could be hurried to any point of danger. From East to West, from the frontier of Tunis for 150 miles to where a minor range cuts North-west across the Plateau to the coast this chain of towns and camps consisted of Tebessa (Theveste), Khenchela (Mascula), Timgad (Thamugadi), Marcouna (Verecundia), and Lambèse (Lambæsis), and the line was continued in less strength North-west through Ain Zana (Diana) and Setif (Sitifis).

The chief expansion of the Roman Empire in Africa was spread over the first century. Tebessa was the first great military centre from which the interior was held in subjugation. Lying at the Eastern extremity of the Aurès Mountains, in the midst of fertile valleys, and in

MAP OF
ROMAN AFRICA


Caesarea (Cherchel)
Tipasa
Icosium (Algiers)
Rusguniæ (Matifou)
Djurdjura Mts.
Portus Magnus (St Leu)
(R. Chelif)
MAURETANIA CAESARIENSIS
Sitifis (Setif)
Hodna
(HIGH PLATEAU)
SAHA
Mountain Regions
Roman Frontier at end of First Century
Roman Frontier at end of Second Century
Modern names in brackets
ROMAN


Hippo Regius (Bône)
Bulla Regia
Thabraca (Tabarca)
Hippo Diarrhytus
(Bizerta)
Utica
CARTHAGO
(Bou Kornein)
R. Bagrades (Medjerda)
(Tunis)
Thugga (Dougga)
Cirta
Constantine
NUMIDIA
Sicca Veneria
(le Kef)
Aphrodisium (Henchir Fradix)
Uppenna (Henchir Fraga)
(Enfidaville)
Hadrumetum
(Sousse)
Diana (Zana)
(Batna)
Lambæsis
(Lambese)
Verecundia
Thamugadi (Timgad)
Mascula (Khenchela)
Theveste (Tebessa)
Vicus Auguste (Kairouan)
Thysdrus
(El Djem)
Sufetula
(Sbeitla)
Scillium (Kasserine)
AURES MTS
Thelepte (Feriana)
BYZACIUM
Ad Piscinam (Biskra)
(Sidi Okba)
Negrine
Ad Badias (Bades)
Ad Majores
Capsa (Gafsa)
Syrtis Minor
Tacape (Gabès)
(Djerba I.)
(CHOTTS-
SALT LAKES)
Gighthis (Bou Ghara)
RA
DESERT
AFRICA

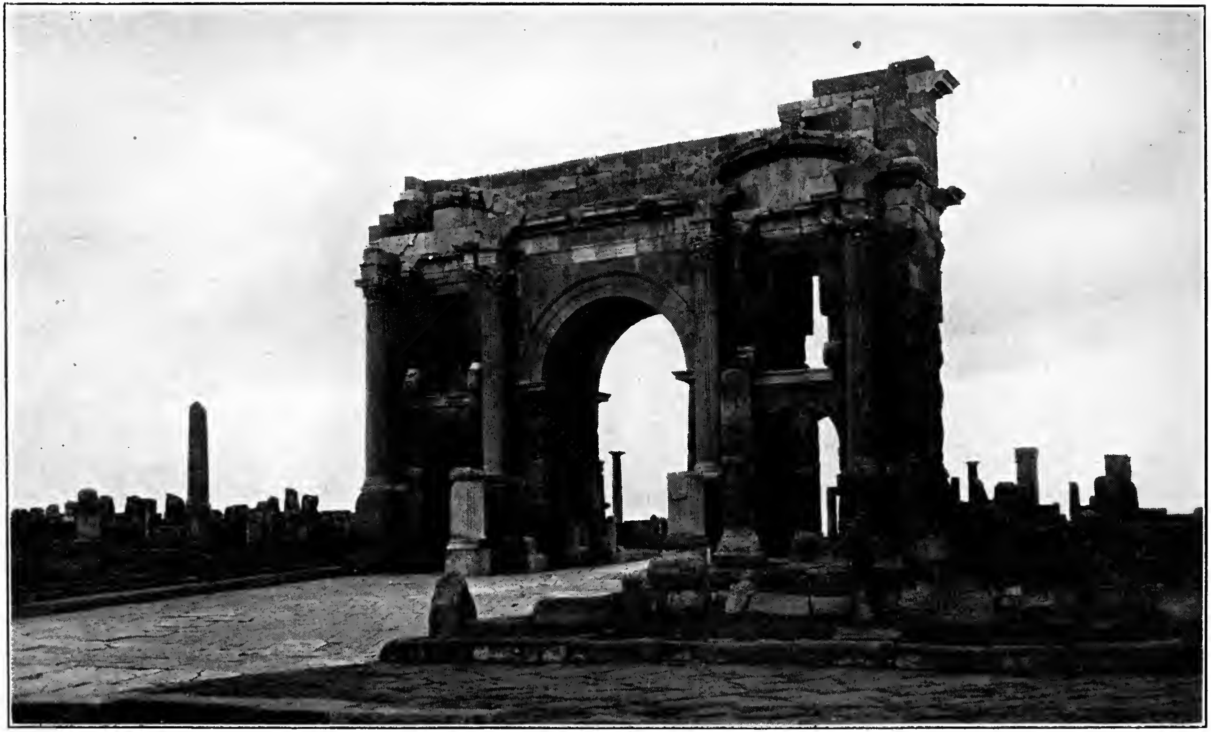
UNIV. OF

an important strategic position, it soon became the richest city in Africa after Carthage. A military road of 190 miles connected it with Carthage, and it was the junction of nine roads radiating to different points on the coast and in the interior. The well-preserved ruins of the Arch of Caracalla, the Temple of Minerva, the early Christian Basilica, and the Byzantine Citadel are among the most interesting architectural monuments of Rome that still survive. About the year A.D. 20 Tacferinas, a native deserter from the Roman Army, led a great revolt of the Berber tribes, and the Third Augustan Legion was first quartered in this district, which remained its headquarters for half a century.

In the scheme of Imperial Defence one legion was assigned to Africa, and three legions to Britain. At first sight this would seem disproportionate, but the explanation is that in Africa the defensive policy adopted on the Western limits was at first one of buffer native states, and later one of a loose occupation by means of native levies. Proconsular Africa, corresponding roughly to Tunisia, civilised, rich, and pacific, was under a civil administration. Numidia, corresponding roughly to the Algerian Province of Constantine, was under direct military administration and was the real base of Roman military dominion in Africa. The two Mauretanias, corresponding roughly to Western Algeria and Morocco, were governed not by Legates of senatorial rank, but by Procurators of equestrian rank, who were not entitled to command legionaries, and had to rely on auxiliary troops for their garrisons. The treasure lay in the rich plains round Carthage, and upon Numidia the defence of Africa depended.

The famous African Legion was the Third Legion, which for some unrecorded exploit had been honoured with the name of Augustus himself. Augustus first established the legions on a permanent basis as a regular standing army. Hitherto the troops had been specially raised for each campaign and then disbanded. Moreover, he assigned to each legion its permanent place in the defensive scheme of the Empire. The Third Augustan Legion was sent to Africa and for three centuries Africa was its home. In times of stress it was reinforced by drafts from other legions, including even the legions stationed in Britain; or it would send out drafts to remote parts of the Empire. It is recorded that there were Moors serving in the garrison along the line of Hadrian's Wall in Britain. But the Third Legion as a body never left Africa. It was recruited from the colonial and native population. Father, son, and grandson served in the ranks and finally settled down with a pension and a grant of land within sound of the bugles.

From Tebessa the line of defence was gradually extended Westwards, keeping pace with the advance of colonisation. At first the base was pushed forward to Khenchela, or Mascula as it was then called, and there another Roman city grew up commanding one of the mountain passes to the Sahara. By the end of the first century it was found that the key to the Sahara lay still



TIMGAD : THE ARCH OF TRAJAN

Showing the paved streets

further West. In the year A.D. 100 the Emperor Trajan committed to the Legion the task of building complete, on the ground plan of a Roman camp, the city of Timgad, which was to be at once a fortress in strength and a perpetual witness to the tribes of Aurès of the splendour and magnificence of Rome. For thirteen centuries the city of Timgad has been deserted, and there it still stands to-day, a monument in the wilderness, its thousand broken columns pointing to the sky, its massive walls enclosing vacant temples and palaces, its flag-stoned pavements furrowed deep by the chariot wheels of four Roman centuries.

The Emperor Hadrian, having established the defence of Britain upon a sound basis, traversed Gaul and Spain and crossed over to Africa to study the military problem for himself. The whole land felt the quickening influence of his genius for construction. Nowhere, not even in Rome itself, is there to-day a more stupendous monument of Roman dominion than the eighty miles of aqueduct by which he brought the waters of Zaghouan to Carthage. He paved with stone the 190 miles of military road from Carthage to Tebessa and drove forward other new roads. He completed the Southern line of defence by moving the Legion still further West to Lambèse, commanding the approach to the great gorge of El Kantara through which the railway now runs South to the Sahara. He reviewed the Legion at Lambèse while it was building its great permanent camp there, and the enduring stone still records the speech which he made on that occasion.

The importance of Lambèse in the defence of Africa cannot be exaggerated. It was the pivot upon which the line turned North towards the coast again. It was the real key to the Sahara. The French have acknowledged the wisdom of the choice by establishing at Batna, in the same neighbourhood, their chief garrison town in the South. Indeed, when they first founded Batna they gave it the title of New Lambèse. Here the Third Legion had its headquarters for over two centuries. The place became a military colony rather than a barrack. The soldiers married and built houses for their families outside the camp. A great and prosperous town grew up, and the veterans farmed the surrounding land.

The records which have survived of the Roman occupation of Britain and of the life of the garrison along the wall from Solway to the Tyne, are few and scattered. A stray sentence here and there in the fragmentary works of a Roman historian, a couplet from the verses of a panegyrist or satirist, a few inscribed stones discovered beside the wall—such are the materials from which we have to reconstruct our picture of the past. The wear and tear of centuries in this most densely populated country, with the operations of agriculture and industry, and a corrosive climate, have served to obliterate most of the footprints of Rome, but in Africa the conditions tended to preserve them. The climate was dry and desiccating. The country in the interior was depopulated and the ruins remained deserted and undisturbed from generation to generation. Timgad remains to-day as complete an example of a Roman town as is Pompeii, which was preserved in the ashes of Vesuvius. Lambèse is a library in stone recording the history of the Roman frontier system.

Nowhere else in Europe, Asia, or Africa does there exist a Roman camp so perfectly preserved, so fully documented with inscriptions, as the headquarters of the Third Augustan Legion at Lambèse. Over two thousand five hundred inscriptions have already been deciphered. The lay-out of the camp, the principles of fortification, the system of military administration, and even the domestic life of the soldiers are all revealed. If Scott's Antiquary, the Laird of Monkbarns, had been able to study this perfect model on the spot there would have been no need for him to revise his Essay on Castramentation after his interview in the Kaim of Kinprunes with the old beggar, Edie Ochiltree, who scattered his theories and brought down his house of cards with the fatal words " Prætorian here, Prætorian there, I mind the bigging o't ! "

Here the historian of Roman Britain may find the solution of many of the problems that baffle him. Here the digger among the long-buried foundations on the muirs and fells of Northumberland and Cumberland will find the key-plan that will tell him what to look for and how to interpret his discoveries.

In the reign of Antonine the Romans had to solve the same problems in the Aurès Mountains as in the Southern Highlands of Scotland, and they solved it in the same way, by an advance through these turbulent regions and the establishment of an advanced line of defence. In Africa this advanced line, corresponding to the Antonine Wall in Scotland, was drawn from the great salt lakes in Southern Tunisia, along the edge of the Desert at the foot of the Southern slope of the Aurès. Beginning at Gafsa, which corresponded to Tebessa on the North side of the mountains, it stretched Westwards to Biskra, which corresponded to Lambèse. There were no great cities or camps on this line, but there was a series of fortified stations and forts (*castella*). From these forts a series of watch towers led through the mountain passes, and from one to another signals of any threatened danger were flashed to the stronger bases on the North.

In these wild and remote passes the record of the Roman pioneers still remains. Where the train to-day passes through the gorge of El Kantara there has been found an altar dedicated by some Asiatic legionaries from Palmyra to their god Malagbelus. In 1850 the French General, Saint-Armand, with his troops, penetrated Khanga-Tigaminin, one of the most inaccessible defiles of the Aurès. Convinced that he was the first general to lead an army through that defile, he proceeded to look for a suitable rock on which to cut an inscription celebrating so notable an achievement. To his amazement he found that on the rock he selected he had already been anticipated, for there, in the bold lettering of the masters of the world, still fresh after seventeen hundred years, was a record which told that, in the time of Antonine, the Sixth Ferrata Legion (from Judea) had been employed here in opening up a military road across the Aurès.

Septimius Severus was an African by birth and by descent. A mighty ruler of men, his compelling hand was felt from the Euphrates to the Tay, but most of all in his native Africa. The march of his conquering Legion was stayed only by the Sahara in the South and the Atlantic in the West. But he soon recognised that these remote regions would be a barren and a costly heritage, and that the line North of the Aurès must remain the true military base. When he came to Britain to fight his last campaign, to renew the Wall of Hadrian, and to die at York, he came fresh from a study of the African frontier system, and a great triumphal arch which still marks the entrance to the ruins of Lambèse recalls his visit to the headquarters of the Legion.

The French, with logical precision, have followed the Roman model. Batna, the modern garrison town, rectangular and walled, is laid out like a Roman camp. Their excellent military road runs East and West along the Northern base of the Aurès from Batna to Tebessa. As the tourist speeds along through the solitude in his motor, he passes the grim Prætorium at Lambèse, the wind-worn arch on the height at Marcouna, and the forest of pillars at Timgad. The Roman engineers for the most part drove straight ahead ; the French engineers have been more careful to follow the contour lines so as to secure a gentle gradient. Repeatedly the new road crosses the track of the old road and they are seldom far apart. To left or right the old track can be discerned, direct and undeviating. Here an isolated arch amid the snow of January testifies to the existence of some vanished rest station. There a broken bridge of massive piers and heavy round arches shows where the chariots crossed a gully.

It is a wonderful sight, the Ancient and the Modern side by side after the dark interregnum of Mohammedanism. It is as if, digging through the accumulated rubbish of pagan centuries, we suddenly come upon the antique foundations of a civilisation that is our own.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE DOLMEN-HUNTER

"I BELIEVE there are some interesting Roman Remains hereabouts," I said tentatively to my professorial-looking neighbour, as I sat down to early morning café in the hotel drawing-room at Hammam Meskoutine. The hotel consisted of four separate pavilions built round a large square, in the centre of which, although it was February, the orange and lemon trees were heavily laden with golden fruit. Among the trees was scattered a small open-air museum of Roman antiquities, statues, pillars, capitals, memorial and votive stones, dedications and other inscriptions, together with a number of pre-Roman relics, Phœnician and Libyan. I had spent an hour last evening after my arrival examining them, and down below the Hot Springs I had caught sight of a broken arch which bore the unmistakable stamp of the Eternal City.

"Yes," he replied, with a slightly bored look, "I daresay—for those who are interested in such things. But they are rather modern, are they not? I always think the Romans vulgarised things. Their spirit was commercial. Everything was standardised and machine-made—an utter lack of individuality about them!"

" Ah, I suppose you will be more interested in the Phœnicians. I see they have left their traces here also," I rejoined. " But were they not also rather a commercial race ? "

" Yes, indeed, and pretty modern too. If you want a really interesting problem you must go back more than four thousand years. Hire a mule and ride out to Roknia—it's only some nine miles away—and there you will find some of the most interesting megalithic monuments I have encountered. There's individuality. The whole place seems to have been one vast cemetery. There must be over a thousand dolmens. There are thousands more down towards Philippeville. Now, who were the Dolmen-Builders ? "

" Who were they ? " I echoed. " Were they the same people who built Stonehenge and the dolmens in Brittany ? "

" That's just the question I am trying to answer ! " He had lost the bored expression, and was speaking with the zest of a hunter on the trail. " I have come here on their track. I have followed them through Sicily and Malta. Ah, what a labour it would save if all this information had been properly collected and indexed. There is the history of the march of civilisation waiting to be written, but instead of being able to consult the authorities in the British Museum and the Records Office one must tramp the world. The reference library is scattered over the surface of three continents. I must see the dolmens in Syria next. There are others to be found as far East as Persia."

" Are you looking for any special signs ? " I asked. " How do you hope to identify the builders ? "

He produced a scrap of paper from his pocket and pushed it towards me with some excitement. It contained the pencil outline of a clay urn, the lower half bulging out and the upper half curving inwards to the narrow mouth.

" There ! " he said, " I am looking for that pot. If it exists in the sepulchral cists here it proves that these dolmens were built by the same race who built dolmens in Scandinavia, in the British Isles, in Brittany, and in Spain. Notice its peculiar shape—convex in the lower half, and concave in the upper part. It is a peculiar shape —not one which would naturally occur to a man making an urn out of clay for the first time. Why did they choose that shape ? What suggested it ? If we only knew that it would help us to form a theory. I have made a guess, but there are not sufficient data to confirm it. If you take a vessel of skin and insert in it a hoop of willow to distend it, when you lift it by the neck it would assume some such shape as this. I have heard that the Shawiah tribe from the Aurès Mountains, who come here every year to burn charcoal after they have sown their corn, use a water jar of this very shape. I hope to verify this when I go further South."

" But what conclusion does all this lead to ? Will you be able to deduce who the Dolmen-Builders were, and where they came from, and what they were doing in all these different countries ? "

" Unfortunately the data are not yet sufficiently collected and arranged to enable one to do more than guess. A great deal depends on the distribution of the dolmens, on the frequency or infrequency of their occurrence in certain countries. What we want is a complete survey on a large-scale map, noting every known instance. They occur very frequently in the South of Sweden, but very seldom in Norway, and then only in the parts adjacent to Sweden. They occur on the Southern shores of the Baltic. One or two very interesting and suggestive examples are to be found in Poland, in the Posen district. They occur also, though not with great frequency, in Denmark, and a very few in Flanders. Many examples exist in Scotland, in Ireland, and in England as far South as Derbyshire. Then we come upon them again in the Southern Counties, in Cornwall, in Wiltshire, and in Kent. Stonehenge is probably the latest and most perfect development of the art. They are very numerous in Brittany and Western France, 'the arc of greatest density' " (he spoke this phrase caressingly), " running from Brest to Montpellier. They occur again frequently in Spain and Portugal, in Sicily and Malta, in Syria and in Persia. One example has been found in Egypt. None have been noted in Cyrenaica, Tripoli, or Tunis." (He was wrong about Tunis. I saw dolmens later at Enfidaville, near where the mountains rise from the edge of the rich Sahel.) " But they are very numerous in this neighbourhood. I do not think they occur much further West in Algeria, at least I have not been able to hear of any."

I was glad to be able to make a small contribution to this erudition. " You will find an example in the Museum at Algiers," I said, "and I heard of several on the coast a few miles West of Algiers."

"That is very important. I will inquire about them when I reach Algiers. Well now, there you have the general distribution. They are to be found in countries adjacent to the Mediterranean, the North Sea and the Baltic, from Syria to Sweden, but only in certain of these countries, and with varying frequency. These are the countries in which the Dolmen-Builders lived, or, as I think more probable, which they visited. They were, therefore, a maritime people and they voyaged in search of something. But where did they come from, and what did they seek?

"Swedish archæologists incline, perhaps naturally, to the view that the Dolmen-Builders originated in Scandinavia and migrated Southwards. It is possible, but the theory does not explain everything. The Dolmen-Builders had a knowledge of agriculture, and agriculture did not originate in Scandinavia. For my own part I incline to the view that they originated in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably in Syria. They were a race of pioneers and prospectors, and they came Westwards along the Mediterranean shores looking for copper. It is in the countries where copper is to be found that their traces are most numerous. And my theory is that they were the race who first discovered the secret of the manufacture of bronze. They were the founders of the Bronze Age. The discovery probably took place in Spain, where both tin and copper are found in proximity. By some accident the two ores would be smelted together and the amalgam formed. Weapons made from this wonderful new substance would be harder, stronger, and more capable of taking a cutting edge than any other weapons. The Dolmen-Builders having discovered the secret would exploit it. Their bronze weapons would give them a superiority over every other race with whom they came in contact, just as the fire-arms of the Spaniards gave them a superiority over the Indians of America. This accounts for the hold which they obtained over the countries which they chiefly visited, and in which they probably made great settlements."

"Did they get copper in Sweden, or was it iron they were after there ?"

"Oh, no. This was long before the discovery of iron. They went to the Baltic for amber, which was greatly prized by the early races, and in this lies the possible significance of the isolated dolmens in Posen. One of the most ancient trade routes between the North and the South was from the Black Sea up the River Dnieper. In later times, at the beginning of the Viking Age, just before Ruric carved out a kingdom for himself which became Russia, the route joined the Baltic at its Eastern extremity, passing through Novgorod to the Neva. In these earlier days, however, it probably did not ascend the Dnieper past the Pripet Marshes, but cut overland, on the East of the Carpathians, through the Bukavino, through Poland, and so on to the Southern shore of the Baltic. If the Dolmen-Builders used this route it would account for the dolmens in Posen. But I have no information as to whether any examples have been found along the Southern portion of this route. It is a matter for investigation.

