



ON THE ROAD.

A VISIT TO A BENIGHTED CITY.

BY THE RT. HON. THE COUNTESS OF MEATH.

If any are disposed not to give credit to the present age for its improvements over the past, a very brief stay in Morocco, which is centuries behind Western and Central Europe in the advance of civilisation, might demonstrate the fact that though some loss may be sustained with bygone days, yet great gain stands to the credit of the present. Lord Meath and I had been spending more than a week at Gibraltar, when on a summer-like day in February we crossed to Tangier. In order to reach it a voyage must be faced of about three hours' duration across a sea with no reputation for calmness. The Atlantic waves rushing through the straits dividing Europe from Africa and encountering an opposite current flowing out of the Mediterranean occasion a disturbance of the waters not favourable to those predisposed to sea-sickness.

The day of our start for Tangier was happily a propitious one, and the little rocking we experienced had only a soporific effect upon the passengers who were crowded together in a cockle-shell of a boat misnamed the *Hercules*. Far from impressing us with its great strength, the little steamer seemed a poor link between two vast continents. As the weather was favourable, she made her way bravely down the long stretch of Spanish coast ending in the most southerly town of the Peninsula, Tarifa, said to have preserved a great deal of its Moorish character. Africa then lay before us with Apes Hill, the ancient Abele, and forming with Gibraltar the Pillars of Hercules; at the foot lay Ceuta, a Spanish settlement; further westward but for a time hidden from view was Tangier, the best known town of Morocco. At length on a sandy bay the outline of low flat houses became visible. It was a smaller and less impressive city than I had anticipated, and travellers going to this place would do well to dismiss from their minds the expectation of witnessing Oriental splendour, for this is not a characteristic.

Formerly landing at Tangier involved for a gentleman a ride on a Moor's back, whilst ladies had to be carried through the surf. Affairs are a little improved of late years, for a pier of the most moderate dimensions usually permits of rowing boats being brought up alongside of it, still landing at Tangier has yet an element of excitement about it. The mole made by the English, after the city had been handed over by the Portuguese as the dower of Catherine of Braganza, was destroyed when the British evacuated Tangier in 1684; now even vessels of the very moderate dimensions of our herculean (?) steamer cannot approach very near to the shore, and immediately they have anchored they are besieged by an army of wildly gesticulating Moors, anxious to obtain forcible possession of passengers' luggage as well as of their persons. The bewildered traveller to whom the guttural sounds of Arabic are an unknown mystery, had better quietly submit to his fate and allow himself and his impedimenta to be deposited in one of the boats which dance up and down the ship-side almost as wildly as the Moors yell. If the weather be rough he may be covered with spray as the scantily-clad swarthy boatmen ply their oars through the waves, and finally when brought to the side of the pier it requires some faith in those whose strong arms are extended to help, to enable him to spring boldly from the pitching boat on to the slippery steps. The first consideration on reaching *terra firma* is naturally the disposal of luggage. Morocco is a country where there are no roads, so no time need be wasted in looking out for cab or omnibus. The method of carrying baggage is simple enough; it is merely hoisted on men's backs-or else donkeys and mules are laden with it. One of the passengers must have bought a gigantic American trunk, for it was a pitiful sight to behold one wretched man staggering under its weight; but nobody went to his relief, very

possibly he would have resented it. Happily the custom-house was close at hand, and our boxes were deposited under an archway where two turbaned men wearing loose blue-hooded cloaks were seated in solemn fashion, whilst a third and principal official reclined on a divan, and thus transacted his share of the business. My trunk was opened before them, and one of the seated men actually rose up and lifted a handkerchief covering some of the contents; but the examination was soon over, and the Moor regained his sitting posture and Oriental composure. Our hotel was an unpretentious square building situated above the landing-place. Entering it from the steep cobbled street with its low houses a surprise awaited us, for all of a sudden from surroundings to which we had not had time to grow accustomed, we were transported, as it were, straight to the New World. Crowds of Americans flock to this hotel, and for their benefit as well as for that of other travellers a very luxurious hotel has been established. It was full to overflowing, for not only were there quantities of our transatlantic cousins, but there was the element of a *jeunesse dorée* attracted many of them from the opposite coast on account of a steeple-chase which was to take place on the following day. The room allotted to me looked on to the bay, and lovely sunset tints later on stole over it, lighting up the hills over Tetuan spurs of the famous Mount Atlas. Sunset is one the hours of prayer for the Mohammedans. Close to our abode was a mosque, not a domed building, but with a square tower not very unlike in shape to some belonging to English churches. At the top was a flag-staff. One evening I noticed on this the green flag hoisted at this hour of prayer, a reminder to the faithful. There is something singularly appropriate in the sunset being regarded as a signal for devotion, and one might wish that it were more the habit of Christians as well as of Mohammedans to observe it.

