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MOROCCO IN MUFTI

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By

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CHAPTER I

THE ARABS ARRIVE

" YOUR civilisation, working like a pair of scissors, is snipping away the glory we won by sword and book." That was the answer of an intelligent Moor to my question : " Where stands Morocco to-day ? " He belonged to the old conservative school, and loved to revel in reminiscences of a great past now wilting under the glare of European civilisation.

He described the change in terms of catastrophe : it was a whirlwind uprooting ancient customs, pulverising their primitive life and denuding them of those qualities that hitherto had given substance and direction to all their activities.

He saw the old and new, not in collaboration, but conflict. To show, however, that his faith was not extinct, that he could not accept this upheaval as the final item in the programme, he quoted the saying current among Moors from the time the Portuguese seized their coast land, " Islam's Jihad will whip the nations into a stampede."

This man with his plaintive harping over old memories reminds us that his country has a history attached to it which, though not attuned to the din of these days, is worthy of more than a passing recognition. To that past this opening chapter is devoted.

At the beginning of the seventh century, when the Berbers, who were the original inhabitants of this land, were living a lazy existence, sleeping out " the gap of time," there appeared among the people of

Arabia a man whose spirit was oppressed by the sight of idolatry. He had visions, claimed divine commission for his message, and set his creed—" There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet "—surging through a population whose devotions were distributed among nearly four hundred idols.

In a surprisingly short time this man, and the followers he had won to his cause, developed a religious fanaticism that furrowed its way through the whole land, and changed its history. This fanaticism, like a tidal wave running up a peaceful river, tore away its banks, broke through its local bounds and inundated large sections of the world, both to the east and west. The rapidity of this march was phenomenal. As early as A.D. 639, these crusaders of Islam were at grips with Egypt, then in the power of Rome, and thirty years later we find them in Tunisia, building and fortifying the town of Kairowan under the leadership of a general called Okba.

The close of the seventh century witnessed the final clash to a long series of battles waged between Arabs and Berbers, where advance and retreat alternated with depressing regularity. Queen Kahina, who led the Berbers, was a forceful character, and succeeded in injecting a large measure of her own courage into the hearts of her army who, for five years, held the invaders in check. After she was slain in battle her sons, feeling unequal to the task that now devolved upon them, surrendered to the enemy. These Berbers went right over to the Moslem camp and joined their conquerors in the conquest of Spain.

The Berber barrier being removed, the march towards Morocco was begun. It was a rapid movement. Soon we find the invaders at Ceuta and Tangier, from which centres they swarmed south and

west, extending their conquests through the whole land until brought to a halt by the natural boundaries of the Atlas range and the Atlantic Ocean. Driving their horses into the sea until the water washed over their saddles, these desert warriors declared that, had not the Almighty set up these barriers now blocking their advance, they would have gone forward in further search of conquests for Islam.

The Atlas range, unlike the Atlantic, was not an impassable obstacle, but when an army set out from the north, as frequently happened, to penetrate into Central Africa through the mountain passes, the fertile plains over which they rode blurred their vision of what lay beyond, and drew off groups of men, who settled down to loot and rule the hundreds of villages that lay in their way. Thus, what commenced at the base in the north like the drive of a river in flood, lost its volume as it passed south, and on reaching the base of the Atlas was a thing of driblets, lacking the impetus to force its way through the precipitous paths ahead. These three factors—the lure of luxury, waning enthusiasm and natural barriers—combined to fix the limit of the Arab movement in North Africa.

The bulk of Morocco's population to-day is made up of the direct descendants of those first invaders. The coast of Morocco is west of Greenwich, and cannot therefore be described as an oriental land; but it is soaked with the manners, morality and religion of the East, imposed upon it at the time of conquest. The country is in Africa; the atmosphere from Arabia.

But if the way south and west was shut, there was Spain on the other side of a stretch of water only 30 miles wide; a Christian country in a state of ignorance and weakness ripe for the knife of robust warriors eager to propagate Islam, and so gain merit for them-

selves in the Paradise of the future, and just as eager to make the best of this world by plundering their victims.

The leader of the first expedition was Tarik, who made a landing at Gibraltar, which name is a corruption of " jbel Tarik," i.e., " Tarik's mountain." The work begun by this man was followed up from time to time by other generals, until, towards the end of the eleventh century, the Almoravid dynasty then reigning in Morocco sent large reinforcements over to Spain and annexed it to the African Empire of Islam.

From the time of Tarik's first skirmish on the coast of Spain to the final expulsion of the Moors by Ferdinand, at the close of the fifteenth century, is a period of nearly eight hundred years. For a considerable part of that time Islam was at the zenith of its greatness, and Spain reaped the benefit. Universities were built, libraries stocked with books, while architectural work of a high order was embodied, and still remains embedded, in many buildings erected at this period. Many of these old Moorish buildings with their solidity and detailed ornamental work are a centre of interest to tourists even at this late time of day.

The fuming fanaticism that demolished hundreds of Christian churches in North Africa, scattering the flock of Christ reared by Augustine, Cyprian and Tertullian, studded Spain with mosques, which became a menace to Christianity in Europe. For in these mosques fanaticism was moulded to Koranic prophecy which gave the world to Islam. Under the impact of these prophecies the sons of Arabia, and their Berber converts, twice crossed the Pyrenees and threatened France with invasion.

In the eighth century there arrived in Morocco a

man named Idrees, a direct descendant of Ali. Unable to bear up any longer against the ill treatment meted out to him in the land of his birth, he travelled west, and sought refuge among his co-religionists in the "land of the setting sun." His noble lineage made him an object of veneration, and soon he was exalted to the position of leader and teacher. He it was who flouted the Caliph's orders, detached Morocco from the main body of Islam, and established the first Moorish dynasty.

The Idreesi dynasty was followed by the Almoravids, which in turn was succeeded by the Almohads and Mareenids. Between the displacement of one dynasty and the rise to power of its successor there was considerable agitation and intrigue, which weakened the country and atrophied the higher qualities of the people.

This internecine strife gave the Portuguese the opportunity to seize the coast land of Morocco. They set to work with the vigour and courage for which they were once notorious, built walled towns, fortified them, and from these centres of refuge plagued the Moors for many years.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the country was in a state of lassitude and degeneration, the Shareefs seized the reins of government, defeated the Wattasis who had exercised some authority over the people during the interim between the Mareenids' decline and the Shareefs' rise to power, drove the Portuguese from most of their strongholds, and raised the country into standing position again.

Since the setting up of the first dynasty under the Idreeses, Morocco has been an independent power; and although to-day it is a French Protectorate, it has its own Sultan at the head of the state.

Through all these centuries of change with their

accompanying battles, internecine strife, periods of upheaval and times of weakness, Morocco has never snapped the link that binds it to Arabia. There is still an intense focus in that direction.

The triumphant history of the Moors in Spain closed with the humiliation of expulsion. To recall the triumph is to pull back the trigger that flashes out the tragedy; and for that reason it is a history over which the Moors would gladly pass the sponge. And the Spaniards have had their revenge, for the northern section of Morocco, lying along the Mediterranean, is now in their possession, as is also Rio de Oro in the extreme south.

That, with many other memories of less importance, now lies in the background blurred by the intervening centuries.

Not so Arabia, the land of their forefathers. The five daily prayers are made with the body facing that direction. It is the focus point that tugs at the would-be pilgrim's heart and inflates him with a new sense of importance; and from this land, where their Prophet was born and died, may there not come forth at any time he that shall lead the Jihad and restore Islam's prestige to the pinnacled greatness of the past? Such is their hope.

With this long and variegated history behind them the Arabs of Morocco to-day drive their wooden ploughs through the soil, tell their folk-lore stories to one another around the smouldering fire within their straw huts, sing their songs to the accompaniment of the ginbree, feed their flocks in forest and plain, draw their water from wells as Rebecca did of old, and, although unable to escape the influence and contacts of civilisation, treat it in large measure as an impertinence too shallow and gaudy to have permanence.

Dear to the heart of the native is the primitiveness handed on to him from generation to generation. To stand by and see this primitiveness being pounded, whether by peaceful penetration or more rigorous methods, is a sore vexation to his spirit. Foreign visitors have come to this country and been moved with pity as they looked on the people stricken with poverty, ground down by unscrupulous Governors, besieged by epidemics, cut off from the interests of a thrilling age, and left to fumble about in the ignorance that besets them. The natives have treated it as misplaced sympathy, calculated to excite hatred rather than assuage grief.

In effect they have said again and again to European Powers, who have interfered on matters pertaining to Moorish rule, epidemics and the conditions of the country in general: Leave us alone. You say our country is backward; maybe, but we do not consider that justifies landing foreign battalions on our soil. If our Government is corrupt, we compel no one to live under it. We are not disturbed by famine, since we believe it is directed by the same hand as gives abundance. If epidemics come, we submit without murmuring. You do not know God; we do.

It is all in vain. The force of modern arms, coupled with the lure of European luxury, has wrenched the country from its ancient footholds forever.

CHAPTER II

MOROCCO TO-DAY

In the year 1907, Morocco felt the swell of the first heavy undercurrent which finally wrenched it from

its moorings. In that year some French subjects working in the neighbourhood of Casablanca were assaulted by natives, and slain. To revenge this outrage the French Government sent warships to the coast, and bombarded Casablanca. The development of modern Morocco begins over the débris of that episode.

When I landed at Tangier in 1912, it was impossible to find any kind of wheeled vehicle to take one south; and even had one been obtainable, it could not have done the journey because there were no roads to admit its passage. Landing again at Tangier in 1934, after a short visit to England, there were at my disposal for travelling south, superb cars and excellent roads, a railway, and an air service.

In the interval between the bombardment of Casablanca and the proclamation of Mouley Yusuf as Sultan under French protection, in August, 1912, the country was too disturbed by the diplomatic intrigues among the Powers interested in Morocco's future to settle down to its normal activities.

The Casablanca incident was treated by the Moors as a bit of camouflage to force the creaky doors of the country back against the walls, and so make a passage for European interference. Had this not been so—so the Moorish Authorities argued—the murder of the Frenchmen could have been regulated in a more reasonable form. At this juncture of tension, Mulay Hafid, the brother of Abd-El-Aziz, the then reigning Sultan, proclaimed a holy crusade against the "infidels." He knew how to play upon the religious instincts of the people, and succeeded in whipping their fanaticism into fury by convincing them that these warships on their coast were not merely a threat against their independence, but a thrust at Islam.

He drove the Sultan from his throne, and took the seat himself; but his reign was a short one. When the religious enthusiasm that gave the movement is first impetus subsided to its normal level, the crusade weakened. Native support was canvassed from both sides; lavish promises were showered upon them by anyone with an axe to grind. Then the unpredictable happened: crusade gave way to collapse. In 1912 Mulay Hafid accepted a large sum of money from the French Government with the promise of a yearly pension, and abdicated in favour of his brother.

In the year immediately following 1912, tit-bits were periodically thrown into the Moroccan cage. The natives approached with caution, sniffed, pawed the "fabor" and then retreated in an attitude of suspicion. But this posture was not permanent, and after the lapse of some time a new approach was made.

They now began to nibble at the tit-bits, then proceeded to take large bites until they gorged themselves with the very stuff they once treated as poison! Picture houses became crowded; cars were brought into the country as fast as roads could be made to accommodate them; young men began to play football; the sons of the upper classes felt the tug towards the tennis court; the demand for European commodities increased; and the whole country began to tingle with the inspiration of a new life.

The growing generation is now convinced that quinine is more effective than their own quack medicines; that vaccination is a surer way of wiping out small-pox than a hundred visits to saints' tombs; that the dangling of Koranic texts about the body does not dispatch pain so rapidly as a touch of iodine, and that water where someone has washed his feet

is not fit for human consumption. In a word: European life with its accompaniment of speed, luxury and amusements has captured the native imagination, and carried the bulk of the population beyond the horizon that hemmed them in for centuries.

How strange it is to see crowds of natives who, not long ago, knew little or nothing of the rush of modern life, scrambling at railway and car stations for seats in vehicles that hurtle them home to the tune of sixty kilometres an hour. The whole country has been caught in a swirling current and swept forever from its ancient moorings.

Those who still carry on the exercise of tapering beads through their fingers, and tilt at Europeans with Koranic texts, have been pushed into the shade of back streets, where they spend their time praying for a return of the good old days now eclipsed by the degeneration of the present.

Social evils and irregularities long embedded in the structure of Moorish life are being chiselled out. The slave market has gone; the oppressed native can now have the aid of a European lawyer; many women are free and untrammelled from those restrictions that made their lives a long, unbroken rut of monotony.

In 1914, I rode a cycle through the narrow streets of Marrakesh. Only a few people in that city had ever seen such a machine until I pushed it along, zig-zagging among the thousands of people and donkeys that stood in my way. Thousands of machines are in use in that city to-day.

And well do I remember how the magic lantern put an audience in high spirits of expectation; but to-day, the cinema, with its telling addition of movement, has broken the spell of the former attraction.

Books were once great things; within their covers

were coiled up supernatural powers which, when touched by an expert hand, unloosed a force that distributed favours or destroyed a community. That kind of threat has now grown thin, for books in Arabic and French have become as common as coins. The opening of a book, which at one time would have produced a hush or aroused antagonism, effects neither of these postures to-day; it simply attracts or repels on the merits of its interest.

