

MOORISH BROOCHES.

## ON MULEBACK IN MOROCCO.

By STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

Illustrated by G. D. ARMOUR.



PAIN does not in the slightest degree prepare the traveller for the surprise which awaits him across the tiny gap of sea when his steamer brings up in the bright morning sunshine off Tangier, and the little shore-boat manned by swarthy, jabbering, half-naked boatmen, receives him and his luggage. Spanish travel may have prepared him for the "blind" aspect of the town, caused by the absence of windows in the whitewashed, flat-roofed houses that climb upward from the sea. But not for the lack of footways in

the narrow streets; nor the consequent jostling together of men, women, and boys, camels, donkeys, and porters in one good-humoured, ever-moving throng; above which the cry of "*Balook!*" "*Clear the way!*" rings constantly; and on which the turbaned and bearded shopkeepers, reclining each at his ease in his hutch of a shop with his shoes beside him, gaze with dreamy eyes and eastern indifference.

Now we note a tall black slave, who runs by bare-armed and bare-legged, with his hand upon the back of a small donkey, which he seems to use as a battering-ram rather than to guide. He wears just such a coarse white tunic, and drawers of the same, as the commoner slaves at Pompeii may have worn. Now it is a Jewish trader in a long black or blue gaberdine and coloured girdle, with a black cap and tall walking-stick, who catches our eye; now a Hadji, or reputed visitor to Mecca, in a turban and white robes; or a group of children with shaven polls, or with one long greasy lock hanging on the shoulder, and the rest of the head as bare as a billiard-ball—save for cicatrices. They look veritable imps of Mahound, but are merry, good-natured little souls enough, and very like Christian children if you set them racing for a penny. Most strange of all the sights, perhaps, is that of men lying at full length in the dust and dirt of the roadway, precisely as a dog might lie; not squatting against the houses—though this is common enough too—nor recumbent on a patch of grass at the side, but wallowing head and ears in the dust as on clean hay!

The stranger may see all these things in his first hour on shore, if he land on Sunday. That day is market day, and then the principal street is crowded. At the best of times two laden donkeys cannot pass one another in it. But the great lion of Tangier is the market-place without the walls. It is a big bare area on a tolerably steep slope, at the foot of which are the town wall and gate. Sunday morning sees it filled with a motley assemblage of Tangierines, country-people and visitors, eddying about various centres of interest—the snake-charmer with his dishevelled locks and monotonous drum, the Arab reciter, or the gentleman who sells you half a pint of copper coins for sixpence, and then does not cheat himself. These coins are of use as a charitable medium—the beggars will take them—and in themselves are curious. But as an instrument of exchange they are a failure. Even the snake-charmer eyed them more in sorrow than in anger, and murmured that he preferred English money. So do the shopkeepers in this part of Morocco, though the coinage in most common use is Spanish. Spanish is also the European tongue most generally spoken by the Jewish and other traders.

While I was standing in the market a man, dressed in Jewish fashion, but wearing a red fez, addressed me. Had I seen the citadel? the big guns? the prison? No, I

had not, I replied; and I thanked him politely, adding, that as I had arranged to make a tour of the place with a guide the next day, I did not need one at present.

"Guide!" he cried, scowling so fiercely that I quite quailed before him. "I no guide! I speak to you as a friend. I am the secretary of—," mentioning a foreign minister, whose name I have forgotten.

I hastened to pacify him, and succeeded so well that he continued the conversation, calling my attention to this or that until I walked away. Even then he accompanied me, and, yielding to his friendly suggestions, I saw in turn the big guns, the citadel, and the prison. I thought him merely well disposed to me. I have at times received so much kindness from foreigners that I readily believe in its existence. And we became quite confidential.

"What shall I give this man?" I asked referring to a soldier who had admitted us to see the guns.

"Oh, one shilling!" he answered readily.

"And this one?" I repeated, when we came to the gaoler who permitted us to peep through a hole in a wall into a horrible dungeon.

"Oh, one shilling!"

"And this?"

"Oh, one shilling!"