Staying in our hotel was an individual whose face impressed itself upon my memory; he belonged to the set of men who had come to Tangier for the races. He was still quite young, apparently a Spaniard by birth, but he had already on his face a look which one might have expected to find on the features of one who had had long years of a wasted life to stamp furrows on his brow. This youth was languid and sickly-looking; existence seemed as if it were already a weariness to him, though days of manhood had only just been reached. His hand attracted my attention. It was beautifully shaped, with its long pointed fingers white as that of a woman, but it, too, seemed to tell a tale; it looked as if it were never used in good honest work calculated to render others happier as well as its miserable owner. The day after our arrival was a good one for sight-seeing, bright with bracing air. After securing a guide and some very indifferent mules—the best animals had been bespoken to carry people off to the races—we set out to see something of the town. The streets are so narrow that in places two donkeys, if laden, could not pass one another; so vehicles under these circumstances are unknown, with one marked exception, *i.e.*, the dustcart, which has quite lately been introduced through the intervention of foreigners to remove some of the filth from the roads, but this vehicle, drawn by a donkey, can only go down certain streets. We rode along the principal one leading out towards the "Soko" or market-place. This road was densely crowded with persons of various races very differently attired. The Moors mostly wear turbans, a "gelab" or cloak with short sleeves, and a pointed hood often drawn over the head. Their trousers leave bare legs exposed, the feet are shod with yellow slippers. Under the "gelab" a caftan or robe is worn. The ordinary colour of the former garment is a brown approaching to grey, but on festivals the Moors like to appear in bright colours. Others wear a dress closely resembling that of the Turks, consisting of a short coat and baggy trousers to the knee. The Jews—of whom there is a large community in Tangier, where, thanks to the presence of Europeans, they are better treated than in other parts of the country—wear a loose robe fastened in at the waist; and their women, who are very comely, go about with uncovered faces, whereas the Moorish females are completely muffled up in a "haik," a huge white wrapper hiding face and figure alike from view. Amongst the lowest classes some allow more of their features to be seen, but they did not strike us as being beautiful. A good sprinkling of negroes can also be seen. They are either slaves or their descendants, for Morocco is a country where slavery, with its attendant miseries, is still in existence, and young women as well as men are liable to be exposed for sale and handled by intending purchasers as if they were beasts. Nor do they seem to demand very high prices, as a writer describing an auction for slaves speaks of a girl of twelve quoted at £6, whilst a mother and two little children were knocked down at £4, as the little ones were an objection. This

describes a market in 1882, possibly during the last twelve years, when women's moral worth has been more appreciated in civilised countries, their money value may have risen in a barbarous one! However, other women besides slaves in Morocco are treated with little regard. A lady-missionary, who has laboured for some years amongst them, and who has written very interesting articles concerning their condition, says in stating how appreciative they are of kindness in the long run, "There is a world of pathos in the question they so often ask us, 'Why should you care if we live or die? Nobody else does.'"

