

## TANGIER AND MOROCCO.

LEAVES FROM A PAINTER'S NOTE-BOOK.

BY BENJAMIN CONSTANT.



MOROCCAN CAÏD AT OLD GATE OF THE CASBAH.

I.

LIKE the ill-fated Boabdil, I have just left Granada. Three months of dream-life in the Arabian palace, the Alhambra towering up in front of my window, a hundred walks in the shade of the halls whose vaulted cedar roofs are constellated with gold and ivory, and in the still waters of the fountain of the sultanas the sumptuous reflection of Moorish arches and interminable colonnades! Then, in the calm of approaching night-fall, the suburb of Albayein, at the quiet hour when the tone of the walls grows softer, when the cypress-trees become black like velvet, when the first stars begin to shine in the pale sky! But after visiting this dead Orient in its European

palace I wished to see the Orient alive in its own climes, and my desire is being fulfilled. The Sierra Nevada has vanished, the roseate outline of the fortress of the Alhambra has disappeared, Malaga has given me a day's hospitality, and the coast of Europe is now gliding away in its turn, while an English tug-boat of sinister name and sinister memory, the *Jackal*, is tossing me during a weary night, and making me pay dearly my haste to gain a day.

Here we are in the port of Tangier. Some men, almost naked, as soon as they see us approaching, walk into the water like savages ready for the attack; they assail our boats, take possession of our baggage and of our persons, hoist the one and the other on to their shoulders under the pretext that the water is too shallow to allow our boats to land. A triumphant entry! Here I am perched on the broad shoulders of a negro, swaying to and fro, and gripping with my knees his shaven head, with its tuft of hair rolled up like a cockade. If there be any truth in the motto of the good King Louis Philippe of France, and if

Frenchmen do enjoy any special protection, may Heaven preserve me from vermin!

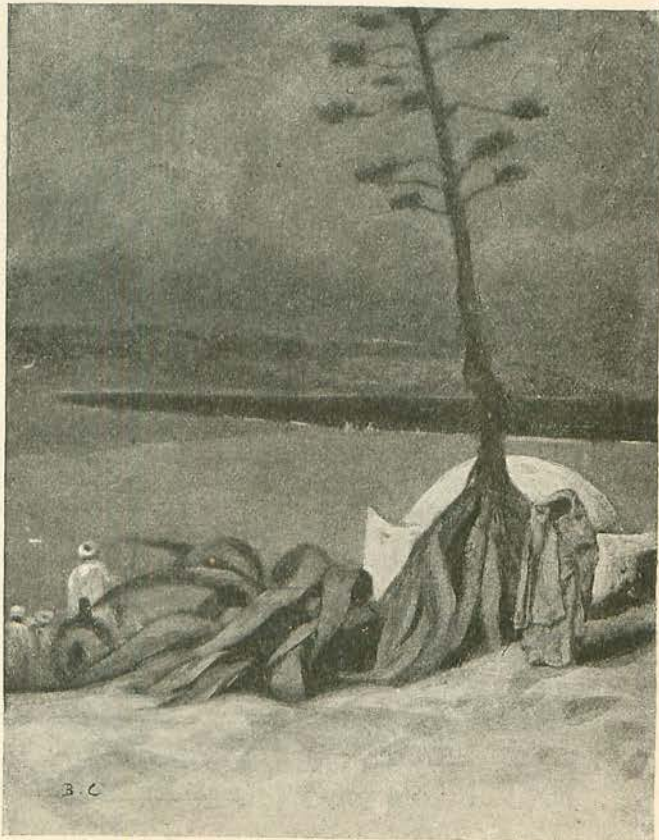
Behold the town of my dreams! Light, whiteness, brilliancy—this is the East indeed. This is what I have been longing to see. My heart is full to overflowing. Would that I had with me a warmer friend than this white paper on which I am writing! Would that I could communicate to some one the artistic emotion that transports me! It is too beautiful for me only. There are pictures everywhere. It is not a city; it is a museum. Whichever way you turn your eyes, without moving a single step, four, five, six *motifs* solicit you, captivate you, tell you and persuade you that if you will try them



they will be your masterpiece. However, the animal man speaks also by the voice of hunger: the night's voyage has provoked a feeling of emptiness, and each lurch of the tug-boat demands reparation by proportionate knife-and-fork work. After crossing Spain a French breakfast seems excellent, and however deeply one may be in love with local color in scenery, one is not sorry to dispense with local color in one's plate. Breakfast finished, I give myself up blindly and entirely, morally at least, to a great tall Arab, by profession an interpreter, which name is given to him because he speaks badly two languages at once, instead of speaking one only and speaking it well. No matter, he is fine with his white turban and his yellowish woollen burnoose draped in superb folds.

We are hardly outside the hotel before we find ourselves in the midst of the *socco*, or, in other words, the little market of the town, composed of a long succession of stalls and sheds, whose worm-eaten wooden roofs shelter sellers of soft-soap, rancid butter, and oil. Some of them are grilling greasy messes which produce a suffocating odor. Women pass, wearing the *haïk*, a large and light woollen wrapper, with which, by the purposed or chance arrangement of the folds, they compose a costume full of character; they utter a few words of mockery at my expense, but in the austere grace of their drapery they have so much charm that no artist could bear them any ill-will. Some of them hold by the hand little children, who follow loiteringly, with their heads shaven, and on the crown a tuft of hair bound up and lengthened out with torsades of red wool. Others carry their still young-

er progeniture on their backs, and when they forgetfully linger in the full blaze of the sun to gossip with neighbors, you may imagine how the poor little babies literally cook in their swaddling-clothes! And from the bottom of the basket, which resembles a bundle of heavy clothes, there issue smothered and angry moans and cries that make the woollen *haïk* tremble. But it is useless to waste pity: as soon as the little martyrs reach the age of five or six years they will be born again to liberty, escape from their too hot nests, and run about the streets like a swarm of sparrows; and when they are eight or nine years old, if they are good, they will be married; but this honor will not save them from the whip if they happen to break their pitcher at the spring. Further on, other women, squatting on their heels and wearing immense straw hats, are selling cakes placed in a row on a board on the ground.



BAY OF TANGIER AND PLAIN.





A SOLDIER OF THE PASHA.

Here is a *kiffin*, armed with his gun, clothed in a brown *gillabia*, with the hood and sleeves embroidered with many-colored flowers; on his head, by way of a hat, he wears the red cloth case for his carbine; his powder-horn and sabre are slung from shoulder-belts, and in this formidable warlike outfit he offers for sale four or five emaciated fowls. A dozen yards further a fountain, adorned with those Moorish faience plaques called *azulejos*, is taken by storm by an army of water-carriers—tall negroes, ragged and tattered, who quarrel amongst themselves with savage cries. And amidst this vermin, these rags, these draperies, these squalling children, these clucking hens, these strident sounds of Oriental quarrel-

ling—amidst this confusion of noises and colors—grave Jewish merchants walk beneath white umbrellas; they talk business as they rattle phlegmatically in their large and deep pockets the loved metal of which *douros* are coined.

Above all this, forming as it were the background of the picture, in the vibrating sunlight, the white houses mount in tiers one above the other; a minaret faced with green faience slabs rises against the blue sky; and the swallows, swift and joyous, chase each other in the luminous air.