The Moslems of Morocco speak freely now of a "truncated Koran." This is what they mean by the phrase: Europeans have created and developed a situation which differs as much from the environment in which the Koran was compiled, as a wooden plough does from a modern tractor. As a consequence of this, many of the precepts of the book have become obsolete, because the primitive knowledge and conditions necessary to their effective working no longer exist.

When the foundations of smoke-stacks were laid in several towns the bell began to toll the termination of a millennium of manners and customs that had remained unchanged among the people. When natives accepted work in factories, where their time is checked by the clock, the demise of ablutions and stated times of prayer was then definitely dated for all such employees. Ramadan was a tolerably easy affair when the bulk of the population was in a position to do much as it pleased, but when civilisation with its inevitable accompaniment of competition comes on the scene and quickens the pace of life, the whole question of fasting comes up for revision.

The camel, which for centuries carried its load unchallenged, has been ousted from trade routes by the motor lorry. The story-teller, with his weird gestures,

Dervish dancers marshalling their passions to sway the crowd, and snake-charmers calling upon their patron saint for help are all having a lean time in the face of the competition that comes from European cafés, dances and cinemas.

The central figure throughout all this change and development, was General Lyautey, a large-hearted man and a great administrator. As far as possible he avoided bloodshed, and carried out the subjugation of the country on the principle of a peaceful penetration.

Again and again he must have felt the urge to rush his troops at rebellious tribes, whose activities not only held him in check, but endangered his rear, by encouraging subdued sections of territory to rise in fresh rebellion. But despite conditions that were sometimes exasperating, he gave his policy of peaceful penetration every chance, and only resorted to guns as a last remedy.

Instead of assault and bloodshed, he drew circles round the turbulent tribes, hemmed them in, hoisted the French flag at each post, and then invited the Caids not merely to surrender to French demands, but also to co-operate with them in bringing the country into a state of order, so that it might become enriched by the materialisation of its potentialities.

But Lyautey's work, which began in 1912 and closed in 1925, left the Soos district from Agadir southwards still unsubdued. For centuries it had been closed to international trade, there were no European residents in the district, and the Sultan's authority was at best only thinly acknowledged.

In 1933, military operations were begun to bring this district under control. It was a short campaign. Aeroplanes, armoured cars, machine guns, with the added strength of disciplined soldiers proved too much

for the natives. Towards the close of 1933, I received a permit from the French authorities in Agadir, and travelled south to the small walled-in town of Tiznit. How strange it was to see this little town, that had slumbered through some centures like a placid pond with undisturbed scum upon its surface, now surrounded by a modern army and all its paraphernalia!

In this district, some sixty miles due east from Agadir, is the town of Taroudant with a population of 8,000 souls. This town is now connected with Marrakesh by a road which crosses the Atlas Mountains by way of the Gundafa Pass. It is a magnificent route, and during this winter, cars were held up for several days by a snowstorm. The first time I visited Taroudant, it was in almost total darkness at night; to-day the streets are lit up by electricity. Hopes of heavy tourist traffic have led to the building of a magnificent hotel which, in matters of comfort and luxury, is equal to the best in Europe. From this centre it will soon be possible for tourists to pass along a route that will take them to Tindouf, which lies on the edge of the Sahara, and from which post adventurous souls may cross to Timbuctu.

The completion of these military operations in Soos has brought the whole of Morocco under French control. It is a great achievement, the full benefit of which will be reaped when the natural resources of the country are more fully exploited. Already there are heavy shipments of phosphates, oil has been found in the north, and when copper fetches a more remunerative price, mines will be worked.

Some twelve miles from the town where I live, there is a river called the "Mother of Grass." For unknown centuries it has flowed undisturbed through mountain and valley, a barrier rather than a boon.

A great dam has lately been built over it, from which electricity has been generated to provide light for several towns. Who could have envisaged, twenty years ago, a link between that river and the mosque? The link has been forged, the mosques are lit up by electricity, and on special occasions the towers of these buildings are made brilliant at night by hundreds of coloured bulbs.

These mosques, under the blaze of electric light, emphasise more than anything else, that the old life has been out-moded, for when civilisation touches the top of these sacred places, beyond all doubt a new era has dawned. The force that in 1907 awakened this people from their long slumber and set them on the road towards new regions, is now luring them on towards a climax that will make their country rich, and perhaps great.

CHAPTER III

COMPROMISE AND CO-OPERATION

I SOMETIMES wonder what would happen if the natives were allowed a vote to decide whether they desired to revert to their primitive life, or continue under European rule with its undoubted benefits.

The old life was simple; and if it lacked the comforts of civilisation, it received compensation in immunity from its complications. The new conditions have their attractions; but the Moor is not sure that these are not outweighed by the drawbacks. His hold upon the past is slackening, his grip of the present lacks the pressure that would indicate whole-hearted acceptance of the new régime.

The condition of things to-day reveals to us a people under the play of two overlapping forces, which

sometimes pull in opposition, and at other times blend. This unstable position of the population makes it difficult to predict what they will do in any set of circumstances. Before the Europeans took the reins of government, one always knew just how the Moor would act, because his existence was regulated by the run of a rut too deep and narrow to admit a change of course, except on rare occasions.

The present position then is one of compromise. Anyone landing in the French zone of Morocco to-day can see at a glance how this factor has shaped the architecture of all official buildings, as well as many hotels and private houses. These buildings are planned in their interiors to facilitate the functions of modern activities, while their exteriors are of Moorish design with arches, pillars and carvings.

In some cases, where well-to-do Moors plan to build, they have difficulty in deciding what design to follow. The old and the new come to grips within the range of their minds. Sometimes there is a complete wrench with the past, and a house is erected in, or near, European quarters. Then in the case of others the primitive instinct prevails, and the house is built in the old native town among hundreds of others huddled together in narrow streets. But in most cases where the rich man is concerned the principle of compromise is followed.

A rich Moor, who is an acquaintance of mine, has a big house standing in its own grounds. It is beautifully tiled, has expensive electric fittings and lamps, is decorated after European fashion, and has a walled-in garden where vines, pomegranates and peaches grow. Some fifty yards distant from this house is his old Moorish house with open court, peculiar smells and long narrow rooms without windows. When I call,

I may find him sitting on a neat European chair under the blaze of electric light, or, as frequently happens, reclining on cushions in semi-darkness in the old home. He cannot tell which he prefers, for he feels the tug of both.

In the matter of dress, we find this tussle between past and present leading to a mixture that makes it difficult to say just where the one begins and the other ends.

Many young Mooresses may be seen walking the streets in high-heeled shoes and fancy stockings, while the remainder of the body from knees upward, right over the head, is wrapped up in a native haik. There are others who reverse this order. They wear slippers and drape themselves to the ankles in flowing robes, leaving the neck and head, with bobbed hair, exposed. And not infrequently one sees a young woman wearing a veil with only a small slit, that exposes part of the eyes, while the rest of the body is in modern dress with open neck and tight skirt. To see these in their bizarre make-up, having a *tête-à-tête*, is more than amusing.

It must not be thought, however, that because many women now enjoy liberty far in advance of anything known in the past, that they are all allowed to parade the streets ; far from it. Many of them are still shut up in harems.

They are allowed an outing to the house-top, but rarely further than that. What must they feel as they peep through the loop-holes in the parapet down to the street, where they see their sisters marching along with European shoe and stride to the cinema or café ?

Among the men, old and young, but particularly the young, this same mixture of dress is evident. Some-

times the European touch is confined to the collar and tie, all other parts of dress being native. Many are in full modern dress minus the hat. It is a very rare thing to see a Moor in any headgear other than his own. The reason for this is that the wearing of a hat is treated as being tantamount to the repudiation of Islam. Some who feel the incongruity of capping a European outfit with a "*riza*" get over the difficulty by going bareheaded.

The method of taxation now in vogue is to a large extent on civilised lines; and therefore a large improvement upon the old haphazard system which lent itself to bribery and oppression.

Nevertheless I have heard in many places, among many people, the expression of a longing to return to old methods of gathering taxes. A muddled affair it was, certainly; but there were ways of escape. The tongue could be brought into play to change, modify or delay payment. Under the new system everything is down on paper, you pay within the limit of time stated or go to prison. Quibbling and shuffling are out of date.

The Moor has taken kindly to the motor car. He seems to enjoy himself leaning back upon the upholstered seats, while the ground is being covered at forty-five miles an hour, and sometimes more, for our public buses here travel faster than at Home. But when travelling with these folks, I am often amused when, arriving at a stopping place, they get out, stretch themselves on the brown earth, and roll about to ease their limbs. The public buses stop at different sections of the road to let down those who must travel the remainder of their journey by obscure paths that wind towards the villages far from main roads. At these stopping places a transfer of goods and people is

made from car to camel or donkey. What a contrast this is, from upholstered car to the hump of a camel! Yet the native is equally at ease by either mode of travel.

In all parts of the country there are hospitals run by the French Authorities. These are well equipped, having qualified doctors and nurses. At first the Moors showed a decided dislike for these places, and, although treatment was free of charge, only a few availed themselves of the services at their disposal. That day is past. The benefits of the treatment received at these establishments have been too obvious to be overlooked. The numbers now attending are so large, that it has been deemed necessary to charge a small fee.

But this up-to-date service does not satisfy all the temperamental demands of this people. It is too scientific to admit the element of magic; and that is a force dear to the heart of this people.

So one may see them walk out of hospital to sit down in the market square, beside one of their native doctors, who has spread before him skulls of strange birds, hides of wild animals, snake skins and a varied collection of powders, crystals and liquids. The hospital bandage, smelling of iodoform, or plastered with some ointment, is undone, and after receiving a sprinkling of powder, or touch from one of the magic skulls or skins, is replaced.

Sometimes magic is employed in the form of writing, no medicine being used. This writing is sewn up in a small leather pouch and attached to the body. I have often asked these people why, if their charms have curative force, they come to us for medicine. The reply not infrequently has been: "The Lord some-

times uses the 'infidel' to complete a cure begun by the 'believer.'"

Civilisation has had the effect of cutting down the rather lengthy string of salutations which has always been treated as an integral part of Moorish manners.

In the early days of my residence in Morocco, I never could get over the embarrassment caused by the endearing and wordy phraseology used in formal greeting. How quaint it is to have someone ask: "What is the news of your bones?"—their condition being a gauge to health! "*La bass aalik?*" (No evil upon you?) To this question one is always expected to reply, whatever one's condition may be, "There is no evil upon me." Having said there is no evil, one is then free, if there is any complaint, to mention it. But the complaint, being "by the hand of Allah," cannot be an evil. It is, of course, a contradiction to ask a person if they have a thing they cannot have; but inconsistencies do not trouble Moors.

The answer to enquiries after one's health or household take the following forms: "May Allah bless you." "Allah lengthen your life." "The Lord increase your well-being." "Our Owner, may He reward you," etc. The Moors have learned that, to Europeans, at least, these salutations are troublesome rather than engaging; and even among themselves they look upon them as somewhat effete. The French forms: "*Bon jour*," "*Ça va bien*," are much in use. But in this as other matters compromise is the order of the day. "No evil upon you?" is followed by "*Bon jour*," and "How are your bones?" by "*Ça va bien.*" The gestures of touching the lips with the forefinger, or placing the hand upon the chest, though not extinct, are being displaced by the handshake.

The Moor, I am sure, does not yet understand or appreciate the music of civilised people. One may see them at any time gathered outside a café listening to a band or piano. They enjoy that kind of thing in a vague way, but it does not reach their emotions, has no stirring effect on the heart. This is manifest from the fact that they listen to it all without swaying their bodies, a thing they cannot do under the influence of their own instruments. I often see young Moors of the educated class sitting among Europeans in a café or at a concert, clapping their hands briskly in applause as one item of music after another ends. I see these same young men at times swaying their bodies to and fro, throwing their heads violently backwards and forwards, their whole being dripping with emotion, as some ragged mendicant plays the "Ginbri" (a hollow piece of wood covered with skin and trimmed with three strings).

It is in the very nature of a bargain that there must be mutual concessions. A European Power has taken the reins of this country, and is driving it on towards a set objective; but it cannot have things all its own way. The people being driven along in the European machine claim the right to carry a good deal of their own material with them, no matter how incongruous it may seem, and at the same time exercise the privilege of enjoying whatever civilisation offers suitable to their temperament and needs.

When travelling in a car one day, I heard a man say: "Thanks be unto God for the afflictions of His mercy; and for having mercy on us through these afflictions." The European ruling in the land is an affliction, because it spells the loss of independence; but through this affliction God has had mercy on the

people, for this same affliction has brought good roads, railways, cars and security.

CHAPTER IV

THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

MOORISH religious thought follows the line of Moslem theology, plus something else. The attitude taken up towards this world might be summed up in the words: "This world is a bridge; pass over but do not build upon it." It is an attitude suitable to a people who "have a great longing to be lazy." A hot climate does not put a man in high spirits for exertion, and as the grapes cannot be reached without a serious effort, they are left alone and called "sour."

In an endeavour to make comparisons between this world and the next, a wide search has been made for suitable similes. All these point to the same conclusion: This life is a passing plaything (*laaba*), "a mirage" (*sirub*). The life to come is a "lasting luxury" (*naaim*).

But inasmuch as we have all gone astray, the question of sin cannot be ignored. It would be correct to say that the main line on which forgiveness is treated is the witness: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." To believe that is to be forgiven all. This is a soothing doctrine, but it does not convey sufficient assurance to the conscience to give it peace. For that reason, we find side tracks off the main line where other theories are tried out and developed.