In fine, it was the same story throughout: one shilling! until, remembering that a pint of copper coins go to that useful silver coin, I became a little suspicious. I was fully prepared on parting from him for his question, "What you give guide?"

"I have not had a guide," I answered stoutly, looking the villain in the face.

"I have given three, four hours," he persisted, holding up four fingers—he had really been with me a little over one—"I charge one shilling the hour. I want three, four shillings! Three four shillings for guide!"

I paid the scoundrel one shilling, and no more; and despatching him without my blessing, went on my way poorer but wiser. He no doubt started on the back track to recover from the soldier, the gaoler, and his other friends his share of the plunder.

The roads which lead inland from Tangier do not repay one for the labour of exploration, at any rate on foot. Either they are deep sandy lanes, or, if they are partly macadamized, they are devoid of bridges. I made, however, one pleasant expedition over Mount Washington, to Cape Spartell Lighthouse, about nine miles distant. From



SNAKE CHARMER, TANGIERS.

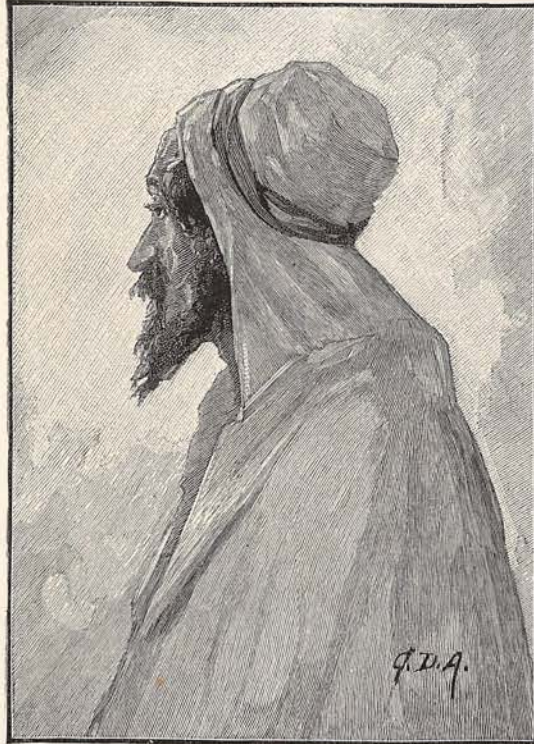
the summit of Mount Washington, a bold headland, covered with gorse and fern, or plants like them, a magnificent view is gained of the straits, with the coast of Spain from Cape Trafalgar to Gibraltar, the houses of Tarifa being plainly visible. On the left hand stretches the gleaming Atlantic; on the right, at a distance, rise the Ape Mountains, black and notable; while behind us dark rolling hills lead away ridge beyond ridge to the horizon and the little-known interior of Morocco.

A pleasant path along the downs presently leads through a narrow gorge to the lighthouse. It is the only one in Morocco. It was built by the emperor, and the floors are of very beautiful marble. In the courtyard is a curious fountain of mineral water. The expenses of maintaining the light are paid out of an international fund, to which I think thirteen countries contribute. The head keeper, had much to tell me of the benefits which would ensue if all machines were broken. But when I proposed to begin by abolishing his lamp, and substituting for it a hundred lights held by a

hundred torch-bearers, he thought I was joking. It was in vain that I explained that work would thereby be given to a hundred poor fellows now in need of it. He could not see it; and I left him voting his bread and butter better than his principles, and his practice inferior to both.

The Hotel at which I stayed deserved the name of the *Hôtel de l'Oasis*—a common name in Algeria—it was so clean, comfortable, and English, in the middle of a town, which is none of these things; which, indeed, visitors are apt to call delightful on a one day's acquaintance, dull on the next, and disgusting ever afterwards. Among others staying at my hotel were a party of five. I had been of some slight service to them in Spain, and they more than requited it here by proposing that we should join our forces for any feasible expedition. But the question was whither?

However, there came a wet day, and it happened that we met in Tangier market, and in a dissatisfied mood drew together our dripping umbrellas. "There are no camels!" we grumbled, contemplating the deserted mud-flat with sad eyes, and



A SOLDIER OF THE SULTAN.

wishing, some of us, that we were dry and comfortable in our clubs.