Horror! All of a sudden fifteen little donkeys charge down the narrow street, carrying their *couffas* full of bricks. They squeeze us pitilessly between their flanks and the wall. Heedless, like Orientals as they are,

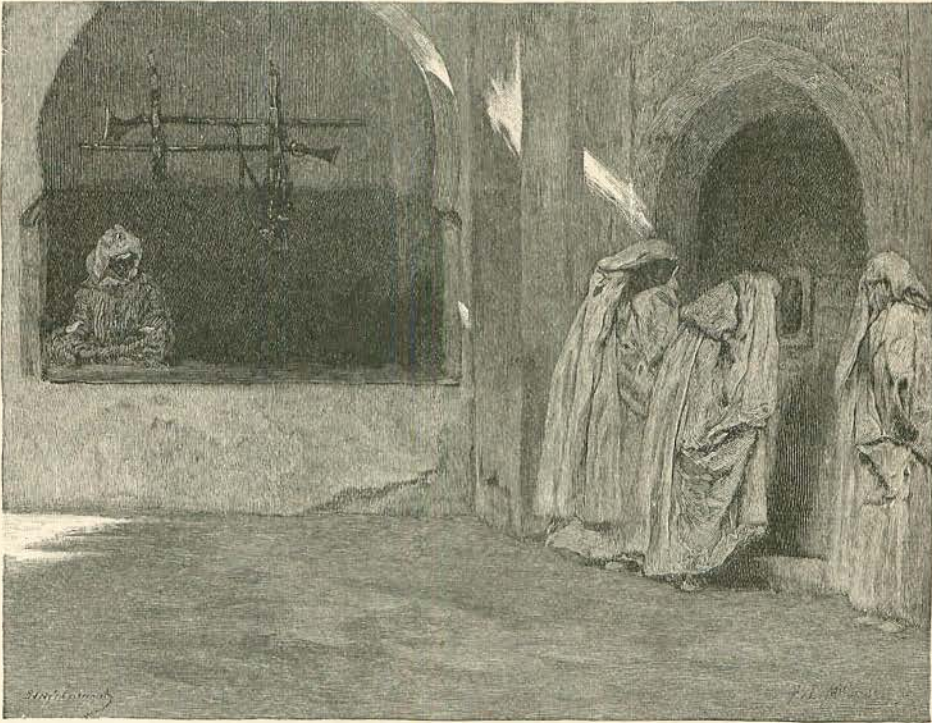
they pass and disappear, gravely forgetful of the insult offered to our European breasts; and the women hide themselves to laugh, and their little shrill peal quivers in dancing shimmer of the sunlight.

Now we proceed to climb through a labyrinth of narrow dirty streets full of holes and hillocks, and lined with little low white windowless houses, each with a single narrow door. We then reach a paved road which mounts straight up the hill-side on which the town is perched, and at last the door of the Casbah opens before us. Here the view of Tangier and of the bay is superb. The town, beneath my feet, seems to be rolling down toward the sea, the white terraces of the houses forming, as it were, step below step, and the



whole mass of whitewash and stucco resembling a gigantic staircase. This descent of terraces strikes and stops against the ramparts which command the Custom-house and the small port; and so the waves kiss the first step of the stairway. Then comes the glistening amphitheatre of the sea, an expanse of azure that moves

powerlessness of its slow means to reproduce the marvels that nature displays in these Eastern evenings, where the minute that comes is no longer like the minute that has just passed! But at least one can enjoy and drink in that nature, get intoxicated with it, and store one's memory with its splendid visions. So, later, in the



PRISON IN TANGIER.

and lives; and the immense curve that starts from Tangier widens and sweeps round to the point of Malabat, while in the distance the bluish mountains of Tetouan mark a faint mass in the silver haze. Oh, the delicacy of that color that sings like notes of music! the ideal fairy spectacle of the transitions, of the *passages*! To sit in front of that vibrating key-board of tones and lights, and, palette in hand, to fix on canvas the image of the fugitive minute which changes, displaces, effaces its effects only to produce fresh ones, indefatigable and incessant in creation! To catch the transition that defies all grasp, to seize that which is fleeting, to preserve that which is ephemeral! The misfortune, the shame, and the despair of art is the

peaceful solitude of the studio, in the meditative calm of souvenir, the glorious pictures that have vanished will reappear in the magic of dreams, and take form and shape on the white canvas that calls up the past. Such will be the reward of those who have known how to look at nature with loving eyes.

## II.

To-day I returned to the Casbah and entered it. On each side of the door, which, by-the-way, has no artistic interest, are beggars quaking with fever; their faces are eaten away by white leprosy; scantily covered with a few sordid rags, they are warming themselves in the sun. We meet some soldiers of the Pasha, who march with measured step, their white



burnouses floating in the air, their heads erect and covered with the *chechia*, a sort of pointed fez of red felt. They are probably going, by superior order, to ransom some Jew or Moor who has had the misfortune to allow the secret of his wealth to be betrayed. For the Moroccan soldier is not so much a man of war as a collector of taxes, and from time to time his master sends him, without law or rule, to visit those whom he finds either too rich, or rich enough for him, the Sultan, to claim his share of the prize. Rapine is the only resource of the treasury. Each Pasha levies his share on all the bargains concluded on his territory. This state of affairs has, however, been improved since the intervention of Europeans in Morocco. But not so many years ago, and in the second half of this century, the most horrible tortures were inflicted both upon Mussulman and Jewish merchants in order to force them to avow their fatal riches. Mr. J. Drummond Hay, in the narrative of his journey on the banks of the Leucos, relates dreadful details: men shut up in ovens, wedges driven in under their nails, children smothered slowly before the eyes of their parents, a man shut up in the cage of a chained lion whose chain was long enough to enable him to come within an inch of the victim, who could not make the slightest movement without being rent by the talons of the beast. Doubtless the stories of Mr. Drummond Hay are exaggerated at the present day, and perhaps they were when he wrote. But this fact remains, in essential points at least: the treasury is filled by means of exactions and authorized thefts; and every official conscience may be bought. This is true from one end of the social scale to the other. When the merchant has tortured the slave, and when the Pasha has rifled the merchant, the Sultan employs similar means to relieve the Pasha of his booty. Many a Pasha, after finally getting rich, is betrayed by one of those around him and denounced to the Emperor as a great capitalist. Thereupon he is sent for to court, and the good sovereign spoils him of everything, even to the last piece of money that sleeps in his coffers or in his pockets, even to the last *flon*, to the last *rhani*, to the last terra-cotta vase which is sold in the market-place. Then, a second Job, the Pasha is sent back to his subjects so that he may begin another period of oppression. If, however, the Master has

reason to suspect that any portion of the treasure has been kept back or hidden, he has the Pasha beaten, and then sends him to spend the rest of his days in the contemplative shades of a prison.

Ah! the prison! Here it is, only a few steps from where we are. In a sordid vestibule, whose walls are covered with torn matting, the jailer smokes his pipe filled with kiff, that slightly opiated plant which takes the place of tobacco in these parts. Three women, draped in their *haik*, are weeping near a grated opening in the prison door; and in the interior darkness a human face is scarcely discernible. As we approach, the women stand aside, and a lean arm is passed through the grating and stretched toward us suppliantly, without a word being uttered. I put a silver piece in the hand; immediately one of the women takes the money and hurries away toward the town, doubtless to buy bread. I look through the grating, and distinguish a vast foul-smelling and sombre room, without air, in which are human forms crowding and crouching, with the noise of chains, and the lamentable and sinister murmur of words uttered in a low voice. The criminals in this prison are perhaps none but people accused of possessing a few douros which they never even saw, and who are now waiting in the horror of this black hell until the efforts of their parents or the charity of some traveller like myself shall help them by degrees to make up the sum of their ransom!