"Some day the history of that great pioneering, seafaring, conquering race, who founded the age of bronze and built Stonehenge, will be written. The past will be made to yield its secrets. We have still to learn the grammar of archæology. The materials are scattered all around us. It must be collected, arranged, and indexed. Above all, a good index is necessary to make the data available for those who are doing the constructive work. So far we have only turned a few random pages in the prehistoric library. We must learn to read."

## CHAPTER XII

# WHO GOES SHOPPING?

THE artists had swooped down upon Tunisia in earnest and painful pursuit of the colour of the East—the strange architecture, the streets, the native life, the Arabs and donkeys and camels. We found them at Tunis, at Carthage, and at Kairouan, strongly entrenched in the hotels. The ladies wore "artistic" blouses or jumpers, and they talked the jargon of the studios. The country or the people seemed to interest them little. They gave scarcely a thought to the historical associations. They cared nothing for romance and adventure. Their sole occupation was the grim pursuit of colour impressions, tones, light and shade. They made a toil of the pursuit of beauty. Early in the morning they went forth in a procession with camp stool and canvas, box of paints, and brushes. They returned for meals and set out again with clockwork regularity. They seemed obsessed with the idea that art was greater than life.

But the Glasgow artist whom we met in Tunis was different. He was interested in life, in men and women, in places and things, in history, philosophy, politics, and stocks and shares. He had an insatiable curiosity about life, the kind of curiosity which makes a great journalist. And withal he was no smooth-rubbed cosmopolitan, but a Glasgow man, Glasgow in the grain, Glasgow in his accent, Glasgow in his shrewdness, Glasgow in his instinct for a bargain. He had the artistic detachment which enabled him to laugh at himself and at others.

"Let us visit the Souks," said the Glasgow artist. "There is an auction of jewellery proceeding in the Old Slave Market. You might pick up a bargain."

We entered the Medina, or native quarter, through the great arch of the Porte de France which leads direct from a Paris boulevard to the Bagdad of Haroon Al Raschid. We walked through the tangle of lanes beset by touting "guides" and importunate shopkeepers who lie in wait for tourists at their doors. "Meester! Meester!" "Look here!" "I will show you somtheeng!" These are the tourist traps. They catch the unwary before they reach the genuine Souks where business is done in a much more leisurely and dignified Oriental fashion.

It was a strange world we entered, ancient beyond computation. We passed antique pillars picked out with barbaric colours, arches, vaulted passages, dark cavernous shops that look like a wild beast's den. Here a door ajar affords a glimpse of a wonderful courtyard full of colour. Here a fig, or a palm, or an orange tree laden with fruit, looks over a wall. Here is a window of exquisite arabesque lattice-work through which the ladies of the harem may be peeping. Jews, Sicilians, Maltese, Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Moors, Kabyles, Negroes, Berbers of innumerable tribes clad in every variety of turban, fez, and burnous, go shambling past in slippers. Strange viands are cooking outside the eating houses, and strange smells assail the nostrils. This town is full of the loot of Carthage. No one can tell what carved stones, what exquisite pillars, what stone-inscribed records may be built into these walls, concealed for centuries. A shoemaker squats on a block of stone at the mouth of his little cave. It is a Corinthian capital. Here are others seated on a bench. It is a fluted column. This native quarter must very closely resemble what the business and trading parts of Carthage were two thousand years ago. Manners change but slightly and slowly in the Orient.

The first of the Souks to be reached by the visitor approaching through the Porte de France is the Souk-el-Attarin, recognisable at once by the heavy scent of attar of roses. It runs alongside the Grand Mosque from which proceeds at certain hours a pungent savour of incense. The doors are carefully barricaded to prevent the infidel from catching even a glimpse of the interior, and a notice in French, Italian, English, and German proclaims: "*Reservé au Culte Musulman. Entrée Interdit.*" The Souk-el-Attarin deserves a special visit all to itself. We will return.

But here is the Souk-el-Blagdjia, the Souk of the shoemakers, or rather the slipper-makers, for the Arab has no use for shoes. Festoons of the saffron-coloured leather slippers hang from the walls, and at the mouth of each den the proprietor sits hammering and sewing. To see the Arab shuffling about in his slippers is to realise the meaning of the expression "slipshod." His slippers "slip" on to the feet and "slip" off like a sheath. They are not semi-shoes like our slippers. They have no heels and no uppers at the back to hold them on. Even when they are made like ours the Arab folds the uppers down flat into the slipper and pulls the inner sole out over the top of them so that his foot can slip in and out without impediment. It is only by shuffling that these slippers can be prevented from falling off. They are incompatible with hurry or with any display of energy. They necessitate ease and leisure of movement. It is said in derision of the Arabs of Mostaganem in Algeria that they had heels made on their slippers to enable them the better to run after their prey—and away from their enemies.

We were fain to buy a pair of yellow slippers, but the Glasgow Artist would not hear of it. "No, no!" he said. "The man who wears these slippers is already half a Turk. Their moral effect is instantaneous. Insensibly there is a relaxation of rigid standards—a softening of the hard Northern fibre. Like an Eastern drug they paralyse the will. Like the lotus fruit they transform the man of action into a dreamer. Their philosophy is fatalism. There is a street near the Place Bab Souika where they make European slippers in beautiful green, yellow, or reddish brown leather. They are just as interesting as souvenirs, and you can wear them with self-respect.

"Besides," he said, "at the Place Bab Souika you can buy these identical Arab slippers at a franc the pair cheaper!"

And here is the Souk-el-Trouk, the Souk of the tailors, with all the tailors stitching away for dear life or unravelling long hanks of wool across the street. We stop to price a burnous. A swarthy interpreter springs up from nowhere and the neighbours gather round. "I spik Scotsch," he says pointedly to our Artist. "I know Glasgow. The Broomielaw! I was sailor in ship sailing to Clyde. In Glasgow is much money."

"Never mind that," said the Glasgow Artist, blushing. "What is the price of this burnous?"

"It is ver' cheap—only three hundred and fifty francs."

"It is ver' dear. We will return another day and see if they are cheaper." He resisted all further attempts at bargaining. "That is the way to deal with them. They will be in a much more reasonable frame of mind to-morrow. You must not hurry a bargain here." The news of our attempted deal travelled along the Souk in front of us and burnouses were dragged from their receptacles and displayed to us as we passed along. "Only three hundred francs!" "Not to-day. We will return."

"This is the Souk-des-Femmes, the Ladies' Paradise. I have my eye on a piece of silk in one of the shops, a real antique, hand-woven, the relic of some harem long vanished. In the Bardo Palace you will see that the hangings of the bed of the Bey's favourite wife are of the same fabric. Just the very thing for a studio."

It was nearly eleven o'clock before we reached the Old Slave Market, a pillared court like the nave of a church, where, in the days of the

THE OLD SLAVE MARKET

In the Tunis Souks

Barbary Corsairs, the Christian captives were put up for auction. Many a fair Circassian has looked desperately round these pillars as round the bars of a cage, while her charms were being enumerated and the bids increased. This square is a kind of public forum. It was so they trafficked in ancient days.

At one corner is an Arab Coffee House. Outside are benches covered with bamboo mats, on one of which sits, cross-legged, a venerable Arab. He bears a close resemblance to one of the most distinguished of our judges. " That old chap," said the Glasgow Artist, " is a rich dealer. He has no shop, but he sits every day on that seat. He carries no stock but what he wears. He will sell you any of his jewellery. Let us look at his rings."

The Glasgow Artist greeted him ceremoniously and pointed to one of his rings. The venerable gentleman, smiling benignly, took it off and handed it over for examination. It was a large sapphire in an antique setting. " What is the price ? " " Two hundred francs." " But is it genuine ? " " Alas, he does not speak French, only Arabic." But a man from the crowd which had gathered round volunteered to act as interpreter. " Is it genuine ? " It is ancient. He has had it eleven years. It pleases him. It is undoubtedly emerald. If Monsieur wishes to buy it he can have it. There is a bureau in the Souk, maintained by the Government, at which, for a small fee, an expert will examine jewels, and certify whether they are genuine. A reference to him revealed the fact that this was, indeed, an emerald, but it was what is called a

“ reconstructed ” stone. Yes, no doubt that is so, the owner agreed, but it is very good and very cheap. He slipped it philosophically on his finger again.

The old Arab sported a massive watch chain which looked as if it might serve to weigh an anchor. Perhaps Monsieur would like to see his watch. It is also ancient. He unfastened it, chain and all, and handed it over. It was a gold watch, most interesting in design and workmanship. Monsieur may have it for a thousand francs. The Artist hankered after it, but the Scotsman in him was too strong. “ How about my watch ? ” he asked. “ Will you buy it from me ? It is of gold also.” The Arab did not pause to examine it. No ! He will not buy it, but he will exchange watches if Monsieur wishes. He made an indescribably sly gesture, holding out his open hand and shoving his other hand edgewise across it, which, I suppose, is some Arab gesture to indicate a barter transaction. The Glasgow Artist pocketed his own watch rather hurriedly, and the Arab smiled delightedly at his joke and refreshed himself with a pinch of snuff.

We sipped our coffee from the little cups, thick and sweet, and watched the trafficking. Many Jews were present, as keen on a bargain as the Glasgow Artist. A valuable article had little chance of escaping being snapped up. Innumerable auctions were going on, and the attendants were busy carrying round the jewels and trinkets for inspection and shouting out the latest bids. It was almost impossible to force a way through the crowd.

The Artist had sold a watch here, an old one left him by a grand-uncle. Now he had his eye on a necklace, a very curious piece of goods, rubies in an antique setting. He had been bargaining with the owner for weeks over innumerable cups of coffee. He sat with him for an hour each day at the café, talking about many things, with an occasional reference to the necklace which was produced and re-examined. The present figure was twelve hundred francs, and he thought that if he brought it to London he could sell it for double the price.

We returned to the hotel in time for lunch, having bought nothing, but vastly entertained. And the Glasgow Artist discoursed on life in general. He was interested in "Burmah Oils," a Glasgow concern, and knew the latest market quotation—22. Alas! he had waited rather long. Not so very long ago they stood at 4, and there had since been an issue of bonus shares. He feared he had waited too long. But yet he knew a man who knew one of the directors, and he said it was impossible to put a limit on what they might do yet. There was nothing like them! Those who knew most about them would not sell. He had done well in rubbers, but they seemed to have reached their limit now. After all, a painter might do worse than invest in oils as well as rubber.

Thus do we pass at a step over two thousand years from the Souks to the Stock Exchange. Thus do the ancient and the modern go hand in hand in Tunis.

## CHAPTER XIII

# THE STREET OF PERFUMES

THE Souk-el-Attarin, the Souk of Perfumes. No need to be told its name. The very air whispers it. Here are attar of roses, jasmine, amber, and many other concentrated essences which might make sweet all the vileness of earth. Before some of the shops stand sacks and baskets of dried leaves from aromatic shrubs and herbs, whole leaves and leaves ground to powder, incense for worshippers in the Mosque opposite, or henna with which the native beauties redden their hair and the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet. There is a profuse display of seven-branched candles and of the familiar long, stick-shaped bottles in which the perfumes of the East come West.

The perfume-seller is the aristocrat of the Tunis Souks. The Souk-el-Attarin commands the approach to all the other Souks. Its little cave-like shops are on an ampler scale, and have a more lavish display. They alone are furnished with cushioned divans on which customers may sit while selecting their purchases. There is a tradition that in the old days rich Arabs who wished to conceal their wealth from extortionate Beys used to hire a shop in this Souk in order to make a pretence of being poor tradesmen.

An air of spacious leisure and condescending ease still pervades the place. Each little den is more like a shrine than a shop, and the proprietor is the officiating priest.

An Arab friend whom I met at Batna had recommended me to seek out Hadji Mohammed Tabet in his shop at No. 37, Souk-el-Attarin. He is a famous man in his craft, and he bears the title of Hadji by virtue of having made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He welcomes us with urbanity. He is fat and jolly and his smile is a cure for the doldrums. We sit round on cushions while he takes his place behind a little table like a magician about to begin his incantations. Coffee is ordered, thick, sweet, and fragrant. There is a touch of incense in the air. We are surrounded by bottles of exquisitely coloured liquids, and by glass jars full of rare gums, resins, aromatic woods and leaves, and tiny pastilles for burning. It recalls the chapter in Flaubert's great epic of the senses wherein Salambo ascends to the roof-terrace of her father's palace at Carthage to invoke the moon goddess, and long perfuming pans filled with nard, incense, cinnamomum, and myrrh are kindled by slaves.

And now the Perfume Wizard begins to practise his art upon the olfactory nerves and to run through the gamut of the sense of smell. His wares are not the ordinary scents dissolved in volatile spirit with which we are familiar, but concentrated quintessences the most delicate touch of which is sufficient to confer a lasting perfume. To use a drop is to squander with prodigality. Hadji Tabet withdraws a stopper from a crystal phial and gently passes it across a fur collar, or a muff, or the back of a glove, and the fragrance lasts for days.

First amber, sweet, ambrosial, exciting, the lure of the adventurer, the song of the endless quest, the double-distilled spirit of pine forests a geological epoch ago. Try it on a cigarette—just touch the paper with the stopper and inhale. Ah! Dizzy! Dizzy! A moment of vertigo. Did the room swim? A memory, swift and evanescent, of summer seas in the North, and golden sand, and birch trees like fountains of green spray. Did it last a moment or a million years? For this the Phœnicians, and their unknown precursors who have left their megalithic monuments on the shores of the Baltic, ventured forth in their frail boats beyond the pillars of Melcarth, whom the Greeks called Hercules. A wild-looking scarecrow, a holy beggar from the gates of the mosque, with uncombed hair and tattered rags, is whining at the door of the shop. Hadji Tabet gives him a coin.

Another stopper. It is jasmine, sweet with the sweetness of wild honey, the spirit of the woods, of the dryad among the reeds, and of the cool shadows and the noontide rest. Happy girlhood. Then orange blossom, tender, innocent, virginal—the breath of brides' adorning. Try this attar—roses, roses, rapture and languor, a call from the land of the lotus-eaters. No longer the sweet freshness of the woods, but the closeness of the alcove. And here are others, the scents of the harem, narcissus and lily of the valley, seductive and alluring, drugging the mind like a love-philtre, and musk for intrigue, and the secret perfume that steals away men's senses.

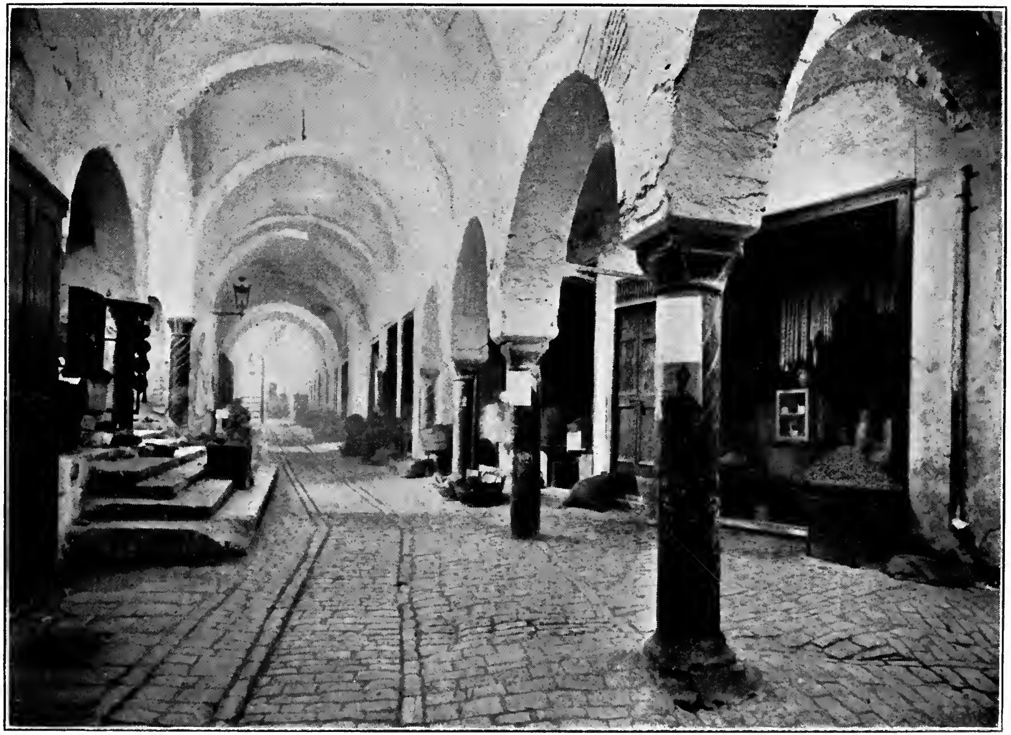
The ragged fanatic has not departed with his coin. He has crept into the outer shop and is sitting on the floor, his eyes staring fiercely through his matted hair. He sniffs the air and his nostrils twitch. What can these delicate odours signify to such as he? "Do not mind him," says Hadji Tabet. "He is quite harmless," tapping his head. "Allah has visited him and he is sacred. He loves some of my perfumes —not these, but incense and such like."

Another stopper. It is like an organ-player pulling out another stop in an oratorio of perfume. He releases the scents of the open air, the balsams which the sun distils from the forests of pine, and cypress, and cedar, and myrtle, and throws broadcast on the wind. It is the air the hunter breathes in Spring in the passes of the Aurès Mountains, from which one can look out over the Desert far below, as over a sea of sand, or from the slopes of the Djurdjura, whence one can survey the broad blue expanse of the Mediterranean. When the Roman legionaries bivouacked after a day's march on the frontier, and stretched themselves at ease beside the fire, the spurting tendrils of smoke from the cedar-logs scented the night. It is the call of the wild, the lure of adventure. Women do not love these scents. They draw a man away from the soft delights of domesticity.

The sense of smell is the sense most closely associated with memory. It can recreate a vanished vision in the mind's eye. Its seat is nearest to the brain, and at the vibration of the olfactory nerves emotions glow again among the embers of the past and thoughts long buried come to the surface. Just as we may construct a drama of music or pictures, so we may construct a drama of perfumes, a drama of memories. The Perfume Wizard, like the Witch of Endor, can make a man read his own heart by calling up the past before him.

Hadji Tabet discourses on the qualities of his perfumes and the preferences of his clients. The ladies of the harem prefer rose, jasmine, narcissus, muguet (lily of the valley), and musk—musk especially, " because it makes itself felt a long way off." Amber is the scent for a man, a bold, adventurous man who fears nothing. The soldier is content with geranium, " because it is cheap." Parfum du Bey, a composite essence, is the royal scent, the perquisite of kings, the privilege of the wise, the rich, and the great, who are honoured by the Bey. For the priest, for the holy man, there is incense. And here is something in a buffalo horn, a black oily paste. A loathly odour of musk, so concentrated and powerful that it is nauseous, fills the little room. It is civet—the unguent exuded from the skin of the wild cat under torture, the perfume for Black Magic, a potent essence much sought after by the tribes of the Desert and the negresses of the South.

The holy beggar displays a most unholy interest in this horn of Satanic pomatum. He is whining and stretching out his talon-like hands for it. The Wizard speaks sharply to him in Arabic and he subsides again on the floor, muttering what sounds like imprecations.



THE SOUK OF PERFUMES: OLD TUNIS

"What is he saying?" we ask, looking at him askance. "I do not know. It is not Arabic. He understands Arabic and he can recite long passages from the Koran. But he speaks some obscure native dialect. There are ancient tongues, older than the Roman, still spoken by tribes in the mountains and in the Desert beyond."

Again Hadji Tabet removes a stopper. Ah, it is not a perfume, it is a drug. It excites, it maddens, it compels. It is the voice of the Sirens. The beggar on the floor is telling his beads. No wonder Ulysses had his sailors bind him with ropes to the mast till he was past that danger.

A brasier of charcoal is produced and a small portion of dark-coloured resinous wood is placed upon the glowing ash. A column of smoke rises and spreads out from the roof, gradually filling the room. It is incantation—a magic rite. Through the reek the ample form of Hadji Tabet looms larger, like a Djinn rising from the earth. We are oppressed by a sense of danger, a terror of the unknown. The blood rushes to the head and sings in the ears. What is that? The beggar squatting on the floor is swaying his body violently to and fro, beating a weird rhythm on some instrument like a tom-tom. Was that a jangling of cymbals and a shrill screeching of stringed and wind instruments? The buzzing in our ears increases. It is like a telephone which has been cut off and in which the wire is still alive. Strange sounds can be heard coming out of limbo. Hark! The ecstatic cries of the priests gashing themselves with knives before the image of Moloch, heated red-hot by the furnace within, the shrieks of the children as they pass into the flames, the wailing of the mothers, the murmur of the crowd. "Hear us, O Baal." We have had a glimpse into the dark places of the earth.