"My lord should see the camels at Tetuan—as the hairs in a mule's tail!" quoth a smooth voice at my elbow: the voice of my friends' Jewish guide. He was a cunning-eyed, yellow-faced little fellow, cousin to all the bazaars-keepers in Tangier; and his employers had spent a small fortune at his instance.

One and all we turned upon him peevishly. "Camels! we hate camels! Now if there were any monkeys for sale, Benjamin!"

"Monkeys! Ah!" And he smacked his lips, and shook the long tassel of his fez as if monkeys were his chief tie to life.

"At Tetuan, of course!" we sneered.

But Benjamin was accustomed to sneers. "Yes, sir," he answered crisply. "Thousands! Hundreds! And apes! And a slave-market! And embroideries, lady! And carpets!"

"Cheap?" some one asked eagerly.

"Dirt cheap! *Bon marché! Borato!* Gah! lady, here they are all cheats!"

Five minutes before this rascal had been lauding the honesty of his latest confederate! But we believed him, being anxious to do so. We had been more than

three days in Tangier, and were tired of its Moorish *café*, and schools, and mosques, and frequent weddings. We gave the necessary orders. With pride we sent forward a messenger to Tetuan to beg that the town gate might be kept open an hour after sunset in case we should be late.

We were to ride to Tetuan, a distance of at least fifty miles, in a single day; to stay there one or two days, as we might feel inclined, and to return also between dawn and dark. Accordingly 5.30 next morning saw us mounted on high red cloth-covered saddles, and clattering down the street, to emerge upon the sandy beach, with our heads pointing eastward, just as the dawn began to break. Then hey for a pleasant canter! with low sand hills on our right, and on our left the sea gleaming white under a gray mist, out of which came, in right ghostly fashion, the shrill cries of unseen sea-birds.

This was the order of march. First came our soldier, mounted upon a showy chestnut screw, with the head of an Arabian and the legs of a cab-horse. He—the soldier—sign to all men that we were under the emperor's protection—had drawn the

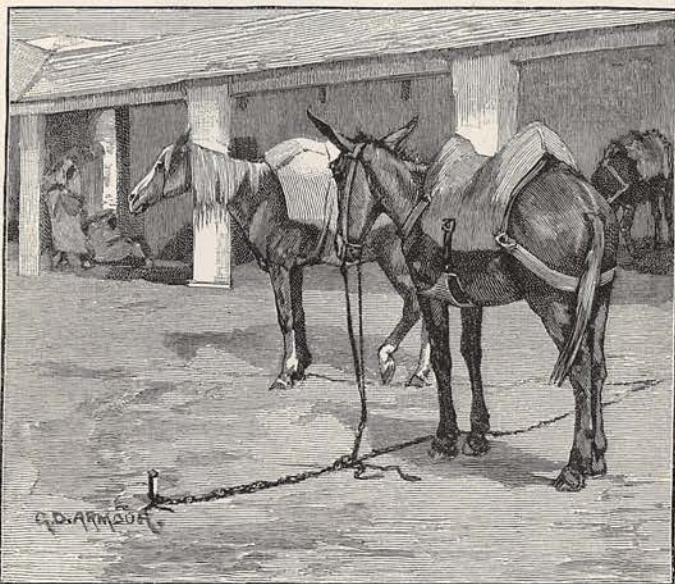
hood of his blue cloak over his turbaned head, and, thus arrayed, the outline of his upper man reminded us strongly of Cœur de Lion's statues; those, I mean, which represent the crusader in his hood of chain mail. His bare feet protruding from his white skirts rested lightly in huge, flat stirrups. One naked heel was armed with something more like a spear-head than a spur. His gun was draped, after the manner of a fishing rod, in a red bag; and the party might, I suspect, have been massacred to a man in one half the time which Ali would have needed to free his weapon. Nevertheless, as he

ambled in front of us, the long gun poised across his knees, he was, with his stately garb and carriage, a singularly picturesque figure. More than once, as he paused on the top of a ridge outlined against the sky, some one or other of us cried, "Oh, look! is he not a picture? Does he not remind you of—the Academy?"