In presence of such misery as this one can understand how the ardent imagination of these nations is exalted by religion, and how they seek in religion comfort, consolation, and hope of a justice hereafter which will compensate terrestrial woes by celestial joys, and requite their sufferings in chains and dungeons by the delights of paradise. One can comprehend these peoples attaching themselves with fierce faith to their belief in God and in a future life, and being proof against the atheistic scepticism which hovers over the Western world. They have need of God more than the citizens of Europe; they want a Master and a Judge above their earthly judges and masters.

I wished to see also the man under whose authority these victims groan, and I saw the Pasha. In an Arab portico he is seated on a carpet cross-legged, motionless, clad in white woollen. He is finger-





MOONLIGHT ON THE TERRACES.



ing the ebony beads of a chaplet, and in the midst of his prayers he seems to be listening attentively to the story of a tall soldier, a black-faced Hercules, who is perorating with a profusion of gestures and much volubility as he points to a poor fellow crouching at his side in a posture of terror that does not even dare to take the form of a prayer for mercy. What can he hope for? The least possible number of lashes, the least number of days or of months to live in irons, the smallest tale of douros to redeem his life. He does not even try to defend himself against the soldier's charges. In his Oriental fatalism he waits with resignation.

Ah! too much of all these gloomy horrors. Light! light! And outside here is once more the superb fairy vision of colors in this world where forms and things are blessed with the sun, and where man is scourged with the curse of man!

### III.

The moon has risen round and large on the horizon, in a trembling vapor which seems to be composed of opals, turquoises, and pearls crushed in a powder of silver. I have crossed the town and entered the primitive theatre, installed in the court-yard of a house covered with a velum, the galleries of the first floor constituting the boxes. There are few Moroccans present, but several Europeans, and some Jewish women, whose dress sets off to advantage their marvellous beauty. Some Mussulmans are running about the stage and arranging it in haste, with their arms and legs bare. The play is a Spanish comedy with intermediate dances. This programme, however, cannot make me forget the splendid moon; and athirst for landscape bathed in silver light, I go out into the street, where guards are striding along and shouting as they swing their lanterns, in order to frighten away the thieves; to frighten them, indeed, rather than to catch them, and perhaps neither the one nor the other.

Down at the port the line of the mountains has disappeared behind the lofty battlemented wall; I listen to the break of the harmonious sea, whose phosphorescence sparkles on the shore, while the line of the girdle walls of the town disappears in the blue, accented now and again by the lighter sections that the masses of the fortress mark on the shadow of the angles. A few scattered promenaders

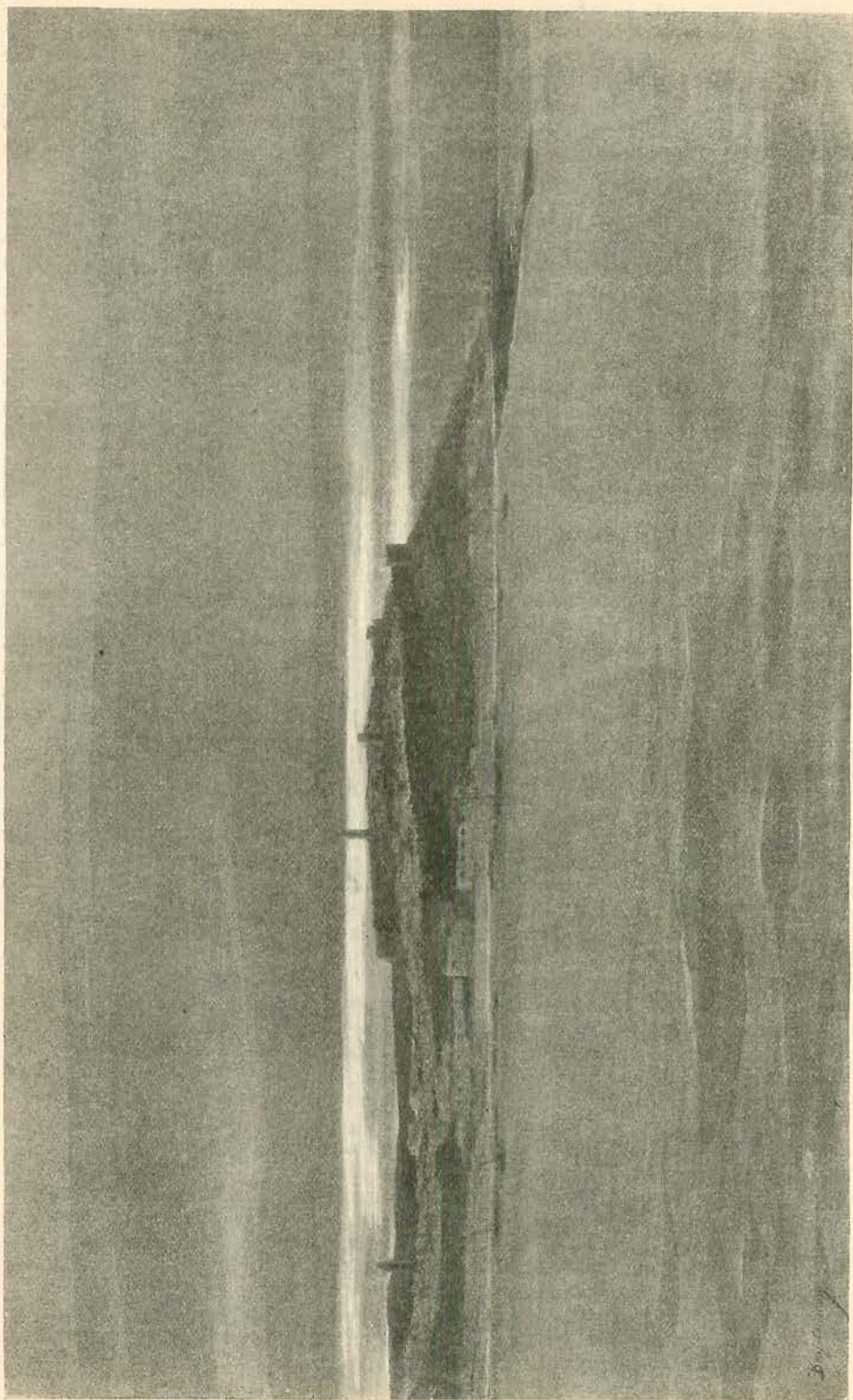
pass silently, and when they speak, in the vibrating air, their voices assume in this Eastern night an indescribable quality of hieratic mystery. . . . O Salammbô! Here, on the corner of a terrace whose foundations bathe in the sea, are some women listening to the flight of time. One of them is erect, in her white *haik* that seems bluish in the moonlight; the others are seated with dangling legs, and a broad sheet of light strikes down behind them on the rampart walls.

### IV.

It is two in the afternoon. I have just come down to the beach. The superb belt of sand is spread out before the sea. It is here that the diplomatic world of Tangier comes, either on foot or on horseback, to take the air at the hour of sunset; but now there is not a living soul in view, except the souls of the mighty sea and of the sun. Everything is hushed beneath the vast swathing light. The Mediterranean slowly develops its long silver fringes, while a white sail on the horizon, coming from some distant port, makes one dream of galley-slaves toiling at their oars, of Christian captives, of pirates, and of the manners of the by-gone ages. . . . At the head of the loop of the bay, Tangier seems to crackle in the light.