Sometimes forgiveness is made to hinge on favouritism. The teacher in the mosque school lashes some boys every day; others who are in no way better in

conduct or at lessons are rarely ever touched because "the teacher likes them." That illustration, and others of a similar type, is used by the Moor when he wishes to believe that, however bad he may be in this world, God will forgive him in the next for no other reason than that He has a liking for him.

There is plenty of evidence to show that this ground does not clinch assurance, and at one swing he will shift to the other extreme and preach the doctrine of inevitability. Escape from the consequences of our action is impossible. "A man is a corpse in the grip of his own deeds," is one of their sayings. That is, having done things, we are absolutely at their mercy. In this connection is often quoted the passage from the Koran entitled "The Earthquake"—"Whoever does a deed, be it small as an ant, good or evil, he will see it."

They tell a story of a rich man who was too lazy to perform the ceremonies attached to his religion. He bought a slave, ordered him to perform ablutions, fast, say the five daily prayers and give alms. The slave being his property, he imagined the merit of these exercises would accrue to himself. One day the slave returned and said: "Master, two words with you." "What is it?" "My lord, I passed through the butchers' quarters to-day, and noted that each carcase hung by its own leg. I cannot be your substitute, even if I would."

The idea of weighing actions, developed in other religious systems, is a strong one with Moors. A man's destiny is determined by the dip of the balance this way or that. Good works and bad enter into a contest. If the good deeds outweigh the bad, by even so much as the weight of an ant, the man goes to

Paradise. If the evil deeds are heavier, the man's portion is hell. "Every action runs to the balance." Everything we do runs on before us, enters the scales and awaits our appearance for trial. "Let a man take heed," says their book, "what he sends on before him to the next world." With this notion in his head, the Moor, having done an evil deed, will follow it up by a good one to keep the balance in his favour.

If in a rage he kills a man, he will give alms to the bereaved family. Theft is a sin, but its consequences may be counteracted by giving a portion of the stolen goods to the poor. It is wrong to take a false oath, but a day of fasting may trip the transgression up and nullify its effects.

From the window where I now sit, I can see an earthen jar sunk half-way into the ground outside a shop. It is filled daily with water, which the thirsty passer-by may drink free of charge. It has been there for years. I paid little attention to it until, one day, when sitting in this shop, I noticed customers were being given underweight. I pointed out to the shopkeeper some passages from the Koran, where hefty curses are hurled against the practice of false balances. When asked what he was going to do about it, he replied to the following effect: "If you subtract a smaller number from a larger one, there is a balance. Of course I cheat; but you see that water-pot there, which I fill daily with water? Well, every night I subtract light weight in scales from water in the jar, and always have a favourable balance."

One day the *Mootahisib* (Moorish official who keeps an eye on weights and measures) set a trap for this shopkeeper, and caught him. He was summoned for trial, found guilty, and fined nineteen francs. "You got it that time," I remarked a little time after

this incident. He showed me the receipt for the fine paid. Nothing abashed, he began to teach me another art in keeping the balance in favourable position.

"Everything is in, and by, the hand of Allah. It was the water-pot that pinned me this time." "What do you mean?" I enquired. "Well, I have neglected it somewhat of late, and thirsty people coming to drink have found it empty, and turned away with a curse. So Allah, seeing the balance was going against me, sent this *fadiha* (disaster) to bring about a favourable adjustment."

Another doctrine which forms a link in this search for forgiveness is fatalism. The day a man is born, an unseen mark is placed upon his forehead by the angels. Whether he shall be forgiven, or bear the full consequences of his sin, depends upon the nature of that mark. We may hope to be forgiven, but inasmuch as this mark cannot be deciphered by man, all speculation is futile.

One morning a friend of mine, on arrival at his shop, found it had been broken into during the night. A few days later, I called to see him. He told me all about it, and added that the thief had been caught. "He is in prison, then?" I enquired. "Yes; three months for him." "The sentence is unjust." "How?" he exclaimed. "Well," I went on, "according to your belief, he could not help breaking into your shop, since it was decreed he should do so." "Without doubt it was decreed," he acquiesced. "Well, is it not an injustice to sentence a man for doing what no planning, praying or resolution could avert?" "Justice or injustice has nothing to do with it. The punishment is decreed just as was the crime," was his reply.

When discussing these doctrines with them, in an endeavour to bring all this loose material to a point of focus, I have urged that, if the bliss of our future hangs upon the good deeds done in this life, the Christians have as good a chance as Moslems. The same remark may be applied to fatalism, for if that is the factor which fixes destiny, we are all in the same corner. They will not admit that; for so greatly beloved of God is their Prophet, that his intercession may prevail against all odds.

The punishment meted out to the sinner in the New Testament is a mild thing compared with that of the Koran. It thunders out all kinds of threats against every form of transgression, from murder to whispering. But scarcely have the echoes of these thunderings died than an easy way of escape is presented. Let the Moor put it in his own way.

A mother dresses up her child in newly washed garments, and keeps it within doors, so that they may not be soiled. The child becomes restless, and persists in its plea to get out. The mother yields, and out goes the child to the muddy streets. "If you return with these clothes soiled, I'll give you such a thrashing as you rarely have had." Such is the threat following the exodus to the street. An hour later, the parent comes out to see how things are going, and finds the child covered with mud. "You wicked wretch! Look at your garments! But never mind; there is plenty of hot water and soap in the kitchen."

After loitering about in a labyrinth of doctrines and theories about forgiveness and man's hope of final salvation, the Moor makes his exit by the door of "hot water and soap." He takes pains, usually, to show that this way of escape is confined to those within the fold of Islam.

The five essentials (*wajibat*) of the Moor's faith are separated in some mysterious way into a compartment by themselves, and are not necessarily attached to the ordinary run of daily life. These are (1) the witness; (2) the five daily prayers; (3) Ramadan fast; (4) tithing of goods; (5) pilgrimage to Mecca.

The notion behind these ceremonies is that man is in debt (*deen*) to God, and payment has to be made by the performance of these essentials.

The Moor works it out in this way: a man is a thief, a murderer or an adulterer. No one would dream of saying to such a person, that because he practised such things, he should not pay his debts. What he owes the shopkeeper is something to be paid irrespective of his moral character. The creditor on his side would not refuse payment of what was due to him by a debtor even if this latter were a rogue through and through.

In like manner God accepts payment in the currency of ceremonies, leaving the daily practices of life to be dealt with on another basis. Those, therefore, who fail to make payment in this life must do so in the next, with heavy interest. How the pilgrimage to Mecca can be made in Paradise is something of a puzzle, as is also the tithing of corn; but the answer to such objections is usually met by a reminder that "we all eat grapes without staying to analyse their contents."

The Moor believes in heaven as it is portrayed to him by the Prophet. It would, perhaps be more correct to say he tries to believe, for the difficulties in the way of accepting the Koranic description of Paradise are very great to all but those who refuse to think. Some modern commentators have endeavoured to spiritualise the "black-eyed maids" provided for the faithful

in the after-life, but I have never met a Moor who accepted these in any other than a literal sense.

In this life indulgences, for which the soul of man craves, are restricted by the limitations to which the body is subjected. Paradise means perpetual youth, emancipation from those boundaries against which the boisterous spirit of man flings itself all through life.

When covering this ground with Moors, as I have often done, I have urged that my mind would not work in a manner that would allow me to believe in these things. "You cannot accept these things?" asked a man at the end of a long conversation we had together. "Well," he continued, "let me hear of your heaven." As simply as possible I described to him the Christian view of a future life, and finished by quoting the words of Jesus: "They neither marry nor are given in marriage." "What!" he exclaimed—"neither marry nor are given in marriage! Why, a place of that kind wouldn't satisfy the birds, far less man. It's a place for babies."

Just as the Christian treats his present existence as a probation, a beginning of spiritual experiences to be indefinitely enlarged in the future, so the Moor treats his as a small experiment in indulgences which, in Paradise, will go on for ever, and upon a scale too vast for our comprehension. Between these two views a great gulf is fixed.

CHAPTER V

THE MOOR AS PREACHER

In my work as a missionary to the Moor, I have had to listen to as many of his sermons as he to mine. Despite the fact that he is not always wise; that the mood of

the moment frequently has damaging effects on his reason, one can pick from the chaff not a little grain.

If his audience is antagonistic, he ceases to bother about preciseness of thought or form of words, and lets the "ruffian direct his rhetoric." When he is in a fanatical mood, common enough with him, he is impregnable simply because he will listen to nothing but the echoes of his own mob of words. When his aim is not merely to defend his religion, but win you over to it, his preaching, like that of the Hebrew prophets, becomes dramatic. It is in this attitude that he invests his theology with a living interest, and keeps it from sagging under the weight of worn phrases. But best of all for him is the parable. It is the peg upon which he hangs his best thoughts. Like all Orientals, he is an embellisher, and as the parable lends itself to colourful treatment, it is often employed.

His blackboard is the nearest object appropriate to the thought running through his mind. I have listened to him for 25 years, and as we read this chapter, we shall find him in the different moods described above.

"Note that tip of white, for that is the gospel according to Islam." The man who spoke these words had listened on different occasions to my message, and was now making his effort to convert me to his religion.

Holding the feather up to my gaze he asked: "What is its colour ?" When I replied "Black," he proceeded with his preaching. "Yes, from the broad end here right up to within a fraction of the narrow end, it is jet black. But this small bit of white at the tip claims recognition, for, mind you, Allah put it there, and saves it from being described as wholly black. Call us jet black, if you like, from the day we are born to the hour of our death; but ever remember this: that, just at the end, when the spirit is beginning to

peer out from the body in search of its direction, there is that tip of white we call repentance, and that is our salvation, as we witness to the Prophet.

"Far be it from me to assert that Islam condones wickedness, but just as far be it from me to deny that Allah is other than gracious and merciful. Sad indeed would be our lot, if the spirit took its flight from the broad end where all is black, but praise be to the Exalted One, that is not so; it is from the white-tipped end.

"Now I have made known to you the gospel of Islam, and if Allah wishes you to come over to our side, it is an easy matter with Him."

Now hear him on his favourite theme of heaven.

A sultan, on the occasion of his son's marriage, had his palace surrounded by a crowd of his interested subjects. All types were there; rich and poor, bond and free, old and young.

When the invited guests were seated, the Sultan, wishing to show some favour on a high occasion such as this, to the clamouring crowd outside, sent a servant to admit a hundred more people. He was instructed to admit an equal number of free- and bond-men. His choice of the free-men passed without protest, but when he called the slaves, the atmosphere thickened with discontent.

A number of rich, well-dressed men felt humiliated at the preference shown to the bond-men. They asked for an interview with the Sultan. After they had stated their grievance, His Majesty replied thus: "Whose palace is this?" "Yours, O Monarch." "Whose marriage is it?" "Your son's, blessed be the Most High." "Who is Sultan of this territory?" "We rejoice that Allah the Merciful has placed you on the throne, and may he lengthen your life." "From

your own replies," said the Sultan, "all is mine. That being so, I remind you that I will not suffer anyone to dictate to me." They then took their departure in silence.

Laying his hand on my shoulder, the Moor continued thus: "The missionaries come to us preaching Jesus the son of Mary, telling us that He opens or shuts heaven's door as He pleases. The Jews make mention of Moses and seem to think he holds the keys, while we Moslems trust in Moulay Mohammed; upon him be peace and prayers. But what is man that he should dictate to God? To whom does the Universe belong? Our answer is—God. Then what if He fill heaven with as many bad people as good?"

Feeling that he had not quite clinched the matter, he sought to bring it nearer home. After a pause, he proceeded again: "I saw at the Christmas season a number of beggars and blind folks going into your house. I was told you gave them a meal and a garment. Alms-giving staves off evil, you know, and God will bless you for this good deed; but the point is that, although those people were lame, blind and filthy in their persons, you admitted them and consulted nobody. Would you claim greater power over your house than God does over His heaven?"

The sermon ended, he suggested I let his words "sink into my marrow."

In a village close by the sea, where a company of men were loafing about waiting for rain to soften the ground so that they could proceed with their ploughing, I got them together for a meeting where I spoke to them for a long time.

We threaded our way through Koranic and Biblical theology, giving and taking thrusts as they or I saw a weak point in the arguments presented. So we talked

on together, tapping at one door after another to see if there might be a way out of the prison house of sin. To these men sin presented no problem either in its origin or outcome. They did not seem to be sufficiently burdened with a sense of its heinousness to be perplexed about its immediate removal.

When I pointed this out to them, a man, the only reader in the company, took over the meeting and began to instruct us. Whether what he said was an immediate inspiration born out of the conversation we had had together, or a fragment of their fatalistic doctrine handed down from a musty past, I cannot say; but here is his message:

Taking the ocean that rolled in front of us for his blackboard, he began with "*Siatna keef ilbahur*" (sin is like the sea). To encourage him to go on, I said, "Yes, like the sea, it's very deep." But no; that was not what he was going to say. He began again: "It wasn't its depth I was thinking of, but its ebb and flow. These waves come surging on, bearing with them a load of sand, shells and seaweed, which they throw upon the beach. Then follows retreat and all is quiet again; but not for long. Back comes the sea—how and why Allah only knows—with a fresh deposit to be dumped on the shore. So it has been since creation, and so it must be until the Creator wishes it otherwise.