Our guide came next. He had arrayed himself in a new fez with a long blue tassel, and a frogged coat; also in high boots of untanned leather, with spurs; and knickerbockers of black watered silk—or something that looked like black watered silk—made very baggy behind, so as to recall to the irreverent a sheep's tail. It was clear from the first moments of our ride that he was thinking far more of his own appearance and importance than of our comfort. But pride comes before a fall; and Benjamin, trotting along on the best mule, whip on thigh and nose in the air, was a very different person from the Benjamin who—but I go too fast.

For ourselves we were six—three ladies and three gentlemen, all mounted upon mules good or indifferent. Some of us were neat in overcoats and sealskins, and some shabby in old ulsters and borrowed leggings. The baggage-man—who wore the common garment of the lower classes, a rough drab thing, sometimes loose and sometimes girt round him, and prone, from its rudimentary sleeves, to give him the air of a puffin—brought up the rear, sitting sideways on his laden mule, and rhythmically kicking its side with one naked heel.

Our order changed little until luncheon time, though the scene varied much! from the sea-beach to a green valley where storks or cranes rose lazily at our approach, and



MULES WITH MOORISH RIDING SADDLES.

from that to a jumble of low hills, bright with great iris blooms. From these we passed to uplands which rose gradually to El Fondak, our mid-day halting place. It was a fold-yard, inclosed by high walls with sheds on the inner side, and a tower over the gateway. In one corner of it we sat down, a merry party, and ate cold chicken, and drank claret, and were thankful that we had not arranged to stay there a night, for it was perfectly comfortable, and not too clean.

We came once upon a bridge, and were absurdly cast down at sight of it. We had supposed such luxuries left behind. It was only when assured that of twenty streams between Tangier and Tetuan no more than two boasted bridges, that we consented to raise our heads and—a little comforted by a deep morass before us—to go on more cheerfully.

About mid-day we were turning in single file the flank of a low hill when our march was arrested by something in front. "What is it?" cried one; "*Qu'est ce que c'est, Benjamin?*" cried another, and there was some confusion, as the whole line closed up telescope fashion. Then we saw what was ahead.

Two men, still fifty yards away, were scudding towards us. One, the bigger, a very sturdy villain, was being pursued it seemed, for his hands were tied behind him, and the end of a halter trailed after him. He gained our party, and, before he could be stopped, flung himself on the ground and there lay writhing in an agony of supplication. I saw the tears running down his great cheeks, as the other coming up proceeded to belabour him with his sheathed sword. Some one gently stopped this operation. We all repeated, "What is it, Benjamin?" with increased emphasis, and crowded round with other exclamations in three or four languages.

It was a simple matter enough when explained; though deeply interesting to us. The bigger man was a nineteenth century Rob Roy. He had been caught red-handed during the previous night in the act of lifting cattle, and he was being conducted to the prison at Tangier. His hopes had been aroused by the sight of the Franks. Would we kindly shoot,



THE GUARD.

stab, or otherwise dispose of his captor, cut his bonds, and let him go? That was all he wished to ask.

Well, no, we could not. We could not see our way to doing it. We took devious paths round the poor, screaming, grovelling wretch, and left him. No one looked back; but for a while afterwards we were silent, and some of us pale, thinking of that loathsome cellar at Tangier, into which we had cast a single fearful glance, and then turned from it, our curiosity more than sated. This at first. Later, when his cries were no longer in our ears, we began to plume ourselves on the encounter, and tried our 'prentice hands at bringing out the more romantic lights of the picture. After all, we had met a robber.