This African light, when it is considered in the full glare of the sun, discolors and devours all that it touches; it wipes out everything with its fiery vibration. Indeed, to say the truth, these Southern countries are for the colorist painter countries of shadow rather than of sunlight. In point of fact, by reason of this very intensity of the light, the shadow remains bright, transparent, and pearly; the flowers retain their coloration, the gold embroidery on the caftans of the women preserves its brilliancy; every detail can be distinguished, and everything takes its place sharply in its exact value; whereas in the sunlight the values and the planes get mixed and confused, and puzzle and confound the impotent palette. Delacroix received the same impression, and in his "Noce Juive," now in the Louvre Museum, he has demonstrated and utilized all the resources that shadow affords in such sunshine. Paint shade in the South and sunlight in the North. The Eastern Sun suffers us not to look him in the face, or to look at the objects on which he sheds his light. The Western Sun allows us to





TANGER FROM THE SEA—EVENING EFFECT.

*By [unclear]*



contemplate him; he bathes forms and caresses them, but never burns them up; he is suave, and not a devouring monster. You must go to Holland to paint nature in sunlight. Cuyp and Rembrandt are the greatest sun painters who ever existed. They paint only in broad daylight; for Northern shadow is heavy, cold, and obscure.

In Italy, and even at Venice, where the sun is tenderer and more delicate than anywhere else, Paul Veronese never made his models pose in the sun as Rembrandt did. All the figures of the "Noce de Cana" are painted in white light, in bright *demi-teinte*, in shade; and in that shade every object retains its proper color. If you want to paint the African sun, you must suspend it in the horizon, at the hour when it sets in its glory, illuminating nature with the splendor of its apotheosis, alas, so brief and so fugitive! You may catch it also in winter when the sky is covered, and veils its implacable and strident blue. At that season, between the great clouds which glide past like silver avalanches, there are formed rents of turquoise blue so exquisitely soft that no words can qualify it; then the whitewashed houses no longer burn your eyelids when you look at them, but appear of a quiet, milky, and rich white, the sea flows like a lake of liquid emeralds, and in the serene atmosphere there trembles a warm haze that seems like the harmonious expiration of a light which was a short while ago too vibrating and brutal.

## V.

The plain of Tangier: to the left, the mountains; to the right and in the distance, the ocean. The ground is light and of a luminous gray color. Tufts of aloes border the path that I am following, and rise gigantic with their thick blades of ashen green and their long lances headed with cones of flowers; rocks, rivulets that one has to ford, a ravine that confines us, then immense hedges of reeds, between which there appears suddenly a streak of violet horizon. Some women are washing in the scanty stream of a torrent, and spreading the linen to dry in the sun.

On a hill heaps of stones with staves planted in them, and hanging from the staves a white rag which a rare breath of wind stirs feebly now and again: this is the entrance to a village. Some women

come to the cistern, bearing on their shoulders pitchers of green earthen-ware, and stop at the well-side. The costume and attitude are the same that Rebekah must have had when the envoy of the patriarch chose her for wife for his master's young son; the pitcher is the same, and the same the way of carrying it. With these people you feel that nothing has changed since the beginning. The village that I have entered is composed of low huts with thatched roofs. The number of huts is equivalent to that of the staves planted on the threshold of this sad dwelling-place. Some men are huddled up cross-legged on the ground, and the women, in front of the house door, are cooking bread, after having ground the flour between two stones.

And to think that a good swimmer could swim across the narrow arm of the sea which separates this world from our own!

## VI.

Every month I go to visit the scherif of Wazan, the proprietor of the house I occupy, and punctually I pay the amount of my rent, which he receives with manifest joy. The square court where I first enter is surrounded with white pillars joined together by open-work arches painted green; four basins of white marble have each a fountain playing gayly into them; two large doors open into mysterious rooms. At the windows in the four walls of the court appear and pass women's faces, and looks full of curiosity are directed toward me. Once I brusquely crossed the threshold of one of the doors. Inside, surrounded by children, were women dressed in robes of many colors, and glistening with gold and precious stones; the smoke of the perfume-burners veiled them in a violet mist; recumbent on sofas or on mats, leaning on brocaded cushions or on stools inlaid with mother-of-pearl, they were fanning themselves or sleeping, while the slaves, draped in long white chemises, played on the mandolin or the drum. The picture did not last long: at the sight of my face they fled away like a swarm of frightened birds, and a negro with threatening eyes hastened their flight with voice and gesture. Then I looked around me: the air was laden with an odor of pepper and incense; the ground and the walls were covered with carpets or with mats; and in places of honor





EVENING ON THE TERRACES.





THE DESERT.

stood the only three marvels which the East has consented to receive from the West, and to shelter lovingly in its abodes, namely, a piano, a hand-organ, and a clock—the three joys of the household, and its perpetual recreation. From a nail in the wall hung a whip. For whom?

## VII.

The Grand Vizier has invited us to his table. After passing through a maze of narrow, acrid, slippery, steep streets full of débris of vegetables and fruit, we arrive at the palace of the prime-minister. He is waiting for us on the threshold of one of the doors of the inner court; the slaves of both sexes are drawn up in two rows on each side. He receives us with a thousand marks of affection and a profusion of "*Marababickoum*" (welcome! welcome!); then he conducts us to the banqueting hall, the walls of which bear inscriptions from the Koran written in characters of gold; the wooden table in our honor has been covered with a cloth, and some uncomfortable chairs and strange forks have been invented for our benefit.

The Grand Vizier reclines on a divan, and presses a fraternal cushion against his abdomen. While he is exchanging with the French ambassador, M. Tissot, the usual formulæ of platonic affection, I edge away toward the door where some

young female slaves are watching us. Frightened at first by my approach, they recover confidence and gather around me, but take care not to be seen by their master: they are handsome, with large eyes, firm lips, and full bosoms; both the Moorish girls and the negresses have their feet and arms bare and adorned with bracelets; their white tunic, tied round the waist with a gold-embroidered girdle, is open at the breast. When I look at them they look at themselves with artless grace, as if to seek and appreciate the particular details of their person that I am examining. You feel that they are not in the least self-conscious, and that they are without faculty of analysis, without reason, without will, without souls: they are pretty little animals, whose function it is to live, and to display, with slow and rare movements, the supple lines of their beauty.

At last the table is served and the feast ready; some wax candles are placed on the table amongst the plates of different sizes and designs; fifteen or twenty dishes are served in succession—mutton and fowls, fowls and mutton, under twenty different colors, or rather under twenty tones of the same color, namely, mutton or fowl swimming in all possible manifestations of saffron. In order to sicken us completely, rose-water is poured over our



hands and heads, and all of a sudden, while you are least expecting it, you feel a cold thread of the eternal rose-water trickling down your neck and down your back.

The Grand Vizier nurses his foot and watches us eat, without himself participating in the feast that he is offering us. Sometimes he seems to be dreaming; I too am dreaming—dreaming of a beefsteak decently cooked and served on a clean white plate, surrounded by fried potatoes nicely browned.