Another stick is flung upon the brasier and a different smoke arises. It is incense. It clears the mind. It calms and reassures. This is the perfume of adoration, supplication, aspiration. Let the world be shut out, and let us sink slowly into Nirvana. The holy one on the floor is reciting monotonously long passages from the Koran, or perhaps it is only the same sentence repeated over and over again. "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

Hadji Tabet sits smiling placidly behind his table spraying something into the air. It is verbena, a clean scent, sharp, slightly acid, fresh, pungent, and reviving. It clears the brain of vapours and mists and mad fancies, and braces the nerves like a call to action. Have we been dreaming? It is time to make our purchases and go. The holy one's hand is outstretched. We pass him some small coins. He conceals them hurriedly in his rags without a word of thanks. Hadji Tabet offers him some morsels of incense. He grasps them eagerly, kisses the hand of the donor, and shambles off in the direction of the mosque.

## CHAPTER XIV

# MARBLE DUST

HOW small are the famous sites of history. We have seen them through a magnifying-glass. The literature of two thousand years, in which the glories of their prime are described by poets who measured them with a different scale, leads us to enlarge them in space. Unconsciously our idea of them is shaped from our own far-spreading mushroom cities of to-day. We forget that Troy, Jerusalem, Athens, Carthage, Rome, covered but a small space of ground, and that their glory was that of quality rather than quantity.

Before Rome was the fleets of Carthage ranged the Mediterranean and explored the unknown shores of Africa and Gaul and Spain and ventured forth in search of the Hesperides beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Carthage disputed the Empire of the World with Rome. In her prime Carthage was a city of towers, temples, and palaces, of gold, marble, and precious stones, of wealth, art, and luxury. Of none of the great cities of antiquity have we a more vivid topographical description than that which Appian has given us of Carthage in the second century before our era at the time of the third Punic War. It might have been written for a guide-book. The walls which guarded the landward side were from fifteen to eighteen metres high and ten metres wide. There were built into the wall, on the lower floor, casemates for three hundred elephants. Above were stalls for four thousand horses, stores for fodder, and barracks for twenty-four thousand soldiers. After Scipio breached the sea wall, and rushed the inner harbour, it took him six days' street fighting before he reached the central fortress, the Bursa.

*Delenda est Carthago.* Let Carthage be wiped out. It was Cato who spoke the words and Scipio who gave effect to them. The proud city was wiped out like an ants' nest that the spade of the husbandman levels with the ground. For a generation it lay there abandoned, an abomination of desolation. Then a new Carthage arose, a Roman Carthage, richer, more beautiful, more luxurious than the old, the repository of the arts of Greece and the science of Rome, the nursery and seminary of early Christianity, the brightest jewel in the Imperial crown. It survived the fury of the Vandals, shared in the dying splendour of the Byzantine Empire, and then perished utterly, like the flame of a candle blown out in the night by the blast of the ruthless fanaticism of Islam.

Carthage has disappeared, and is only gradually being discovered. For centuries the ruined fragments have lain buried, twenty, forty, sixty feet underground. The destruction and the obliteration were so complete that even with the help of the complete and detailed topographical descriptions handed down in ancient literature antiquaries have disputed as to the actual site.

The soil heaves in many a mouldering heap. The Arab plough passes and repasses over the gentle swelling of the ground and in autumn the ripe corn waves above it. It was not till the work of excavation was commenced under expert guidance that the general ground plan was established and the main sites identified. But even yet a traveller passing over Carthage might never guess that he was treading on holy ground. The portions discovered, being deep below the surface, are not visible till one has actually entered the excavation.

We visited the site of Carthage in perfect February weather. The crystal-clear air was fresh and sweet, with a faint touch of the scents of Spring in it, and the sun was shining hotly from a sky of unflecked blue. The sea near shore was a bright and vivid green, the colour of leaves which have just burst from their buds, but as it receded from the shore the tones deepened gradually till they became a deep violet. Along the opposite shore ran a line of hills of variegated colour, yellow, grey, brown, or slaty-blue, according to the rocks, with patches of dark green where the sides were clothed with forest and specks of pure white where the villages nestled. Beyond them the tops of another range of hills just showed themselves, purple against the turquoise of the horizon. The isolated cone of Bou Kornein rose from the water's edge, thrusting high above the horizon its two horns, emblem of Tanit, where once the smoke of her sacrifices ascended like the reek from a volcano.

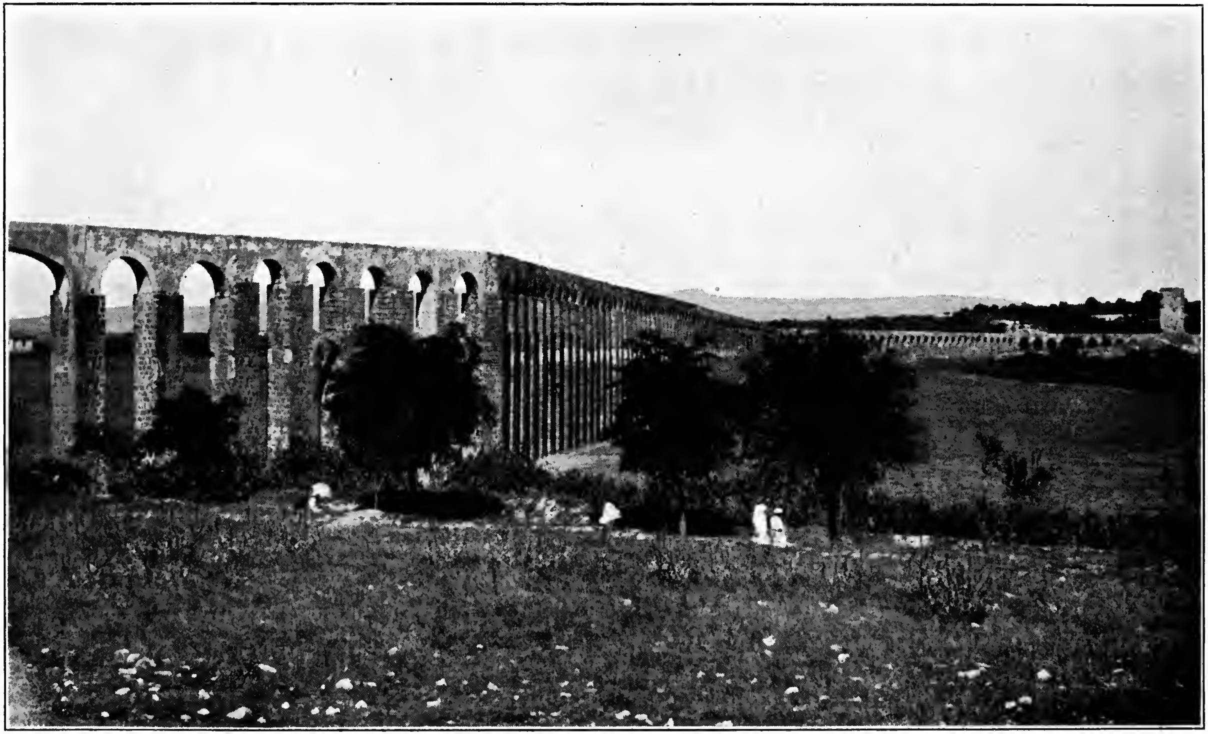
First of all the landmarks of ancient Carthage, the two harbours catch the eye. They lie at the margin of the sea, surrounded by green fields, two shallow, sky-reflecting lakes. The inner one is circular, with an island in the centre. This was the Military harbour, and the Admiralty Palace, with its stately porticos and look-out tower, stood upon that island. It communicates with the mercantile harbour, a long-shaped lake, which, in turn, has direct access to the sea. Looking down upon these land-locked patches of water, it is difficult to realise that this was the emporium of all the trade of the Western world from Sicily to Cornwall, and that in this harbour were fitted out the fleets which threatened Rome with destruction. It requires a vivid imagination to recreate round these grassy margins the pillars, the wharves, the landing-stages, the stores and factories of which we have so full a description by Appian. But descend to the water, pass over by the narrow isthmus which is now left high and dry to the island, and there all doubts will be resolved. It is much larger than it seemed at first sight. The vast foundations of the Admiralty Palace and of the pillared and porticoed embankment that surrounded it have been laid bare. In the centre, tumbled pell-mell into what must have been the dungeons, are some colossal pillars of the most rare and beautiful marble, whose weight alone has saved them from being carried away to grace the Grand Mosque at Kairouan.

The excavations of the theatre give the best idea of the architectural beauty of the city in Roman times. A multitude of massive columns have been unearthed, mostly fractured, all overthrown. Some are of granite, but the majority are of marble, and porphyry, and onyx, richly coloured, black and white, red and green, and yellow, exquisitely chiselled and fluted and polished, each of them a miracle of grace like the limbs or draperies of a Greek statue. The labour of hewing out and transporting these megalithic monuments is as nothing compared to the labour expended upon the carving and polishing of their surface, which is as delicate as the engraving on a gem. Even more impressive from their massiveness as well as from their delicacy are the pillars already referred to, which have been exhumed on the site of the Admiralty Palace. The greatest Imperial Powers of the modern world, with all their efforts to express majesty and dominion in terms of art, have produced nothing to surpass them.

As one strolls over the fields from site to site, to the Phœnician Tombs, the Bursa, the Theatre, the Odeon, the Basilica, the Villa Scorpianus, the Amphitheatre, the Cisterns, the Cemeteries, and the Aqueduct, the soil beneath our feet, in which the corn is sprouting, is a compost of the works of man. It is as much an artificial soil as that in which plants are bedded in a hothouse. Every stone has been worked or fractured by the art or destructiveness of man. The rock is brick, or concrete, or built stone; the earth is brick or marble dust. You cannot lift a single spadeful of this soil without finding in it a hundred manifestations of human workmanship. A few spadefuls would afford sufficient material to start a small museum. Vegetation leaves a deposit; it may be a coal seam or a peat bog. A tiny shell-fish by its deposits left the chalk beds of England. The twenty or forty feet of soil above Carthage are a human stratum.

Consider how intensive has been the cultivation of this soil. It has been built upon and built upon, over and over again, for three thousand years, by Phœnicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and French. The most recent addition is the Cathedral of St. Louis, consecrated in 1890, upon the summit of the Bursa, covering one knows not how many foundations of past centuries. But the builders of the past were not content with high towers. They burrowed, and mined, and excavated deep into the hill. Even on the plain the excavator breaks through a vault and finds a vast well-like cavity descending about 100 feet, far below the level of the sea. On the top of the hill, out of whose Southern flank the Theatre has been cut, the explorers have cleared away some twenty feet of deposits and have come upon the floor of the Odeon littered with pillars, capitals and statues. One would think that the heavy flags of this floor rested upon the natural earth-bed at last. Far from it. With tremendous labour the excavators have hewn through three feet of solid masonry and come upon vaults below vaults. Behind the Theatre vaulted and domed chambers and arched passages penetrate to unknown depths into the heart of the hill. We are compelled to ask : " Is there any hill at all ? "

The Bursa, the Juno, and the Odeon Hills—they stand in a row—are all alike honeycombed. The whole mass is an incrustation of the human hive. They rise from the Carthaginian Plain



THE ROMAN AQUEDUCT
Near Tunis

like gigantic ants' nests. In speaking of this site one must speak in geological terms. The strata of the various epochs follow each other as regularly as do beds of sedimentary rock or chalk. At one excavation I observed that the lowest layer visible consisted chiefly of shards of pottery ranging from amphoræ of the roughest clay to the finest Samian ware. It was overlain by earth which seemed almost alluvial and which may possibly have been cultivated at one period. Above that came a layer of coloured marble chips about three or four inches thick. Then came a bed of several feet of miscellaneous debris in which abounded potsherds, tiles, bricks, crumbled mosaic and concrete, fragments of beautiful marbles and fractured portions of pillars, capitals, cornices, and linings.

This accumulation of debris has had the effect of protecting the oldest relics of all from the hand of the spoiler. When Scipio carried out the savage sentence of Cato and left the city a heap of smoking ruins he preserved unwittingly the more ancient Carthage for us. It was already buried before Rome built anew on the top of it. Deepest of all, embedded in the clay, and now at last, after nearly three thousand years, being uncovered, are the archaic Phœnician tombs reminiscent of the tombs of Egypt, and yielding like them a rich harvest for the archæologist. With the mummies have been buried the personal ornaments and utensils, the trinkets and jewels of the dead, together with vases, votive tablets, inscriptions and sacred images. All this treasure trove, collected, arranged and displayed by the expert hands of the White

Fathers, who have conducted the excavations, is to be seen in the museum behind the cathedral upon the summit of the Bursa.

Of all the remains those relating to the Phœnician Worship of Baal and his consort Tanit, or Ashtaroth as she is known to us in the Bible, are the most interesting. The inscriptions, of which the site has yielded many, reveal much of the strange gods who so often ensnared the Children of Israel. Their spirit still haunts the place after two thousand years of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Strong links draw us to Asia Minor, to Tyre and Sidon, to Canaan, and to Assyria. Names of power from the Old Testament, which ring in our ears with a familiar sound, are here represented by the reality. The old gods still call though no priests gash themselves before the altars, and no victims pass through the fires, and the groves are long since cut down, and the High Places on Bou Kornein are deserted.

As I strolled among the pits and trenches which have laid bare the most ancient Phœnician tombs, built of huge blocks of tufa in a style of architecture which suggested now Egyptian and now Assyrian, I suddenly heard the bells of the cathedral ring out a peal. It is nearly two thousand years since the religion of Christ was first planted in Africa. For a time it flourished and became a mighty Church. It was blotted out and exterminated as completely as Phœnician Carthage had been. And now it has been planted again. The tomb of its latest African Saint, Cardinal Lavigerie, is within the cathedral he built. The new church, a magnificent example of modern Byzantine architecture, dominates the scene and its bells peal out over the ruins.

And as I listened to the bells I looked down into the pit leading to the Phœnician tombs. To one of the massive blocks of tufa clung a lizard about six inches long. Startled by my shadow it ran swiftly across the upright surface of the stone and darted into a crevice. The bells rang out to summon the White Fathers to prayer for the redemption of Africa, and the lizard played upon the tomb of the Priest of Baal.

## CHAPTER XV

## "SALAMBO"

"SALAMBO" is more talked about than read. It is by way of being a classic, but it is a classic of a certain limited period and of a certain limited phase of art. The subtitle of the English translation gives it away. It is "A Realistic Romance of Ancient Carthage." A Realistic Romance! Realistic! The word transports us back to the time when the prim prudery of the mid-Victorian era was being shocked by the brutal directness of the Zola school of fiction, when the ban of the circulating libraries still maintained the veil before the eyes of the Young Person, and when Vizetelly went to prison for his translations.

The moral inquisition of that time was wrong. It was defending smug hypocrisy and sham morality and shrivelled conventions which ought to be discarded as the London plane tree discards its last year's bark. The censors imagined that every work which strayed beyond their fastidious conventions might be dismissed as

Some scrofulous French novel
With grey pages and blunt type.

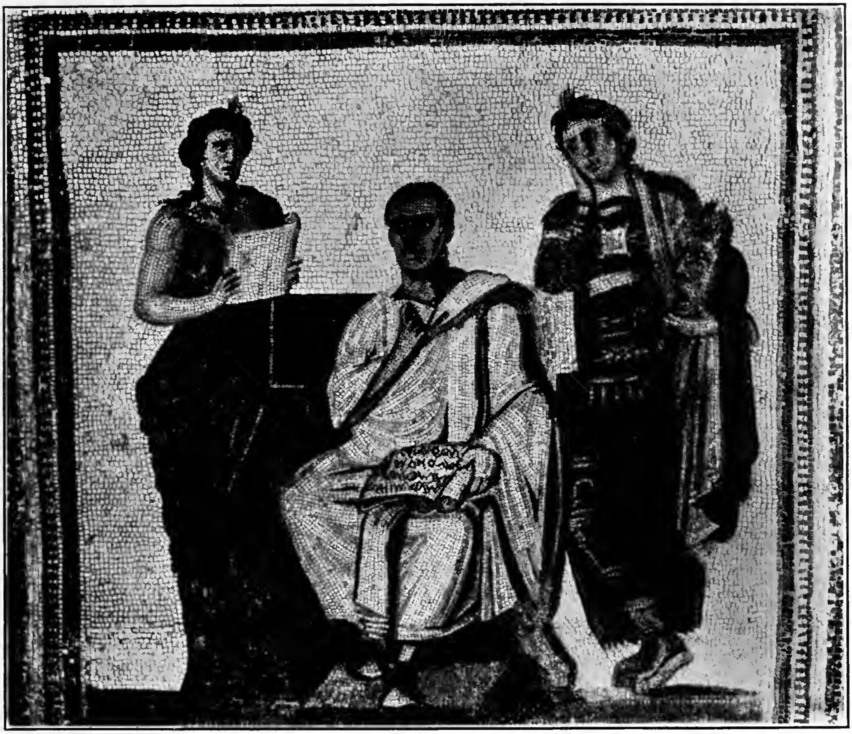
But they were not merely trying to suppress indecency and licentiousness. They were fighting a new movement in human thought. The new school of writers which was rising in France was in revolt against a prudery which was itself prurient. Zola was essentially a moralist, as came to be recognised in the great campaigns of his later years. They sought to bring humanity out from the enervating atmosphere of hot-house morality into the bracing open air, to teach it to face the facts and to stand by itself, to extend the range of human interest and human emotion out of a monotonous routine.

The innovators had both the virtues and the defects of rebels and revolutionaries. They were crude in their iconoclasm. They smashed the windows to ventilate the room. They often thought more of destroying a convention than of creative art. They thought they were calling a spade a spade when they called it a bloody shovel. " Realist " is a question-begging epithet. They were not photographers of the nude, but rather theorists, doctrinaires, idealists, fanatics for the personal emotions which they called " truth." They swerved insensibly to the opposite extreme to that which they were attacking. They tended to exaggerate the facts which the prudes ignored. They shouted limited truths with an emphasis that falsified them. They were not content to paint the portrait of a man " warts and all " ; they must needs paint a wart with a man attached to it.

Of this " movement " Gustave Flaubert's " Salambo " is a typical example. Flaubert was a man of genius, but of ill-balanced genius. His novel has all the merits of the movement, but also all its excesses and extravagances. It has, too, its mannerism emphasised almost to the extent of caricature. It would be easy to parody the book. Dumas, Victor Hugo, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Tolstoy, Turgenieff, are novelists who tower beyond their generations. They have a universal quality that defies time. The things which shocked the Victorians in "Salambo," and other novels of the same school, pass unnoticed now. The revolution has been successful. But "Salambo" belongs unmistakably to its own generation, the period when the novel was struggling to emancipate itself from the shackles of an outworn moral convention.

The power of the book cannot be denied. By a *tour de force* of imagination Flaubert has rebuilt the topless towers of Carthage and repeopled the vanished streets and temples and palaces with strong and vivid personalities. By the conjuration of art he has recalled the ghosts of the long-buried past and made them walk for ever among the ruins. History has given us Hasdrubal, Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Sophonisba, and Cyprian. But the creatures of fancy are as real to most of us as the creatures of flesh and blood. Virgil's love-lorn Dido still haunts the hill of Sidi-bou-Said. Salambo, distracted, still invokes the moon from the roof of her father, the Suffet's, palace at Megara. One of the stations on the electric railway from Tunis to Carthage, just where it crosses the site of the ancient wall, bears the name of Salambo. The vision of Carthage which all of us have is coloured by the art of Flaubert.

It is somewhat of a paradox that a great novel of the Realistic School should be, not a



VIRGIL WRITING THE "AENEID"
A Mosaic discovered at Sousse. Now in the Musée Alaoui, Tunis

transcript of contemporary life, but an attempt to reconstruct a vanished civilisation twenty-one centuries old, and that it should be designated a romance. This was the lust of battle. The pedants and the romanticists were assailed on their own ground. The challenge to the conventions was all the more outrageous. The aim, the method, are as clear as if they had been set forth in an introductory manifesto. Carthage is a mere background for an epic of sensuous impressions. The book is a tornado of smells, tastes, colours, sounds, and of those nameless sensations which are conveyed through the sense of touch, and which can only be expressed generally by such terms as " creeps," " shudders," " goose flesh," " hair standing on end," nay, not nameless, for Flaubert has invented for them the expressive name of " horripilation." It is not by the mere piling up of antiquarian detail as to architecture, dress, habits, religion, politics, social customs, it is not merely by intellectual sympathy, that the past can be made to live again; it is by evoking again the same sensations and emotions that were experienced by the Carthaginians that we not only see them again as they strutted on the stage, but feel that we have become part of them.

It is not that the task of antiquarian research has been shirked. On the contrary all the available sources of information have been carefully ransacked. The bulky notebook was a characteristic of the Realistic School, and it has been freely requisitioned in the writing of " Salambo." Indeed, one can see here and there the encyclopædia behind the notebook. There are pages in the book which are like a museum show-case in which the archæological material has been admirably selected, reconstructed, arranged, catalogued, to illustrate some special phase. Take, for instance, a sample from the two-page-long list of Barbarians who had assembled like obscene birds from all parts of Africa in the hope of sharing in the loot of Carthage. From the Eastern regions there came:—

> "Nomads from the table-lands of Barca, bandits from Cape Pluscus and the promontory of Dernah, from Phazzana and Marmarica. They had crossed the desert, drinking at the brackish wells walled in with camels' bones; the Zuacces, with their covering of ostrich feathers, had come on quadrigæ; the Garamantains, masked with black veils, rode behind on their painted mares; others were mounted on asses, onagers, zebras, and buffaloes; while some dragged after them the roofs of their sloop-shaped huts together with their families and idols. There were Ammonians, with limbs wrinkled by the hot water of the springs; Atarantians, who curse the sun; Troglodytes, who bury their dead with laughter beneath branches of trees; and the hideous Auseans, who eat grasshoppers; the Achyrmachidæ, who eat lice; and the vermilion-painted Gysantians, who eat apes."