In the main street numbers of shops are situated; curious little dark dens they mostly are; peering in, one can see the owners at their various trades. In some cases the shop

is open to the street, in others, a barrier about three feet high is in front with a ledge against which a customer can lean whilst wares are produced for his benefit. After visiting the Cairene bazaars, those at Tangier seem poor, the brightness, the colour and richness of material are lacking. Tangier is extremely eastern in character, and in spite of its being the most Europeanised of Morocco's towns, it is comparatively little changed from what it was in bygone years; it is little wonder if Oriental splendour be not conspicuous when any display of wealth may render a native a mark for spoliation and possible imprisonment. After going out through the gate of the city, the "Soko" is reached. On market days this large open space is densely crowded, and a very strange scene can then be witnessed. Men, women and children are massed together



KABYLE WOMEN.

as well as camels and donkeys, having brought produce from the country. Here animals are sold; poultry, fruit, vegetables, and doubtless slaves were once to be purchased, but foreign interference prevents this nowadays. Snake-charmers are also to be seen attracting crowds of on-lookers; the performance takes place to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Seen from a distance there is a lack of colour about the scene on the Soko. The mass of people wear brown or dirty white; this tones in with the tawny coats of camels and donkeys, and the eye does not catch the bright hues which are usually characteristic of the East. Some of the women wear straw hats circular in shape and of gigantic size over their haiks. This head-gear forms a splendid protection from the sun, but one would have fancied that the hat would be more likely to be adopted by some fair-haired and complexioned northern girl than by a dark Moorish woman muffled up in a wrapper which leaves little of the face exposed. Leaving the Soko we rode on to the part of the town known as the Casbah or Fortress. Here only Moors are allowed to live; on the way we passed through the Jewish quarter. Owing to the protection of the Europeans, the Jews are better off at Tangier than elsewhere in Morocco, where they are liable to be subjected to all sorts of indignities, one of which would be scarcely appreciated by Britons. The Jews are compelled to wear black slippers, black being a hue hated by the Moors, and the ideas they form of the clothing worn by visitors is naturally not very flattering. In the Casbah is the Bacha's palace; it really belongs to the Sultan, but the Bacha or governor lives here in the absence of the ruler of the Empire. In part of this building the Bacha holds a court of justice, and when peering through the arched entrance to the hall, a glimpse of the great man was to be seen trying cases. Our guide did not encourage too much curiosity on our part for fear of offending this personage, but later on he seemed to think that we were at liberty to watch the Kalipha, a man with a venerable white beard, who was plainly to be seen conducting judicial proceedings. Witnesses reverently kissed his hand when crouching down to give evidence. From what we learnt of Morocco practices, principles of justice are not understood in the country. People are thrust into prison for no crime, but simply on suspicion, for debt or for the purpose of "squeezing" money out of them. Once a man is in confinement, there is no telling when his case will be tried; and unless his friends have the means of sending him food, he is liable to die of slow starvation. A piece of bread only is given per day, and water only every second day. On one occasion we were present when some money given to procure food for the prisoners by some charitable person, had been expended in buying flat loaves; one was given to each man. A small opening into the prison-house enabled us to see the poor captives, some of whom were making baskets in hopes of earning a little money. After the bread had been given the sound of chanting voices was heard. What did it mean? The reason was both simple and touching. These prisoners were rendering thanks to "Allah" for the food, and praying for the person who was thus feeding the hungry. The way in which these poor Moors endure affliction is admirable. When disappointment and adversity befall them they bear it with exemplary patience. A favourite expression of these people is "Mektub Allah." (It was decreed by God). Suffering must needs be the lot of men arbitrarily and oppressively governed, despoiled of rightful earnings, and lacking the means of obtaining proper relief in the event of becoming sick or of accidents befalling them. Well it is that the gift of patience helps them to bear such evils! In Tangier, sufferers are better off, for the