## VIII.

I admire these men who have made an art of lying on the ground, who have invented ten thousand postures for rolling up their torso and their limbs in such a manner that they no longer retain the remotest aspect of humanity; I admire these children, hardly old enough to stand up, and who walk about bravely in their long hoods looking like wandering extinguishers; I admire these women with their slow movements who are crushing corn, and seem lost in dream-land; I admire this whole people, which has no registers in which to record the stages of its life, and where no one knows when he was born, how old he is, or when he dies: he dies without being informed of the fact. He

is as indifferent to death as he is to life, and as long as he exists he seems to be revolving beneath his meditative brow aphorisms of the most sublime philosophy and of the most profound melancholy, but in reality he thinks of nothing. Such is the life of those who live according to nature.

## IX.

We have just left Tangier. An iron-clad ship of war, *Le Salé*, carries us along the coast to Mazagan. The mountains speed away bright and vibrating in the light beyond the blue quivering of the waves, beyond the yellow band of the sandy shore; the sky of cobalt blue hangs like a monochrome cupola over the circle of the horizon. Here and there on a cape, amidst a bouquet of verdure, there rises, as at Spartel, a white house with imperceptible grated windows which awaken in the memory the story of Cervantes.

The Caïd Tahamy receives us at Mazagan, and by order of the Sultan gives us an escort of fifty men armed like bandits: we are going to start for the interior, to gain Morocco, and see the desert! Already the tents are spread outside the walls of the town, and their little white roofs make a circle, in the midst of which floats the French flag. The Arabs squatting



CAMP OF PILGRIMS OUTSIDE THE GATES OF MOROCCO—EARLY DAWN.





INTERIOR OF MOSQUE—EVENING PRAYER HOUR.

around the camp like bronze statues watch us with their impassible white eyes, which seem to be deep wells of menace, whereas in reality they are merely gentle and curious. The camels are being loaded; we are going to start; we have started.

The land undulates; the country is solitary; the sun mounts far from the hills; the camels in their cadenced walk sway to and fro the mass of their variegated burdens; on each side of us gallop the Arab servants, erect and graceful on their horses; the escort of Janissaries precedes and follows us. The dust rises in roseate clouds beneath the horses' hoofs. The procession lengthens out and drags along in front and behind; the air gets hotter and hotter; from time to time a cry of terror or warning: such is a caravan.

We have passed the night under the tents. At early dawn, while still half asleep and half awake, and not yet daring

to believe that my caravan pilgrimage was a reality, I heard a prolonged irregular cry that came to us from the military tents. I rose in haste: it was a Mussulman soldier of our escort calling his companions to morning prayers. One by one the men came out of their tents, stretched their burnouses on the ground to serve as carpets, and turning toward the east, held out the palms of their upraised hands, and then knelt down and recited in a low voice the first of their five prayers. They were kneeling, their bodies resting on their heels, and the rising sun tinged with pearly rose their white dress. Behind them the cloudless sky passed from fierce rose to pale blue, through a series of shades that the art of words is powerless to express.

*A douar!* When in my boyish days I used to read this word in Jules Gérard's hunting stories the name alone awoke in my childish mind a whole vision of the nomad world and of the

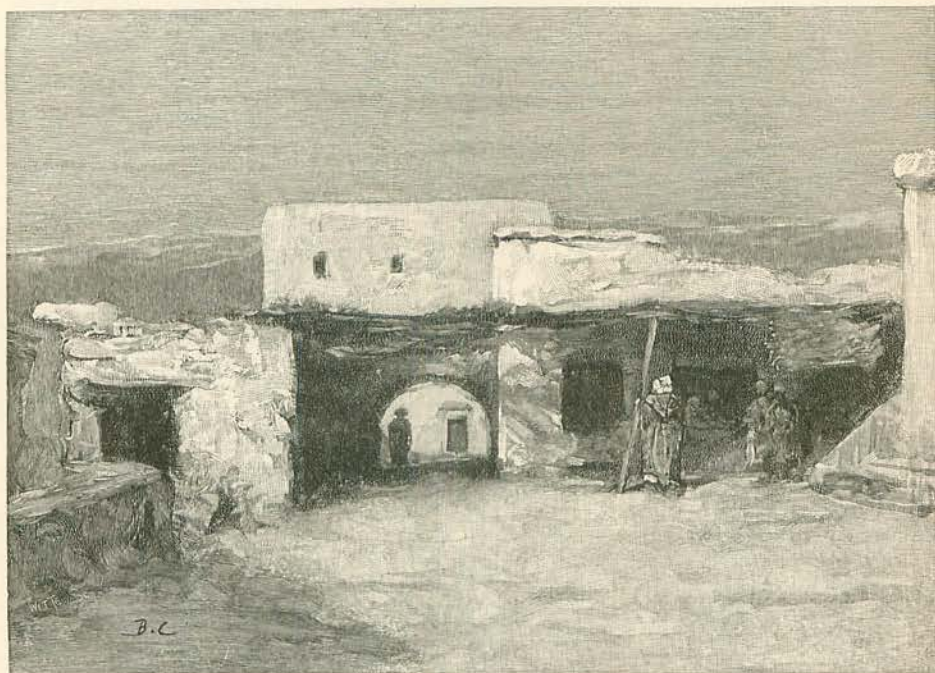
Eastern sun: in this word *douar* I saw the metallic blue sky over tents surrounded by palm-trees, glistening and torrefied rocks, wild faces beneath the hoods of burnouses, and camels kneeling to receive their burden. I even used to think I heard the roaring of lions.

Here in the midst of the desert is the canvas village where sleep, live, and die the accursed children of Abraham, ignorant of a better world and of a more pleasant existence. Some twenty tents, each of which shelters a whole family, are planted in two parallel rows: they are brown, and made of a coarse stuff which the women weave with the fibres of the palm-tree. The tent is the ancient tent of the Numidians; it is square, and looks like a roof placed on the ground; posts of bamboo hold it up, and it is anchored by cords to the tent pegs. In the middle is the square of the *douar*; in front of the entrance of the tents, where the camp fire smoulders,



its blue smoke mounting straight in the air, some fowls are pecking about and some ewes ruminating; the horses, in our corner of the square, browse the bushes. The largest of these tents are twenty-five to thirty feet long and seven feet high: a reed mat separates the tent into two chambers, in one of which the man and his wife sleep, while the children occupy the other pell-mell with the animals. On the ground are osier mats, a box with painted arabesques, some earthen-ware vases and bowls, some drinking shells, the millstone

to which is harnessed a donkey or a goat, or sometimes a woman, and very often the two together. Meanwhile the women—for it is only in times of extreme misery that they drag the plough—remain in the tents and prepare food and clothing for the family. The women are dirty in spite of their daily ablutions, and the only *haik* each one possesses gets washed but four times a year, at the religious fêtes. Beauty is cultivated before and in view of marriage only, and the cultivation consists in feeding the woman before