One can not only see them but feel them and smell them, as if one were shouldering through the swarm. There are similar catalogues of the foods at the banquet to the Mercenaries in the garden of Hamilcar's palace, of the scents and balsams in the Factory of Sweet Odours, of the murderous military machines that were massed against the walls of Carthage, of the gods in the temples, of the musical instruments by which the cries of the little victims as they were hurled into the furnace of Baal were drowned. And yet all this detail is kept strictly subordinate to the main purpose. The emotions and the sensuous impressions fuse it all into a vivid impression of reality. The book is not overloaded with archæology. The thing has been managed with consummate art. The effect produced is that of the catalogue of ships in the Iliad.

" Salambo " is the story of the revolt of the Mercenary and Barbarian allies of Carthage which took place in the years 240 to 237 B.C. The Carthaginians had just been enfeebled by the disastrous end of the first of their three great struggles with Rome. They were unable to meet the demands of these rapacious allies for pay and donations. The Mercenaries and Barbarians, on the other hand, had the prospect of the loot of the wealthiest and most luxurious trading city in the world. For the purpose of his plot Flaubert makes the dominant *motif* the infatuation of Matho, a leader of the Libyan Barbarians, for Salambo, the daughter of Hamilcar, an exquisite flower, reared in the hot-house of the palace under the tutelage of the High Priest of Tanit. He had seen her when she tried to quell the riot at the feast of the Barbarians in the absence of her father. He had drunk from the same cup. The thought of her haunts his mind, and inflames his blood, and impels him back to the assault on Carthage after each defeat. Inspired by the dexterous cunning of Spendius, an escaped Greek slave, he penetrates to the temple of Tanit, steals the sacred veil of the goddess, the talisman of the city, and by virtue of its possession becomes the most influential of all the Barbarian leaders. The turning point in the fortune of the rebels comes when Salambo visits by stealth the tent of Matho in the midst of the locust-like army which is besieging her father in a fortified camp and steals back the sacred veil. She is both repelled and attracted, horrified and fascinated, by the rugged strength and rude passion of the Barbarian.

Hamilcar returns from five years of battles and final defeat in Sicily to find Carthage besieged by the Mercenaries. His head is full of great schemes for the conquest of Spain, the founding of a New Carthage at Carthagena, and the renewal of the attack on Rome by land, schemes which his greater son, Hannibal, was destined to carry to the verge of consummation. But now all seems lost. Encumbered by a selfish oligarchy and by a jealous rival, he bends all his energies to reorganising the city's defences and preparing the means for attack. By his masterly tactics he outmanœuvres the Barbarians and keeps them at bay. The water supply is cut off and the city is nearly starved into surrender. To appease the god it is resolved to sacrifice to Baal several hundred children from the noblest families. By a trick Hasdrubal saves Hannibal, the child of Destiny, from the hecatomb. He bursts out from the city and attacks the Barbarians in the rear. He succeeds in detaching Narr' Havas, Prince of the Numidians, from the rebels, and promises him his daughter in marriage. Finally, by a master stroke, he traps an army of forty thousand of the Barbarians in a defile between the Mountain of Hot Springs (Bou Kornein) and the Lead Mountain (Djebel Ressas), walls them up there, and starves them, till not even cannibalism can save the last remnant from agonising death.

From the first chapter to the last the book moves in a crescendo of horror. This is one of the limitations of Flaubert and of the School to which he belongs. In their determination not to ignore the ugly side of life they become mesmerised by it. The spell of terror and of fascination which Matho cast over Salambo is the same as the morbid attraction which the bizarre, the gruesome, the horrific, have for Flaubert. The description of the Barbarians, their weird mongrel breeds, their mutilations and deformities, their gluttony, their drunkenness, their bestial vices, their savage ferocity, makes the flesh creep. The luxury, the corruption, the superstition, the greed, and the lust of cruelty of the Carthaginians are as vividly depicted. Hanno, the old general, with his perfumes and unguents, his hideous diseases, his diet of flamingos' tongues and honeyed poppy seeds, his medicines of viper broth and the ashes of a weasel and asparagus boiled in vinegar, and his bravery, is a compelling figure. There are sacrifices to Baal, tortures, crucifixions, elephant charges in battle, and massacres of the wounded by the women camp followers. The final scene of all is the martyrdom of Matho in the presence of Salambo on the day of her wedding to Narr' Havas. She looks upon the hardly human remains of the man who tried to burn up the world for her sake, and, seized with a convulsion, she dies in the arms of her husband. Of such material is the "Realistic Romance" composed.

Flaubert has an uncanny genius for imaginative detail, as when, after the battle, "the vermin might be seen to forsake the dead, who were colder now, and to run over the hot sand," or as when, during the famine of the siege, the teeth of the Carthaginians fell out, "and their gums were discoloured like those of camels after too long a journey." The novel is like the witch's cauldron in "Macbeth," into which he throws the ingredients of the incantation by which he recalls the apparitions of the past.

> "In the poisoned entrails throw——
> Root of hemlock, digg'd i' the dark,
> Liver of blaspheming Jew,
> Gall of goat, and slips of yew
> Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
> Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,
> Finger of birth-strangled babe
> Ditch-delivered of a drab:
> Make the gruel thick and slab."

The boiling pot bubbles over with the horrid brew. Horror can give as vivid an impression of reality as can charm. One's gorge rises—but one believes.

Is it a true picture of Carthage? The answer must be both "yes" and "no." It is an aspect of Carthage, but it is not all Carthage. Flaubert has omitted to give us the finer side of Carthaginian character which undoubtedly existed, the pioneering spirit of the people which must have gone to the making of the first great Empire of the Seas, the refinement, the beauty, the domestic happiness, the philosophy, the deeper politics of the time. In " Salambo " it is Carthage, indeed, that we see, but we look through a distorting lens.

# CHAPTER XVI

# BOU KORNEIN

BOU KORNEIN, the Mountain of Baal, Father of Two Horns, dominates the Gulf of Tunis as Vesuvius dominates the Bay of Naples. The inner Gulf is fifteen miles across at its entrance between Carthage on the West and Korbous on the East, and, as it bites into the land, it opens out into a wider circle, after the fashion of a Moorish arch. Its Western shore is but a narrow spit of sand separating it from the great lagoon, beyond which lies Tunis gleaming white in the sunlight. The Eastern coast is fringed by a range of low hills rising abruptly from the water's edge, forming part of the great peninsula which ends at Cape Bon. On the Southern shore two rivers fall into the Gulf—the Miliane and the Massi. Each of these rivers before it enters the Gulf flows through a broad fertile plain covered with vineyards and olive groves—the Plain of Mornag on the West and the Grombalian Plain on the East. Between them, close to the sea, rising from the level plain with all the abruptness of a cone, is the Mountain of Bou Kornein, with the cleft summit from which it derives its name.

The early Phœnician mariners as they coasted along the Southern shores of the Mediterranean, past the desert shores of Cyrenaica and Leptis with their occasional oases of palm trees, past the Great and the Little Syrtes, past the Island of Djerba, the land of the Lotus-eaters, and rounded Cape Bon, came suddenly upon this sheltered Gulf, with its amphitheatre of hills, its rich, well-watered plains, and its lagoon in which a fleet fit to conquer the world might ride safely at anchor, and its solitary mountain, rising like a beacon, visible far out at sea, and horned like their own god. Probably they cared little for the natural beauty of the scenery, but they had the sailor's eye for a good harbour and the merchant's eye for a land which surpassed even the Canaan they had left—a land flowing with milk and honey. They landed twelve hundred years before Christ, as the British landed on the shores of India, bargained with the native Berber chiefs for sites, established their trading depots, and built their factories and forts which soon developed into flourishing cities. Utica and Tunis were their first settlements in the Gulf. It was not till 800 B.C. that they founded Carthage, which grew to be the greatest city of them all, the Imperial City of their maritime empire. It had greater advantages than any of the others in regard to defence against attack by land. It had greater natural beauty, standing as it did on the edge of a promontory and facing, across the Gulf, the Mountain of Bou Kornein.

Bou Kornein is a precipitous mountain, but an excellent track has been engineered from a point just opposite the railway station at Hammam Lif right to the summit. It winds along the contours of the northern bastion until it comes to the central cone, up the side of which it zig-zags to the saddle or col between the two peaks, from which either peak may be reached in a few minutes. The total height is 1875 feet, and the ascent may be made with comfort in two hours.

It was a warm day in February when we made the ascent. The afternoon sun beat strongly upon us until we had rounded Eastwards into the shadow of the peak itself, and we were glad of the shade of the Aleppo pines with which the lower slopes were clad. Beyond the pines there is a thick growth of dwarf cypress, with occasional bushes of myrtle, reaching to the summit. The warm air was fragrant with their aromatic essences. The mountain, enveloped by the sun in this aura of incense, well deserves the name of "The Scented Mountain." A profusion of wild flowers decked the sides of the path, white and pink and mauve begonias, daisies nearly as large as marguerites, large heath bells, wild clematis with pale greenish white blossoms, and unknown little flowers of turquoise and cornflower blue. Bees were humming, richly coloured butterflies were flitting about, and here and there a stray dragon-fly. In the orchards at the foot of the mountain the almonds were in full blossom, and the bursting leaf-buds of trees that shed their foliage in winter had begun to clothe the naked branches in sprays of delicate and tender green. The scents, the colours, the warmth of spring, were in the air.

As we mounted, the classic panorama towards the North was spread at our feet, as if we were looking down from an aeroplane. The Gulf swept round like a deep horseshoe crescent, its horns to the North. Strange how this sacred symbol, the crescent moon of Tanit or Ashtaroth, and the bulls' horns of Baal-Hamon, is repeated so often in the outlines of the Gulf and in the cloven summit of the mountain. Carthage tips the Western horn of the Gulf. The Cathedral of St. Louis crowns the Bursa in place of the Temple of Moloch, the ancient land-locked harbours gleam like hand-mirrors that have fallen from the sky upon the margin of the sea, and behind, on the peak of the horn, gleam the white walls and the red roofs of the modern palaces at Sidi-bou-Said. Opposite Carthage, nestling at the foot of the hills, on the water's edge, at the tip of the Eastern horn, is Korbous of the hot springs. Between these two there opens out and sweeps round in a long regular curve the beach, outlined by a faint white edging of surf where the wavelets break on the sand. The sea was a deep purple, shading off into a vivid green near the shore. The lagoon of Tunis was like a sheet of silver. Tunis shone on the further side like a white queen. As we rose higher the prospect opened out wider, for this mountain stands like a tall sentinel over the sea and the islands, over the capes and peninsulas, over Carthage and Tunis and Utica beyond, and over all the rich and fruitful plains which nourished these ancient towns. The plains of Mornag and Grombalia at our feet were like vast spiders' webs, a criss-cross of white roads radiating from shining white villages against a background of vines and olives.

This was the landscape which Agathocles, and

Pyrrhus, and Hasdrubal, and Hamilcar, and Hannibal, and Scipio, and Cæsar, and Cyprian, and Augustine, and Belisarius, and Genseric beheld. We were looking down upon the stage on which was enacted one of the greatest dramas of history, a struggle which lasted nearly one hundred and fifty years and which decided that the foundations of European civilisation were to be Roman rather than Asiatic. Here, in this Gulf, was the fulcrum of destiny. And here, in later days, were the granary of Rome, the cradle of Western Christianity, and the pirates' lair of the Barbary corsairs. Nor are literary associations lacking. Virgil made this the scene of the passion and the parting of Æneas and Dido, and has invested every feature of the Carthaginian landscape with the magic glamour of great poetry. And, by a *tour de force* of modern art, Flaubert in his novel, "Salambo," has re-peopled the site with the monstrous figures of Phœnician pride and luxury and cruelty.

Not until we had reached the summit was the panorama complete, and then the prospect was completely changed. The final stage did not come gradually as it does when one passes over a rounded dome. We climbed up a precipitous wall and suddenly we looked over the top as over the battlement of a tower. We looked South into the savage heart of Africa. Behind us amethyst and emerald, before us a huddle of wild mountains, of barren precipitous peaks riven apart by dark gullies and passes. These are the last spurs of the Atlas Mountains which run in a continuous chain from the Atlantic.

Immediately to the South the Plain of Mornag ends abruptly at the 2600 feet high cliffs of Djebel Ressas, the Mountain of Lead, while, forty miles to the South-West, rise the clustered peaks of Zaghouan, 4200 feet high, whence Tunis to-day, like Carthage of old, draws its water supply. On the plain beyond Tunis we could descry the gigantic stone arches of the Aqueduct built by Hadrian, one of the most awe-inspiring monuments of Roman power and Roman will, more impressive than the Pyramids because more purposeful. Like a colossal centipede of stone, it winds across the plain, disappearing where the ground rises, and straddling across the valley of the Miliane. From Bou Kornein the full magnitude of this engineering triumph can be taken in at a glance.

Between Bou Kornein and the jagged ridge of Djebel Ressas, which cuts into the air like the fin of a shark, the inland road from Tunis to Grombalia passes through the gorge of Khanguet el Hadjaj, the Pass of the Hatchet, surrounded by sheer precipices. When the Mercenaries and Barbarian allies of the Carthaginians revolted after their defeat by Rome in the first Punic War, it was in this gorge that the frightful massacre was perpetrated which quelled the rebellion. The episode forms one of the most ghastly chapters in the accumulated horrors of "Salambo."

Bou Kornein is a cone of igneous rock sharply jutting through the limestone beds which have been thrust up to form the bastions at its base. The central cone is shot through with crystalline veins of quartz. Obviously it is a volcano in the line of the same fissure in the earth's crust which has produced Etna, Stromboli, and Vesuvius. That the central fires are still active is proved by the hot springs at Hammam Lif at the base, and at Korbous a few miles along the coast, where modern thermal establishments continue the bathing tradition of the Romans. On either summit there are deep shafts leading down into the heart of the mountain. Lateral caves lead into these shafts. Other caves have been discovered nearer the base in the course of blasting operations to form the road. One I discovered blocked by a stone. Possibly there are others still unexplored. The associations of the mountain, the thousand years of Phœnician history, and the romantic possibilities of these caves, suggest the scenario of a Rider Haggard novel.

But the supreme association of Bou Kornein is with Baal. The whole mountain is one gigantic altar to the Horned God of the sun, and of fire. This was one of the High Places on which sacrifice was made to the Abomination of the Sidonians. On the highest horn of the mountain there was a temple dedicated to Baal-Caranensis, whom the Romans identified with Saturn, and to his consort, Tanit, or Ashtaroth, the moon goddess. The temple was merely a small enclosure with an altar in the midst, the god being represented by a rudely carved pillar. The ground around was studded with small steles or stone slabs on which were carved dedicatory inscriptions and rude emblems of the two Deities. All these objects may now be seen in the museums of Carthage and Le Bardo. A few shards of rough pottery scattered among the roots of the scrub are the only tokens that remain of the ancient usage. The altars smoke no more, and Phœnician Carthage has been buried for over two thousand years; but standing here on this High Place and looking out over one of the fairest of earth's kingdoms, one feels something of the spell against which Israel struggled for a thousand years.

## CHAPTER XVII

# THE SAHEL AND THE STEPPES

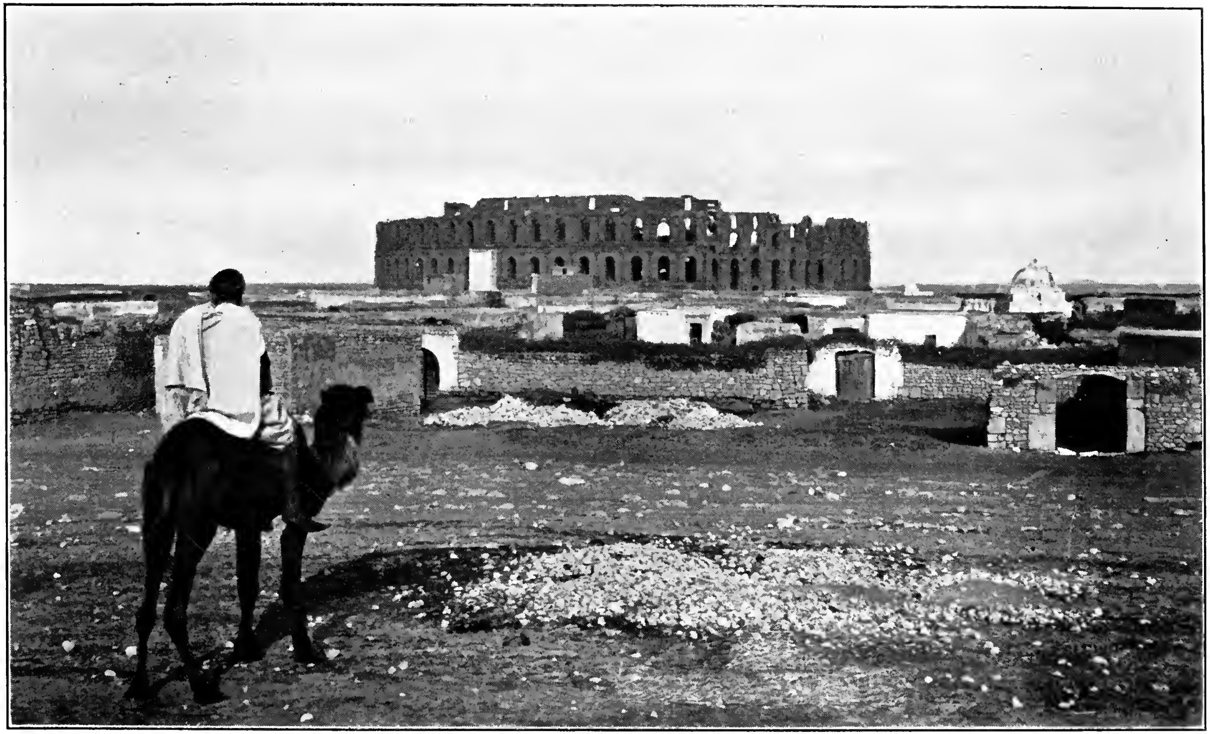
TUNISIA is an ideal country for motoring. It has a wide variety of picturesque scenery. In the North are wild mountains and the beautiful Medjerda Valley. Along the Eastern Coast are the rich and fruitful plains of the Sahel, covered with olive groves and vineyards. In the centre are the rolling Steppes, abounding in sheep, horses, camels, and dromedaries. And in the South, at Gafsa and beyond, is the great Desert, studded with oases of date palms and traversed by nomad tribes. The whole country is a treasure-house of Phœnician and Roman remains, rivalling in majesty and interest anything Italy can show. And the roads by which it is traversed are perfect.

I have never seen anything like these French roads. In the country of the Sahel and the Steppes they drive straight ahead for twenty kilometres at a stretch. The contours of the land never affect them. Their alignment is chiefly determined by the towns and the wells. About half-way between Sousse and El-Djem, before we reached the dip into the valley, our road could be seen running straight for the ridge, where it seemed to end abruptly, a white ribbon suddenly cut short. Then above it appeared the opposite side of the valley, dim in the distance, gradually rising as we approached. And on the dim other side a slender white thread, as narrow as a pipe shank, rose from the middle of the abrupt end of our broad ribbon of road. It was the continuation of our road. From the lip of the valley the prospect was surprising. For a distance of ten kilometres we could see the road, faultlessly regular and undeviating, like the segment of an immense arc, extending in front of us. At the lowest point there was a well on one side and a small olive tree on the other. Along the side of the road, at intervals gradually foreshortened by the distance, we could see the ten milestones, or rather kilometre stones, gleaming white in the sun, like beads on a necklace. In our car we shot over the ground at the rate of a kilometre in a minute less five seconds, or forty miles an hour. Africa was slipping away beneath us. The car was eating up the miles—annihilating distance. As we passed over the lip of the valley we seemed to take the air like a bird or an aeroplane. The milestones raced past like telegraph poles past the window of one of the slow African trains.

This road bespeaks a purpose. It is not the road of those who are content to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. It has not been developed unconsciously like the primitive track of the great caravan routes. It is eloquent of the will of man subduing Nature. Such a road is built not for the present but for the future. Its aim is not to serve existing needs, but to open up the country, to develop its resources, to serve a multitude of new needs which it will create. It is said that he who plants trees must love others better than himself. So also he who builds roads like this works for generations yet unborn.

On such a road we would often pass a small nomad caravan, a relic of the Patriarchal age, journeying, as Abraham journeyed some four thousand years ago, along this road of modern destiny. Half a dozen camels led the way, followed by a troop of donkeys and accompanied by a motley tribe of Arabs with their women-folk and children and innumerable dogs. They straggled all over the road, and at the sound of the motor horn the Arabs would start into violent activity, put their shoulders to the flanks of the camels and hoist them off the road. These camels were not led or bridled, but were driven like a flock of cattle. Whole families moved together with their tents packed and all their household belongings. Even their poultry were carried with them, and we often saw a hen perched on a donkey's back and fluttering to balance itself when the donkey took fright.