From El Fondak the path led very steeply up an old watercourse, through a low blind scrub, and among awkward stones and boulders, where our mules' qualities were

severely taxed. The watershed crossed, we descended the hill on its farther side, still with much labour, so rugged was the path. For a great part of the way we followed the banks of a considerable stream, and more than once came upon a most charming sight, which travellers in Morocco have already noted—fields of flowers growing so thickly as to resemble woven carpets. Now it would be one of daisies alone, so little relieved by the green of the herbage as to be visible in its pure whiteness a mile away. Now it would be a field of African marigolds and buttercups, the pale yellow and deep orange hues combining exquisitely; and now an exceedingly rich and beautiful arrangement of all three flowers, so closely commingled and so tastefully blended by nature—with here the shade of an olive-tree, and there the sunshine to form wavering patterns on its surface—that at the sight we uttered low cries of pleasure, and sat motionless in our saddles feeding the eye.



ON THE TETUAN ROAD AFTER CROSSING THE FONDAK.

Of human interest there was little by the way. Now and then a shepherd or herdsman, with his long gun at his back, would inspect us from the top of a mound; or a company of traders with brass-scabbarded swords hanging at their backs would give us the path. Or two or three unveiled women tending sheep would linger, despite our glances, to take long and wondering looks at our female companions. We saw scarcely any habitations, and no wild creatures, save some fine eagles.

It was after six o'clock, and growing dark, when there at last appeared in front, crowning a small hill, a long, low, whitewashed wall, with a flag flying at the angle nearest to us. Low as the wall was, scarcely a building within rose above it; and to us, wearied by twelve hours in the saddle, the city looked in the twilight most mean and dreary. At the gate, however, we were hospitably received, and escorted through narrow alleys, winding for the most part between dead walls, to the house or inn, of a Jewish gentleman named Nahom. He was consul for several European powers, including England and Holland. There are few, if any, European residents in Tetuan, though the town contains I believe, forty thousand inhabitants, and much exceeds Tangier in size. Lest in dealing with it I should seem to press hardly upon our host, let me say at once that he did, and did kindly, all for us that lay in his power.

We were lodged upon the first floor. It consisted of three rooms, or rather alcoves, entered from, and corresponding with, the three sides of an inner balcony which overhung the well-like apartment, open to the sky, in the middle of the house. This open hall, or common room, was paved with red tiles. In winter, or at noon-day, it could be covered by a sail-cloth drawn across level with the roof of the house. The balcony, and the exterior of our three apartments, were of gaily painted wood,

producing an effect which reminded us partly of a Noah's ark and partly of a Swiss chalet. The fourth side of the tiny quadrangle was occupied by a staircase.

We went upon the roof next morning; a little timidly, because we remembered that in some of these cities the roofs are so entirely given up to the women, that a man is punished for showing himself even upon his own. But no complaint was laid against us, and we saw nothing noteworthy.

We set forth next day in a more cheerful mood to explore the city; to visit the slave-market, purchase some monkeys, and accept any carpets and embroideries that might, so to speak, be given away to us. But our spirits were soon dashed. We were not a squeamish party. We knew—all of us—Malaga, and the Albaycin of Granada, and the slums of Naples. Now however the monotony of squalor that



A MOORISH GIRL.

met our eyes, no matter which way they looked, was too much for us. We were in a town as large as a cathedral city at home, yet we saw no street wider than a narrow lane, no building that externally was much above a hovel; no public monuments whatever; no thing of beauty. The streets were veritable kennels, reeking with the refuse of a thousand dust-bins. Looking about us we could think of human beings only as ants toiling in the gloom of their ant-heap. As the day wore on and found us still threading the mazes of those endless passages—they were more like the galleries of a mine than streets, for they ran at times for twenty or a hundred yards under beetling arches and vaultings—we dubbed it a dust-heap; a dust-heap and nothing else, burrowed through and through, and unlike any surface town we had ever seen.

Once and again, it is true, a glimpse of the interior of a mosque, caught through a doorway, revealed a sparkling fountain, a flash of sunshine, a row of orange-trees, and colonnade; but the scowls of the passers-by warned us not to linger too long about these oases. And later a couple of visits, of which I shall speak again, lightened the gloom which this horrible place, seen under a leaden sky, cast over us.