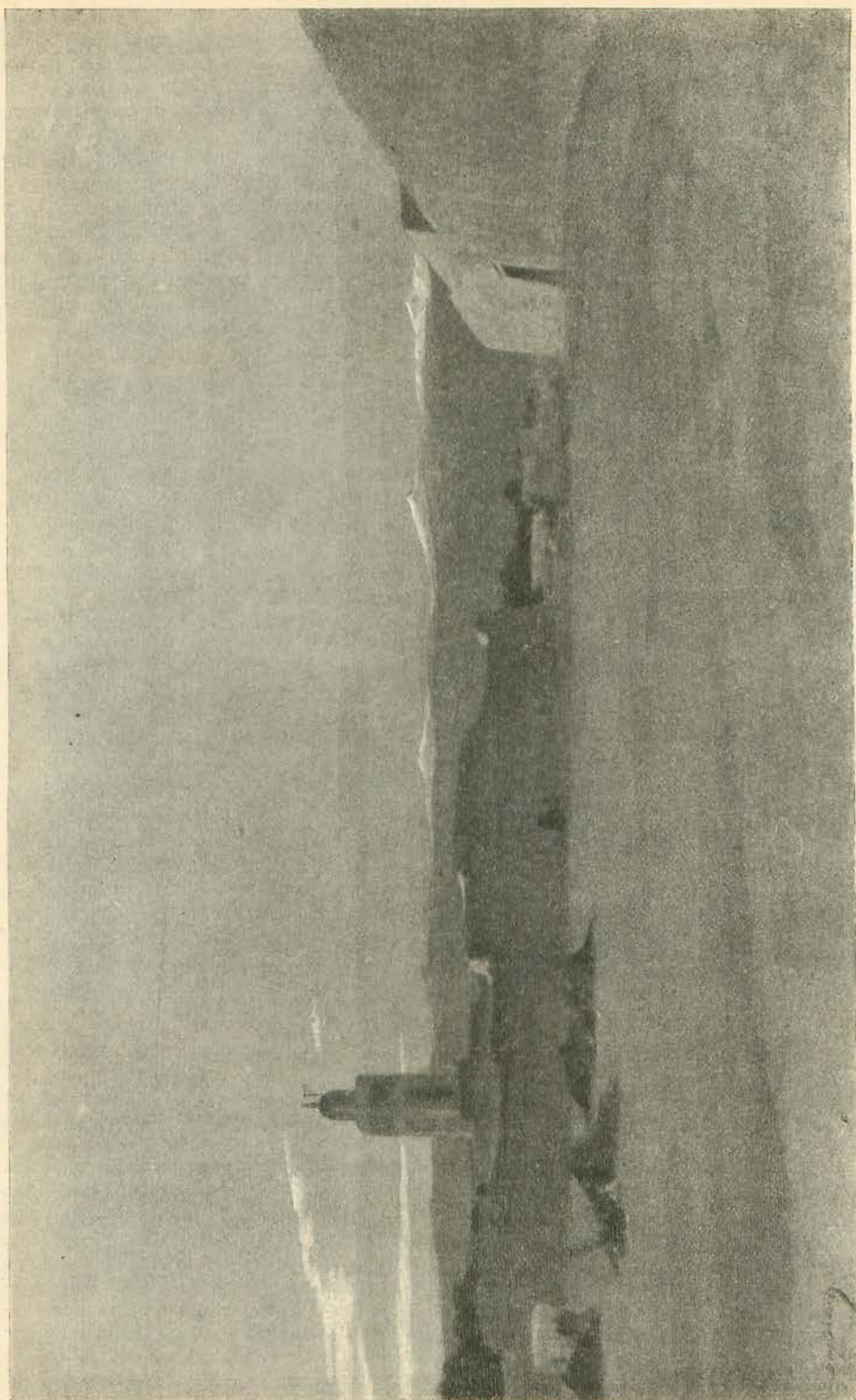
STREET VIEW IN MOROCCO.

for grinding corn, the spindle for spinning hemp and wool, and some goat and sheep skins.

In every tent there is a gun and some poniards, and in front of each one a hearth formed of two bricks, where the housewife cooks the *couscoussou*. The *couscoussou* is a mixture of beans, onions, and gourds, seasoned with pepper, sugar, or saffron; on high days and holidays some meat is added to the dish, but only on very great occasions, such as marriages or funerals. During the day the men go to till their poor field of beans or corn, and push along the dry furrow a plough

and during the period of betrothal with fattening food, and particularly with an herb called *ebbah*, which has the property of fattening thin women, and even fat ones too; for it must be observed that adipose redundancy of form is the only kind of beauty that fascinates these lean warriors. On her wedding day the bride sits in front of the tent on a saddle surrounded with greenery; she has her eyebrows blackened with charcoal and her nails reddened with henna, while before her and in her honor friends from neighboring *douars* execute a fantasia with floating burnouses, and carbines twenty





MOROCCO, WITH ATLAS CHAIN IN BACKGROUND—EARLY MORNING.



times loaded and fired; and on the carpet spread in front of her each one deposits as a wedding present a piece of money. Alas! to-morrow misery and hunger will claim the bride for their own. In this bare soil, in this voluntary exile, without resources and without strength, where the land yields so little bread, and where the soldiers of the Pasha and of the Sultan levy a tax of half of that which so many efforts rend from miserly nature, what is there to live upon? What indeed? And so the man mounts his horse and lays his gun across his saddle, and whatever he can steal from the neighboring tribes he will steal. He knows that the shots will whistle around him, and that often when father or eldest son has gone off thus to seek some resource against the everlasting misery, their place has known them no more, but the hyenas and jackals have gnawed their bullet-riddled corpses, and left their bones to whiten beneath the implacable sun of this implacable father-land. Then, when they are weary and sick of struggling, they revolt in a body, and death takes all the more of them: they die by thousands instead of dying one by one. It has always been so, and it always will be so.

## X.

The desert: the scorched ground beneath a scorching sky. The admirable verses of Leconte de Lisle come into my mind:

"Le sable rouge est comme une mer sans limite,  
Et qui flambe, muette, affaissée en son lit;  
Une ondulation immobile remplit  
L'horizon aux vapeurs de cuivre où l'homme  
habite."

And we pursue over the sand the road which is marked out for us by the lugubrious finger-posts of scattered bones, skeletons of horses, of camels, and of men.

## XI.

Every time we traverse a province the governor comes to greet us at the frontier of his government, and presents us with the *mouna*. This is another tax that falls upon these miserable peoples: whenever there passes a chief followed by his escort, or a detachment of soldiers, or an ambassador, or any other official personage, the inhabitants of the country are obliged to furnish him with provisions by tithes called *mouna*, of which the governor fixes the amount. In general he

estimates it as high as he dares when the personage expected is a European. We select only such provisions as are indispensable, and leave the rest for the poor villagers. But behold the governor takes possession of all that remains, and sells it back to those who have just contributed it! This tithe is composed of sheep, fowls, vegetables, eggs, bread, sugar, charcoal, candles, butter, and cheese.

One day on the territory of a new province the carriers of the *mouna* came alone, without the Pasha, who, it appears, had thought it more prudent and economical to sell the tithe to his subjects immediately after he had levied it, and without even offering it to us, and so he sent us just sufficient to enable us to die of hunger before we could reach the limits of his viceroyalty. We thought that we too were destined to become acquainted with the horrors of famine, and like our predecessors to strew the desert with our corpses. The Moroccan soldiers of our escort looked at the inadequate *mouna* with grave and uneasy eyes. The country people who had been chosen to bring us these paltry offerings believed that their last hour had come, and that their massacre would be our vengeance. They looked first at the provisions and then at us, with an air at once grieved and resigned. M. Tissot rose gravely and ordered the Pasha to be brought in person. The Pasha came, stammered out some vague excuses, to which the ambassador listened at the door of his tent. Then, when the Pasha had spoken, M. Tissot condemned him to receive twenty strokes with a stick at the foot of the French flag. The viceroy went to the flag himself, lay down on his belly with his arms outstretched, and received at the hands of the Moroccan soldiers attached to the legation the number of strokes fixed; then he went away full of gratitude and respect, and sent us abundant provisions; and so we did not die of hunger in the country where he reigned.

