

VIEW OF FEZ. (From "Morocco and its People.")

THROUGH MOROCCO TO FEZ.



LANDING AT TANGIERS.

THE conference recently held at Madrid has at any rate shown a great number of people that Morocco is a strange country, and that the natives are given to outrage. The atrocities perpetrated some weeks ago told us that the consular

protection is of a very anomalous character, and has been frequently abused. Public curiosity respecting the country has been already stirred, so in the following pages we propose to give a brief description of Morocco, its people, and the chief places within its borders. The easiest way to reach Tangiers is from Gibraltar, and we will therefore at once cross the strait.

What a contrast! Behind us we have left the bustling rock, crowded with British troops, and bristling with cannon. On all sides civilisation and evidences of a Christian community are observable; cross the tumbling water and all is changed. You are in an unknown land. Three short hours have made the difference. Civilisation is ignored; a Christian, if not openly regarded as an enemy, is suspected; and Europe is morally and physically the opposite land. Even the landing is different, for we are carried ashore on the backs of half-naked Arabs, our chins perchance resting upon their polished skulls, and our toes dipping into the water.

The first thing that will strike the visitor to Morocco is the peculiar aspect of the natives. Everything about them is strange. Their dress, their attitudes, looks, the dreamy expression on their faces, their bare metallic-looking skulls and fixed eyes, combined with their cloaked appearance, gives them the aspect of a colony of spectres or of a Dominican brotherhood let loose. And the streets are quite in keeping with the population. The city of Tangiers is simply a labyrinth of lanes, crooked and not clean. The houses are square, white, and windowless, half convent, half prison, with doors so small that entrance is not easy: domiciles fit for "hide and seek" rather than for residence, and redolent of garlic, fish, and other odours, all the houses wearing, like their owners, the weary air of mystery and *ennui*.

The first appearance of Tangiers, therefore, is certainly not cheerful to the late sojourner at Gibraltar. Nor can the visitor amuse himself, or rather herself (for ladies like shopping), by gazing at windows and appraising wares. The shops are mean to a degree. Those in the only square, around which are the various legations, are wretched. Here is the well-defined shore upon which the sea of barbarism breaks—a line of civilisation merely. The rest is all barbaric—a dead sea of unknown extent.

But if the aspect of the city be dull during the day, what shall we say of it at night? Fully illuminated by a refulgent moon, which lights up the white walls with almost dazzling splendour, Tangiers is a city of the dead. The cloaked spectres have disappeared into the whited sepulchres—the houses. A bundle of rags will stir at your feet: it is an Arab! You tread upon the skeleton of a cat and recoil. Your footsteps echo in the deserted lanes, and probably the beating of your own heart will be all the sound you will hear. All is mute and lifeless around you.

Apropos of the "bundle of rags" we mentioned above, nothing will surprise the visitor to Morocco more than the extraordinary manner in which the native will curl himself up in a corner or lie down against a wall. In a spot where we should fancy a boy or a bundle would find insufficient and uncomfortable space, an Arab will sit or crouch in perfect happiness. "He spreads himself on a wall like a bas-relief, and flattens himself upon the ground like a sheet spread out to dry." And in all these attitudes he appears alternately headless, legless, or trunkless, a ball, a cube, or a nondescript. His adaptability is wonderful.

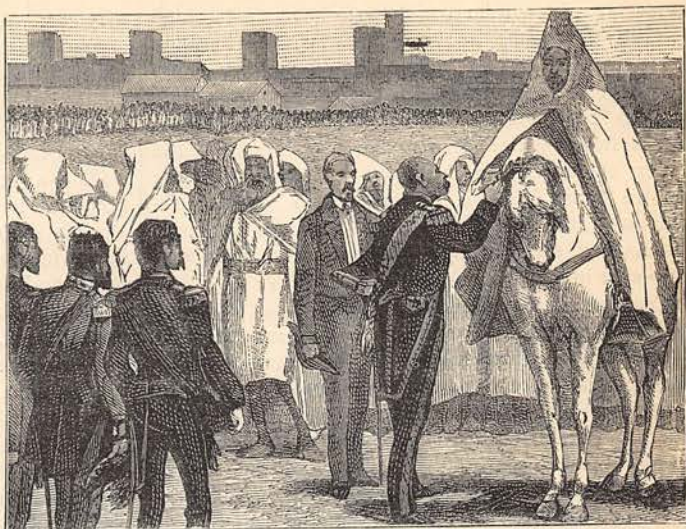
Let us glance for a moment at the different races occupying the country and their mode of government. There are about eight millions of inhabitants—Europeans, Arabs, Jews, Berbers, Moors, and Negroes. The Berbers, who are really a savage tribe, dwell near the Great Atlas, and are quite independent. The Arabs—the conquering people—occupy the plains, while the Moors hold the wealth and commerce of the country in their hands. The Negroes are servants, soldiers, or labourers. The Jews, numbering about half a million, are here detested to the full, but manage to make money and to wring a subsistence from the hands that persecute and oppress them. The Europeans are very few, and they are obliged to live under consular protection.