But the slave-market! Benjamin, quick! To the slave-market! And we bravely pick our way through mud and things unspeakable to a square, in which is a busy, animated crowd. It is the

market of Tangier over again; snake-charmer, Arab reciter, and all. But why this irresolution? Why does Benjamin turn this way and that, and appeal in a surprised manner—an entirely surprised manner—to our sturdy baggage-man, and so slap his boots with his smart whip?

Because—I shrink from disappointing the reader, as Benjamin fears at this eleventh hour to disappoint us—because there are no slaves for sale to-day.

It bursts upon us in a moment. "No, nor any other day!" we exclaim. We have lost all faith in Benjamin. We will not listen to his profuse explanations. "To the monkeys!" we cry sternly. "To the monkeys!" And we gather round him, determined, at any rate, to have the truth out of him.

"Plenty monkeys, my lord, presently!" he assures us, "plenty monkeys!" And he waves his hands as though the square about us were full of them.

But is there something shifty in his eye? Or is it merely that we have found him out? "To the monkeys!" we repeat. "Now! At once! *Tout de suite!* Benjamin," and we sign to him, in a manner that does not brook denial, to precede us.

It cannot be! Oh, no, it cannot be that the same signs repeated mean the same thing. It cannot be that because Benjamin again looks this way and that, and seems to calculate the distance to the monkeys, and whether we shall take a hansom or four-wheeler, or go by an omnibus, and so forth, and so forth; and again talks to the

baggage-man, again slaps his boot savagely with an air of annoyance—it cannot be that there are no monkeys in Tetuan!

But it is so! When the fact is really brought home to us, words fail us. “No monkeys! No monkeys! and we have ridden fifty miles to buy monkeys!” each flushed face seems to say. A heavy blow this. Still the shops remain. They are queer little shops, measuring six feet every way, and much like the tiniest of booths at a country fair. They stand three feet from the ground, and the intermediate space is a warehouse, I think. We were lucky enough to see a tardy tradesman arrive and open his shop. He unlocked the front, and let it down with the help of his slave. Then he took off his shoes, and carefully placed them in one of the nearer corners; then hoisted himself in, laid himself down, and all was done! It reminded me very much of a man going to bed in a high four-poster. Once or twice we were in a shop—singly, of course. But as a rule we could stand outside and reach for ourselves anything which we wished to examine. Door, window, and shop-front are of course one and the same thing, and unglazed.

Trades of a feather are found together. There is an alley of red-leather slipper shops, an alley of yellow-leather slipper shops, and an alley of embroidered slipper shops. In fact half the shops seem to be slipper shops. In another place a dozen sage and spectacled old Moors pore over yellow parchments. They are scribes or lawyers. Here is the quarter for silk goods, and there the cotton quarter. Here are the coppersmiths—you can hear them at work a mile away; and here are the sellers of kabobs, which are tiny morsels of cooked meat spitted on skewers. We hasten past them with raised skirts.

We paid three visits to the silken-embroidery quarter. The first time we were shown the things hanging up in the shops, or stored on the shelves, and nothing more; although our fair critics laid these

down with much disdain, and shot little arrows of scornful speech at poor Benjamin. The next time one and another tradesman produced from a dark corner, or perhaps from beneath his elbow, a better article, and charily displayed it. The third time these gorgeous productions had multiplied enormously, and followed us even into adjacent streets. They were pronounced both second-rate and dear, however—as dear as at Tangier—and did little to restore Benjamin’s reputation.

About two o’clock it began to rain, and taking the hint we hastened to pay our visits. Conducted through alleys such as I have described we came, at length, to a mean door in a wall. Our guide knocked and presented our credentials; we exchanged looks of disappointment. Nothing could be less promising than the external appearances. While we were still looking at one another however the signal to enter was given, and passing the threshold we found ourselves at once in a spacious and airy, albeit cool, room, decorated with painted woodwork, coloured tiles and matting, and spotlessly clean.



ON A TERRACE.