## XII.

Morocco! In the immense plain bounded on the northern and southern horizon by the Atlas Mountains the red town rises out of the red sand, its walls of rammed clay frittering away melancholically in the sun. It is a town of sun-dried bricks and mud walls, a town of gardens spread along the bank of the Tensift—a stream



bordered with palm-trees and aloes, which, as soon as April comes, steams away and dries up. The deep sadness of the extreme South, the hopeless sadness of the torrid sun, weighs upon the walls, the objects, and the men of Morocco. You feel that the Soudan is near; a few steps further and there would be no longer any mercy to be hoped for either from nature or from man. It seems as if here was the threshold of the tropical Hell, and as if the sky said to man at this spot, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further!" The wall of the Atlas Mountains which tower up behind fills one with alarm and dread of the terrible "beyond" which their steep ramparts hide.

Morocco is of a red color, as mortal as the white color of Tangier was joyous. The people who crowd around the Mogador gate, by which we enter, are black, and seem even more desolate than all those whose faces and whose expressions we have yet seen. The tower of Koutoubia rises above the town, and on its battlements, on its sides, and on its every salient part an army of storks sleep, fly, or click their bills in the sun, and this clicking noise sounds a sinister and funereal note in the close air. The streets are lonesome; a few ragged and terrible creatures creep along here and there between the two walls of a crumbling street no wider than the lobby of a prison. Here we are hated more than ever; the very name of Christian is accursed.

As at Tangier, there are little bazars about four feet high, where the sellers, seated cross-legged in Oriental style, wait with indifference until the passers stop to buy at their stalls; they remain there, hieratic, like statues of potential sale: hours and days pass, and still they do not move; they pray. From one wall to the other over the streets is stretched trelis-work of reed canes covered with dry branches and foliage. The sun passes between this rough thatch, and spots with dashes of light the reddish ground and the yellowish *haïks*.

Here comes, in his tattered robe—a robe made of holes connected together by a few threads and a few patches—a beggar, a saint. In Morocco all those who have lost their reason are called holy men or saints. Madness is considered to be a sacred privilege which God gives to His elect, whose reason He is supposed to have

kept in heaven, and who therefore pass through this life without understanding and without suffering. What sombre philosophy! This particular beggar is so thin that his bones may be discerned one by one beneath his calcined skin, which shines with a peculiar polish at the joints. It is a miracle that he lives. He walks about the streets slowly and with a savage air, and the little children crowd behind him to kiss the white banner that his feeble limbs can scarcely hold up.

### XIII.

One evening, through the open door of a mosque, I saw the court-yard and the palm-tree which grows only in the interior of sacred houses. Around the central basin, which made, as it were, a black hole in the night, some men clad in white were stooping down and executing their evening ablutions, while in the background ran a row of arcades lighted with little suspended lanterns, forming a sort of belt of red twinkling stars. The Jews, as they pass before the door, take off their babouches and walk barefooted. Woe to the Jew whom a Mussulman catches in forgetfulness of this ancient mark of respect! In the towns where the mosques are numerous, in order to avoid the tiresome task of continually putting their babouches on and off, they carry them permanently under their arm instead of on their feet. Formerly this constant obligation was the rule. When the Emperor Soliman decreed that the Jews might walk in the streets without taking off their shoes, the Moors in their indignation massacred so great a number that the Jews begged the Sultan to revoke the decree, and of their own accord continued to carry their babouches under their left arm. In those days their condition was terrible. Even now they cannot bear witness in a court of law, and when they appear before a tribunal it is in the attitude of the condemned. They can only wear clothes of sombre colors; but they take their revenge by overloading their women with jewelry. They cannot marry without the authorization of the Emperor, they cannot own land within a town, and on the occasion of Mussulman fêtes they pay ransom. Every pretext is good for crushing them. In the East the spirit of the Middle Ages still prevails, and the Middle Ages would continue forever in this stationary country if European intervention did not from



day to day modify this atavic legislation, and gradually render more endurable the existence of its victims. This, however, is true only as regards the coast; the interior of the country retains its inviolable customs. It must also be remarked that since the amelioration of their condition the Jews of Morocco seem to tend to abuse their privileges, and if they get still a little more emancipated they will become the veritable tyrants of the town. But whatever may be said or done, there is one thing that no influence will touch, one state of soul that no apparent modification will really alter: in the souls of these two races, whom so many customs and tendencies unite, hatred will abide, lively and immortal, in spite of everything—the old and indelible hatred of Isaac and Ishmael.

## XIV.

This morning M. Tissot is to carry to the Sultan, on behalf of the President of the Republic, the grand cordon of the Legion of Honor. I shall see the man before whom trembles the whole race of one of the oldest peoples of the world, the Sultan in person, the Eldest Son of God, clothed in glory and power, a man more than royal and almost divine.

I have donned my dress clothes and my white cravat, and my gibbous hat towers above my head. This garb seems to me so ridiculous that I am ashamed of it for the sake of art, for the sake of my country, and above all for my own sake. Must I, then, appear thus masqueraded beneath the irony of the sun? And if there were only the sun to see me, it would not be so terrible, but there will be a whole nation to jeer at us!

My anticipation is being realized—we are a laughing-stock. The whole town is in a hubbub as we march through with our escort of infantry in red uniforms, of Janissaries attached to the legation, of interpreters and officers and all the official gala. My dress-coat is mingled with rose-colored caftans, and my tall hat rises with misplaced pride above turbans of spotless whiteness; around me ceremonial court swords clatter against Barbary yataghans, gold-striped trousers pass side by side with bare legs, and white gloved hands shake hands with black hands. The women, when they see me, hide behind pillars to give vent to their laughter without restraint, and the countenances of the men

finally assume a smile of disdain and pity. Amongst the Moors black cloth is of an accursed color. Perhaps they take me for the public executioner.

Now we pass between ranks of troops. A strange army! Men of all ages—old men with white beards, boys of thirteen or even less, who wear red woollen mantles, or the yellow vests of Spanish dragoons, or the coat of the English soldier, or the blue sailor's jersey; at the extremity of their naked legs are lemon-colored babouches; their arms are rusty carbines, old guns with twisted bayonets, lances with tufts and streamers; their heads roll on their shoulders, and their feet move backward or forward as their fancy suggests, while those who feel inconvenienced by the sun draw their mantles over their heads. This easy and this familiar bearing, combined with the ferociousness of some of the faces, forms a very curious mixture.

We pass through the door, and we are now in the court-yard where the Sultan Sidi Mohammed is to receive us. It is a square court, which the oblique rays of the sun cut into two divisions of light and shadow. In the middle the crowd of courtiers is collected; ministers, officers, slaves, either Arabs or negroes, all dressed in white, are drawn up in two lines face to face. In the right-hand corner are the horses of the Sultan with their gold harness, each one held by a Moorish warrior, and a gala carriage formerly presented to the Sultan by Queen Victoria. In this carriage no one ever sat, and no horse was ever harnessed to it, but on the occasion of all official ceremonies it is dragged out as if it were a triumphal trophy. To the left is drawn up the private guard of the Emperor.

We dismounted, and the master of the ceremonies, himself but slightly ceremonious, armed with a staff, points out our places with a ferocious look, and beneath the blazing sun, in the torrent of light that plays on the burnoose, we wait in silence.