The government is military, and is chiefly exercised in extracting all it can from the miscellaneous population. Tribes are obedient to sheikhs, cities or provinces are ruled by cadis, then the pasha, and finally the Sultan, have the upper hand. So under such a government, or organised system of oppression, everything that grows up fades, withers, and dies, killed by savage fanaticism. Commerce is choked, manufactures are restricted to the old Moorish methods. Agriculture is equally hampered; education is thrust out: there are no books, nor maps,

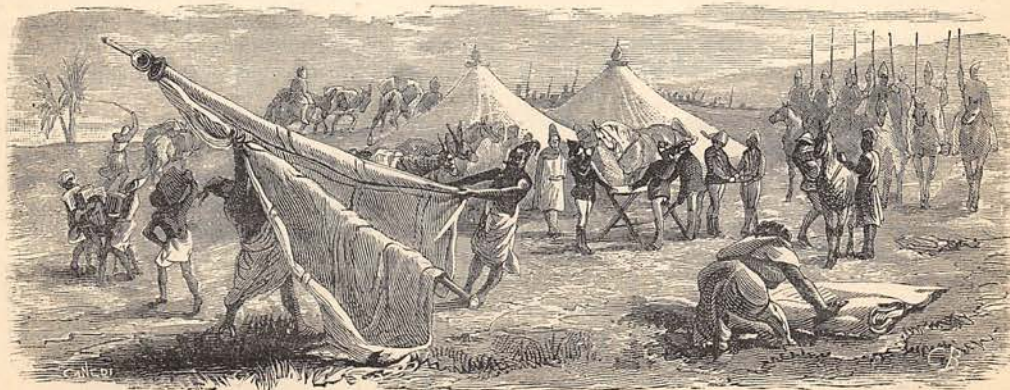
nor printing-presses, and the language itself is as corrupted as the national character. This is what is left of the once proud seat of a glorious monarchy. Ichabod, Ichabod! The glory has indeed departed!

The dress of the people is very picturesque. That of the men is ordinarily a white mantle, but on gala days is more elaborate. The women cover their faces with the end of their long mantles, under which they wear a wide-sleeved garment, bound round the waist with a cord. Nothing but the eyes, fingers, and bare feet thrust into slippers are visible. They are a *saâ*, weary race, prized till twenty, then they get old and withered, and are treated like beasts of burthen till they die.

It is somewhat curious to remark that lunatics or idiots are considered saints in Morocco. This supposition arises from the accepted idea that Providence has withdrawn reason to keep it in heaven, and generally throughout North Africa this is accepted as a proof of sanctity. These saints are at times mere impostors—men who assume an idiotic manner and action in order to benefit by the holiness that attaches to lunatics. They take strange liberties, however; and



OUR FIRST MEETING WITH THE SULTAN. (From "Morocco and its People.")



STRIKING THE TENTS. (From "Morocco and its People.")

to receive a blow from a stick or to have the "saint" spit in your face are privileges which, however greatly prized by the natives, have not yet found favour in the eyes of Europeans. These prejudices may in time wear off; at present the feeling is rather in opposition both to the actions and to the odour of sanctity in Morocco. Such a welcome as we have referred to is by no means uncommon, and the Christian is regarded as very fortunate if received by a blessed saint who may have spat in his face.

There are many interesting features about Tangiers had we space to dwell upon them. We may mention a few of the most striking. One certainly might expect conveyance, but in the whole town there is not a cart nor a carriage. No itinerants go round with wares, no street occupation absorbs the pedestrians, no movement to speak of, no bells, no cries, no invitations to purchase. Repose has settled upon all; even the active-minded visitor will succumb at last, and sit for hours doing nothing, not knowing what to do. And in this somnolent city you can wander about at will, and will lose yourself, no doubt, in the hopeless maze of little houses and lanes and alleys. Every lane is like every other lane, all the alleys and tiny squares are *fac-similes* of other alleys and squares, and one might very easily disappear never to return. This is all the more curious as the whole place could be built up, with plenty of land surrounding it, in half Kensington Gardens; and in this labyrinth you may as a Christian wander unharmed and almost unnoticed. No pickpocket of civilisation will molest you, and European women might carry their purses in their outside pockets without fear of loss.