Spaniards have established a hospital. So, too, have the French, whilst the English have a medical mission at work with a building attached to it where large numbers of out-patients are tended, whilst more severe cases are received for lengthened treatment. A well-known medical man who was staying at Tangier during the time of our visit told us of this establishment which bears the name of Hope House, and of the undoubted good he considered that was here accomplished at a very low cost. I felt greatly indebted to him for the information, indeed I may say that this hospital and the question of how its beneficent labours could be further extended interested me personally more than anything else at Tangier. It is worked in connection with the "North African Mission," which has stations not only here but in various Morocco cities. I heard that the labours of the lady missionaries had been greatly appreciated in Fez, even the Sultan having spoken favourably of them. One lady was a trained nurse, and all have some slight knowledge of medicine. A doctor also resides at this mission station. At Tangier I was on three different occasions in the hospital. The doctor who is at present practising at this institution is most anxious to see a change brought about; he feels that the presence of native women in this building is a difficulty, and he is one of those who are the most anxious for the further development of the Christian work in which these missionaries are engaged. Zenana hospitals in India have done an enormous amount of good, and there is no reason why such an institution should not prove a great blessing in the more benighted country of Morocco, provided the missionaries are judicious and do not force their own religion in season and out of season upon the natives in a way calculated to create hostility. On the other hand it would seem a great loss of opportunity to start a hospital for such sadly neglected women as these poor Moorish Mohammedans are on purely secular lines. Intensely ignorant, despised and scarcely credited with having souls, these sisters of ours in a neglected country seem as if they were peculiarly needing Christian sympathy and consolation. Not only would their gratitude be earned, but that, too, of the more affectionate husbands and fathers who, through this manifestation of practical Christianity, might begin to see in the religion of One whom even they have to acknowledge as a prophet, something in which Mohammedanism is lacking.

It is difficult to find unanimity of opinion on any given subject, but whilst we were staying at Tangier, the idea of a resident lady-doctor was frequently discussed, and I only heard expressions of approval concerning this proposed innovation, although people differed as to whether she should work in connection with the mission or not. Amongst others whom I heard discussing the subject was the Shereefa of Wazan. An Englishwoman by birth, she married the late shereef of that name (a shereef is a descendant of the Prophet); happily, though her husband was a Mohammedan, she retained her own religion and opinions. She is very benevolent, and has been of much service to native women, over whom she has consequently gained considerable influence. Another lady, who seemed to approve of the advent of a woman-doctor was the wife of the Bacha. A visit to her was most interesting to us, as affording an opportunity of catching a rapid glimpse of the life of women of the better class in Morocco. A lady who had been long resident in Tangier, and who had some knowledge of Arabic, invited me to accompany her to the Sultan's palace, the temporary residence of the Bacha; another English visitor was also of the party. Entering through the hall, where on a previous occasion we had seen the Bacha at a distance,

we passed into the interior of the building. The soldiers, who I suppose had expected our arrival, made no difficulties, and one of them knocked loudly at a door opening from within, which admitted us into a central court with a fountain in the middle of it. My friend, who preceded us, shook hands with a native lady who proved to be the Bacha's wife, a quiet dark-eyed woman, who greeted us strangers in a kindly manner, and ushered us into a room which served as dining, sitting, and sleeping-apartment. It was all the more adaptable for various purposes as it possessed no furniture except some ugly European chairs, which had been brought in and set out in a row for the occasion of our visit. Light and air were admitted by the large arched doorway, for windows there were none. In the centre of the room, opposite to the entrance, there was some fine plaster-work and wood-carving, forming a canopy over the place of honour. The carving was excellent of its kind, and closely imitated hangings. The lack of seats was supplied in Oriental fashion by a raised ledge round the apartment constituting the divan, on which all could sit or recline. A rich carpet was on the floor. Our hostess set herself down on the divan at our feet. She wore a coloured handkerchief across the brow, a caftan, or robe, fastened round the waist, with a wide stiff sash woven of silken and golden thread (these sashes are receptacles for stray articles, and serve instead of pockets); she had trousers and bare feet, but slippers were worn on going out of the apartment. The conversation was a brief one, for the hostess left us almost immediately; apparently she was on hospitality intent, for soon after her return a little black slave brought in a round brass tray, with teapot and cups, which he proceeded to deposit on the floor opposite to his mistress; a kettle and stand were placed close at hand. The process of tea-making then commenced, and was effected by our hostess putting green tea into the pot, afterwards some gigantic lumps of sugar, after this some herb was added, and, finally, hot water was poured upon the mixture. Soon this sweet decoction was handed to us by the little darkie, but not before our entertainer had sipped some of it from one of the very cups out of which we were to drink. This is a Morocco custom, and one of great value in a country where a cup of tea or coffee might contain that which would cause the death of the unsuspecting guest. However, even in houses where such an act of treachery need not for a moment be anticipated, it would be a want of courtesy for an untasted beverage to be handed to the visitor. Whilst we were drinking the sweet and somewhat sickly tea—three cups are presented to guests and it is not considered polite to refuse them—there was time to converse. The Bacha's wife, hearing that a lady-doctor might possibly go to Tangier, said she wished her to come soon because her child was ill. There it was before us, a fretful infant whom we were not to look at nor speak of too much for fear of "the evil eye," this superstition being strong in Morocco, and charms being suspended to little ones to avert its baneful effects. A slave was sitting down at the entrance and listening to our conversation, also a Moorish lady, a relative of our hostess. Signs of occupation were totally lacking, and no wonder, for we learnt that only boys were educated, being sent to school: whilst though our entertainer had been taught to sew in her youth, it was considered that she was now too great a lady to do needlework. I asked how they were taught religion, for these Moorish women are not even permitted to go to the mosque; we gathered that the older women taught them, but it is presumable that this teaching can be none of the wisest and best. As time goes on and the native lady grows old she obtains