Along the Eastern Coast, from Hammamet Southwards to Gabes, stretches the Sahel, a belt of fertile and well-watered land from twelve to fourteen miles wide. Beyond it lie the Steppes, and beyond them again a great chain of jagged mountains running South-West from Zaghouan to Tebessa. For geological epochs the mud and detritus has been washed down from these mountains into the shallow lagoons or sebkas along the coast and deposited in deep beds of alluvial soil. This land is of almost inexhaustible fertility, a fat land, a land of corn, and oil, and



EL DJEM : THE AMPHITHEATRE

wine, and fruit. It only requires that its surface should be scratched and supplied with water to bring forth fruits in abundance. Its fortunate position between the mountains with their great natural reservoirs and the sea makes irrigation easy for any people who have the energy to make use of the natural resources of the earth.

For miles we motored between groves of olives. The soil beneath the trees was carefully terraced and dyked for irrigation purposes. The older trees had a most extraordinary appearance. So decrepit were their trunks that they might have been survivals from Roman times. They were gnarled, corrugated, knotted, twisted, rotted, hollowed out. They were like old men, bent by age and toil. But their branches were still green and fruitful.

From Sousse, the ancient Hadrumetum, we proceeded to El-Djem. As we gradually rose with the swell of the Steppes the olive groves gave place to vast savannas of corn land, and scrubby pasture, and then desert which in spring is clothed with flowers and grass, but is baked bare by the heats of summer. Not a tree nor a shrub nor a house appeared on which the eye could rest. The horizon circled round us level and unbroken except in the West where the distant mountains rose like a wall. There was not a hedge to chequer a pattern on the monotonous surface. The land had been lightly ploughed and already in February a thin veil of green shoots was spreading over the brown earth. As the swell sank again towards El-Djem we passed a large manorial farmhouse, probably that of the owner of the domain who farmed his own land. It was dazzling white, of two wings, in the Arab style of architecture, and with a large enclosure behind it. No doubt it was supplied within with all the luxuries of modern civilisation like the mansions of the Roman lords of the Saltus, the remains of which, in the shape of beautiful mosaics, are sometimes turned up in the wilderness by the Arab plough.

As we breasted a swell the Amphitheatre of El-Djem could be seen, ten miles off, rising like some phenomenon of Nature from the midst of a wide valley as shallow as a saucer. It could not be said to lie on the earth ; it rises from the earth, enormous, astounding. It is so large that it completely conceals the native town which lies behind it. The road is aligned direct for its centre, as if it were going to drive straight through it. As we approached, it seemed to tower higher and higher, dominating the landscape, more imposing than the Great Pyramid, more threatening than a cliff. The houses and domed mosques of the native village huddled at its base seem like the cells of insects. It has served as a quarry for centuries, but it has been too colossal to be destroyed. Not since the days of the Tower of Babel has the bosom of the earth been burdened with a more ponderous pile.

The mere sight of it darkening heaven as one stands in its shadow conveys a more enduring impression of the might and power of Rome than does any study of printed books. One is compelled to think of it as made not by man but by a race of giants or by the elemental forces which thrust the rocks and mountains up through the surface of the earth. It is the more astounding when one reflects that the quarries from which this mountain of stone was dug are situated twenty miles away. These monoliths had to be dragged by teams of oxen over the clay on specially built roads. The solidity, the massiveness, the time-defying bulk of this single building in a remote town near the Desert frontier of the Roman Empire can only be compared with the similar qualities in the Pyramids. There is nothing to compare with it in the monumental architecture of the great empires of modern times. This Amphitheatre and the Aqueduct of Carthage are together the most eloquent witnesses of the greatness of Rome, of the genius which made her the law-maker and ruler of the world, of her far-reaching purposes, and of her relentless will. If every other historical record of Rome were blotted out we could still appreciate her Imperial Majesty from either of these two works.

Thysdrus, the proud city which stood upon the site of El-Djem and which gave three Emperors of the Gordian name to Rome, has disappeared. Not only its wealth but its stones have been plundered. Its groves have been cut, its irrigation works broken down, and its gardens dried up. Its pillars of marble and onyx and porphyry adorn the mosques of Kairouan and Sousse and Sfax, or may be found with inscribed stones and delicate carvings buried in the rubble walls of the Arab hives. Not even the ground plan of the city can be traced. The Arabs squat all day in the shadow, and at night the tom-tom beats in the dark cave-like little cafés of the squalid village, and over all, in sunlight or in moonlight, like destiny itself, towers the work of those who were once masters of the world.

All this land of Sahel and Steppe was called by the Romans Byzacium. It was one of the chief sources from which Rome drew her supplies of corn and oil. How inexhaustible was its cornucopia is recorded in numerous anecdotes. Pliny the elder tells of a mighty palm tree at Gabes in the midst of the sands which bore a heavy crop of dates. Under the palm there grew an olive, and under the olive a fig tree which overspread a pomegranate, and under that again a vine, and under the vine they sowed corn and then herbs, all in the same year. When the Mohammedan invasion broke like a deluge upon all this prosperity the Arab general who captured Sufetula, the modern Sbeitla, marvelled at the magnitude of the treasure that fell into his hands. "Whence comes this enormous wealth ?" he exclaimed. "From this !" said a captive citizen, taking up an olive which lay trodden under foot upon the dust.

Under Roman rule this Byzacenian plain was thickly populated with an agricultural population and studded by flourishing cities in which the arts, the luxuries, and the elegancies of Rome were reproduced. The chief port was Hadrumetum (Sousse), and inland were Thysdrus (El-Djem), with a population of 100,000, and, on the line of the railway, Vicus Auguste (Kairouan), Sufetula (Sbeitla), Scillium (Kasserine), and Thelepte (Medinet Kadina). But these are only the chief landmarks. The whole country bristles with mounds of ruins, and carved stones, projecting through the scrub on deserted hillsides, catch the eye afar off.

Enfidaville, which lies half-way between Hammamet and Sousse, is perhaps the supreme example of French agricultural development. Here a vast estate of over 300,000 acres was acquired by the Franco-African Company just before the French occupation. After encountering great opposition from the native administration it was able, under the new regime, to proceed with its ambitious plans for developing the resources of this fabulously rich soil. It brought capital, it brought brains, it brought engineering and agricultural science into operation. It planted vines and olives and figs and sowed vast stretches of land with corn. The beautiful little French town of Enfidaville is its creation. As one approaches from Kairouan by the road which forges straight ahead, league after league, across the bare Steppes, its trim houses of several stories, with their red roofs, embosomed in trees, are a welcome sight to European eyes. And when one drives along its trim boulevard it is a delight to observe the graceful church, the shops, the café, the mansions, the municipal offices, and the headquarters of the Company. After the Souks of Kairouan this is civilisation, this is home, this is Europe.

But enter the little church. Its richest and rarest decorations, covering the floor and the walls, are the mosaics of fifteen hundred years ago, which have been removed from the ruins of the Basilica, or Ancient Christian Church, at Uppenna (Henchir Fraga), about four miles to the North. There on the walls stand the sacred symbols of the early Church, the circle containing the Greek Monogram of the first two letters of Christ's name, the X P, and the Alpha and Omega, as fresh as they were on the day the artist wrought them. The church is lined and paved with these designs and with memorial panels recording the names and ages of Christian men and women who "lived in peace" so many years ago. In the enclosure surrounding the church are displayed a slender pillar, some beautifully carved sarcophagi, a massive altar with an inscription, and one or two archaic stones which go back to earlier days when Baal and Tanit of the Phœnicians were worshipped under Roman names.

A few miles further North of Enfidaville, in the midst of a solitude, are the ruins of the ancient city of Aphrodisium, called by the Arabs Henchir Fradix, where Venus was worshipped. Among the edifices which can still be traced are a pagan temple, a Christian Basilica, and Amphitheatre, a Fortress, and a Triumphal Arch. Enfidaville, flourishing and prosperous though it is, has nothing to show in the way of monumental buildings which can be compared to these time-worn fragments of its ancient neighbour which was hardly important enough to be commemorated in history. A little further North, beyond Bou Ficha, near the Tower-of Babel-like mausoleum known by the Arab name of Ksar Menara, there may be seen, parallel to the modern road, the massive ruins of a Roman bridge across the small Oued Cherchar. All the arches are broken, but the piers, with the beginning of the arches still adhering to them, remain. Modern engineering science has enabled the French to make their road more perfect than anything the Romans could produce; but if the modern road were abandoned for a single century it would leave no relic which would speak so eloquently of French genius as do the solid fragments of this bridge of Roman power and dominion after fifteen centuries of decay.

The Arabs and the Turks settled down on this teeming land like a blight, and it relapsed into a wilderness supporting only a few nomads with their camels, horses, and asses, and their sheep and goats. The French have been forty years in occupation of the country, and already the desert is beginning to blossom as the rose. There are two great agricultural zones in Tunisia —the Medjerda Valley in the North, and the Sahel along the Eastern Coast. Of these the Medjerda Valley is the more advanced, not because the soil is richer, but because the rainfall North of the mountains is more abundant and because the one great river of the country affords greater facilities for irrigation. At Beja and at Mateur the results have been miraculous. In the Sahel the soil is equally rich, but there is need for more elaborate irrigation works. Conspicuous success has been achieved at Enfidaville and round Sousse. The land is returning to its former prosperity. But as yet the French have only scratched the surface. They are still centuries behind Rome.

## CHAPTER XVIII

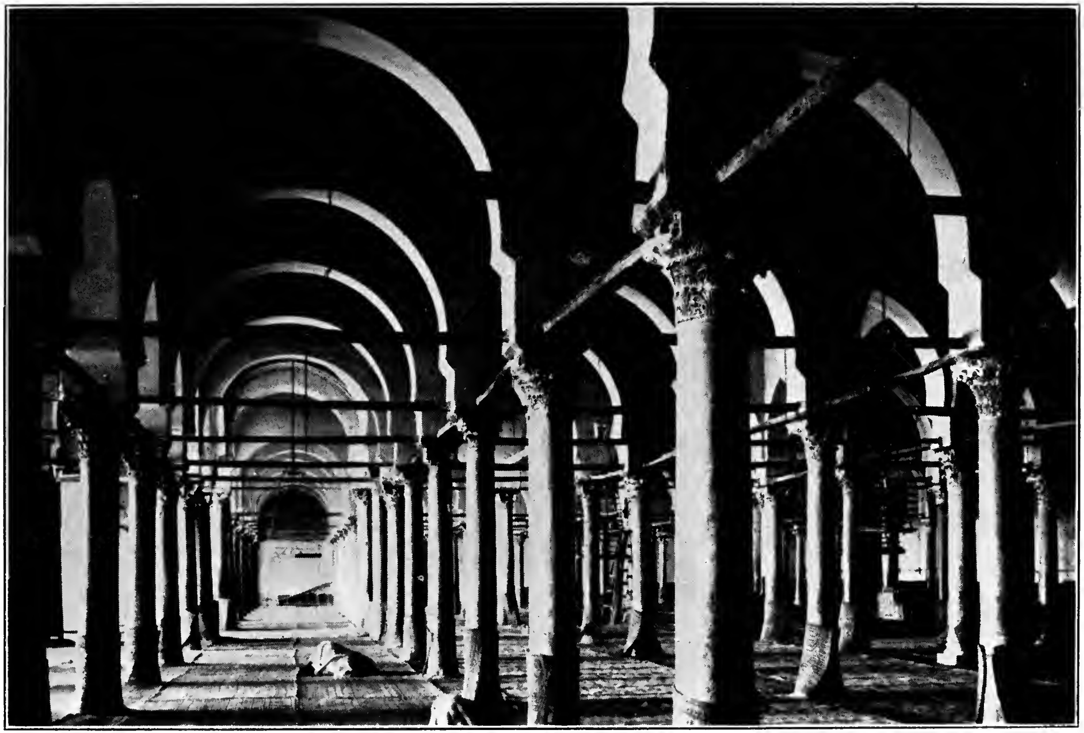
# THE GRANDE MOSQUÉE

KAIROUAN was founded in the year A.D. 670, by the Arab conqueror, Okba-ben-Napy, better known as Sidi-Okba, to be the centre from which North Africa should be governed and from which the faith of Mohammed should be propagated. It is still the most holy city of Africa. Crowds of pilgrims flock to it in the firm faith that seven pilgrimages to Kairouan are equal in merit to one pilgrimage to Mecca. The Phœnicians and the Romans founded their capitals upon the coast where a good harbour secured them communication with the rest of the world. Only by means of a perfect system of communications and organisation can a great Empire be maintained. This choice of a site for the Arab capital, high up on the Steppes, and difficult of access, is typical of the characteristics which prevented the Arabs, in spite of their far-reaching conquests, from building up any great Empire. Kairouan is a symbol of their character and of their faith, exclusive, bigoted, self-centred, and self-sufficient.

Kairouan is a ramshackle city, surrounded by a massive brick wall round which clustering suburbs have grown up in recent times. The town itself is a museum of the ruins of Roman and Byzantine magnificence. To build it the Arabs ruthlessly despoiled Carthage and Hadrumetum, and Thysdrus and a dozen other cities of renown, even as far away as Cæsarea, beyond Algiers, in the West. The columns and the capitals, the rare marble linings, the delicately carved cornices, the inscribed stones for which historians hunger, now support the aisles and arcades of the mosques or are built into labyrinthine rubble walls of the human hive. Here lie concealed, covered with whitewash, or plaster, or sun-dried mud, treasures which one can only guess at from fragments exposed to view. One notices that to strengthen the lintel posts of a door or the angle of a wall massive recessed pillars have been introduced. Scale off the whitewash, and marble or porphyry is revealed embedded in mud-bricks like a jewel in a toad's head. It is the architecture not of deliberate and scientific design, but of loot and plunder. Here is a doorstep which still shows the fluting of a marble column on its under-side. As one walks along the narrow thronging streets one has glimpses through open doorways of the lighted interior of an Arab café which might be the crypt of a cathedral, or of a caravanserai in which the camels and asses seem to be stalled in cloisters. Ichabod! Ichabod! The glory has departed.

There are, naturally, numerous mosques in Kairouan; and although, elsewhere throughout Tunisia, strangers are, by order of the Government, rigidly excluded from the mosques, here, in the holiest city of all, they are open to inspection on an order from the Civil Controller which may be obtained without any difficulty. The Mosque of the Three Gates, Tleta Biban, with its façade covered with inscriptions in gigantic, archaic Cufic inscriptions, is one of the most interesting of Arab antiquities. The Mosque of the Swords, Amor Abada, with its six fluted domes, is entirely of modern construction. The Mosque of the Barber, Sidi-Sahab, is remarkable for the beauty and intricacy and delicacy of its internal decoration. The courts are surrounded by fairy-like arcades of Moorish arches supported by slender marble pillars. The walls are lined with tiles of glazed faience. The domes are an open fretwork of plaster arabesques as exquisite as lace. The building belongs to various dates in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and is a triumph of the same artistic impulse which produced the Alhambra and the Taj Mahal. But it is primarily to the *Grande Mosquée*, to the shrine of Sidi-Okba, the Conqueror, that visitors will turn. In size, in holiness, in its associations, and in its general interest it surpasses any other building in North Africa.

Architecturally the *Grande Mosquée* belongs to the most primitive type of Arab temple. Since the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in the fifteenth century, the great Church of Hagia Sophia has served as the model for most Mohammedan builders. The structural conception, therefore, of most mosques is Byzantine, or European; only the decoration is Arabic. But the *Grande Mosquée* retains the form of the original sanctuary of the faith at Mecca, which in turn simply reproduces that of the earlier



KAIROUAN: THE GRANDE MOSQUÉE

pagan temples of Arabia. The ground plan is an oblong quadrangular enclosure which represents the court in which the tabernacle containing the idol was set up. Such is the enclosure round the Kaaba which contains the Black Stone of Mecca. The sides of this enclosure have been arcaded round by a double row of cloisters. From the centre of the North-Western side rises the minaret from which the muezzin gives to the town the call for prayer. The South-Eastern side, in the direction of Mecca, has been roofed over to the depth of nine arcades of seventeen bays supported by an assortment of pillars and capitals which must be unique in the world. There are the priceless treasures of Carthage, marble, onyx, and porphyry, red, yellow, green, black, and white, exquisitely cut and polished like megalithic gems. A florid Corinthian capital has on its right side one that recalls the lotus shapes of Egypt, and on the left another whose tracery is purely Byzantine. Some of the capitals are upside down. There are said to be 296 pillars. Built into the walls are stones containing Roman inscriptions, and as one ascends the minaret one notices that the steps are of marble, and that at the sides where feet do not tread there are still traces of mouldings and carvings which indicate that these stones were once the cornice of a Roman temple. The whole structure has been not so much designed as improvised.

In the grand simplicity of this building we get the key to Arab or Moorish architecture. The Arab house, be it the palace of the Bey or the dwelling of a merchant in the native quarter, in a street like a rabbit's burrow, is built round a square courtyard. A gallery of arcades runs round each side and from this lead off the public apartments, the kitchen, and offices. Above this gallery there is a balcony supported by graceful pillars and with a more or less elaborate balustrade. From this balcony lead off the private apartments. One side, on which is the entrance, is deeper than the others and sometimes higher, with a central dome. The roof is flat.

The origin of this design is more clearly revealed in the ordinary farm-house and in the village caravanserais, which we had many opportunities of observing as we motored through the country. It differs absolutely from the design of the modern European house, the predominant purpose of which is shelter from the elements. In this North African climate there is little need of protection from the weather, save perhaps from wind and from sun, but there is a continuing necessity for protection from enemies and thieves.

In its essence the Arab farm-house is a square enclosure of high walls with a single entrance. It has no windows to the outside—nothing but bare walls. It is nothing more or less than a zareba of stone, a permanent structure to take the place of the zareba of stakes and thorned branches which the nomad builds round his tent or hut. One end of this enclosure is roofed over, in the case of superior buildings by three domes in a line. This is the dwelling-house, and it has some small windows looking out into the court. On the opposite side a kind of shed is constructed against the wall by means of a rough wooden roof, supported by posts, to serve as cattle shed, stable, and store for fodder.

This rudimentary house plan was the model for the pagan temple and the mosque at Mecca. It is seen in an intermediate stage in the *Grande Mosquée* at Kairouan, and it has been perfected in the modern dwelling-house and palace with its lining of brilliantly coloured tiles, with its arcades and galleries of horse-shoe arches and arabesque lattice-work surrounding a marble-paved court in which a fountain plays, and with its graceful domes.

To pure architecture the Moors or Arabs have made little contribution. They have developed no new structural principle. They have, however, modified in a distinctive manner the types which they have borrowed from Greece and Rome. Their treatment of these forms has given them a distinct impress which we immediately recognise as the Moorish style. This treatment is due partly to the climatic conditions of their country, partly to the requirements of their form of worship, both of which lead to essentially structural modifications, and partly to mental characteristics which express themselves in the form of decoration. It is notable that the architects for the greater undertakings were almost invariably European foreigners, frequently slaves and renegades. The human mind, as developed in the heat belt, does not take easily to the prolonged strain and concentration of grappling with its structural problems of a vast building. But the Arab genius has successfully imposed certain conditions upon the foreign architects.

The supreme problem of architecture, the varying solutions of which provide the key to every architectural style, is the supporting of a roof. In these lands of perennial sunshine there is no need for our Northern high-pitched roof to throw off a gathering weight of snow. The flat roof, resting on beams thrown across from one wall to another, suffices for most domestic purposes. It gives no outward thrust as does the arch or dome, but presses steadily downwards upon the walls. The native stone seems to be somewhat intractable, and does not dress easily, so the walls are built of undressed stone, or sometimes even of rubble, and faced with plaster, which is kept continually whitewashed. If such a roof has a wide span it must be supported by an internal row or rows of pillars. To give a wide lofty space uninterrupted by pillars a dome is necessary, and as the dome gives an outward thrust it is supported by adjacent buildings which serve as natural buttresses. There is another *motif* which supplies one of the most decorative features. The fierce sun necessitates shaded spots open to the air—hence the deep arcades in which one may sit and enjoy whatever comfort and coolness shade may give. The arcade must be deep set, the arches must be low and not too wide, and there must be plenty of lattice-work to admit the free passage of air.

The flat roof, the dome, and the arcade are the three main *motifs* in Arab architecture. The structural principles are Greek, or rather Byzantine, which have been modified in various ways, as, for instance, in the treatment of the dome, probably due to the characteristics of the building material, the paucity of windows, the form of the arch, and the high development of arcading. The decoration is purely native. It is very elaborate, but its invention or execution requires little mental strain. It consists of the constant and mechanical repetition of certain geometrical formulæ, just as their prayers consist of the constant reiteration of a single sentence or even name. The soul of this desert-born race which could conquer but could not govern, which could overthrow Empires but could not build them, is expressed in its architecture as in its creed.