"Well, the passions of men are just like that. On they come, rolling in with their rage and roguery; anger that kills; corrupt love that conjures up the devil; disputes that develop into expensive lawsuits, thefts, lies, perjury and what not (*ash mazell*), all come rolling in. Then the sea ebbs; we repent, become reconciled, compose our differences, or having been in prison take fresh vows upon us as we leave it to lead

better lives, and a spell of quiet follows, but not for long. Some son of Satan begins with his mischief, sets party against party, and by giving impetus to trivialities has the whole village in a tumult again. So it will be to the end."

In another village not a mile distant from this one, I heard the following story, some weeks previous to this, and as this man's message left us in the murky night of despair, I told it to these men.

The sea was being whipped into storm by a gale. A saint called Moulay Abd-Allah had a pupil with a wild and savage nature. To him the saint said: "Go down to the shore, look at the sea, return and tell me what its condition is." When he returned, he reported, "Wild and stormy." "Now take this pail," continued the saint, "fill it with the stormy water, and put it down here." The pail was filled and put down. "Now," said the teacher, "the stormy sea is what you are: that pail of water is what you are going to become." "That," I added, "is what I claim for Jesus Christ: the power to subdue our passions and calm our souls."

A man who evidently thought my alms-giving was not on a scale commensurate with my income, stopped me one evening as we were walking along the street, drew my attention to a big house standing within its own grounds, and then told me this story.

Barley Meal and a Pickaxe

A beggar in dire need, whose effort during the day to obtain bread had been disappointing, sat down towards evening on the doorstep of a big house, hungry and tired. The house had a big door beautifully carved and placed within a heavy stone archway.

" Give me what belongs to God," he began to cry, but though he repeated it many times, there was no response. Another of his professional calls was tried : " God's revenue ; God's revenue." No one heeded him. " Scatter alms and God will not disappoint you." And so on through his list of appeals. Just as he got up to come away in despair, the great door was opened, while a stretched-out hand that asked him to " take " dropped a little barley meal into his lap.

A few days after this incident, the inmates of this house were startled by hearing heavy thuds at their door, as if someone was trying to break into the house. Rushing out to see what it was, they found the old beggar, the upper half of his body naked like one ready for an arduous task, dealing heavy blows at the archway with a pickaxe. " What are you doing ? " shouted the lord of the palace. " What am I doing ? " repeated the beggar—" Why I'm taking down this great archway and removing this beautiful door." " Who sent you to do this ? " was the owner's next question. " My own sense sent me. The other day, I spent an hour on your doorstep, pleading for bread ; you gave me a handful of barley meal. Allah be praised even for the small portions, but you do not require a door of such dimensions to hand out a little meal ! So I am pulling this one down. In its place I will put another, low and narrow, that will be in harmony with the proportions of your liberality to the poor."

Having told this story, he drove its moral home—" Beware, or you may find at your doorway the man with the pickaxe ! "

The following incident is an example and illustration of Moorish fanaticism. A man rushed from his place in the rear of the audience, stood before me, and shook

his garments wildly about him. Then passing his hands on to my shoulders, he drew them down my back and waist, gave a pull at my trousers, and, having finished his acting, addressed his co-religionists thus:

"O servants of God, there will be no evil unless He wishes it. This Englishman's gospel is like his clothes, an uncomfortable thing that cramps, and with its rigorous restrictions denies the body its natural indulgences.

"He speaks as though God in the making of us men had made a slip, and put us in the wrong mould, and is now expecting us to re-shape ourselves with a view to correcting His error."

Having thus dealt with my clothes and gospel, he again shook his garments wildly, and with a voice that had now developed into vociferation, said: "O ye who follow the Beloved Prophet, witness that our religion like these garments I now shake, is wide, roomy and easy, giving play to our natural propensities, and bringing a simple way of forgiveness, when we transgress. This Englishman's invitation to change over from Islam to Christianity is as though he should invite the Sultan to evacuate his palace and take up residence in a straw hut."

One day, when in the country, I asked if I might be permitted to take a turn at the plough. Permission being granted, I set the oxen forward, shouting as the furrow was being made: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The furrow ploughed was a very crooked one. Later in the day, when I had finished preaching to the village folks, a man put his hand on my shoulder and said: "True are your words: we reap in the next world what we plant here; but tell us, what would happen if we followed your furrow?"

Clothes are usually washed in this country by placing them on a hard surface such as is provided by flat rocks. After being soaked with water, they are beaten with a stick or pounded with the feet. To visualise the process all one has to do is to picture the native dancing a lively "Highland fling" on top of his garments.

A group of men and women were busy at their washing one day around a pool recently filled with rain. They were in great form, singing, dancing and clapping their hands. At my suggestion they stopped work and sat down to listen to what I had to say. Ignorant people they were, but apparently had no difficulty in following my simple message.

"It's all so true," said an elderly woman, when I had finished. Then other remarks followed: "Death is hard," "We are laden with corruption," etc. As these remarks were going the round, a big black man got on to his feet, and in a vigorous voice said: "This European whom we call 'infidel' has brought us the truth. We are a wild lot of people, high and low, bond and free; we are all corrupt. Like these clothes, we are soaked with sin; but Allah remains."

Filling his bucket with water, he poured its contents over the clothes, leaped upon them and danced with extraordinary vigour. "Pound! Pound!" he shouted. "Allah remains." Then appealing to me: "Look! Look! See the dirt running out of the garments. Fasts and prayers, sickness and poverty, the coming of infidels and every untoward event is the pounding of Allah. His working is never in vain. By these things sin is being washed out of us. Dirt is not driven out by water only, nor is sin washed away by words. Allah is dealing with us; it is the pounding process that tells; and when it is over,"—here he stood

still, lowered his voice, and pointing the forefinger upward said with great solemnity—" yes, when the pounding is over, Paradise, Allah willing."

The religious phrase " *sirat Ilmostakim* " (straight way) is in constant use among Moors. Strange it is indeed that a people so crooked in word and deed should cling so tenaciously to terms that trumpet their own failure.

In a gathering where I was stressing the moral potentialities for which the phrase stood, at the same time urging the desirability of endeavouring to make these actualities in our lives, a man stopped me and addressed the audience thus : " O servants of Allah, lift up your eyes to the heavens. Behold the sun ! She rises in the morning, and with slow and steady movement makes a straight course through space, until she dips in the evening below the horizon. So it is with the moon. Her course is not a jerky thing that leads her to roam about space. The stars move with perfect symmetry ; there is neither noise nor clash among them.

" O servants of God, let us come back to earth and behold man. Like the sun he begins his course in the morning, often with prayers and good intentions, but before the day has closed, he may wander through all the evils the devil has ever invented, and at night find himself in prison. We always know where to look for the sun, the moon, the stars ; but where shall we look for man ? He jerks from mosque to brothel, from prayers to curses, from alms-giving to false balances. Well, if we go on talking about the straight way and continue to live jerky lives, we may find ourselves jammed together in hell fire. And yet, Allah is merciful. May He cover up our sins."

CHAPTER VI

SNAKES AND SCORPIONS

New Theories and Facts

IN my contact with Berbers and Arabs in Morocco, now lasting for 23 years, I have been much impressed by the tactful methods they employ to keep Europeans upon the periphery of any secret they do not wish to divulge. When one begins an investigation which aims at unearthing the underlying significance of certain customs, one has to face an entrenched obstinacy that blocks all ways of approach.

In some cases this attitude becomes manifest at the first stages of enquiry. Again and again I have found my way barred as soon as my curiosity dipped beneath the external manifestation to trace its origin and meaning. This blockage is sometimes done in a rather neat and polite way, but it is none the less effectual for all that. "God is great," exclaims the man who has the secret and intends to hold it, "He has enclosed the tongue within two ivory gates." So one is given to understand that no information will be given on the subject which one's question has introduced.

But this is not the only method employed. Sometimes one is lured on by a facial expression which seems to indicate eagerness to impart the desired information, and then after one has travelled a long way, smoothly and interestingly, one is suddenly held up at a point where the secret is expected to pop out. Natives greatly enjoy giving this anti-climax to the foreigner's inquisitiveness.

The reason why it is so difficult to get at the secrets of snake-charming is because the snake-charmer is

an adept at parrying the strokes of those who poke at the mysteries of his profession. Among his own people, who are ignorant, superstitious and easily satisfied with superficial answers he experiences no difficulty. Every native knows that snakes sting, frequently with fatal results. When, therefore, they see a man holding them fearlessly they accept without further thought the charmer's explanation, namely, that his attachment to some great saint (*wali*) long since dead, but whose spirit still hovers about his mausoleum, has conferred upon him the power to handle poisonous reptiles with immunity. That is why we hear at all these performances the name of some prominent saint mingling with almost every sentence.

But this explanation of immunity does not satisfy the scientific mind any more than it would be satisfied to be told that the cloth used by a toreador possesses virtues which make the thrust of a bull ineffectual.

For twenty years I have been interested in the snake-charmer and his play, and knowing Arabic have on numerous occasions by frank questioning, and sometimes by cunning, endeavoured to elicit replies which would satisfy my curiosity and demand for facts. This effort has been spread over a number of years, and the information presented in this article has been gathered partly—always with great difficulty—from snake-charmers themselves, but mostly from the members of the Aisawa sect who, though not charmers, know the secrets of the trade.

I have been repeatedly told that the secret lies in a process of taming. Anyone who has watched the expert charmer giving a performance will readily admit that much can be said for this theory, for the reptiles are made to sit up upon a coil of their tails, lie down, enter their baskets and come out, and take up positions

marked on the ground where they lie coiled up until at a given sign they erect themselves and move to new attitudes. It works out on the same lines as the lions and their tamers.

Some snake-charmers travel about with only one reptile. Their performance is a tame affair where most of the time is spent in circling round the reptile to the accompaniment of drum-beating and eerie howls. But to see the expert with a dozen or more snakes all playing their part, just as a trained group of lions would do, is an intriguing performance.

Two years ago in the city of Marrakesh a European who would not accept the theory of taming, but believed immunity was obtained by operating on the fangs, and being desirous of proving to the audience that the whole thing was a deception, stepped forward and lifted a snake. Barely had he touched it than it plunged its fangs into his flesh, and despite treatment by injection at the French hospital he died a few hours later. This, not altogether an isolated instance, proves that, at least in some cases, the immunity enjoyed by some charmers is not due to castration.

While strongly inclined to accept the theory of taming as sufficient explanation of immunity in many cases it must be admitted that this method is not universally employed. The secret in some instances, perhaps most, lies in an operation upon the fangs. But to cut these out would give away the show, for the darting of the fangs is the most spectacular part of the performance. This drastic operation is not necessary. The method adopted to preserve the fangs, and at the same time render them harmless, is simple, although considerable skill is necessary for its manipulation.

When a snake strikes an object there are three distinct moves, made with such lightning speed as to

be almost simultaneous. First, the fangs are sunk into the object to be attacked; second, the muscles at the root of the fangs press forward the poison which is deposited in the wound; third, withdrawal.

Now the operation consists in piercing by a needle, or similar instrument, a number of holes in the passage between the poison retainer and the point of the fangs which makes the wound. The result is that when the poison travels along this perforated passage it squirts out at the holes and so fails to reach the end of the fangs embedded in the object attacked. The reason we sometimes find a snake-charmer dying, or becoming seriously ill, from a bite by one of his own reptiles, is because, in the course of time, the holes in some instances become clogged so allowing the poison to travel the full length of the passage.

But the wound made by the fangs, even in the absence of poison, is it not serious? No; but the bleeding if of frequent occurrence may be a nuisance. To obviate this drawback the fangs are blunted in the same manner as one would flatten down the point of a pin. In this way they are deprived of the power to pierce their object. It might be asked: if the blunting of the fangs prevents the making of a wound would not this give immunity without piercing the passage? The only answer I could get to this question was that it is customary to perform the double operation.

Some fangs, however, are not so blunted, but are allowed to retain their piercing power so that on special occasions blood may be drawn to enhance the charmer's reputation, and so call forth a larger collection of coins.

Immunity by innoculation is unknown in Morocco. At least, in all my investigation on the subject I have never received a hint of it from anyone. But snake-

charmers sometimes eat the flesh of their reptiles raw. On rare occasions this is done publicly before an audience in the town square or in one of the large country markets. But the performer is never equal to this undertaking until he has worked himself into a state bordering on insensibility. After spending some fifteen minutes uttering wild cries, tearing the hair and making frantic leaps into the air he suddenly pounces down upon one of his reptiles, and after wringing its neck severs the head from the body with his teeth. Round the ring he whirls like a tornado, dealing blows at his body, throwing himself now and again with a thud to the ground, jamming his mouth with the raw flesh, and calling between mouthfuls on his patron saint, whom the audience believes to be at the back of the whole performance. Having eaten the snake, or a large part of it, he collapses and lies spread on the ground as if dead. At this climax his partners get busy collecting the coins.

Some natives, too intelligent to accept the religious explanation of immunity, believe that it comes by this eating of the flesh.

Some of these men carry scorpions in their baskets as well as snakes. Not many weeks after I had settled down in the city of Marrakesh a young Moor, who gave me the impression of being silly, stopped me, pulled out a small box from under his garment, and after bringing out several scorpions placed them on his head and bare shoulders where they ran about as if greatly enjoying their exposure to sunlight. The performance over, there was of course the demand for *fabor*.