somewhat more liberty, still her position at best is a miserable one, with no education, no interests, no employment, and probably little or no comfort in religion. It seems like bringing down woman to the level of the animal, for there is not much difference between her life and that of the beast browsing on the hill-side, with this exception, that the latter leads an outdoor and healthier existence than that of the Eastern woman, whose physique must suffer from confinement to her own abode, just as her mental and moral being must deteriorate from want of scope for natural development.

We visited one day a small house where I was told the very first school for Moorish girls in Morocco had been established. Truly in this benighted country it is a day of small things, for efforts of this kind, if carried out on a large scale, would be calculated at once to raise suspicion and jealousy. Humble though the attempt was, and with very few pupils, yet at one time it became necessary to close the school for awhile until a wave of opposition had rolled by, but it was found possible to resume the teaching soon afterwards. The lady who started the school belonged to the Medical Mission, but as this institution had scarcely enough funds to carry on its special work, the brave missionary had to take a house on her own account, trusting that help might be forthcoming. When we entered the little abode, close to the Jewish Hospital, we found a native woman seated on the floor teaching sewing, which art and that of reading Miss J— is permitted to teach her little scholars. Writing is forbidden, the Mohammedans, apparently, considering this accomplishment as a dangerous one in the hands of women. The missionary soon appeared, and had summoned all her little pupils into the schoolroom. They were few in number, a dozen or so, and mostly quite little girls; two belonged to the better classes, and when these little maidens have attained the advanced age of ten or twelve, or possibly

when still younger, they will probably be shut up. The women belonging to the lower orders in Mohammedan countries are in this respect better off than their richer sisters. The children were of various complexions, some fair as if of English birth, others evidently had negro blood in their veins. One mite of a child, clad in a red garment, mounted on a tiny chair, and with wand in hand, showed off her newly-acquired knowledge, and accurately pointed out the various letters of the Arabic alphabet, printed in the graceful characters of that language. It was strange to feel this baby-child was so much more accomplished than we were ourselves, as this alphabet was a mystery to us, the attainment of the language requiring prolonged study and much practice. The lady-missionary, besides teaching the children, was in the habit of doing a little doctoring, and a young boy who had had some slight accident was present, having come to her to have his bruises attended to.

Very much are the services of this active helper and her fellow-labourers appreciated by the more grateful Moors. A lady long resident in Tangier told us that she had a servant in her employ who was a very strict Mohammedan. This fact did not however prevent him, when his wife was suffering, from permitting one of the lady-missionaries to tend her, and so kindly and skilfully did she do so that the man's heart was touched, for instead of alluding to this benefactress as he was wont to do before his wife's illness as "Tabeeba" (lady-doctor), by changing one letter of the word he turned it into "Habeeba," which means dear friend. Before people hastily condemn the work of missionaries in distant lands or pronounce it as useless, they might do well to inquire a little more closely into the matter. Few travellers comparatively care to interest themselves in the doings of missionaries, but even those persons who are indifferent to religious questions suffer loss from not making acquaintance with such

workers, as those who go in and out amongst the natives are capable of giving most valuable information as to the customs and habits of the country in which they are sojourning.