The son of our host (who was himself absent), a young man handsomely dressed, received us with perfect ease and self-possession. The room was, I believe, a kind of ante-room, beyond which male guests were not usually admitted. It was nearly devoid of furniture. At one end a staircase led to the more private part of the house; at the other was a door through which we presently passed to a delightful terrace, paved with fine tiles, and bright with bowls of gold fish, a gleam of sunlight, and a gem of a drinking fountain; the water of which bubbled up from a shallow basin in the top of a dwarf pillar.

The terrace resembled, on a smaller scale, one at the Alcazar, the old Moorish palace at Seville. It overlooked a garden rather formally laid out, not with flower-beds but with rose-bushes and sweet-smelling shrubs. In the centre was a marble basin. The walks and covered bowers were paved and lined with brilliant encaustic tiles. Looking back at the house which boasted two stories, we marked three large windows in a row on the first floor, veiled by wooden lattices, but enjoying a view of the gardens and distant sea. They lighted the women's apartments, to which we were next conducted. Our host explained that the ladies were unfortunately out walking; otherwise they would have had the honour of receiving the female members of our party.

The harem consisted of one long handsome room, and of an alcove or second room nearly as big, running along that side of it which faced the windows, and separated from it only at each end, the wide-arched doorway being without curtains. Probably one was a day-room; the other served for the night. The centre of the former was covered by a rich oriental carpet; round the sides ran a cushion or mattress, itself white, but draped by a loose strip of carpet, above which again were ordinary white bed-pillows at intervals.

This arrangement formed, I suppose, the divan. The walls were decorated with fretted stucco, and against them hung brackets bearing pieces of china. One or two chests of wood carved in arabesques and coated with paint, blue or red or green, completed the furniture. The inner room contained two iron bedsteads, one at each end. Both rooms were light and airy, and perfectly clean, with something of a toy-like appearance. The Moors never wear their outdoor shoes within the house, and generally go barefoot.

At the next house to which we paid a visit we did not see the garden, but, by way of compensation, the ladies were at home. A majestic old Moor, the brother of the owner, received us here—a man of pale olive complexion, with singularly fine features, of the aquiline type, and a long gray beard. He wore a turban and flowing robes of blue and white with a girdle. He spoke French fluently. His manners were exquisite, and his expression peculiarly thoughtful and kindly.

After the old Moor had talked with us for some time we descended again, and found our feminine companions standing in the middle of the women's day-room, ready to take leave. Near them a couple of middle-aged wives, dressed in white flowing robes, remained hardily to take a look at us as we passed; and the "light of the harem," standing just within the alcove, raised her veil for a moment, with arms gracefully uplifted, that we might see a very pretty face and figure, or she might see us. As we presumed to look more closely, she slowly let down her veil, and the curtains as well. We took the hint and withdrew, the ladies unanimously pronouncing her a beauty. She was a blonde with a perfect complexion, and fine eyes.

"We will start back to-morrow?" I said, as we returned through the rain to our hostelry.

"I think, my lord," said Benjamin, "that the rain will hinder us. If it rains to-night, as it did last night—and it is beginning—the rivers will be impassable."

"Nonsense!" replied my lord. "We start to-morrow at five o'clock, Benjamin."

But of course we felt a little uneasy. There might be something in the guide's objection. In favourable weather we had found the ride long and toilsome, and fully as much as the ladies could manage. It would not do either to be flood-bound in this wild country, or to spend our strength in an attempt to get home which might prove fruitless. We took our host into our confidence. Luckily he was an honest man.

"It stands in this way," he said; "to be perfectly frank with you. If you leave to-morrow morning, in my judgment you will reach Tangier with a little difficulty. If you stay here over to-morrow, and the rain continues, the rivers will then be impassable."

able, and you will probably be kept here ten days. This is against my own interest," he added truly, "but I think it fair you should know it."

We warmly thanked him, and gave peremptory orders to Benjamin to have everything ready for the return journey by five o'clock next morning. Then we dined cheerfully, and, going to bed about nine, we were on foot next morning by half-past four.