I concluded these scorpions had been operated upon in a manner to render them harmless. In the following

years I repeatedly saw similar displays. One day I mentioned to one of my Aisawa friends my belief about an operation rendering their reptiles harmless, but he would not accept it. He asserted that although a scorpion could not be tamed like a snake some men who had by heritage, or special religious fervour, special attachment to some great saint, had, in virtue of such attachment, immunity conferred upon them. I refused to believe this as I had always done.

He said if I would agree to give a man who handled scorpions a *fabor* he would arrange a meeting between the three of us where I could examine things close at hand. In a quiet place we met, and the first thing that struck me about the man was his apparent silliness. I believe these men are quite normal, but feign this silly attitude, having proved by experience that it impresses people.

He carried several poisonous reptiles about his person, but as I had raised the question about scorpions these were brought out first. In spite of the fact that I was by his side it was difficult to undertake a minute examination because when any of the scorpions appeared upon his breast or forehead, which were facing me, he immediately poked them into action.

After a time he put them back in their box, and as he was about to proceed with the next part of his performance I held him up with a question. "How," I asked, "do you extract the thorn from their tails and so render them harmless?" Under the thrust of this question he became like one demented. He stamped his feet on the ground, ran round in circles with his body bent so that his face was nearly touching the ground, tugged at his long hair and uttered weird sounds. "You've upset him," said my friend.

I was too familiar with this kind of thing to be

deceived by it. So I put my hand on the shoulder of the owner of the scorpions and said to him : " You may stop this nonsense at once, because I am not in the least frightened by this exhibition of fury. Among your own people, who gulp down your gossip without thinking, it is efficacious, but I treat it as an effort to bury my question."

Seeing him aggravated rather than appeased by these remarks I feigned utter indifference toward him and began a conversation with my friend about the prospects of the harvest. This attitude brought him to his senses. " Now," he interjected to our conversation, " I am going to show how in making me a cheat you do me an injustice." He brought out a scorpion, this time from a separate box, which he handled, as I could not but observe, with greater caution than the others. Holding it close to me he asked : " Has any operation been performed on that tail ? " I admitted it looked exactly like those I had seen in field and forest. " If I put it on your hand it would strike and you would perhaps die. Yet you see it does not strike me."

I informed him I was ready to believe his assertion about saints and immunity if he would allow this scorpion to run over his neck and breast as the others were allowed to do. I added that the reason for attaching this condition to the exercise of my faith was because I observed that he held the scorpion under its body, *and* with his forefinger pressed its tail upwards in a manner that made it impossible to strike downwards at the hand which held it. I admitted that very considerable skill was necessary to get such a catch, but this was not the first time I had seen it done.

He did not accept my challenge, but returned the

scorpion to its box, and then held out his hand to receive the *fabor*.

After his departure my friend, now convinced that I had got at the secret, made further revelations. So long as there was a chance of keeping me in the dark he did so, but now he let the secret out, thus adding detailed information to what was already gained by my own observation. All the scorpions except the one kept in a separate box had the point of their tails cut away, and then plugged with some resinous matter which, under heat, becomes fluid. This is poured into the perforated tail where it hardens and so blocks the way against a flow of poison. This does not prevent the striking part of its tail from moving in and out of its sheath, so that the onlooker is deceived into believing that no castration has taken place.

The scorpion of the separate box is used only to convince, as in my own case, those who declare immunity to be due to some operation on the tail.

CHAPTER VII

BARGAINING BY BLUFF

FROM time immemorial the Moors have carried on their commerce in articles small and great, on the haggling principle. Since the French Protectorate was established, an effort has been made to fix prices for commodities such as beef, bread, oil and other necessaries of life; but this has done no more than touch the fringe of an evil too deeply rooted in Moorish mentality to be exorcised by anything short of a miracle. So deeply has this thing become embedded in business methods, that the natives treat it as an essential part of their armour in the struggle for bread, or something better.

For twenty-five years it has been my lot to jostle in street and market with these gushing Orientals; and not only have I watched their methods, listened to their language and been sickened by their oaths, but been compelled on many occasions, when making purchases for myself, to prune down the price to a reasonable figure, using their own weapon (without its attendant evils, I hope) in the process.

These people cannot leave God outside the sphere of trade; that would be a fatal mistake. His name saturates every deal. A beginning is made with "In the name of Allah"; the exchange, as money and article cross, is capped with "May Allah give you gain of this."

In order that the lengthy process of these deals should not be denuded of its quaintness and force, I have, as far as possible, adhered to a literal translation of the language used, departing from this principle only when necessary to save the meaning from obscurity.

I was sitting in a shop, where all kinds of leather goods are sold, conversing with the owner, whom I knew well, when a country Arab entered with the sanctifying phrase: "In the name of God." The shopkeeper was keen to sell his goods, but simulated indifference, lest the customer, seeing his eagerness, should clutch at the advantage to bring down the price.

Lifting an expensive "*shakara*" (bag worn by men) the Arab asked: "How much is this, my lord?"

"Even if you sold all the animals on your farm, the sum wouldn't be able for that bag. But here, in quality and design, is another, the brother of the one in your hand, which you can have at half its price."

After fumbling about the inside of the bags to test their quality, the Arab said: "They are not brothers."

"By God they are, and this one is half the price of that, not because it is an inferior article, but because my uncle, who thought of buying it, used it for a day. This one day's use has brought the price down by half." Then, turning to me, the shopkeeper handed the bags, asked me to examine them, and say whether or not he spoke the truth. I pleaded ignorance in the matter.

"If these don't please you—I know you country folk like tough goods—here is a lot, strong and cheap; look at these."

"Look, my lord, I am going to make a marriage; if it pleases your mind, let me have the bag first handled."

"God have mercy on us! Had you told me your aim was to make yourself nice for a wedding, why I would not have offered anything but the best in my shop. There, take the bag." "May God bless you, but not yet have you mentioned the price." "Well, there are two reasons why I should let it go cheap: you are going to get married, and I don't want to churn your mind; that. Again, you are my first customer this morning, and we shopkeepers don't like sending such away without the article they want; it's bad luck. Give me 150 francs."

"That, my lord, was a true word you said about the sale of my animals. No, they would not fetch this figure." "We have only what Allah is pleased to give us," mumbled the shopkeeper, "but if the price is too heavy, make an offer." The Arab wants the bag, has no doubt been at several other shops, and knows his chances here are as good as anywhere. "Allah has only brought eighty francs," he says. Pretending to be exasperated by this low bid, the shopkeeper snatches the bags, throws his arms up

toward heaven, and solemnly declares that he will burn the bag rather than budge from his first price.

After a pause, this from the buyer: "If it comes upon your mind, my lord, speak with reasonableness." "By Allah, and upon my neck be the curse if I lie, I paid 135 francs for the bag. There, take it at cost price." "My lord, in another shop I was offered its brother for ninety. If I lie, then let Allah smite me with small-pox." "The brother of this bag at ninety francs has not yet been created by Allah. But I am not yet conquered; here is a fall below cost price, 120 francs." "It was the same bag at ninety." "Well, go in peace; buy it." "I'm ashamed to return, by Allah, I am." Here the Arab muttered the name of his patron saint, while the shopkeeper in reverence touched his brow. "I'll give you ninety." "You said Allah only brought eighty francs. May He cover up our sins. Give me your hand; 110 francs." "Amen. May He cover our sins." And at last the bag was sold for 107 francs.

In the Cow Market

In the early morning the Arab farmer arrives at the market, hobbles his animal, and squats down on the ground among hundreds of others engaged in the same traffic. The buyers then come along in small groups of four or six. They begin business by making remarks among themselves (actually these remarks are intended for the owners of animals) which they deem calculated to keep prices down: "The butcher trade is fading these days." "Last month I bought ten bullocks, and lost 200 francs in retail selling." "Great herd here to-day; Allah willing, the price will be low."

The farmers, also talking among themselves, make their thrusts too: "Did you ever see such fat animals?

By Allah, not one of mine goes for less than 150 dollars." " I'm like you. If prices are low, my animals go back to country. I hear a European engaged in export trade is coming round our way soon. These ' infidels ' give good prices and money on the place."

Before any effort is made to buy or sell, the preliminary skirmish, between two camps manœuvring to get an advantage over the other, plays its part. The fact that the tricks of both sides have been in operation for a millennium, are known outside and inside to the core, makes no difference ; indeed, without this cumbersome preliminary work neither party would feel secure for the battle about to be waged. This wordy warfare over, the butchers, who are the big buyers, go off in twos or threes to make a start.

The first move is to take an animal by the tail and give it a pull ; this they always do to test its soundness. Then the question : " How much ? " " Proceed, make an offer," is the curt reply. " You are the owners ; why don't you state the price ? " " You are the buyer ; why don't you make an offer ? " " There is no power nor might but of Allah ; you don't want to sell." " There is no stir nor stoppage but by Allah's will ; you don't want to buy."

The butchers depart to try their wits on another farmer. The tail of another animal is pulled. Its movement suggests defect somewhere. " It has a hurt somewhere," say the buyer to his partner. " If you find any disease in this beast," vociferates the owner, " then by Allah I'll give it to you for nothing." " Disease is in, and by, the hand of Allah," is the fatalistic response. " Anyway, what is your price ?"

Here the farmer lets the " lie " out of its lair, which now plays its part in the proceedings. " I was offered 100 dollars and refused it." " The Almighty must

have smitten you with dizziness! It's one animal we are pricing, not six." "Praise be to the Highest, I am a believer. It is easy for Him to provide six bullocks for 100 dollars, but to-day He puts that price on one." "To all that we submit; but be reasonable and state your price." "Well, to show I'm reasonable, I'll take one hundred less five."

At this juncture a psychological factor is introduced. "Kiss the dog on his very mouth till you gain your end," says one of their proverbs. Acting on this advice, the buyer, who treats the country Arabs as animals, calls him "my lord." "Well, my lord, our offer is fifty dollars." "My taxes run to eighty-five; that sum I must have." Mention of taxation paves the way for another flick of flattery. "Yes, my lord, these taxes are the curse of our country. May Allah help you poor Arabs in the struggle against them." "Amen, amen" is the enthusiastic reply. This link of sympathy supplies the key to clinch the bargain. "Take the animal for seventy-five dollars, and let Allah plan about taxes." A rise in the offer to sixty by the butcher brings them closer. Then follows a dead-lock; neither party will budge.

A confederate of one of either party now intervenes. "O servants of the Most High, why render this day's work useless? Times are hard, and you must be patient." "I will be patient, and let the Prophet bear witness that this is my last word—seventy dollars," shouts the farmer. "I have taken an oath, upon my neck be the outcome, not to pay more than sixty-five." "You have taken an oath, have you? I have called for the Prophet's witness. Half the sin be on my head, the other half on yours—sixty-seven dollars. Behead me now, if you like, but I am not budging." Then follows a hand grip and the money is paid.

This bargaining propensity is not confined to matters of importance, but trips out with its bulky display of words in things trivial. Here is the conversation of two boys swapping a "*tageea*" (skull cap which boys knit themselves) and a "*laira*" (reed whistle). "I made this *tageea* myself," says the first boy, "and by my neck swear it is *Romi* (European) wool." "Even if it is *Romi*, that does not make my word topple. I'll give you my *laira* for your *tageea*, plus fifty cents." "May Allah have pity on you, but there's no money in this deal—*tageea* for *laira* or nothing." "Don't get angry; you know Allah loves the patient." "Yes, patience is good, but you goad me to anger. Anyway (*aila cooli hal*) here is the *tageea* and ten cents; now you be patient." "My mind does not accept ten cents; it wants thirty-five; by Allah it does." "Death in the street be mine if I've got thirty-five cents to pay."

They walked away in different directions. Then both take backward looks to see if there is any signal of concession on the part of the other. *Tageea* boy: "What's your last offer?" "*Baki Allah,*" (remains God) shouts back the other. Little by little they come together again. "Give me the *tageea* and twenty-five cents, and take the *laira*. I have now ploughed my last furrow." "Without doubt you are difficult. May Allah guide you; fifteen cents is my last furrow." "*Allah akbar*! Let's make the exchange, and then we can go to earn a living." "Our living is in, and by, the hand of Allah." "That's known."

They failed to bridge the gap of ten cents, and the exchange did not take place. They parted hurling curses upon each other's heads until the sound of their voices grew weak in the distance that separated them.

CHAPTER VIII

AMONG THE VILLAGERS

ANYONE going over a map of Morocco will see almost at a glance that it does not contain many towns. The bulk of the population lives in the country upon the soil.

The villages are built in various fashions and of different materials, according to the district in which they are situated. They are called "*douar*" or "*disher.*" Among some tribes they are composed of straw huts built on the beehive principle. They vary in size, having anything from twenty to two hundred huts. Among the Shilha tribes, stone dwellings are erected. They are mostly small, oblong rooms with flat roofs, and without any stroke of skill to break in upon their ugly appearance. It should be added, however, that the traveller in the Shilha country may encounter here and there a solid building, resembling in some respects a castle, made of baked clay and straw. These belong to a few wealthy men such as Caids.

In other cases the lower half of the dwelling-house is of stone; the upper half of straw. Settlements of camel-hair tents are found scattered about throughout the country; these belong to the nomadic section of the population. In spite of the fact that there is plenty of space to allow of some distance between dwelling and dwelling, they are all packed closely together in a manner that makes privacy in conversation almost impossible.