Pleasant rides can be enjoyed in Morocco, with the possibility of securing animals fitted for the age, weight, and tastes of the rider. Cruelty to four-footed creatures, as might be expected, is very frequent in Tangier, but beasts can be hired in good condition. The richer Moors seem to prefer mules to horses, and I was told that the former commanded the highest price. Mounted on their high red saddles, these men look picturesque objects as they pass by. We saw no rich cultivation of the soil in our wanderings, though Morocco was once the granary of the world, there is no inducement for the agriculturist to labour long and industriously, for if his land shows signs of great fertility it is a reason for the unfortunate owner to be "squeezed," and thus deprived of the fruits of his industry.

Wild flowers were beginning to be very plentiful during our stay in Tangier. The white broom was flowering most luxuriantly, a hill-side was crowned with lovely blue irises, whilst asphodels, as well as the useful palmetto, grew freely. The climate of Tangier is excellent, though situated so many degrees of latitude south of the British Isles, yet strange to say the thermometer does not attain the same height as that which is sometimes registered in England.

Time spent in interesting cities and amongst pleasant surroundings passes all too quickly; the morning of our departure soon dawned, and again we had to embark on board the *Hercules*. Our voyage was an unpleasant one, not so the recollections of the time spent in Tangier. We had gathered new ideas and new interests, and we had had one more opportunity of realising that wherever there is suffering, there too are likely to be found kind hands eagerly stretched out to give comfort and relief.

MARSH MARIGOLDS.

By ADA M. TROTTER, Author of "My Lady Marjorie," etc.

CHAPTER XIV. FRANK RETURNS HOME.



DOCTOR SETH was as good as his word, and arrived at the Old Moss Farm next day in his work-a-day suit of clothes, which made Rover whine suspiciously, under the false impres-

sion that the newcomer was a tramp. After awhile, however, the sagacious animal accepted friendly overtures from the scientist and became his bond-slave.

For Doctor Seth meant work, and was more chary than ever of words. Accompanied by Mr. Marphell, who poor man in a most pathetic manner had become the mouthpiece of Ruth's hopes, he made his survey of the golden fields. Perhaps it was well that the owner could not see the very doubtful expression with which these said fields were considered. Ruth, who had followed in her father's wake, saw and trembled.

"So that is the patch Frank re-

claimed," said Doctor Seth, after an hour spent in careful observations. "That won't help us at all. I have the notes he made on it, and the cost. We must go to work from other directions."

"You think it worth the trial then," said Ruth, drawing a long breath of relief, for, during this long interval of silence on the part of the doctor she had given up all hope. Had she known the good man more intimately, his silence would have brought her hope rather than fear.

"It is worth a few experiments," he replied cautiously, "and these can be made with but little outlay. We will see what science can do, though I suppose the farmers in the neighbourhood would call me merely a man of theory, and prophecy failure in consequence."

"We are willing to accept all their prognostications at their true value," said Mr. Marphell, smiling. "A practical farmer of the old school has disbursed all my ready money for so many years, that I am more than happy to place myself in the hands of the man of theory."

"Oh," said Ruth, "Doctor Seth is practical as well as theoretical; I have seen some of his work and its results."

"It is true that I enjoy outdoor work," he replied. "My garden is my hobby, and I am never tired of learning Mother Nature's secrets. The wonder is that we know so few of them. We are densely stupid, we men, and too content to think we know enough if we can go ahead in a slap-dash manner, or laze along in the furrows of our forefathers. But now, Miss Ruth, to some practical questions; I shall want a man's help here."

"Ruth has more than one factotum in the village," said Mr. Marphell; "that matter will easily be arranged."

"In the meantime," said Mrs. Marphell's silvery voice behind them, "dinner is waiting and will not be set aside for theory or practice."

Mr. Marphell's step showed the improvement in his health, and scarcely a trace of dejection could be read in his countenance as he accompanied the party to the table. Ruth smiled significantly across at her mother as her