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE OLD GODS

ALONG the North African coast from Djerba, the Isle of the Lotus-eaters, to the Pillars of Hercules, in the sheltered bays, in the river valleys, and in the recesses of the mountains, linger traces of the ancient gods whose names of dread have still power to stir our blood. A place name, an altar stone, a symbol worn by a native girl, a folk tale, a popular custom the origin of which has been long forgotten, all these are like echoes from the dim beginnings. The gods of Rome and of Greece are modern cults compared with these awful deities the smoke of whose sacrifices went up from the altars of Babylon, and whose High Places and Groves, scattered through Canaan, were a perpetual snare to the Children of Israel. Here, as in the land of the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Sidonians, and the Hittites, from whom Solomon took the wives who led him astray, the prophets cried to Baal, and gashed themselves with knives, and children were passed through the fires of Moloch, and unnamed rites were practised in the groves of horned Ashtaroth.

The Phœnicians were kindred of the Israelites, of the ancient Canaanite stock. The word Canaan signifies simply the "low land," and Canaan proper was the plain between the mountains of Lebanon and the sea, of which the two chief ports were Tyre and Sidon. Carthage was founded in the ninth century before Christ, as a colony from Tyre. The name Carthage is a Roman rendering of the ancient Phœnician name Kart (the same root as Kirjath)—Hadchat, which signifies "the New Town." And the name by which the Carthaginians designated themselves for centuries after their conquest by Rome was, not Phœnicians, but Canaanites. Tunis had been founded three or four centuries earlier. At this time, when the Phœnicians were extending their mercantile enterprise and their trading colonies Westward, Ahab was King over Israel. He took to wife Jezebel, daughter of Eth-Baal, the Phœnician King, established the worship of Baal, and for generations he and his dynasty sought to fuse the Israelites, the Jews, and the Phœnicians into a single people with the same national religion.

Out of the fearful pit of Tophet, out of the miry clay of the Valley of Hinnom, have we been dug. Our own pure Faith in the One God, compassionate, merciful, righteous, had its origin in the black superstitions and cruelties and licentiousness of this older Faith, into which it relapsed many times before it emerged as the Gospel of Jesus. But the Old Faith lingered on in the deserts of Arabia for some six hundred years, until there emerged from it another conquering Faith, less pure than the Christian; but still based on the idea of One God, the

Compassionate and Merciful, the Gospel of Mohammed. Here in the land of Barbary, on the site of New Tyre, we have a glimpse back into the abyss. Here we may look upon the altars, the pillars, the images of the gods, the High Places and Groves of the Abomination of the Sidonians, about which our chief authority is our own Scriptures.

We refer to Baal as if he were one particular god. There were, however, an infinite number of Baals, or Baalim. Each tribe, each city, had its own Baal. The word " Baal " signifies simply " Lord," and in the earliest days it was even applied to the God of Israel, but as the conception of God became clearer the title was associated only with the heathen divinities. He is Beelzebub, the god of flies or corruption, who is identified with Satan, Prince of Devils, in the New Testament. We also read of Baal-Berith, and Baal-Peor. Baal Moloch, God of Fire, Baal Hammon, God of the Sun, and Baal Melcarth, the tutelary god of the Merchant Adventurers of Tyre, were all objects of special veneration at Carthage. The other chief deity of the Carthaginians was Ashtaroth, or Astarte, or Tanit, the Moon Goddess, for whom Solomon planted groves to please his Sidonian wives. In Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, and Canaan there were as many Ashtaroths as there were Baals.

The Phœnicians, like the Greeks and Romans, were eclectic in their divinities. They did not hesitate to adopt foreign gods, to identify them with their own and to endue them with their attributes. Baal Moloch was identified with the Greek Chronos, who devoured his own children, and with the Roman Saturn. Melcarth was Hercules. Tanit was recognised as identical with Aphrodite and Persephone of the Greeks, and Venus, Diana, and Proserpina of the Romans. After their defeat in Sicily, in the fourth century before Christ, which they attributed to their violation of the temple of Demeter and Persephone there, the Carthaginians erected a temple to these goddesses at Carthage. There are also in the most ancient Phœnician tombs at Carthage many traces of the gods of Egypt, Anubis, Isis, Bes, Phthah, Ra, and Osiris. Tanit was identified with Isis.

There was another characteristic of the Phœnician gods which leads to considerable confusion. They were metamorphic. They were not only liable to be identified with foreign gods of a similar nature, but they also tended to merge into one another even when they were of the most diverse nature. As tribes merged into kingdoms, and kingdoms into empires, the old tribal and city gods began to coalesce into a conception of one all-powerful Being manifesting himself in various forms according to his various attributes. Baal was at once the beneficent and the destructive, the sun that blessed the harvest fields and the fire that destroyed like pestilence or war. Tanit was the goddess both of chastity and of licentiousness. And there was a mystic union between Baal and Tanit, the sun and the moon, the male and the female. Tanit is always referred to as "Face of Baal," i.e. Reflection of the Sun. All these characteristics and tendencies converged on a deification of the vital, vivifying, creative, reproductive principle in nature, a sexual dualism which seemed to underlie the whole material world, one dread power manifesting itself in an infinite variety of ways. It is a doctrine which was capable on the one hand of a high spiritual development, and, on the other hand, of a gross and debasing materialism. Humanity had a slippery and thorny path to climb, and many a time it relapsed into the mire. It was not without giant agonies that the platforms of Judaism and of Mohammedanism were reached.

Melcarth, "King of the City," whose chief temple was at Tyre, was a god held in special honour in Carthage as the founder of the Phœnician empire in the West. He was the Phœnician Hercules, a hero-god, who in the dim beginning of things led his people through desperate adventures and by his superhuman strength overcame foes and removed difficulties. Another temple was situated in the extreme West, at Gades in Spain, near the narrow straits, which gave them their name of the Pillars of Hercules. Probably this god represented the deification of the real leader of one of the earliest expeditions into the West. Sallust, in his history, quotes a native legend that the Berber races owed their origin to the followers of Hercules, who, after the death of their leader in Spain, crossed over the Strait into Africa. Herodotus visited the Temple of Melcarth at Tyre, and he has left it on record that it contained no image of the god, but two pillars, one of gold and the other of emerald. It was from Sidon, the twin city of Tyre, that Solomon got

Hiram, the cunning worker in brass, who cast for him all the metal utensils and furnishings of the Great Temple at Jerusalem. It is not without significance that we are told that Hiram cast two great pillars of brass which he set up in the porch of the Temple, giving them names, the one " Jachin " and the other " Boaz."

As Moloch, Baal was worshipped in Carthage with cruel and bloody rites and self-immolation. In times of great national danger when the city was threatened with destruction, hundreds of children of the noblest families were sacrificed to placate the god. When Mesha, King of Moab, saw that the battle was too sore for him he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. A brazen image of Moloch, horned and bull-headed, stood in the Temple in Carthage. On such occasions a fire was kindled between the legs of the idol and the great body was heated red-hot. The little victims were placed in the brazen arms which, being raised by pulleys, deposited them in the furnace. The clashing of cymbals, the beating of drums, and the blare of musical instruments drowned the screams of the victims and of the mothers. It has been conjectured that the numerous urns and little stone coffins containing the calcined bones of children, which have been discovered by the excavators in Carthage, where cremation was an unusual method of disposing of the dead, may indicate that the parents used to beg back the ashes of their children for burial.

Baal was also worshipped as Baal-Hammon

and Baal Caranensis, but it is impossible to determine the exact differences of these manifestations. In his temple the god was usually represented not by an image, but by a pillar or pillars in which he was supposed to dwell. The archaic stone pillars, of which many examples have been found along the Barbary coast, have rude markings suggestive of human features. Later, brazen pillars were cast, surmounted by a bull's head—the molten calf. Throughout the Bible the Temples of Baal are invariably referred to as "the High Places." "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." A typical High Place has been uncovered by excavators at Gezer in Palestine, where Baal and Ashtaroth were worshipped. It consisted of a row of eight rude stone pillars ranging from five to ten feet, together with a trough-like altar. The surrounding earth was packed hard and contained many large jars in which were infant bones. Such must have been the temple on the summit of Bou Kornein, the two-horned mountain across the Gulf from Carthage.

Tanit, Ashtaroth, Astarte, the Moon Goddess, is invariably associated with Baal, and they were often worshipped in the same temple. Round the pillars in the temple there were set up in the ground small votive tablets or steles, on which were carved the sacred symbols, the crescent and disc, the triangle, the upraised hand, together with a dedicatory inscription. Several thousands of such steles have been discovered on the site of Carthage and on Bou Kornein. The inscriptions almost always follow a rigid formula, with only the names varied.

> *To the Divinity Tanit, Face of Baal, and to the Lord Baal-Hammon, a votive offering, made by Hasdrubal, son of Hanno, because he has heard the voice of the Goddess, Blessed be She.*

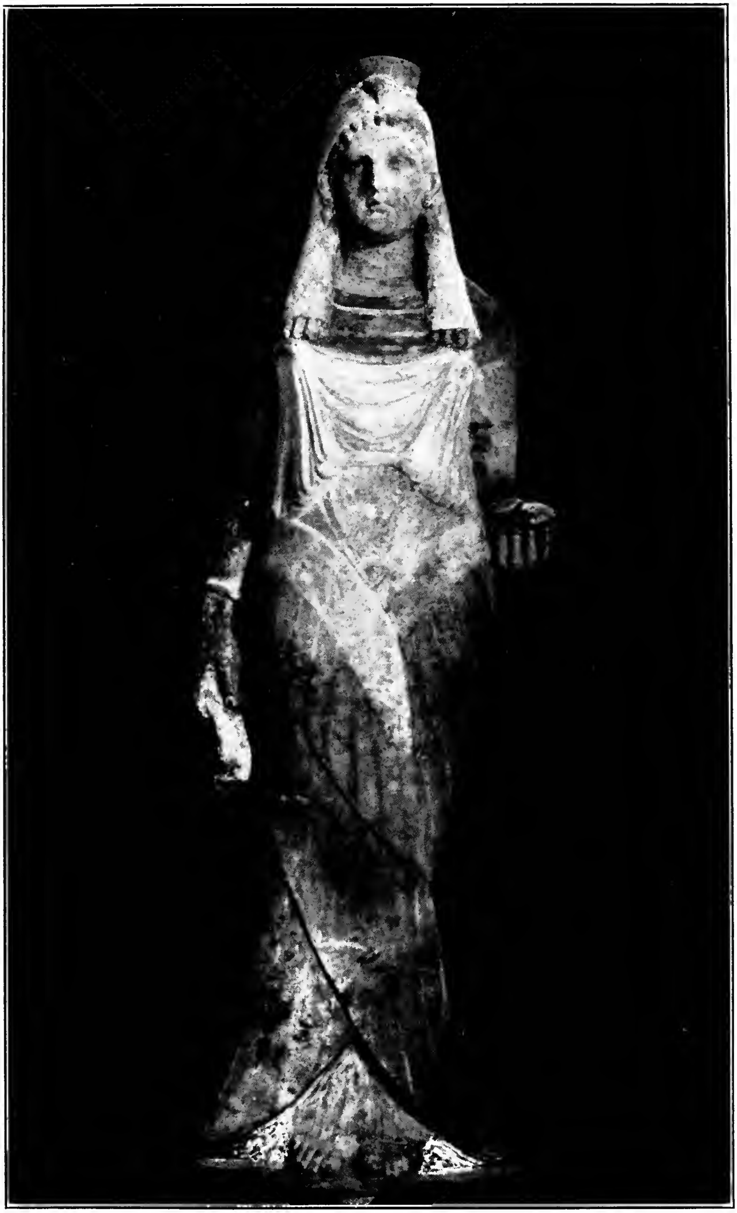
Groves were planted round the temple of the goddess, and on the branches of the trees rested flocks of her sacred birds, doves. In her lower aspects she was worshipped with obscene rites and licentious revels. The ancient towns of Sicca Venerea (Le Kef) and Aphrodisium, in Tunisia, as their names indicate, were centres of these demoralising practices.

But this religion was not all sordid and degrading. In his higher aspects Baal was both sun and moon, father and mother, male and female, self-created and self-reproducing, a majestic figure dispensing justice, the germ of a nobler ideal. And Tanit was not only the goddess of lust, but of chastity. It was in this aspect that the Romans identified her with Diana, the goddess of the crescent or virgin moon.

The jewel of the Carthage Museum, discovered in 1902 by the White Fathers in their excavation of the Phœnician cemetery at Bord-el-Djedid, is the life-sized figure of a priestess of Tanit carved in high relief upon the heavy stone lid of a sarcophagus. She is clothed in the robe of the Egyptian Isis, the head of the sacred vulture surmounting her head-dress, and its two wings enfolding the lower part of her body, the crossed tips at her feet having the appearance of a fish's tail. A gauzy veil is draped over her bosom. Her robes are of deep blue with bands of the rich Phœnician purple. In her right hand she holds one of the doves of Tanit, and she looks out upon the world in the colours of life, as she lived in the fourth century before Christ. It is the portrait of a gracious and queenly personality, inscrutably calm, exquisitely beautiful, and radiating charm. It is the eternal type of noble womanhood calling through the ages. Modern art has not succeeded in expressing the type in any more ideal or refined form.

Who is she ? It is the figure of a woman in the prime of life, but the bones in the coffin were those of a very aged woman. Quite probably it may have been the practice in rich families to have the carved stone that would one day cover the lifeless corpse prepared during life and preserved in a place of honour in the house to await death. Probably she was a matron of a noble house serving for her year as priestess, a position of honour and dignity. And in her old age she was buried with this token of her early service. What is important to know, and what we do know, is that the cult of Tanit could produce so fair and exquisite a flower.

It is easy to understand how the lower side of this Baal worship, with its appeal to passion, its pandering to the lusts of the flesh, its unspeakable orgies at Sodom and Gomorrah, and the mesmeric effect of its horrid cruelties, exercised a fatal attraction for primitive races—and how bitter was the struggle, and how many the backslidings before they were emancipated from it. For centuries the struggle continued in Israel



ARIZAT-BAAL: A PHŒNICIAN PRIESTESS

As represented on the lid of her Sarcophagus in a tomb of the 4th Century, B.C., at Carthage

and Judah. Two centuries before Solomon built the Temple Gideon left threshing wheat at his father's house to throw down the altar of Baal which had been set up by the Midianites. Two centuries after the building of the Temple, at the time of the great drought, Elijah challenged the Prophets of Baal to bring down fire from their god upon the altar. And when he mocked them saying, peradventure he sleepeth and must be wakened, they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out of them. And again three centuries passed before Josiah, King of Judah, made a clean sweep. He put down all those that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. He burned the groves, and broke down the houses of the Sodomites. He defiled Tophet, in the Valley of Hinnom, "that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch." "And the High Places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon, the King of Israel, had builded for Ashtaroth, the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, the abomination of the Children of Ammon, did the King defile."

The end was not yet. Jerusalem was to be destroyed and the Jews led captive to Babylon, Jeremiah had yet to utter his Lamentations, and Ezekiel to see his visions before the race was purged of the taint in its blood. And then it became but a remnant, dispersed among the nations. The Old Gods retained their hold in Asia Minor and in Africa for centuries even after Christianity had been founded and had become the religion of the Roman Empire. The fierce zeal of Mohammed at last ended their reign in these lands. But their presence is still felt where the sun shines hotly upon their ruined altars and their broken pillars and their deserted groves. The crescent still has honour, and the jewelled hand which all the women wear as a trinket, and which they call the hand of Mohammed's daughter, is in reality the mystic hand of Tanit. We stand upon a lava crust, below which still glow the infernal fires, and we hear faintly in the air the siren call of some far-off dying pagan beauty.

# CHAPTER XX

# ISLAM

IF we wish to understand the strength of the Mohammedan religion, its rapid growth in the early days in Asia and in Africa, and its enduring hold upon the races of the Heat Belt, we must obtain the right perspective. The Gospel of Mohammed came as a message of hope and deliverance to nations in bondage. Against the bloody cruelty of pagan superstition, a religion of horror, it set up the ideal of a single God who was merciful and compassionate. Into the anarchic political conditions of that time it introduced the idea of a religious community in which the blood-feud was suppressed. Above all it appealed to the slave and the oppressed. It broke down the barriers of caste and of rank. All Mohammedans were on a level before God. No Mohammedan could own as slave a man of the same faith. A slave, or a man of mean birth, might rise to the highest position in the State. It tempered political and social despotism by a crude form of democracy. In this respect it resembled the primitive Christian Church which five centuries before the time of Mohammed had made great advances among the same peoples.

By the time Mohammed appeared the Christian Church had definitely failed in its appeal to these peoples. It had been adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and had become the chief bulwark of that mighty despotism. It had, moreover, become acclimatised to the ethical system of the temperate zone, that is to say, it had become European instead of African or Asiatic as it was in origin. Both in the political and in the moral spheres, therefore, it represented to them an intolerable tyranny.

Islam is the most fiercely monotheistic of all religions, not even excluding the Jewish and the Christian. "*There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet.*" That is the simple, concrete, definite creed, clear and hard as crystal, upon which the whole Faith is based. It has no theology, no room for priestcraft. In its essence it was a fierce revolt against everything that is involved in theology and priestcraft. It is the religion of an illiterate man, of strong character and personality, who was in vehement revolt against the evils of idolatry and superstition, evils which weighed upon the human mind with a horrible accumulation. Mohammed was a puritan. He sought to establish a pure religion of the One God, with a creed which even the most illiterate, even the savage, could grasp and understand, and to abolish altogether the intermediation of any priest between a man and his God. The negro who can repeat the magic formula has grasped the whole essence of the religion, while his mind reels before the mystic doctrine of the Trinity. He is a Mohammedan.

This is the secret of the advance which Mohammedanism continues to make among the African tribes.

From that simple creed much followed. The law of the One God was set forth in the Koran of Mohammed, his Prophet. The religion inculcated by Mohammed in the Koran was a pure theism, and the rules of social conduct enjoined brotherhood among the faithful, justice, abstinence, and the regular performance of the rite of prayer. But human nature is weak. The human mind seeks the aid of superstition. In his zeal against the abominable idolatry of his time Mohammed absolutely prohibited, whether for religious or for decorative purposes, all images, all statues, and all pictorial representations of any kind, lest they should act as a snare and lead the people into idolatry. And yet the Mohammedan peoples have found a way of circumventing him. They have made a fetish of the Koran. They have made of the printed book something greater than God. They use it in a purely superstitious way. They regard its texts as charms and talismans. For the human intellect to venture on any intellectual development beyond it is blasphemy. They have in fact set it up as an idol to be worshipped blindly and literally. They are not without their parallels in Christendom.

The wandering Englishman whom I met at Biskra, and who had lived much among the Arabs, said to me: "The Mohammedan has a very natural way of speaking about his religion. He regards it as one of the natural facts of life, like the weather. An Arab was once telling me of a journey he had made across the Desert. One portion he described as the most sterile and desolate land he had ever seen. ‘For days we went without ever seeing a blade of grass or a living creature. Not a bird or even an insect was to be seen—nothing at all. Only the sand and God.’ Just like that—the one as naturally as the other—‘only the sand and God.’ ”

The mosque is naturally the chief source from which the European visitor can derive any impressions of the nature of the Mohammedan religion. Throughout Algeria the mosques are freely open to strangers, but in Tunisia they are rigidly closed, with the exception of the one town of Kairouan. In the mosque the religion is seen at its best. The worshippers are reverent, there is an atmosphere of devotion, and a spirit of humility and fraternity prevails. In the course of my reading I came across an extract from an article by Kathleen Wilson in the “Echo” (12th May, 1897), which conveys effectively the impression produced by a Mohammedan shrine upon a person of religious temperament.

“From the open court in the interior comes the clear tinkle of running water. . . . But in those solemn aisles that enclose the open court, always that unbroken silence and that gloom. Not an ornament, a picture, or a hanging; no sign of painted stories; no least symbol of ritual or of doctrine; nothing but aisle upon aisle with snow-white arches converging intricately, the thick, soft carpet, and the strips of bamboo matting under foot, the dim, faintly scattered lamps overhead. Not one window is there in any of the many walls around, no organ, pulpit, altar, chancel; and yet without the smallest aid to devotion, the very quintessence of reverent and passionate adoration breathes from out the spaces that these white undecorated walls shut in. So much so that one reckoned at home a great man and upholder of the Faith called orthodox, when he came to this land and moved much in the stern, sweet atmosphere of this other Faith, was known to say, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Mohammedan.'"

What puzzles Europeans most is the apparent divergence between faith and works on the part of these ardent worshippers, their zeal in prayer and in certain forms of abstinence, and their lax morality. It produces a painful or a humorous impression according to the temperament of the observer.

Joseph Thomson, the African explorer, who had thought favourably of Mohammedanism before he visited Morocco, wrote: "It was difficult to grasp the fact . . . that absolutely the most religious nation on the face of the earth was also the most grossly immoral. In no sect is faith so absolutely paramount, so unweakened by any strain of scepticism, as among the Mohammedans of Morocco. Among no people are prayers so commonly heard or religious duties more rigidly attended to. Yet side by side with it all, rapine and murder, mendacity of the most advanced type, and brutish and nameless vices exist to an extraordinary degree."