There are various religious ceremonies which will bear description, one of which, the entry of the "Aissawa," is very popular. The Aissawa is a religious fraternity, and they keep alive the fervour of devotion by various exercises, which break out in dervish fashion into extravagant manifestations, such as dancing, leaping, yelling. These simple exercises soon expand into a sort of madness, and when under the influence of this great excitement they will burn themselves with hot coals and gash themselves with knives, as did the prophets of Baal in their frenzy. Under these circumstances they are quite irresponsible for their actions, and will seize and devour raw any small animals in the streets, and finally fall down insensible. Such are the people—a confraternity of fanatics—who come dancing, struggling, and staggering into Tangiers. Some endeavour to beat their heads against the walls; others are already almost exhausted, and are upheld by their companions; others, again, are pale rigid spectres, foaming at the mouth, and apparently contracted by fearful spasms. The spectacle is an unpleasant one—a grim procession of madmen, a gruesome masquerade.

The Fête of Mahomet is a more varied and much more pleasant sight, the charges of Arab horsemen, the games, the story-tellers, the snake-charmers, and the lances of the soldiers making a pleasant change. There is no drinking save a little water, no pairing off

of young couples, no betting nor horse-play, which we are so accustomed to see in so-called civilised society!

But Tangiers, although interesting and containing a great deal that is novel, is not Morocco, and we must now pass outside the town, where we shall find many curious features. For instance, all around the city walls is a "girdle of gardens" rich in a sort of vegetation, but too neglected. Aloes, Indian figs, oaks, oleanders, and numerous shrubs grow thickly, and intertwine their branches with the ivy, vine, and cane. Rank and luxuriant grass, quantities of flowers, in places growing two feet high, a small white house, a wheel, a well, by means of which irrigation is carried on at times through trenches, but not a living being is to be seen. All is rank and luxuriant in vegetation, but all is dead and lonely so far as the people are concerned. Here the cultivation ends. Beyond this zone of verdure there are no trees nor hedges nor boundaries to be seen. Rolling hills, undulating plains, and verdant valleys stretch away, but scarce any tilling of the ground is attempted. Ploughing is carried on in the most primitive manner; a small so-called plough guided by *one hand*, while the other wields the whip, carries us at once back hundreds of years, when our Lord's rebuke—"No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"—must have been literally applicable to the implement mentioned. The mode of using this plough is curious. Any animal is pressed into the service: a goat or a mule, or both together; even a donkey and a woman are sometimes yoked, and pull together very well in Morocco. Agriculture is of an extremely primitive order, for we see the land in any degree cultivated—as we understand the process—the ground would yield a hundredfold increase to the possessor.

So passing out of the strange and never-to-be-forgotten city of Tangiers, we start for Fez; for the escort has arrived, accompanied by horses, mules, camels, tents, and attendants; and last, but not least, the Sultan's permission to depart. What a curious escort we have to conduct us through the unknown solitudes, and to guard our canvas houses! What a number of animals!—no less than fifty horses and seventy mules, besides camels, which last, with their loads of wine and provisions, started three days in advance. At last all is ready; the escort is prepared, the travellers are mounted, and the cavalcade, preceded by the green banner of the Prophet, starts away from Tangiers.

Although we cannot pretend to describe an actual journey through Morocco, we may from authentic sources notice some of the chief features and incidents which the traveller will be most likely to encounter on the way; so we will beg the reader to imagine himself seated upon a horse and proceeding across the undulating country, green and solitary, wherein the so-called road is composed of a series of paths winding in and out, and sometimes descending deeply, and in its roughness resembling a dried-up water-course. A few palms and aloes may show against the golden sky, but probably no one will be met with until the

encampment is sighted, and then, amid noise and bustle, you will dismount among the attendants, many of whom have preceded you, and you will find the tents all ready. And in the pitching of tents, had you been present during that operation, as well as at the breaking up of the encampment next morning, the European will not fail to notice the wonderful passion for authority that is existent in every Arab. No one who possesses a scintilla of authority will abate it by a fraction, and many will assume an air of command although they possess it not. The servant of the lowest grade will endeavour to tyrannise over a humble spectator if he can only find a convenient opening.