It has been my lot to visit many villages where few, if any, Europeans have been. The approaches are guarded by ferocious dogs, that take up their duty

with a surprising seriousness. The approach of a European is heralded by an outburst of barking, followed by an attack, which may take the form of encirclement, not easily checked. The villagers are slow to come to one's aid, except in places where previous visits have been made. Fortunately, in most districts stones are plentiful, and by a vigorous use of these the dogs are kept at bay until help arrives.

The first attitude of the people is one of suspicion. One can see a series of question marks in the darting eyes, the twist of the mouth or the whisper going round. "Is this a Government official?" "Possibly come to buy ground?" "What does he do in this outlandish place, unless there is mischief in his movements?"

Nothing can be done until these fears are allayed. But for anyone who knows their language, customs and temperamental make-up, this is rarely a difficult task. One humorous touch will often scatter suspicion and ensure a cordial welcome.

"You villagers are a wonderful people," we say to them. "The 'infidel' calls here and you all turn out to welcome him! There, already I see a lad chasing a fowl. I know it's going into the stew-pot for my dinner! Why, this is just like heaven. You are all at ease and peace—no robbers, no oppressors. Blessed be the Most High for a people and place like this." They rarely miss the point of such a joke, and it moves them like magic.

In some few places the attitude taken up towards me has been one of silence and sullenness. Men stand by and wait to see what my first move is to be. If I am to propose entering the village, they have already agreed to shout with one accord—no. If it is land I am after, there is nothing doing, for they have arranged

among themselves, while I was still in the distance, that a curse should fall on the family that gave the European a footing on their soil. If it is books I have come to distribute, these are not to be accepted. Any attempt at joking in such circumstances would fall flat. To imitate their mood, and stand by in sullenness to wait for a change of atmosphere might take more time than one is prepared to give, nor would there be any guarantee that such a stroke would bring a break.

I learned long ago, that when Arabs are in an intractable or unreasonable mood, the best medicine to bring them back to normal is a good scolding. After all, they are a mixture of quadruped and child. The mature man rarely mounts to a position of control.

So we address them thus: "When I met you and said 'Peace be upon you,' you returned the compliment with a grudge. What do you mean by standing there scowling at me? I suppose you have objections to my presence here, the weightiest of the flimsy lot being that I am a European, or perhaps you would prefer to call me an 'infidel.' Do you imagine God made a mistake when He created me?" "Far be it from us to charge Him with folly," is the spirited reply. "Well, since we are agreed that there is one God, Creator of all men and things, and further are agreed that we have a common origin in Adam and Eve, perhaps you'll tell me why this treatment is being meted out to me." I recall but few instances where this kind of handling has proved ineffective. Someone begins with: "Well, now it's like this," (*iwa kataarif*), and that is a sure sign a break has come.

Among the first things to attract the attention of a visitor to these villages, if it be the spring or summer, is the stork's nest. The bird is sacred, and is never in

any way maltreated by the natives. They choose the biggest huts, which are about nine feet high, and on top of these build their nests. They are not molested by children, nor do the dogs treat them as intruders. The tops of these huts present an amusing picture, when the young are some weeks old. The parents may then be seen standing on the slant of the conical roof, while the heads of their offspring lean over the thorny nest. They impress one with a feeling of restfulness as they pass the day without fear—despite their nearness to the ground—or any of those movements characteristic of other birds or animals always on the alert against attack. They live largely on lizards and frogs. Their method of feeding the young is to fill their pouch and disgorge its contents in the nest.

Water is scarce in these country places, and has to be drawn from wells. To do this a donkey, ox or camel has a rope attached to its neck; when the bucket is full, the animal is led forward in a straight line, until the water reaches the top. In places where the wells are not deep, it is raised by hand.

Much might have been done to conserve supplies of water in cisterns during the rainy season; and this could easily enough be done, as the two essential materials, stone and lime, are plentiful. But, no; this people would rather fumble their way through life and submit to the resultant impoverishment than get down to work and obtain the benefit which labour would bring.

The wells in places are at a considerable distance from the villages; but bringing in water supplies is a woman's job, and consequently it does not seem necessary to the men to dig others nearer home. A line of these women, straight as palms, each carrying a

vessel of water on her head in perfect balance, is a familiar scene in the country.

The first thing that would probably strike an English farmer, passing round the country-side of Morocco, is the leanness and small bulk of the animals. If, however, he spent a night lying on the floor of a hut, he would discover that the vermin are an exception to this widespread degeneration. They thrive in this country, the scarcity of water with resultant accumulation of dirt, providing the ideal conditions for their propagation.

I have seen boys push a beetle into an ants' nest. In a second they hurl themselves at the intruder, nipping the body with their pincher jaws, until it is driven out, and left half dead. When a European sleeps in an Arab settlement, he places himself at the mercy of a battalion of fleas, after a somewhat similar manner as the beetle among ants. If, instead of scurrying all over the body, they kept up a disciplined and directed march throughout the night, one might find in the morning a red belt, or maybe a rut, over the section covered! Even for the native, this nightly gnawing process may become too much. When this is so he turns everything out of the hut, spreads straw on the floor, and sets it on fire. I have seen the fire get out of control, spread to the thatch, and set it on fire, too. In such cases, the neighbours rush out, surround the burning dwelling, and throw earth on it to extinguish the flames.

The village school, which is in charge of a teacher called a "Talb," is always a centre of interest to the missionary. The building does not differ in design from the others, the only distinguishing feature being its larger proportions. One may find anything from ten to fifty boys under instruction. These are a

select lot, as most of the others are busy all day herding animals. The teacher gets little or no money; but the scholars bring him green tea, and dishes of food. He is not worth any more, as most of his time is spent in reclining upon a sheep-skin where he dozes away the most of his time, wakening up occasionally to apply the stick.

Education is confined to memorising the Koran, but not necessarily to understanding its contents. The scholars being of different ages, some are more advanced than others. So, while one is busy shouting out the contents of the first page of chapter one, another beside him may be at the last page; and so on through the various ages and pages of the book. It is a scene of wild disorder, and this is heightened by the swaying motion of the body, which always accompanies memorising.

On numerous occasions, when in one of those schools, I have handed a boy a Bible, written in the same classical style as the Koran, and asked him to read a portion. A few of them can read tolerably well, but it is a rare occurrence to find anyone who can read and understand the meaning.

Opening the Bible at the passage, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," I requested a lad to read it. When he finished, I said, "Well done!" and suggested he should tell us in colloquial language what the text said. I could see he was embarrassed. But why not make bid for it? He might strike the meaning, even if he guessed at it; and after all there was the possibility that the European himself could not decipher the meaning. He was not sure on this last point, and looked like giving in, until a glance from the teacher indicated he should try. A little nervousness set up

a conflict in his throat. He coughed. Then this: "Some people had a man unjustly put in prison, but God was merciful to him, accepting this punishment as a substitute for his sins." Handing the book to the teacher, I said: "The boy knows nothing about it. Now you have a try." He probably would not have got much further than his pupil, and he was taking no risks with his prestige in their presence. Lifting his stick he whipped right and left. "Get on with your lessons, you sons of rascality," and in a moment the school was back in the old rut.

To see the women of the villages quarrel among themselves is to get an insight into the terrific forces of human passions. It is a battle of filthy language which, translated into English, would outrage our sense of decency. The quarrel, begun between two, extends to others as they interfere, and may involve the whole village, separating it into, not two camps, but several. Curses are hurled from hut to hut, violent gestures rock the body like a tempest, while uncanny shrieks fill the air. In and out they run, from the low doors of their dwellings, like rabbits to their holes. A spell of silence is only the gathering of the storm. Suddenly, as if caught in the current of a whirlwind, they rush to a common centre, where they shake their garments violently, pull their hair and tear their cheeks with their nails. When they have well-nigh exhausted themselves in this barbarous outburst, heads and hands are turned heavenwards, while a general appeal is made to God to strike at the oppressors.

When the women are in this state the men are powerless. Only once did I intervene, and endeavour to stop a village quarrel. I was as powerless as if I had tried to capture a rolling wave through the narrow

neck of a pint bottle. I'm sure they enjoy an occasional outburst of this kind. It appeals to those quadruped instincts which surge about the human body in search of exit.

The word "reconciliation" studs their language. "Allah," says the Koran, "is easy to be reconciled." So are they. "*Illy fat-fat*" (Let by-gones be by-gones) is in everyday use. These women, who cursed one another like troopers during the day, may be seen the same evening gathered round a dish of kooskoosoo, tripping merrily to the sound of the ginbri, or laughing through the scars received during the conflict.

Two countrymen, who had come to town for marketing purposes, brought me a present. One may be sure when the Arab gives the European a gift, there is some ulterior motive behind it. As the saying runs: "Herewith a gift by donkey; please return the same by horse." "We have heard about your preaching," they began, "and have come to request you to visit our village and give us the truth."

I was not impressed. However, as my work could be done there as elsewhere, I decided to go. They departed, and I ran out on my motor cycle the following day. At the appointed place the two men, who were brothers, met me.

They walked me round their ground, making occasional stops to point out its limits, and where they stopped they gathered stones and placed them in a line. There was something in their talk and movements which I could not fathom. Having gone the round of their property, I complained that the heat was too much for me, and I must seek shade. A group of men, who had been watching our movements, came forward to salute me as I approached, but were

prevented by my two friends. All my efforts to make contact with the people were frustrated, and when I suggested a meeting to carry out the purpose for which I had been brought, the brothers replied : " The people here are just animals. What is the good of preaching to them ? " " Then why did you bring me out here ? " I asked. " Go on ; preach to us," was the retort.

Two days after the incident, a man from the village called at my house. The two men who had asked me to go to their village were sons of rascality, he said. They had ploughed a piece of ground which belonged to a neighbour, and were now claiming it as their own. When I departed, they had told the others that I had become a partner with them in their farm, going half and half, and consequently, if they wished to make a lawsuit over the disputed property, it would have to be taken up with me at the British Consulate. The brothers knew that, if they could pass the lie, the chances were all in their favour.

Needless to say, I exposed their treachery, and the news was carried back to the village. But the lawsuit went on, for a few days later I saw six men from the village, including the two brothers, at the Arab tribunal. When I remonstrated with my friends for their lies and treachery, they waved me away with " *Baraka, baraka* " (That's enough).

CHAPTER IX

FORMS OF CRUELTY

MOORISH nature lacks the sensitive surface upon which an impression can easily and quickly be made. I have never once seen a native, man or woman, admire a sunset. " There, where the quiet end of evening

smiles, miles and miles," means nothing at all to them.

I remember entering a village where some men were sitting against a wall, looking blankly into a manure pit in front of them, while the sun was setting with its retinue of clouds in a blaze of glory that almost pulled one to the ground in worship. " Get up and see this wonderful sight," I said, by way of carrying out an experiment on their feelings. No one budged. Another attempt was made : " This is great : won't you get up and look ? " One man then got up, looked over the wall in the direction I pointed, and sat down again. " What is it ? " asked his friend lazily. " Just the sun," said the reporter.

Along the main routes, the French have planted, at much expense, lines of trees on both sides of the road. It is a great achievement in a country where water had to be brought, in some places, from a long distance, to bring these trees through two or three summer droughts, until they sank their roots deep enough to fend for themselves. The natives do not understand this work, for it is the last thing in the world they would dream of doing.

This lack of sensitiveness manifests itself in many forms of positive cruelty. The quality of mercy, in regard to beasts, is strained. Visitors to this country are attracted by the fine Arab steeds, which may be seen at times here and there. It is not always realised that these are the pets of a few rich men, and that the other millions undergo much suffering throughout the greater part of their existence.

In the country districts, which are treeless, one sees, during the burning heat of July and August, flocks of sheep crowding together seeking to find shade for their heads under the bodies of one another. I have travelled over hundreds of miles of country without

seeing a shed or tree to provide shelter from the terrific blaze of the summer sun. In winter, when torrents of rain and cold nights come, the animals are exposed to all the elements.

To the question: "Why don't you plant a few trees over your ground here and there to shelter your animals?" one always gets the same answer: "Allah has not made them grow here." On receiving this answer from a man, I remarked that Allah did not make his straw hut grow; that he had to put it together. "*Milith*!" (That's a good one!) he exclaimed. "Do you think we are going to do for the animals what we do for mankind?"

On another occasion, when my question was met with, "Allah has not caused trees to grow here," I pointed out that Allah would not cause maize and barley to grow, if man did not do his part in tilling the soil and sowing the seed. Then why should he expect trees to grow, if they were not planted and watered? That, he thought, was different. Animals could live without shelter, but man could not live without grain.

Had the donkey not been made of tough tissue, it would have been extinct in this land long ago. I have watched them for twenty-five years; at the end of a long summer drought, the bones in several parts of their frame almost cutting through their skin, dragging ploughs over a rough soil, through a long day, until they were exhausted. Such a scene in England would draw a protest from every passer-by. When the poor beast becomes too exhausted to be urged forward by blows, a pack needle is driven into its neck at the collar-bone. I have seen these animals being driven a long journey in this way, arriving at their destination with an open wound. During the

night, or a day's leisure, a scab forms over the wound, but when they take to work again, the sore is pierced with the needle and drips with blood all day. These wounds are a disgusting sight.