Palgrave, in his " Arabia," tells how he conversed about sin with Abd-el-Kereem, a master of Islamic lore. He asked him which were the " great " sins, and which should be reckoned " little."

" ' The first of the great sins,' he replied, ' is the giving of divine honours to a creature.'

" ' Of course,' I replied, ' the enormity of such a sin is beyond all doubt. But if this be the first there must be a second. What is it ? '

" ' Drinking the shameful,' in English : ' smoking tobacco,' was the unhesitating answer.

" ' And murder, adultery and false witness ? ' I suggested.

" ' God is merciful and forgiving,' rejoined my friend, ' that is, these are merely little sins.'

" ' Hence, two sins alone are great, polytheism and smoking,' I continued, though hardly able to keep countenance any longer. And Abd-el-Kereem, with the most serious asseveration, replied that that was really the case."

Another thing which astonishes Europeans in Mohammedan peoples is their apathy and indifference on many occasions that excite us to energy and effort. The merchant does not rush about seeking for custom ; he is content to sit passively awaiting it. A nation will accept defeat with resignation. " It is written." " There is no escape from what is written." " I am in the mercy of God." " As God wills." With such phrases the Arab meets good fortune or disaster or reconciles himself to a dead level of stagnation. Kismet, fate, is the universal law, and men are but the creatures of destiny. No human effort can alter the course of events already decreed. So much have we come to regard this attitude of mind as characteristic of Mohammedan peoples that there is a tendency on the part of some writers to regard Kismet as part of the doctrine of the Koran, and as the cause of the decay of all the Mohammedan Powers.

The matter, however, is not so simple as this. No such doctrine of predestination is specifically taught in the Koran. Mohammed himself, and his successors whose conquests extended from Persia to Spain, showed no signs of paralysis of the will or of passive acquiescence in the decrees of fate. The doctrine of predestination in its extreme form has been held by people, by Calvinists, for example, whose stern and grim character admitted of no surrender to fate and who would maintain a fight against overwhelming odds. Of two men who hold the same doctrine one will bow down supinely before the inevitable, while another will rush furiously into action, saying: "Thus and thus it is decreed! I am myself the instrument of fate." Habit of mind, character, temperament, is the true fate. A man cannot escape from himself. And, indeed, it is written: "Greater is he that ruleth himself than he that taketh a city." It was the Arab temperament which was capable of the furious zeal of the cavalry charges which drove Rome out of Asia Minor and Africa. It was the Arab temperament which prevented the growth of any permanent Arab Empire. And temperament depends largely on climate. The Mohammedan religion, like the date palm, is a product of the Heat Belt.

## CHAPTER XXI

# THE TASK OF FRANCE

THE French have not yet succeeded in developing, colonising, and Europeanising North Africa as thoroughly as the Romans did. They have been in occupation less than a century in Algeria and less than half a century in Tunisia. The Romans, on the other hand, had been in occupation of this same territory for half a millennium, three times as long as we have been in occupation of India. For five centuries it was one of the richest and most flourishing of the Roman Provinces. Fifteen centuries ago the country was Europeanised to a far greater extent than it is to-day. It was better equipped with the machinery of civilisation. Aqueducts and irrigation dams represented a vast sunk capital and far-sighted development. Plains which are now desert were then cultivated. Great cities equipped with all the luxuries and refinements of Rome, adorned with art and centres of learning, flourished not merely on the coast but far inland, on the frontiers of the Desert, where now silence reigns. Magnificent roads penetrated the remotest parts of the country, and rivers were spanned by bridges whose ruins are still eloquent of conquest over man and Nature. The civil engineer was supreme in the Roman

Empire, and his handiwork is everywhere visible. He was the real builder of the Empire after the soldier had opened up the way. It was here also, in Africa, before St. Peter's in Rome was ever heard of, that the Christian Church first became a power. It was the country of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. Then came the Mohammedan deluge, sweeping both Rome and Christianity out of Africa, and the Dark Ages descended like the fall of a curtain.

France has brought back to this derelict province the European tradition. Consciously, deliberately, avowedly, with the logical system and set purpose that are characteristic of her race, she has taken up the task of Rome with the methods of Rome. She has subdued the robber tribes of the Atlas and the Sahara. She has driven roads and railways into the recesses of the country, and linked up cities, towns, and villages with telegraph and telephone. She is draining the fever-haunted valleys, irrigating the desert, planting orange and olive groves and vineyards, and ploughing the corn lands. She offers substantial inducements to French settlers to colonise the land. She has established schools, and post-offices, and savings' banks, and boulevards, and cafés, and introduced cinemas, gramophones, and newspapers. And, lastly, she has introduced popular elections.

Gaul, the greatest of the Roman Provinces, loves to think of herself as the heir returning to his own. In all that she does she sets before herself the Roman model. Rome aimed at making her provinces a part of Rome, incorporated in the Roman system, held together by common institutions, by common privileges of citizenship, by a uniform legal system, by a standardised education, and by systematic organisation. Algiers is not a self-governing Dominion like Canada, or a subject State like India, or a Crown Colony like Jamaica ; Algiers is incorporated as an integral part of France, directly represented in the French Chamber of Deputies. The aim of France is to assimilate rather than to dominate or to establish in an independent career.

To all outward appearance the French seem to have met with marvellous success. The contrast between Egypt on the one hand, and Algeria and Tunisia on the other hand, is too obvious at the present moment not to be noticed by the most casual observer. In both cases an ancient civilisation has been swept away by the tide of Mohammedanism. In both cases a European Power has in comparatively recent times stepped in and assumed responsibility for the government of the country. The British in Egypt are confronted by violent agitation and incipient rebellion. There is no trace of any similar movement against the French in Algeria or Tunisia—at present. Some young Arabs who have had associations with Egypt may talk wildly about ideas they do not understand in the cafés, but they have no following, and no material to work on.

I looked in vain for signs of the general Mohammedan unrest about which so much has been heard in the East. I did, indeed, hear some rumours of trouble among the tribes in the Aurès Mountains, but it was of a purely local character, and seemed to have no political significance. There were, I was informed, some bandits led by a deserter from the army, a sergeant who had committed several murders and who knew that if he were captured he would go to the guillotine. He had gathered round him a small band of men as desperate as himself. They played the rôle of Robin Hood, befriending the poor and robbing the rich. Hitherto they had not meddled with Europeans. Their plan was to send a message to some rich native that they wanted a thousand francs. He generally paid up, for he knew that if he did not they would take his life as well. So they levied a kind of tribute or blackmail on the district, but they were very popular with the poorer people who would not betray them. There had also been some small trouble with the enforcement of conscription during the War. There was a small rising and a prominent official had been killed. Some German agents may have been at work. The matter was hushed up at the time. But none of these incidents seemed to give rise to any anxiety on the part of the authorities.

Economically British rule in Egypt has been more successful than has French rule in Algeria and Tunisia. It has created greater material prosperity. But politically it has been less successful. I made many efforts, by enquiries among British subjects of long residence in the country, both business men and officials, to find an explanation of this contrast. I received no completely satisfactory explanation, but there seemed to be a general consensus of opinion on several points. The military regime, and espe-

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cially the presence in Egypt of the Australian soldiers in the early days of the War, had a bad political effect. The Australians regarded all the inhabitants alike as " Niggers," who must get out of the White Man's way. The poorer natives were ill-treated and sometimes plundered. The educated natives, many of them men of high position and dignity, were humiliated and treated with indignity. The people of French Africa, moreover, were quite different from the Egyptians in race, in temperament, and in education. There were distinct differences even in the territory between Tangiers and Tunis, which are well expressed in the Arab saying that the Moroccans are a race of warriors, the Algerians a race of gentlemen, and the Tunisians a race of women. The French were themselves a Latin race, more akin to the natives, and, lacking the element of race prejudice, they mingled with the natives more on equal terms. In Egypt education was much more highly developed. In this respect the very success of our rule was creating the means for its own destruction. Finally, the proximity of Egypt to Turkey offered facilities for agitation by pro-Turks, while the French sphere was far removed from such influences.

It is not that the French have shown any excess of tenderness for Mohammedan sentiment. They have taken over mosques in many instances and converted them to Christian or to secular uses. They make no effort to suppress Mohammedanism, they give it full tolerance. Their attitude towards religion in general is secular. The State is their Church, and they leave no room for mistake as to whether the State is master. Christianity must have an equal right to flaunt its emblems where once they were trodden under foot. At one of the best view points on the Rue Michelet, in Mustapha Supérieur, from which the whole panorama of the town, harbour, and bay of Algiers may be surveyed, there is erected an iron cross with the legend:

IN HOC SIGNO VINCES

1858.

In the course of suppressing an insurrection fomented by a Marabout called Bou-Amama Bel Arbi, in 1881, Col. Negrier committed an act which gave deep offence to the Arabs. He destroyed the tomb of Sidi Sheikh, the great Saint of the Sahara, to whose family Bou-Amama belonged, and transported the ashes to Greyville. The act, which bore a close resemblance to the much-discussed desecration of the Mahdi's tomb by Lord Kitchener in the Sudan, was very popular with the extreme French party in Algeria, and was never formally repudiated by the Government. The tomb, however, was reconstructed by the State, and the Saint's bones were redeposited in it. This combination of religious tolerance, or indifference, and drastic insistence upon the supremacy of the State, was characteristic of pagan Rome.

There is no sign of friction. One meets no surly looks in the street or beside the mosque. But one wonders if there is anything beneath the placid surface. There are deeps below deeps. In his book on "Roman Africa," Gaston Boissier says in effect something like the following: We have conquered the country much more rapidly than the Romans. But we have not won over the inhabitants. There has been no fusion, no real union. They cherish their separate beliefs, customs, hatreds. At heart they are our mortal enemies and probably will never blend with us.

At Biskra, as stated earlier, I met a wandering Englishman who had lived much with the natives, and who might have served as a prototype for Browning's "What's become of Waring?" I quote his opinion because it seemed to me the best informed and most fully informed of any that I heard.

"Why do the French get on better with the natives than we do in Egypt? It is difficult to say. The natives here are of a different race from those of Egypt. They have no educated proletariat knowing nothing of practical affairs. Then the French are more cunning than we are. They treat the richer class, the chiefs, and the leading men, as Europeans. They travel in the same railway carriages with them and use the same hotels and restaurants. We insist more on the race distinction, and these men feel that they are slighted and humiliated. We protect the poor people, the agriculturists, and we see that they secure justice, and we prevent them from being exploited by the more powerful ones. This further aggravates the richer men whom we have already humiliated. The French are cunning enough both to placate the wealthy and to secure justice for the poor, at least in a large measure. Then the French are so logical. If a man is good enough to fight for his country he is good enough to vote. All the soldiers who were enrolled during the War have now got votes.

"The French local population, however, dislike the Arabs intensely. Their temperament is so different. The Frenchman is, above all things, industrious and thrifty. He is keen on making money. He does not understand the Arab, who is content to live from hand to mouth, and who, if he has enough for to-day, takes no thought as to how he is to live to-morrow. The local French are often very bitter about the Arabs having votes. The home Government, they complain, does not understand how to treat the native.

"The Arabs, again, hate the Kabyles, or Berbers, the native stock which was here before the Arabs, before the Romans, before the Phœnicians, and which has retained its own language in spite of all subjugations. They are an industrious and hard-working people, especially in agriculture. Goodness knows what is their racial origin. They are scattered very wide, from the Djurdjura to the Atlas Mountains, and even to the oases of the Touaregs, far in the Sahara. They are not negroid, though a slight prognathous tendency indicates an admixture of Negro blood. They are not Semitic like the Arabs. Apart from their costume they are as European in appearance as you or I. Suitably dressed they would be indistinguishable from the natives of any French or English village. They are of that Mediterranean race which inhabited the country at the time when Africa and Europe were joined by land bridges at Gibraltar and across Sicily, when the Western

Mediterranean was an inland lake, and when probably the Sahara was a sea cutting them off from the rest of Africa. They were to be found in Italy and Sicily and they even penetrated to Britain and Spain, where we call them Iberians. The Greeks of the Islands were of the same stock, but the Greeks of the Mainland were quite a different race. In my view these Kabyles are ‘Europeans,’ and, if the French occupation continues, in the course of a century or so they will be indistinguishable from the French. The religious barrier will probably be broken down. They are not orthodox Mohammedans as it is. They are very lax, and they go in for many practices which are not Mohammedan, while the French, on their side, are very tolerant, if not indifferent in religious matters.”

Will France succeed where Rome failed ? I am not sure. It is too early to venture on prophecy. The great experiment is only at its beginning. There are many factors which require time for development and whose significance is obscure. France has taken Rome for her model, but France is not Rome, and she has to contend with two factors which were unknown to the Romans—Religion and the modern theory of Democracy which has dominated France since the Revolution.

The Mohammedan religion has a stronger hold on the African population than any of the old pagan cults which existed in the time of the Romans. It is as hard and as self-centred as a diamond. It opposes a blank wall to the most active and stimulating ideas and motive forces of our civilisation. It is a spiritual armour against Europeanisation. It does not yield. The soul of Africa is still the soul which Mohammed gave it from the Desert.

The evolution of the modern idea of Democracy is hostile to the imposition of an alien civilisation upon another people. It is all in favour of " self-determination." Strictly interpreted it would leave the heathen in his blindness if he so desires. It rejects the somewhat hypocritical idea of the White Man's Burden. It assumes that if people are left alone to govern themselves, they will always choose the better course. The pressure of French public opinion at home restrains the present Government from adopting many drastic methods of assimilation which were open to the Romans.

And in spite of prehistoric affinities of race there is in Africa something intractable and alien to Europe. Why should the Roman tradition have survived the Mohammedan domination in Spain and not in Algeria ? It is the sun which claims Africa as its own. The great tropic heart of Africa can never be Europeanised. Africa is the land of the camel, the palm, the cactus, the desert, the mirage, the Koran. You cannot teach the palm to branch like an oak. It is true that Spain is in climatic respects almost identical with Morocco and Algeria ; but the heart from which it draws its blood is European. Its reservoirs lie not in the South but in the North.

Europe has once more laid hold of Africa as she has laid hold of Asia at intervals since the first beginnings of history. She has conquered, she has taken possession, but in the end she has always recoiled. To conquer is one thing, to assimilate is quite another. The assimilator may be assimilated. The struggle is not merely a physical one but a spiritual one. The soul of the conqueror is in danger. Western Europe was saved from being Byzantinised by being cut off from Africa and Asia. In spite of our great possessions in Asia and Africa, the salt estranging sea has saved us so far. We sup with a long spoon with the East and the South. But France lies only a few hours' sail from the New France which she is endeavouring to create in Africa. Her success has been marvellous. Africa has responded to the stimulus of stronger will and character. But—but we have yet to see whether there will be any reflex action.

## CHAPTER XXII

# “ESTO PERPETUA”

IT was through Mr. Belloc’s short book —an essay, he calls it—that I first felt the enchantment of the Maghreb, that lost outpost of Europe, corresponding to Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, which France is now steadily recovering. The book is slight, like a fountain jet sparkling in the sunlight, with perhaps a rainbow in the spray, but it springs from deep reservoirs of feeling, knowledge, and thought. It belongs to the period of “The Path to Rome,” and indeed, it might be a supplement to that delightful book. It is no laboured diary of his journey through Algeria but a *jeu d’esprit*, an afterthought, an improvisation. One might almost say it had a lyric quality about it.

The spirit of the book is joyously heroic —the spirit of the Three Musketeers. He has all the recklessness of Porthos and all the subtlety of Aramis. He is full of challenges. His blade is always leaping from its scabbard. He is ready to ram his opinions down the throat of the first man he meets at the inn. One can see him arriving at the inn, shouting for wine and pasties, singing songs of his country, and discoursing, with an air, upon the Eternal

Verities. The gallantry and gaiety and audacity of his gasconade are infectious.

The Belloc mannerisms, affectations, poses, which give such a piquant flavour to this book, are still fresh, young, tender shoots pushed forth in the luxuriant exuberance of youth. He rails at the Jews, he brushes aside with a superb gesture the Protestant schismatics, he turns his back on the barbaric North, he is in his most oracular vein, he shocks the Puritans, he uses theological terms familiarly, he chaffs his readers, he cuts short a disquisition on the destiny of man to recount with circumstantial detail a wayside adventure of his own.

" Would to God I could tell you of the shoemaker ! " he exclaims as he hastens through a village in " The Path to Rome." Fortunately, he finds time to tell us of the Shoemaker—" or words to that effect "—in " Esto Perpetua." There is the story of the House of the Lions, of the Arab farmer who gave him a lift on the road, and boasted of his possessions, of the old soldier at Timgad who fed him on stewed mutton which tasted like camel, and of the strange man whom he met in the ruins who was clad in a long cloak of stuff not woven in a modern loom, who told him " that many who saw the Desert learned more than they desired to learn," whose sentences were " full of what he and his call wisdom and I despair," and who left him with the fantastic thought " that he had known the city when it was loud with men." Here is a little incident seen *sub specie Æternitatis.* There was " a poor

Arab and old, who sold fruits upon a stall in Setif. In his face there was a deep contempt for Christendom. The snow fell all round him swiftly, mixed with sleet and sharp needles of cold rain. . . . He knew me at once for someone to whom Africa was strange, and therefore might have hoped to make me stop even upon such a night to buy of him. Yet he did not say a word, but only looked at me as much as to say: 'Fool! Will you buy?' And I looked back at him as I passed, and put my answer into my eyes as much as to say: 'No, Barbarian, I will not buy.' In this way we met and parted and we shall never see each other again till that Great Day."

Alas for the flight of years! That was fourteen years ago, and "The Path to Rome" was earlier. The springs of poesy are drying up. The lyric rapture has fled. The poet has become a metaphysician. In his recent books Mr. Belloc has run to seed. The early affectations which were as charming as the tender shoots of asparagus have now become hard, stringy, and fibrous. The mannerisms have become a formula. The gaiety is no longer spontaneous. The joy has given place to asperity. He is no longer a musketeer for fun but a hardened veteran. The trouble is that he has successfully hoaxed himself. His earliest books such as "Lambkin's Remains" and "Caliban's Guide to Letters" were exercises in elaborate and sustained irony. The trick of posing captivated him. He posed in his gestures, in his mannerisms, in his antipathies, and, which was fatal, in his opinions. There is nothing more dangerous, more treacherous, than to strike an attitude in opinion. This is what Mr. Belloc did. He had lashed Lambkin and Caliban with elaborate sarcasm and fooling. He had exhibited their foibles and their humbug in grotesque parody. Then he exceeded the licence of parody. They had hoaxed the public with their ponderous solemnity. The public was an ass. He would show how it could be hoaxed into accepting the most glaring paradox by sheer intellectual audacity and effrontery. He ended by falling into the pit which he himself had digged. He persuaded himself. He has fallen a victim to his own practical joke. The pose has become grim earnest. The masquerade has become a reality. The opinion which he played with has gripped him and mastered him, and become an obsession. The farceur takes himself seriously. He is in danger of becoming a crank like an inventor whose great project the Government has rejected.

In " Esto Perpetua " one sees in its simplest and most attractive form the idea which has since clambered like ivy round all his literary activity. It crops up like King Charles's head in every book he has since written. In one volume after another the idea can be seen growing, as it were, from an embryo taking organic shape, developing, absorbing nutriment from its environment, building up by vigorous selection a hard shell or argument, until finally it emerges in the full panoply of an historical thesis in " Europe and the Faith."

In bald terms the idea is this. The Catholic

Church and the Roman Empire and European civilisation are identical. All the permanent and stable elements in European Society are derived direct from Rome and the Roman Church. Everything that is not Catholic is Barbarian and outside the pale. Protestantism is a disease of the Barbaric North springing from those countries which never were fully incorporated into the civilisation of the Roman Empire. The Goths, the Vandals, the Normans, the Angles, the Saxons, the Huns, and the Germans still beat like surf upon the frontiers of the Empire. If we are to fulfil the mission of Europe, if our civilisation is to endure, we must recover the True Faith. The mere statement of the idea is a challenge, and this no doubt enhanced its attractiveness for Mr. Belloc.

Against this may be set up the counter idea. All that is most characteristic of European civilisation is derived from the marriage between the Northern or " Gothic " intellect and temperament and the Roman culture. The Roman Empire and the Roman Church, with their gospel of authority, both political and religious, had become an intolerable tyranny. They had great learning, great art, great system, but they smothered individual liberty under a deadweight of authority. As the power of the State grew the character of the citizen deteriorated. Rome was rotten ripe for its fall when the Barbarian deluge broke upon it and brought the new blood, the new temperament, the new spirit of individualism which, under the quickening influence of Roman culture, were to save

Europe. Through gradual stages the Northern intellect and character evolved the Feudal System, Gothic architecture, Representative Government, Protestantism, and the Federal form of Empire. For those who do not like this kind of thing, of course, it is just the kind of thing they would not like, but it is at least intelligible that others may find here the real meaning and mission of Europe.