Breakfast? Yes, breakfast is ready. Bill? Yes, the bill is quite ready—and satisfactory also. Mules? What, no mules! No, no mules. The mules are not ready. And then ensues a hurriedly rehearsed drama. Benjamin repudiated all knowledge of last night's orders, Benjamin borne half-choked to the stable. Benjamin flung headlong among the mules! Benjamin sulkily producing the mules! These are the hastily improvised, but vigorous scenes of the play, which has at least the merit of action. At half-past five, thanks to the willing assistance of the baggage-man, we do start. We ride in triumph under the low portal of the town gate, and emerge



TANGIER FROM THE SOUTH-WEST—EVENING.

upon the far-stretching, open country, with its sweeter sights and sounds, and cooler air. We all, I think, enjoy a sensation of relief and freedom.

We rode without halt or pause until noon. Then having topped the ridge of hills, and passed el Fondak, we dismounted on the bank of a small stream to lunch. Unfortunately it began at that moment to rain; and this did not add pleasure to a meal, our complete enjoyment of which was already endangered by the discovery that our guide, certain we should not start that morning, had not troubled to have a single article of our table equipage cleaned! There they were—cups, plates, and dishes—just as we had packed them up on our former journey! The glasses were stained with claret and begrimed with dust. The knives were sticky, the forks greasy. It seemed to us intolerable. In a rage we drove Benjamin from our presence with a storm of execration; and rejoiced to see him stand lunchless and desperately sullen on a little bluff apart, his hands behind him, and a cigarette in his mouth.

At half-past twelve we started again, and soon found that we had as much work cut out for us as we could do. Possibly more, it seemed to us at one time. The rain poured down unceasingly. The pace, owing to the broken nature of the ground, was of the slowest. We had to diverge again and again from the track to avoid a swollen stream; and to make our way by rougher paths. We crossed, as it was, some dozen torrents, and saw for ourselves that to have stayed a few hours longer would have rendered impossible even such progress as we were making.

We began, under these circumstances, to pin our faith to the baggage-man. He had always—when he was not chanting his prayers—a smile and a pleasant Arabic word for each of us. He never tired of shouting, "Arrha!" and "Arriba!" at the lagging

mules. He replenished the stock of switches. He applied them when our arms were weary. He it was who spurred to the rescue when mademoiselle's mule stumbled, and all but threw her in a rapid current; and who took the lead of the party when the soldier stated that from fatigue he could ride no farther, and must take a siesta on the baggage-mule. And the same eager, helpful fellow it was who assured us we were in the right way, when we feared that our guide was avenging himself by leading us astray. He never faltered but once, when, about five o'clock, our party drew up one by one on the bank of an ugly torrent—a mass of foam and brown clay—and gazed wistfully at the other side. "No es possible!" said he dubiously. The soldier said so too with greater decision. Benjamin kept silence, but he smiled joyously to see the pass to which our obstinacy had brought us.

The water was turbid, and running at a tremendous pace, but it was not deep nor dangerous save in appearance. We crossed without difficulty, and we were soon all safe over. I shudder to think what would have befallen us if we had given way there.

We had hoped to be at Tangier by half-past five. But six o'clock and seven found us still wandering in single file among low hills, crossing this bottom and rounding the next shoulder, and, so far as we knew, getting not a step nearer to our destination. We felt ourselves very helpless in the hands of our guide. The moon rose and surprised us in the act of wading through an apparently shoreless lake of flood-water about a foot deep. It stretched as far as we could see, a pale sheet unbroken save by our sombre figures as we plashed miserably through it. One or other of the mules was constantly coming to a standstill; and it required all the force of the company on these occasions to induce the recalcitrant to venture farther. We never knew where the next step would land us.

But everything has an end. We emerged at last upon dry downs where the going was fairly good. To these succeeded a stretch of seashore from which we could see the lights of Tangier—a most welcome sight! The mules pricked up their ears and moved more briskly; laughter and conversation—stilled before by downright fatigue—were heard again; the ladies awoke from feverish visions of Moorish ambuscades. At twenty minutes past eight we reached the hotel where a capital little dinner was ready for us, at which, however, the ladies were unable to join us. They had to be lifted bodily from their mules and carried to their rooms. We were tired enough ourselves, but we drank one toast before crawling to bed. It was "The Baggage-Man!"