On one occasion in the city of Marrakesh a big man riding a very small donkey was urging it on, for it had evidently come a long journey, and was exhausted, with a needle. Blood was flowing freely from the neck where there was a big wound. At that time I had only been a few months in the country, and the sight enraged me. Without staying to consider the consequences, I stopped the donkey, shoved the man off, and snatched the needle out of his hand, while the owner stood, and addressing his co-religionists asked: "O servants of Allah, what's it all about?" He never saw that needle again.

The French have done much to ameliorate the lot of animals in the towns, but most of them are in the country, where this barbaric practice is still carried on.

Sometimes, when oxen are being driven from one place to another, the herdsmen, to save themselves the trouble of looking after them, will pull down the heads of the animals and tie them to the foreleg. In this manner they are kept from wandering into by-paths, while their pace is slowed down to suit the herdsmen's steps. If anyone thinks this is a small matter, let him tie his neck closely to his knee and walk for an hour in a hot sun in that position. If any man carries out this experiment, I shall not be surprised if he sends me a cheque to lay the foundation of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in Morocco!

Boys are very cruel. They will stand by, enjoying the sight of animals being tortured, without manifesting the slightest feeling of pity. I have seen them

pass a palm thorn four inches long through the bodies of several beetles of the larger species, and so bring them into line like horses abreast. To the small bit of thorn protruding from the beetles at both ends of the line a string is fastened by which the boy controls their movements on the same principle as a horse is driven by reins. From behind he pokes at them with a long stick, imitating in language and gesture the driver of a carriage. Progress is slow, and he soon tires of the game. He then takes the beetles up, swings them round his head, and heaves them on to a house-top, to end their existence in torture.

There is a small type of lizard which abounds in this country, and a very lively fellow he is during the hot season. It is as harmless as a dove, with no means whatever of protecting itself. Boys use them for sport in various ways. They push a sharp thorn through the tails of these lizards, then, releasing them from their grip, they sit and watch them make their way to some rock or brushwood. The thorn is pushed well through the tail so as to scratch the ground and thus retard escape.

Sometimes half a dozen of these lizards, or more, are placed in a circle, and pinned to the ground by passing the thorn through the tail into the soil. Unable to make headway, round and round they go, until their tails break off, and they escape mutilated.

On one occasion, when a group of boys were torturing these animals in the manner described, I boxed their ears, and sent them in all directions. Some of them ran to the nearest village, howling as if I had half killed them. A number of their parents arrived on the scene to investigate the pugnacious activities of the "infidel." With the arrival of the parents, the boys became bold, began to cheek me, and tug at my clothes.

This did not have a cooling effect on me, and another scene followed, that nearly landed me into a lawsuit.

When I remonstrated with the parents for encouraging their children in such barbarous practices, they told me to mind my own business (*dughel sok rasik*). When I further remarked that I would like to drive a peg through their legs and pin them to the soil, they reminded me that Allah was reserving that form of pain for the " infidels."

And the poor birds !—how they suffer ! One sees them placed against a wall in a small cage, where there is scarcely sufficient space to hop about, while a fierce sun beats down upon them. I saw a wood pigeon recently in a cage small enough for a canary, with its wings on either side stretched through and beyond the wires. Movement was difficult and the poor bird had nothing to do all day but stand in this position. The sight was too much for me. I called the owner, a Mooress, and after pointing out the cruelty of the whole thing, asked her how she would feel if a similar affliction were imposed upon her. " Lots of people keep pigeons just like that," was her reply.

It took a lot of persuasion to get her to do anything in the matter, but ultimately it was taken down from its place on the wall, and I never saw it there again. Whether after that it was put into the stew-pot, I cannot say, but if so it would be a merciful deliverance, for its wings were broken beyond healing.

Along the sea-shore one may see boys trapping gulls or other sea birds. Various forms of cruelty are practised on these. One is to tie a long piece of string to the bird's leg, then, wading knee-deep into the sea, the boy sets it free. When the length of the string has been flown, the bird is brought down with a jerk upon the water, hauled in, and set through the same

process again and again, until too exhausted to make further effort.

Veterinary surgeons carry on their profession in a crude manner that causes much suffering to dumb beasts. But all this suffering is secondary to the preponderating question of how to secure a living in the easiest possible way. To see their practice carried out on the rough scale, without any European touches to modify their methods, one must go to the country. They use no medicines. Their only tools are a hot iron and a knife. I have never been able to find out why they did certain things, nor could I see how they were calculated to produce beneficial results. But I dare say that long experience has proved to them that cures, or at least some amelioration, is effected in the condition of diseased animals by the application of these methods of treatment. If this were not so, it is hardly likely that they would have prevailed for so many centuries.

I have often stood by and watched these men at work; this is how they proceed: the animal to be treated has a rope tied to its forelegs. This is gradually tightened, so as to bring the legs to a centre, and then a jerk at the rope brings the animal to the ground. While they are haggling over the price to be paid, which is usually about two francs, an apprentice is busy blowing a charcoal fire to heat the iron. The money having been paid, and the iron heated, a man sits down on the beast's neck, while his partner draws its skin out from the body. The skin where drawn out to this taut position becomes two-ply, and it is through this the hot iron is passed. This operation may be performed on a dozen different parts of the body.

The pain of such an operation may easily be imagined,

and on more than one occasion, I have found the sight too sickening to stay and see it through. This form of treatment is very common, and I dare say the French Authorities would willingly teach these surgeons more scientific methods; but these would tend to become ephemeral if they were complicated or involved the operators in heavy expense for instruments.

In mouth diseases a knife, none too sharp, is used to cut the gums from the inside, until blood flows profusely. After the incisions have been made, a hot iron is run along the gums; but whether to stop the bleeding or complete the cure I cannot say. So great is the pain caused by passing the iron over the open wounds, that the animals, in sheer desperation, exert every atom of their strength, and become so unruly sometimes, that they cannot be kept under until the work is completed.

To my enquiries as to the particular disease being treated, or how the operation cures it, no reply has been forthcoming beyond the statement that "It does them good." In many cases, I'm sure a month's good feeding would prove more effective than anything else, and the native too knows this; but then he also knows this would be more expensive than the hot iron. In this sphere, as in many others, any measures calculated to improve the lot of animals is scouted as dangerous and impractical, if it increases the labour of the man.

It is a constant source of amusement to the people of this country to see how Europeans coddle their dogs. I have never known a native to give medicine to his dog, or indeed to pay it the slightest attention if ill. They are ugly-looking brutes, very poorly fed, showing little affection and receiving none. The only times they get a satisfactory feed is when some animal dies. All the dogs in the district gather to the carcase,

gorge themselves, and then lie down to sleep. It is a ghastly sight to see them half buried within the inside of a dead camel, their bodies covered with blood, while others are engaged in a fight over some tit-bit, such as the liver or heart.

One sees many of them with broken legs, the loss of an eye, or other serious wound, for upon the least provocation stones or sticks are hurled at them with fury. And yet they do good service, for though they lack the discipline and fine sense of the trained European species, they are indispensable for guarding the village within which live stock is enclosed at night.

But the dog is not a marketable product, his loss is easily replaced, and consequently his lot is a hard one. Any effort I have made to impress Moors with the desirability of showing kindness to animals has been as fruitless as "sending precepts to leviathan to come ashore."

CHAPTER X

SECRETS ABOUT CHARMS

WHEN we are greatly impressed by any new fact, we may stress it in a manner that will cause us to overlook partially, or entirely, other forces and developments which have not lost their importance, nor ceased to function, because a later discovery has been made.

A visitor to Morocco might pass through its towns, along its main routes, and be so impressed by its modernity as to overlook the fact that in the interior, away from the highways, primitive life still prevails. He might live in hotels and be enamoured of their luxury, look at shops and feel they could be put down in Oxford Street without damaging its appearance,

saunter through the main thoroughfares and comment on their cleanliness, and ignore the fact that in the background are narrow winding streets with shops like cupboards, where a large section of the population carries on, in matters of food, dress and other customs, in a way that does not diverge widely from their ancestors.

A country in transition, with overlapping forces working upon its life, twisting its trends now this way, now that, cannot be pinned down to any central focus point that will set forth the whole in one clear picture. One can only describe Morocco to-day as the swinging of the pendulum of a clock from one extreme to another. These preliminary remarks to this chapter are made with a view to dissipating any feeling that there is contradiction between its contents, which set forth a dark phase of this people's beliefs, and previous chapters which describe their progress under civilisation.

Moors are under no delusion as to the severe limitations of the human eye. Its activities are confined to material objects, that can be seen, handled and described. Beyond its range, they believe, is a vast world of movement and mystery, not detached from the one within our ken, which plays a lively and vital part in the affairs of our existence. This unseen world has its own population. It is difficult to comprehend, but is usually divided into two opposing camps of good and evil spirits with their innumerable subordinates.

Those who would peer through the small aperture into this mysterious region must be initiated by one who is a master in occult matters. To be able to make contact with spirits, and adjust oneself to their demands and operations so as to make them allies,

one must have special training. Favours may be distributed or communities destroyed according to the mood or whim of these inhabitants of the unseen world. They have passions, desiring this or despising that, and to know these, so as to be able to work in line with their will, is to be in a position to harness them for good or evil purposes. It is these beliefs that have brought the expert charmer to his position of power. It is worthy of note that, in the East, Moroccan charms are credited with a unique potency, and for that reason are highly valued.

It is never easy for a European to get into contact with the charmer. Any poking process that tends to throw doubt upon the efficacy of his profession is resented with indignation. On numerous occasions, and by varied means, I tried to draw these men out in conversation, hoping to pop in questions here and there, and so by guile get them to divulge some of their secrets. They were difficult to trap. My motive for approaching them seemed to be understood, and they kept guard. By persistence, however, combined with cunning, I ultimately gained the confidence of more than one charmer, who cast off reserve and treated me with an alluring measure of frankness.

My investigation of the whole business has led me to the conclusion that these charms are an empty bubble ; that any benefits that flow from their application are due to the faith of the person treated, and not to intrinsic virtues they contain. Where the consequences of application are evil, they can usually be traced to the fear or folly of some one or other within the sphere of operations.

An illustration of these assertions is seen in the following incidents. A neighbour of ours divorced his wife who, having run a course of some twenty-five years,

was getting too old for him. Shortly afterwards, he married again ; this time a girl of fourteen. The divorced woman resolved that her late husband should not long enjoy his new plaything. Her story was related to an expert charmer, who consulted his books—the medium for getting contact with unseen spirits—and then advised her how to proceed.

Following instructions, she watched the house until, one day, the husband went to the country. Then, taking her place on the doorstep, the girl wife being all alone within doors, she mumbled the mysterious words given by the charmer. The young wife, locked indoors, heard the voice, knew it, scented mischief, and began to tremble with fear. The divorced woman, having kept up this mumbling incantation for the better part of an hour, brought it to a climax by pushing a written charm under the door. When the wife saw this bit of paper slipping in through the door, she became hysterical, for it conjured up to her mind an invading army from the underworld marshalling their forces to do her mischief. She began to scream, rushed to a window—the door was locked—and made her exit.

When the husband returned in the afternoon, his wife was gone. He jumped to the conclusion that she was out for evil purposes, and not expecting him back until sunset, had delayed and been caught. When, later on, explanations were offered to remove his suspicions and prove the falsity of his accusations, he treated these as additions to the treachery already practised at his expense. He divorced her immediately. The charm had worked ! All our efforts to clear up the situation, and show how the fear and folly of the young wife had wrought the mischief and not the charm were as ineffective as " pitching peas at Gibraltar."

Where good results are attributed to the use of the charm, the main factor is really in the faith of the person employing it. Take, for example, sickness. It is believed that disease is something that exists apart from material form. But it takes turns and betimes longs for embodiment; or is revengeful and seeks to do hurt. When satisfied, it returns to its purely spiritual sphere. A theory of that kind lends large scope to the imagination.

Here is a man who feels " queer " and imagines sickness in some form has seized him. He goes about moping and complaining until he decides to consult the magician. This latter examines him, consults his books, passes the beads of his rosary through his fingers, and having picked out one of these as being appropriate to the case in hand, concludes it is a difficult case to diagnose. Another expert is called for consultation (double fee, of course). The particular sickness affecting the man, it is stated, is far from satisfied, and may not return to its spiritual sphere for a long time. A substitute therefore must be found to take it over, or the patient must continue to bear his affliction.

A substitute can be found, if he will pay the charge. Having paid (not without haggling), the process of enchantment is taken up. After mumbling incantations, a charm is written out, rubbed over the sick man, and then sewn into a small leather pouch. This has to be placed upon a path where someone will tread on it, or better still dropped into another person's clothes. When, and if, he succeeds in doing this, which is not always easy, what more natural than that the man should immediately feel better, since he accepts this theory of sickness? The whole thing is on the same footing as passing a flea on to another

person's skin when you are convinced it has done enough feeding on yours!

One day, when sitting in the room where one of my magician friends works out the mysteries of his craft, an old man called for aid. I sat still, feigning indifference, pretending to be reading a book. What was the trouble? Lack of affection on the part of his young wife, who met all his approaches with indifference. A remedy for that defect was what he sought.

Dipping his cane pen in saffron juice, my friend wrote out a charm. "Now," he said to the old man, "take this, slip it into some liquid such as tea or water, which you are both going to drink, and she will love you as much as if you were a youth of her own age. But be careful, for she may know what you are up to and refuse to drink. The teapot is the best place for it, because any colouring from the saffron won't be noticeable there." When he had paid his fee and gone, I said to my friend: "It won't work, teapot or no tea-pot. It is against nature that a girl of fourteen should show married affection to a wizened man like that." His answer to my objection was: "*Allah aaila kool she kadeer*" (God can accomplish anything).