This is not the place to argue out such an issue, nor does Mr. Belloc attempt to do so in " Esto Perpetua." The idea is there, clearly defined, sparkling, challenging, like the cockade of a lost cause worn for bravado by a Musketeer. The high spirits, the lightness of touch, the dash, the artistry of the whole thing disarm criticism. Even those who dissent most from the central idea can enjoy it and enter into the spirit of it as we do with a Jacobite song or a Cavalier roundelay.

Wandering in Barbary Mr. Belloc discovers once more that he is on the Path to Rome. The land, its relief, and its story are a symbol of the adventures of Europe. It is thoroughly our own in race, climate, and situation. We falsely assume the Berbers to be Oriental because of their dress and language, until we have noted their faces, but they are fundamentally of our own kind, capable of the same civilisation. He examines a hewn stone built into a rubble wall and finds on it the lettering of " the august and reasonable Latin." He suddenly comes upon the colossal ruins of the Aqueduct which supplied distant Cherchel with water. " It spans a lonely valley in which the bay and the harbour are forgotten, and it is as enormous as the name of Rome." The little museum in the Town Hall at Constantine, with its collection of inscribed stones, is "a rediscovery of ourselves." "You dig through centuries of alien rubbish and when you have dug deeply enough you come suddenly upon Europe." At Lambèse, as high as the top of Cader Idris, there stands a square and hardly ruined tower, the Prætorium of the camp of the Third Legion. It looks almost Jacobean, and yet "it is older than our language by far, and almost older than the Faith." He approached Timgad by night, on foot, and suddenly, in a glimpse of the moon, he saw "a large city unroofed and dead in the middle of this wasted land." The triumphal arch, the inscriptions, and the statues were "full of that serenity which faces wore before the Barbarian march and the sack of cities. The foundations on which the Maghreb is laid, and to which it must return, are Roman."

Nowhere else is the genius of Rome more apparent than in these African ruins. And yet the Roman tradition was completely extirpated. It passed like a shadow on the dial when the Mohammedan deluge broke upon the land. The Berbers, though they were of our own kind, had something barbaric in them—a genius for revolt. In the African Church every heresy arose. Even under Islam sect warred against sect. In Syria, and in Spain, the Moslems failed to extirpate Christianity; in Africa only their victory was complete. The Berbers had not the tenacity of Gaul, Spain, and Britain; they were not merely overwhelmed but, what is worse, persuaded. The Roman towns did not decay—they were immediately abandoned, and of the olive groves the stone presses alone remain. It was an example of cataclysmic history which the " Scientific Historians," his *bête noir*, deny.

And now, after twelve centuries, the French have taken up the task of Rome. They have designed, then organised, and then built. " The mind is present to excess in the stamp they have laid upon Africa. Their utter regularity and the sense of will envelop the whole province." " The vine is in Africa again. It will not soon be uprooted." Take for example the little town of Guelma, high up on the Tell, surrounded by new farms and vineyards, European in climate, vegetation, and architecture, and framed in the heavy walls and arches of Rome, all informed by that " nameless character which is the mark of Empire and carries, as it were, a hint of resurrection." The refounding of such municipalities, and not adventure in the desert, is Europe's task. And yet, in Guelma, as throughout Africa, the Arab has " cast a spell." From the midst of the roofs " rises the evidence of that religion which still holds and will continue to hold all its people," the minaret that mocks us. The influence is intangible. It has sunk into the Atlas and the Desert and fills the mind of every man throughout this land. " Against this vast, permanent and rooted influence we have nothing to offer. . . . Nor will our work be accomplished until we have recovered . . . the full tradition of our philosophy, and a faith which shall permeate all our actions as completely as does this faith of theirs."

How is France equipped for the task? She has been handicapped by the "dissolution of the principal bond between Europeans, the bond of their traditional ritual and confessional." But for this Italy and Spain would have shared in the task—Italy in Tunisia, and Spain in Morocco. Owing to the division of nations the task fell to France alone. "The vices and the energy of this people are well known." Of necessity they have produced in Africa, not a European and a general effect, but a Gallic and a particular effect. "They are not Roman in permanent stability of character." On their long route marches the French often fail to reach their goal, and have to bivouac under the sky, and sleep out unsatisfied. They may fail in their task of recreating the Empire in Africa, but, if they fail, Europe will fail with them and our tradition is ended. But "they have done the Latin thing."

Besides Islam and the lack of unity in Europe there is another obstacle, or rather limit, geographical and climatic, to the Europeanising of Africa. Mr. Belloc tells how he climbed on foot over the last ridge of the Aurès Mountains until he reached the Southern slope and saw stretched before him "a vast space much more inhuman than the sea . . . sharp reefs of stone, unweathered, without moss, and with harsh unrounded corners, split by the furnace days and the dreadful frosts of the desert." "I had then seen a limit beyond which men of my sort cannot go." And as he returned

" over an earth that was quite barren, with no history," and observed the immobile figure of an Arab of the Great Tent, he said: " This is how it will end. They shall leave us our land with the European climate and we will leave them their desert." *Esto Perpetua!* Let Rome live for ever!

Vain dream—a mirage of the mind! France may indeed be successful in her task, but it is not Rome that France brings back to Africa. The well-springs of that Western civilisation for which France stands are in the North and not in Italy. Rome stands for dominion and authority; France stands for " Liberty, Fraternity, Equality!" No doubt Gaul has much Latin blood in her, but she has also much Frankish and Norman blood, and the political institutions which she has developed and is developing bear, like Gothic architecture, the characteristic marks of Northern origin. When the Gothic races broke into the crumbling Empire it was the Vandals who occupied Spain, crossed the narrow straits, and sacked the cities of the African province. They settled down in the country, but they were not sufficiently numerous as were the Lombards in Italy, or the Normans in France, or the Saxons in England. They were cut off from their kind. The climatic influences, moreover, were against them, and they finally were absorbed in the native stock, leaving no trace of their presence save occasional blue eyes and fair hair among the Kabyle tribes, and a single word added to the native dialect, *trinkan*, to drink. They passed, but their kindred races in Europe built up a new civilisation out of the ruins of the Empire. It is not Rome which comes again to Africa with the French. It is the Vandals returning on the crest of the wave of Western Democracy which is their own.

## CHAPTER XXIII

# CHARLIE MEETS THE BOAT

ON the arrival of the s.s. *Eugène Pereire*, from Tunis, at Marseilles the passengers were gathered as usual in the dining saloon, with their luggage awaiting the appearance of the porters. Suddenly there burst into the saloon an excited person with a cap bearing the words "*Agence X*" on the band. He was shouting "Meester Veegeens! Meester Veegeens!" in which form I recognised the name of Mr. Wiggins, an official of the British Government who had a cabin to himself. He was soon directed to Mr. Wiggins's cabin, but before going down he took the opportunity to announce to the assembled passengers: "*Une grande Grève des Cheminots! La Gare est fermée! Les hôtels sont remplis!*"

A railway strike—no trains—the hotels full! The news went through the crowded saloon like an electric shock. Those who had taken the precaution to book rooms (and who had letters or telegrams in confirmation) congratulated themselves. The others, who had intended to proceed direct to Paris, or who had trusted to finding room at the inn, began to consult anxiously with one another, and to speculate upon the possibilities of bath-rooms and billiard tables. " I telegraphed to the Hôtel du Louvre a week ago," said a shrill voice, " and prepaid a reply. I think that's good enough, don't you ? They didn't reply but I shall hold them to it. They should have let me know if they couldn't give me a room."

The voice of the herald of bad tidings was heard again—" There are no carriages, and very few porters ! " The gloom deepened. I went downstairs to consult with Mr. " Veegeens " who seemed to be a person with authority, and who, even in the midst of this catastrophe, had a representative of the " *Agence X* " in attendance on him.

It seemed that I had found my saviour. He had got the Agency to make all arrangements for him at Marseilles, to meet him at the steamer, to take charge of his luggage, and to convey him to his hotel. By a fortunate accident rooms had been reserved for him in two separate hotels. He had himself booked a room in the Hotel Splendid, and he was informed that the Agency, in ignorance of this, had booked another room for him at the Regence. He would be very glad to place the second room at my disposal. Moreover the representative of the " *Agence X*," after seeing him to his hotel, would, no doubt, be glad to see to my transport. " Can you arrange for this gentleman, Ferdinand ? "

" For a friend of yours everything is possible. A room at the hotel ! But yes—a good room. A carriage ! A porter ! Nothing is impossible. What is the name of Monsieur ? Ah—Meester Scott ! If you will rest in the *salle* with your *bagages* I will return. *Allons !* " He staggered up the cabin stairs with a heavy trunk, nearly knocking over a waiter and a passenger and leaving a trail of maimed and wounded behind him. Where had I seen him before ?

I returned triumphant to the saloon to await this miracle worker. I had not long to wait. His voice was heard again : " Meester Scott ! Meester Scott ! " " This way," I cried, and a lane opened up as he charged through the dense crowd of passengers who were casting envious glances in my direction.

My " *bagages* " were not inconsiderable, as I was travelling with my wife. He grappled with a heavy cabin trunk while I grasped a suit-case and a hold-all. " *Non ! Non !* " he exclaimed with an expression of anguish, shaking his head till his cap fell off. He put down the trunk to recover it and forcibly deprived me of the luggage. " *Ne touchez pas !* It is all arranged. Have I not said it ! *Restez ici*, and guard well the other *bagages*. All the people here are thieves. I will return with the porter. He attends." His gesticulations were violent, and, as he rolled off again with the trunk, even his legs seemed to gesticulate.

He reappeared with an incredibly stout longshoreman, whom he seemed to have conscripted to act as porter, and I followed them, sucked up in the eddy made by their passage through the crowd.

Our luggage was dumped on the pavement. " *Attendez ! Attendez ! Je chercherai une voiture.*" An accomplice rushed past him apparently intent on other business. He grasped him by the shoulder and lugged him back, his arms and legs revolving like the spokes of a wheel. I could not follow the rapid exchange of expletives in the *Marseillaisian* dialect, but I gathered that it had something to do with the *voiture.* The accomplice disappeared up a side-street, and the master of the situation ran across to a café. A rattle of wheels. The *voiture* at last, with the accomplice standing up in it and shouting to the loiterers to clear the way. Our deliverer emerged from the café as it passed, and jumped on board. " It is all right ! " he shouted. " *Fait accompli !* I have telephoned to the hotel. The room is reserved for you."

He and the accomplice and the longshoreman flung themselves violently upon the luggage and began piling it on the carriage. An electric car was approaching, and no one noticed that our carriage overlapped the car rails. Too late, Ferdinand rushed forward, with his hand in the air uttering a string of imprecations. " *Arrêtez ! Arretêz !* " The driver pulled up but not in time. The car caught our hind wheel. The decrepit horse started forward with a frightened jump. The luggage was scattered along the street. While the accomplice and the longshoreman were recovering it, our friend was cursing the car driver by all the gods of the Midi, and explaining to him that I was a person of importance, whose well-being was an object of peculiar solicitude to his Britannic Majesty !

At last we were ready to start. I looked round for the longshoreman who would, doubtless, be expecting a tip. He had disappeared. " *Allons !* It is my affair. I see to everything." Ferdinand jumped up on the step on one side of the carriage, the accomplice jumped up on the other side, and the carriage lurched forward perilously. "*Allons! Allons!*" Ferdinand shouted, taking off his cap and waving it to the disconsolate crowd we were leaving behind.

Now we had time for a little conversation of which he assumed complete control: "You are from Tunis? You like it? Yes? You have seen the Souks? And the Bardo? And Carthage? And Korbous? I know! I know! And you have stopped at the Hotel Majestic? No! The Tunisia Palace? No! Ah! The Hôtel de France! But yes, it is small, but ver-r-r-y agreeable. And the patron, M. Eymon, he is very stout, like this. Very good man! You like Tunisie? Good! Very good! I am Tunisian. He (pointing across to his accomplice) is from Algiers. No good! No Souks! You like Tunis?"

The accomplice, hanging on perilously to the carriage step on the opposite side, now took up the ball. "But you have been in Algiers, also? Yes? And you like Algiers? Ah, you stop in Algiers a month, and only a fortnight in Tunis! You hear that, Ferdinand? It is evident that Monsieur loves Algiers twice as much as Tunis."

"Oh, you be silent!" shouted Ferdinand. "Pay no attention to him. He knows nothing! He is from Algiers!" He leaned across us, grabbed his accomplice's cap and rubbed it over his face as if he were trying to stuff it down his throat. "Do not regard him!"

The carriage gave a perilous lurch round a corner and pulled up at an hotel door. "Regard it!" shouted Ferdinand. "A beautiful hotel!

First-class ! Thank you very much ! And your room is prepared. Will you give the driver twenty francs ? "

I was rather staggered. " Is that not rather much ? " I asked.

" *Non ! Non !* On a night like this it is nothing. I assure you that you are very fortunate to arrive here."

I paid the driver and Ferdinand led us in triumph to the hotel office. Yes, a room was ready. Would we ascend at once ? The price ? But yes, it was a very good *chambre*, at thirty francs. Was there anything cheaper ? *No-o-o-n.* To-night of all nights it was impossible to have a choice.

It remained to say good-bye to Ferdinand. I owed him something, I hinted delicately. How much was it ?

" It is a matter of nothing. As Monsieur pleases."

I searched in my purse and found two 20-franc notes. " How will this do ? " I said, extending one of them to him.

" Ah," he said, " money is of no importance to me. But one must spend on a night like this. I will take them both if Monsieur is so kind ! " He grabbed the other note which I still retained, crumpled them both up in his hand, and stuffed them carelessly in his pocket. " *Bonsoir, Monsieur ! Au revoir !* " He wrung my hand.

As he turned the light shone fully on his face. In a flash I recognised him. The element of familiarity which had puzzled me since I first saw him puzzled me no longer. The black curling hair, the little dab of a moustache, the impish twinkle in the eyes, the extravagant gestures—I saw them all together. It was Charlie Chaplin himself, Charlie Chaplin incarnate!

"*Au revoir!*" I said. "*Au revoir!* We shall certainly meet again."

The Mediterranean shores are the native home of Charlie Chaplin. One cannot escape the type. It is Levantine, a weird blend of all the races swept up by the tides of humanity into this cul-de-sac—Greek, Jew, Syrian, Arab, Italian, Maltese, Spanish, and even a touch of the negroid from the African shore. One sees him everywhere, Charlie Chaplin in the tram-car, Charlie Chaplin carrying a ladder and a pot of paint along the street, Charlie Chaplin in a café, Charlie Chaplin in a Homburg hat, or a bowler, or a fez. He flutters about like Puck, careless, impudent, childlike, impish, exuberant, full of the joy of life. Archæologists tell us of a Mediterranean race which was one of the original racial stocks of Europe. Charlie Chaplin is its modern representative.

I was reading some notices on a board in the hotel lounge when suddenly my eyes caught the name of the hotel and a thought occurred to me.

"Is this the Hôtel Régence?" I asked the clerk at the Bureau.

"But no! It is the Hôtel Regina."

"Oh, Charlie!"

# MAP OF COMMUNICATIONS
# ALGERIA—TUNISIA

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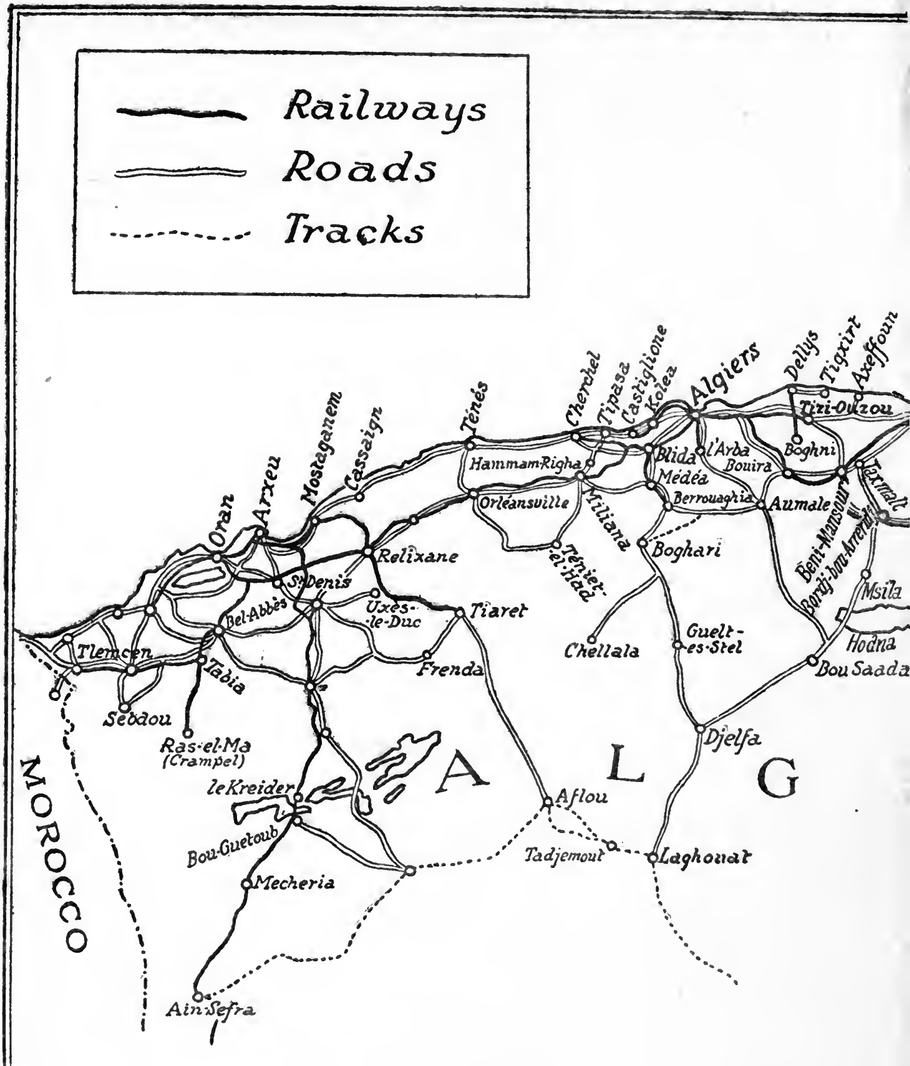
CALIFORN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Berrouaghia
Aumale
Taxmalt
Beni-Mansour
Bordj-bou-Arreridj
Msila
Hodna
Bou Saada
Kolea
Castiglione
Tipasa
Cherchel
Hammam-Righa
Milliana
Ténès
Orléansville
Téniet-el-Had
Boghari
Chellala
Guelt-es-Stel
Djelfa
Laghouat
Tadjemout
Aflou
Cassaign
Mostaganem
Arzeu
Oran
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St Denis
Tiaret
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Frenda
Bel-Abbès
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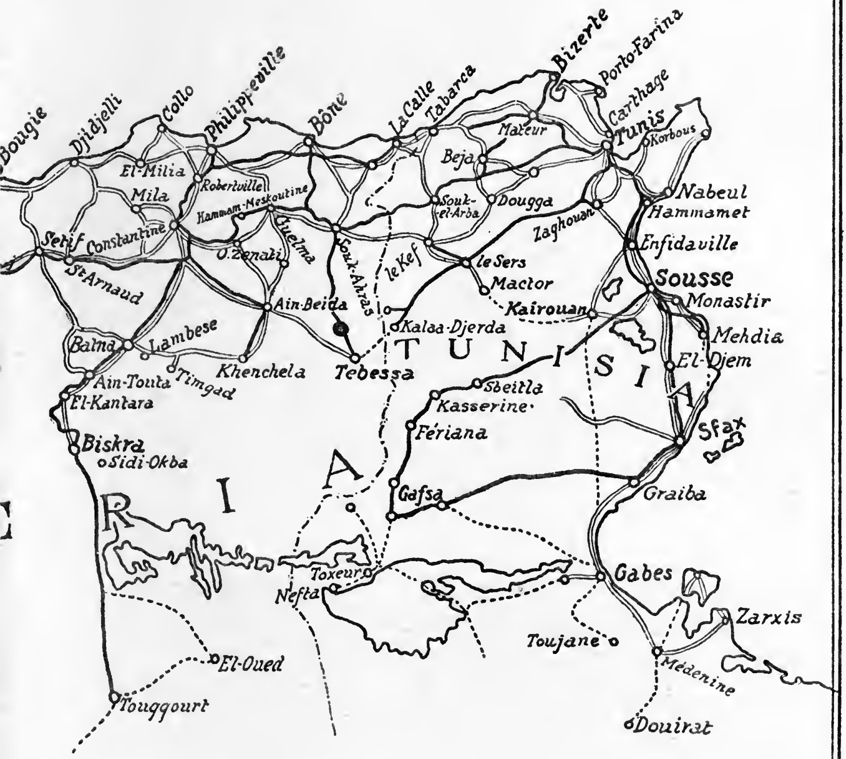
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Beja
El-Milia
Mila
Robertville
Hammam-Meskoutine
Souk-el-Arba
Dougga
Nabeul
Hammamet
Zaghouan
Setif
Constantine
O. Zenati
Guelma
Souk-Ahras
le Kef
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Kalaa-Djerda
Mehdia
Batna
Lambese
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El-Djem
Khenchela
Tebessa
Ain-Touta
Timgad
Sbeitla
El-Kantara
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Feriana
Biskra
Sidi-Okba
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