Suddenly the bronze gates re-echo with a shock, a flourish of trumpets is heard, the palace opens, and the Sultan appears, clad in white. He is mounted on a superb white horse with a green saddle and trappings, green being the color of the Emir. The instant the master appears the whole court bows to the ground, and, like a murmur at once humble and mar-



tial, a clamor ever growing in strength, the cry rises, "May Allah protect our master!"

The Sultan advances toward us in his sacerdotal majesty; at his side walks a man who holds over the Emperor's head the parasol, symbol of command. This parasol, nearly ten feet high, is of amaranthine color, lined with blue silk, embroidered with gold, and surmounted by a gilded ball. The man who carries it from time to time lifts his eyes toward the all-mighty master whom he shelters, with an expression of religious dread, like that of a dog beneath the threat of the whip, and when he lowers his eyes and looks upon his own person he seems to admire himself, as if his soul venerated his body because that body is, as it were, an inherent part of the sacred thing with which rests the glory of furnishing shade for the brow of the Sultan.

Motionless in his green saddle and golden stirrups, the Emperor has stopped near M. Tissot, and looks straight before him. From time to time his eyes move and glance at us with rapid inspection; but in spite of the curiosity with which we feel that he is filled, his eyes never condescend to fix us directly. Sidi Mohammed and the ambassador exchange, through the organ of the interpreters, the usual compliments. When the Sultan speaks he contemplates attentively his horse's ears, as if the lesson that he repeats were written there. The courtiers, prostrate around him, drink the words that fall from his divine lips; and yet, divine as are those lips, Sidi Mohammed stammers. While the ears listen to him, the eyes of the assembly caress rather than contemplate him. Two Moors, awe-stricken by their holy task, drive away with their hands the flies that buzz around the royal babouches; another has the mission of passing his finger-tips every few minutes along the hem of the imperial burnoose, to drive away the desecrating air; while to another—and how many envy him!—is allotted the task of stroking and patting the Sultan's horse. In all eyes, in all hearts, you feel that there is an absolute devotion, a loving passion, a frenzy, a worship of this sexagenarian mulatto who is more than a man, more than a king—a god who deigns to live amongst them. He would only have to say one word, and every one of those fanatics would shed every drop of his blood

gratefully and with ecstasy in order to satisfy a single one of his caprices.

M. Tissot handed to the Sultan's minister the case containing the grand cordon, and then presented each of us in turn. Each time that a name was pronounced with the accompanying title the Sultan cast upon us a rapid glance, furtive but kindly, and said, automatically, "*Marababickoum!*" (welcome! welcome!)

Suddenly the Emperor wheeled his horse round and rode toward the threshold of his palace. Then once more the trumpets flourished; ministers, generals, soldiers, slaves, all bowed to the ground; and again the cry arose, "May Allah protect our master!" And when the bronze gates were closed, the crowd rose from the ground and looked around with a remnant of alarm, as if still terror-stricken by what had taken place. After this the dignitaries came to us and lavished upon us marks of the liveliest affection, gesticulating and smiling, and pressing our hands to their hearts. They said to us: "How handsome he is, is he not? How great is our master! He is the divinity!" And evidently these men, who are not given to sincerity, and who lie with such facility when they talk to us, sincere in this present case, expressed only the thousandth part of their religious adoration.

#### XV.

A band of Aïssahouas has entered the town. Followers of the saint Sidi-Mohamed-ben-Aïssa, these sectarians are fanatics and workers of miracles, and somewhat related to the dervishes of India and Asia. Their religion manifests itself in cries of hatred, furious contortions, and terrible dances; they crush with their teeth iron and wood, swallow stones and burning coals, cauterize themselves with red-hot irons, and gash their flesh with poniards in presence of the religious admiration of the crowd which remains there, until by dint of sufferings, cries, and contortions they fall fainting and insensible. I saw one of these fanatics. He was accompanied by a few neophytes less saintly than himself, whose function was to make music while the saint danced. Two of these men played on a kind of reed flute which produced grave and melancholy sounds, while another beat the drum. The saint first of all danced; then he took an earthen pot which was empty, and which he showed



to the spectators; he kept this pot in his arms while he continued dancing and whirling; then he stopped, and lifting the pot above his head, he called upon God; and when he put the pot to his lips it was full of water, and the water ran over the brim. "See!" he cried—"see the power of God! See His goodness for His elect who serve Him faithfully! Because I love Him, He rewards me! I am a holy man! I can cross the desert without fear; but if you try to cross it you will die of thirst, because you are not holy as I am!"

Then he began his vertiginous dancing around an osier basket which was placed on the ground, and suddenly plunging his left arm into the basket, he took out a superb serpent of the most venomous kind, which the natives call *leffah*. The saint handled the serpent, gave it the flesh of his arm to bite, and bit it himself. In the same way he took several other serpents, and all of them together clung to him, enlacing in their coils his legs and neck. The man was dripping with blood, his face rolling down with sweat, and white foam was gathering at the corners of his mouth. His body was covered with wounds, and still he kept on

whirling and bounding round and round to the sound of the flutes and the drum. Then, in order to prove that his serpents were really venomous, he sent for a hen, which was bitten by one of the serpents, and died almost instantly. It sometimes happens that an imprudent spectator meets with the same fate as this hen. Immediately after this experiment the sermon began over again about God's protection and about the holiness of the Aïssahouas; then followed a collection to redeem the souls of those who gave. I threw a silver piece, and the saint thanked me with a torrent of abuse; and then, in order to refresh himself, he ate a rat. The whirling was resumed once more, and he whirled and whirled, till at last he fell fainting to the ground. And this is the man whom the people envy, the saint whom the cobras bite and who bites the cobras, the pasha who lives in gold between the axe and the dungeon.

As I was returning to the town I saw a head stuck up over one of the gates: the blood was coagulating and running into clots on the sand. Ah! wretched people, what pain it gives to see your life, and what pleasure to paint it!

## A COMMERCIAL UNION.

BY DR. THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

A PECULIAR train of trifling circumstances led to the union of those two old and respectable firms, Lambert & Barr, of New York, and McPherson & Co., of Rio de Janeiro. To give the facts as they were, we have to go back to a point in the life of two young persons.

The fourteenth day of February, 1852, had been cold and dreary, the dense, leaden sky threatening snow or rain—probably the former, since the temperature was low. Now at night there was a cold and damp air out-of-doors, that made foot-passengers uncomfortable. Yet the room in which a young couple sat in conversation, despite the air of faded gentility in its once handsome furniture, looked comfortable as well as warm. The talk of the two seemed so absorbing, and at last so exciting, that, had it been chilly there, the pair would have scarcely noticed it.

There was nothing particularly notable about the young people. He was young—probably twenty five or six; she, just

budding into womanhood. The young man, who was over middle height, was fine-looking, and would have been handsome but for the extraordinary prominence of his large eyes. The girl, though small and slender, was undoubtedly pretty, though her features were not all regular, the small straight nose with its tremulous nostrils, the faultless mouth, being detracted from by heavy eyebrows, and a chin that was almost masculine, and had that squareness that is supposed to indicate firmness. The chin of the young man was of the opposite type, being round, feminine in its shape, and dimpled. The character of his mouth was hidden by a long, drooping mustache, which made him look older than he really was.

"You own that you care for me, and yet you will not marry me," said the young man, in a tone of voice that showed both vexation and perplexity.

"I don't see, Edmund, how we can afford to marry, even if we were free. You