On the way the native tribute of provisions will probably be paid by order of the Sultan if your caravan is of sufficiently elevated rank. Besides the heavy tax paid in money, the inhabitants must furnish this *mona* or tribute on certain occasions, and very irksome it must be. But there is no redress. Then the escort will, perhaps, amuse the traveller by their wild games and antics, racing hither and thither, discharging their guns, and yelling all the time as if possessed; then later forming into most striking combinations in their evolutions, the varied and varying colours of the mantles producing an effect which it is impossible to describe.

In crossing Morocco we must not ignore the celebrated tribe of the Beni-Hassan, which is notorious for its thievish and turbulent character. Indeed, theft is the profession of the *duar* or encampment, and it is elevated to a science. Stealing on horseback is practised to perfection: the men act and disappear with such rapidity that it is impossible to recognise them; they will also glide through grass, and come in all sorts of disguises; they will incur almost certain death to filch a fowl, and go ten miles on the chance of stealing a few shillings. The *duar*, or Arab encampment, is worth describing, as by it we shall better understand life in Morocco; and, indeed, Morocco can scarcely be realised without such a description. The *duar* is composed of a number of families, say fifteen, and all are related to each other; each family occupies a separate tent. These eligible family residences are erected about thirty paces apart, and in appearance are much the same as those used by the Numidians in the time of Jugurtha—viz., a boat keel upwards. An aperture is left for ventilation, and fenced by a tiny hedge of reeds. The tent is divided into two portions—the parents occupy one, the children the other part. In a corner we shall probably find a hen and her brood; in front of the tent is an oven, close by a plot of ground for herb-growing, and a few pits wherein corn is kept.

The furniture of the tent consists of a few straw mats, a clothes-chest, a mirror, a tripod covered with a mantle, under which the family perform their ablutions, two stones for crushing corn, fire-arms, a weaver's loom of a pattern dating from Abraham, and a few other useful articles, such as a distaff, some jars, &c. These are the usual features. A tent is usually given to the schoolmaster, but the instruction

imparted is, as a rule, not very tangible. Existence is of the simplest and most peaceful kind. At dawn all the people are up, then prayers are said, the cows are fed, the butter is made, and then after breakfast the men go to work till the evening. The women meantime fetch water and gather in the wood, grind the corn, weave the material for dress, twist tent-cords, and attend to their numerous domestic duties, including the preparation of *cuscussu*.

Perhaps our readers do not know what *cuscussu* is. "It is a mixture of beans and other vegetables peppered," mixed with the juices of meat; sometimes it is sweetened. This is eaten for supper, and after supper all go to bed at sunset. A story may be told for the general entertainment, but, as a rule, the *duar* is soon plunged in sleep and in darkness, except where a lamp may be lighted in some hospitable tent to guide the weary traveller to shelter and refreshment. Although the clothing of the tribes is seldom washed, the bodies of the wearers are more carefully attended to, for no one can pray without washing, but they are always more or less dirty. The principal event in the lives of the people is a wedding. The bride is fattened for the occasion, perfumed, her nails stained with *henna*, and her eyebrows are corked. She dismounts at the door of her husband's tent and, seated, looks on at the dances and exercises of the bridegroom's friends. Coins are deposited in a cloth spread on the ground. A supper closes the ceremony. Next day the wife goes around to collect more money, and afterwards the "happy pair" go about their usual avocations in the most matter-of-fact manner. These are some of the features of life in Morocco, and for the rest who can tell? Poverty, squalor, and oppression are patent to all, and when oppression can no longer be borne revolt raises its head, and the Sultan quenches the rebellion in blood.

We will now take a glance at Fez and bring our wanderings to a conclusion. The first impression of this city is decay. On all sides houses are crumbling to pieces, and the whole place is full of misery, and steeped in a "melancholy twilight;" long covered passages like tunnels, blind alleys, dens full of all sorts of abominations. Emerging into wider streets, the crowd is very great. The principal thoroughfares are but six feet wide, and a camel tramping along, or a Moor on horseback, will squeeze the foot-passengers against the houses. Hooded spectres perambulating the streets; horrible old women, men scarcely clad, corpses carried along the street, and madmen or "saints," with an assemblage of wretched boys, bleeding prisoners, and an almost insupportable heat and dust, do not at first recommend Fez to the Christian. Yet an Arabian historian says, "O Fez, all the beauty of the earth is concentrated in thee!"—the seat of wisdom, science, peace, and religion. Do you want to make purchases in Fez you will be in some respects disappointed. Candles? "We will make some; there are none." Matches? "We will have them ready in an hour," and so on. Books are unknown. There were some once, but the owner has died, and his heirs cannot be traced.

Yet the merchants sometimes go to Italy, where they buy silks, damasks, coral, pearls, muslin, and numerous other articles. For these they exchange their stuffs, hides, arms, and pottery. The red caps which are known as fezes are made here, and are very fine and durable, while the carpets are admirable. The muskets, swords, and daggers are also of beautiful workmanship. Hides are the principal source of gain. The scarlet leather from Fez, the yellow from Morocco, and the green of Taflet are well known. Jewellery, furniture, bookshelves are also marvellously worked and ornamented. There is no doubt that were the restrictions removed the commerce of the country would advance rapidly, and prosperity would be assured. The principal trade is with England, but much is also done with France, Spain, and the interior of Africa, whither immense caravans proceed across the Sahara. Morocco is

the gate of Nigritia, and would prove a very useful portal did not barbarism thrust civilisation from the threshold.

We have in the foregoing pages given a slight and necessarily imperfect account of Morocco. Any one desirous to read a more detailed description of this most interesting country should obtain the volume written by Edmondo de Amicis,* who accompanied the Italian Ambassador to Morocco, from which much of our information has been gleaned. We have traversed this land in imagination, and have not nearly exhausted its beauties nor its interest. We could fill pages with details which all would be glad to read, but we must close. With regret we leave the land of Barbary, and—

"Folding our tent like the Arabs,
As silently steal away." H. FRITH.

* "Morocco and its People." London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.

THE TROUBLE IT BROUGHT;

OR, THE OLD HOUSE IN THE GHURCHYARD.

By C. E. DESPARD, Author of "The Artist and the Man," "When the Tide was High," &c.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.



AFTER our late dinner that evening my father called me to his side. "You are going to Miss Ashley's?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered;—"she said that it was your wish."

He replied, smiling, "You must not think me a coward,

Mary, if I find it hard myself to tell you the story of those past days. But it is natural you should wish to hear it, perfectly natural. Young people are imaginative. I have been so reticent that you might easily come to fancy the mystery greater than it is."

I interrupted him. "Did Miss Ashley tell you I was curious? Oh! how could she? I will not go."

"Miss Ashley did not tell me you were curious, Mary; no. And indeed she only hinted—however, that has nothing to do with the matter. It has occurred to me that it would be well for you to know the circumstances of your aunt's marriage. Miss Ashley knows them. She was her confidante. She did not—but hear it all from her, my dear child; hear it from her."

His eyes fell upon the book in his hand. I saw he

was not inclined to enter into the matter further, and I started with my old nurse for Miss Ashley's house.

We had to pass through the churchyard to reach it, for it was situated just beyond the old Rectory house. Indeed, Miss Ashley's upper windows overlooked the ancient terrace and the shrubby and lawn, overgrown with weeds, which in the old days had been the playground of my father and his sister; and sometimes, late in the evening, when I went to her spare-room for my cloak and hood, I had looked out fearfully, in dread expectation of catching a glimpse of the ghost which haunted the desolate spot.

Miss Ashley's house itself had no such sinister associations. It was a modern house, built in the modern style, and fitted up with all the modern conveniences. In the productive, well-kept garden, the smooth-shaven lawn, the well-gravelled paths, the trim hedges and clustering evergreens; in the diamond-bright windows and snowy curtains; in the roomy and appropriately furnished interior, the crimson-carpeted hall, the bright little flower-fragrant drawing-room, the capacious dining-room, and the snuggerly within, where Miss Ashley kept her books and work, and the pleasant ladylike litter with which the idle delight to surround themselves, comfort could be read—comfort in large letters, comfort perpetually obtruding itself upon the notice of those unhappily constituted people—and according to Miss Ashley their name was legion—who did not so much as understand the word.

If comfort be at one end of the scale, the shivering ghost, with its breath of mortality, its reminder of the cold clay sods, may be said to occupy the other.

The haunted house and the modern house were two different orders of existence. It really surprised me sometimes that the ghost legend could continue to flourish in such a neighbourhood. The contrast was