Young men like the female sex to pay them some attention. They use a charm which—so they tell me—causes young women to fall madly in love with the person who carries it. So intense does this love become, that they cease to bother about their reputation or other consequences. They will follow men round and round the street, lie in wait for them, take rebuffs and show no vexation. When I asserted to a young man that the basis of this kind of thing was human affection and not the influence of charms, he waxed hot at my unbelief. "If I bring you one of these charms, will you wear it?" "All right," I replied.

" You fetch one, and I'll test its power." He never did bring one.

After the lapse of some time—a year perhaps—I met this young man, who had been away working in another town. At the end of our conversation, just before we parted, I teased him about not keeping his promise. " I don't use these charms myself now," he said. Then tapping a couple of gold teeth, showing in his upper jaw, with his finger, he added : " A smile and these are more effective." It is quite a common thing these days for young fellows to have several of their natural teeth extracted and replaced with gold ones.

On another occasion, when sitting with my friend, a woman called to obtain information about her husband, who had been absent for a long time, and had sent no indication of his whereabouts or what he was doing. Before the woman arrived, we had been reading together " The balance of truth." This I kept open in my hand, pretending to be engrossed in its contents. In the position in which I sat, I could hear and see, without being detected, most of what went on between them.

When the wife indicated her inability to give any information as to her husband's whereabouts, my friend produced a chart which had a small ring in its centre, round which a number of circles were drawn in continuous widening circumference. Through these circles, running in various directions, were dotted lines, each of which had a number attached to it. Having consulted this chart, he took up his rosary, slipped the beads through his fingers and stopped at one which had the appropriate spell for the case in hand. The number on the dotted line was then taken up.

This indicated a paragraph on the back of the chart, which was read to the woman, who had no more idea of what it meant than the cat purring at her feet. Extracts were taken from this and written on a bleached bone, and she was instructed to keep it about her person until her husband returned.

A fee of five francs was paid, but an arrangement was made whereby she promised to pay twenty-five francs more, with an added gift of a garment, if the husband returned before, or during, an approaching feast called "*Illaaid Ilkabeer.*"

A few weeks after this, I met my friend one evening on his way home, singing merrily to himself. The husband had arrived, the wife kept to the arrangement made regarding payment, and there in his hand were the twenty-five francs and on his shoulder the garment called a *Djillabia*. We began to talk. He became annoyed at my unbelief. "You say you don't believe my charms and incantations achieved this result. Your reason for not believing is a poor one, for you say that often there is no response or result to my work. That is true; but you don't deny that the river exists, when it is running in flood before your eyes, because you happened to cross it in the dry season, when it was only a ditch."

The multifarious activities springing from jealousy, greed, lust, fear, etc., are calculated to have damaging effects unless counteracted by means strong enough to hold them in check. Man may succeed by his own strength or cunning in doing this, where he believes that such evils begin and end in the human heart. But when they are looked upon—as in the case of Moors—as an ebulliency of the underworld, a feeling of helplessness takes possession of man. He can only deal with this kind of thing by employing forces which in

substance and power are equal to those attacking him. The use of charms, as well as all the magician's art, has to be evaluated against this background of belief.

Here is a man in a good job. A *jinnee*, in the form of jealousy, has embodied itself in some man, and is trying to oust him from it. The magician professes to know another *jinnee* which is at perpetual war with jealousy. He knows how to enlist its help by the mystic means at his disposal; and this help can be passed on, in the form of writing or figures, to the person attacked. Those little pouches hanging about the walls or windows of European houses where native labour is employed, and which are frequently a source of curiosity to those who do not understand their significance, are there to set up a fight against the invasion of jealousy.

The magician's aid is not confined to human beings. A farmer jealous of the prosperity of his neighbour may employ charms to blight crops or spread disease among animals. Where there is suspicion of such action, counter charms are employed. One may see a cow or a camel, rarely a donkey, with a leather pouch dangling from its neck. The owner of these animals has reason to believe that evil is directed against them, and has taken precautions in the form of this counter attack.

In some shops one sees a figure of a hand, sometimes cut out in cardboard, sometimes drawn in ink. This is called "*Ilhamza.*" (The five points). The five points are not always in the form of a hand. Women wear silver ornaments of various shapes, which have five distinct notches or points indicated on them. A person passing anyone in the street against whom he bears a grudge may mutter a curse against such an one. Jinn are always about the streets waiting to

say " Amen " to an evil wish against person or shop ; for that reason the five points are employed in one form or another to prevent this " Amen " from taking effect.

I have seen these charms hanging, half hidden, among the leaves of the fruit trees in my garden, put there no doubt by my servant to increase their productivity. In the street I have picked them up, and seen curious women goggle with their eyes, as if expecting to see me suddenly turn silly. On the edge of cornfields, where they are sometimes dropped, I have opened and examined them, while some natives not far away seemed by their attitude to be saying among themselves : " Little does he know what he is handling." Oh, yes, in every case I knew what I was handling ; and have always found pleasure in showing the natives how little their fears and superstitions affect me.

CHAPTER XI

SAINTS, SNAKES AND SHRINES

THE idea that there is a perpetual conflict between the ideals sought after by the spirit of man, and the indulgences for which the body craves has persisted down through the ages. Theologians and philosophers of different schools, ancient and modern, have been so impressed by the importance of this theory, that they have given it a central place in their teaching. There is only one Throne in man's heart, and therefore place for only one ruler. If the spirit triumphs, the man becomes holy ; if the body, he remains corrupt.

The Moors of Morocco have always recognised this conflict ; but at the same time they feel that conditions

in this life are overwhelmingly favourable to the flesh, and consequently saintship, which is related to the spirit, can only be realised in this life by a few select souls. This sense of defeat has eaten into the soul of the people to such an extent, that their everyday language has become saturated with expressions of it.

This defeat, however, is not absolute, for the body can be dethroned by prayer for short periods daily, or, where that is too large a demand, for one or two short periods during the year. So we find about thirty per cent. of the male population answering, more or less regularly, the five daily calls to prayer. When this call to prayer rings out, a man may be busy accepting bribes to falsify a document, may be taking a false oath at some tribunal, or tinkering with his weights and measures to gain a dishonest advantage over a customer. He cuts them off, goes to prayers, and returns to begin again just where he stopped. For fifteen minutes, more or less, the spirit has been on the throne, the devotional exercise has acted as a plaster to a putrid conscience, and the man feels that in spite of much wickedness there is still a link in his personality that attaches him to God.

In most cases, however, the spirit gets a chance only once in a year, for the majority of the people do not go to prayer, or, indeed, keep up with regularity any form of worship beyond a series of pious ejaculations. But the yearly fast which takes place in the month of Ramadan is kept by approximately ninety per cent. of the population. It aims at two things. In the first place it is supposed that, by refusing to feed the body for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, favourable conditions for the ascendancy of the spirit are created. The nights of this fast-month may be, and in fact in many cases are, spent in boisterous amusement

and lust, but that serves to emphasise the triumph of the spirit for the twelve preceding hours. The second aim of this fast is to exhaust some of the consequences of sin. Sin, being treated as a debt, is something for which a price must be paid, and fasting is coin whose currency goes unquestioned at the last making up of accounts.

Now at rare intervals, there stepped forth from the ranks of the people of Morocco a man here and there who trounced his body into subjection and freed his spirit from its trammels. With the spirit constantly in the ascendancy conditions were developed that paved the way for that mystic contemplation that pierces the veil between material and spiritual existence. In this way these men claimed to have a knowledge of God which no book could impart, and an experience of fellowship with Him which words are impotent to elucidate. The more the body—by fasts, prayers and other forms of penance—was subdued, the more real and intense did the world of spiritual values become.

These men were called "*Tulba*," a word which signifies "searchers after truth." They set out upon a "path" towards an objective known as "Polehood." That is the end of the path, and no one who is still in the body can go beyond it.

Some of the more prominent of those *Tulba* founded societies to which select pupils were admitted. The sole aim of their teacher was to initiate them into the art of contemplation, so that they in turn might reach the goal where one gathers in a minute more knowledge of God and Truth than a lifetime could produce. But the gruelling tests encountered in this quest were too much for all but a few. The great majority of the pupils retreated to their old life, or a modified

form of it; but those who did "arrive" became famous, and their names, some of them from far-back centuries, are heard every day in the streets of Morocco.

When a saint who had reached Polehood died, a shrine (*Kubba* in Arabic) was built near to or over his grave. These can be seen in different parts of Morocco to-day. There are hundreds of small shrines scattered throughout the country, which have been erected to the memory of local saints; but these are not of the Polehood class, whose number is few, and to whose shrines tens of thousands of pilgrims journey every year. The object of the pilgrimage is at heart always the same. The saint is God's favourite. He sits at the door of Paradise with power to open or shut its door as men and women arrive after death. Those, therefore, who visit his tomb and thus honour his memory are likely to be favoured with a welcome.

The spirit of the saint is said to be in the shrine ready to hear special requests which sinful men dare not present to God themselves.

(How his spirit can be guarding the door of Paradise and at the same time hovering over his grave is a question the Moors do not stay to ask, far less answer.) Requests for male offspring, relief from pain, victory in a lawsuit, bumper harvests, etc., are all presented.

Pupils who had been in the school of a Polehood saint, and retreated, formed themselves into a fraternity. They met periodically and endeavoured, by wild dancing, to work themselves into an ecstatic condition, where they would taste for a brief period something of the glory that would have been theirs had they gone to the end of the Path.

Now there lived in the town of Meknes during the reign of Moulay Ismail, A.D. 1670-1725, a saint called Muhammed ben Aissa, whose fame spread over all

Morocco and beyond it. He founded a society which, after his death, degenerated into a rabble. The members of this society held an annual Festival to exhibit their undying admiration for his memory. I have been present at this festival on several occasions, and have found it a singularly savage affair.

Gathering at a centre, usually a shrine, the day begins with loud beating of drums and profuse smoking of Indian hemp. The professional dancers take the lead in the procession, followed by thousands of men and boys. Linking themselves arm-in-arm, several abreast, they sway their heads, slowly at first, backwards and forwards. As they advance the drums beat faster and louder, while a number of women utter a peculiar cry called "*Izghareet.*" This is the signal for the dancers to display more movement. At the end of the first hour the whole procession is in a state of violent agitation. A thousand heads can be seen jerking backwards and forwards with a rhythmic motion that dulls their senses to external objects. Several men walking backwards shout, dance, and spring into the air until they literally foam at the mouth in an effort to urge each group into a frenzy. The whole procession is now palpitating with passion, and the appointed guards are on the watch lest anyone should break away and assault the spectators. Fiercer and fiercer the drummers ply their sticks ; old hags howl as if entering an abode of eternal despair, children screech and try to imitate the frenzied jerks of their elders until the atmosphere becomes charged with uncanny feeling.

When the procession arrives at the end of the journey a great circle is formed, in the centre of which is carried out their ghoulish ceremonials. A sheep or goat is brought forward and placed in the centre of the circle. At a given signal they rush upon the animal, tear it in

pieces, limb from limb, and eat the raw flesh. Those who have not obtained a share run round the circle, crouching and imitating the actions of a wild animal. Wild scenes, where brute force is in evidence, are enacted while the raw meat is being devoured. Meanwhile, many who took no part in the scramble for meat have been dancing continuously to the beat of drums, and have reached a state of ecstasy which causes them to slaver and act generally like an idiot. This condition of things goes on for hours, one after another falling down through sheer exhaustion, until the performance breaks up through lack of energy to carry on longer.

Another Meknes saint whose shrine is visited by many thousands of pilgrims annually is Sidi Ali bel Hamatcha. He, too, founded a society which in after years lost all sight of his original idea and developed a ceremonial code even more detestable than that of the Aissouwa. At their annual festival they cut their heads with knives, throw stones into the air and allow them to crash on their heads, thrust palm thorns into their flesh, drop lighted candles into their clothes, and throw themselves to the ground repeatedly with thuds that bruise the body and cause it to bleed profusely.

In recent years protests from the European population against these performances have appeared in the local papers. The authorities have been compelled to take notice of these, and have introduced measures to modify the orgies of those societies.

From saints to snakes is a far cry, but in this country there is a connection. As a reward for their holy living the saints received from God special gifts. Muhammed ben Aissa's gift was power to handle snakes

and poisonous reptiles with immunity. This power he passed on to his descendants. Snake-charming is mostly confined to the Aissouwa fraternity.

I have made enquiries on many occasions to find out how they become immune. Europeans usually dismiss the subject in a sentence: "The snakes have their poisonous pouch removed." But again and again this assertion has been falsified by experience. In June of 1934 a European watching a snake-charmer in the city of Marrakesh laughed at his tricks, and informed the crowd that the reptiles were harmless, having been operated on to that effect. He asked the charmer to give him a snake to handle. He refused. This led the European to assert more strongly than ever that the performance was a deception. At last the charmer, irritated out of patience, handed him a snake. No sooner had he taken it over than it struck him with its fangs and he died a few hours afterwards, in spite of injections received in hospital. Next morning's paper devoted a column to this incident, which was headed: "Imprudence costs a European his life." There have been other cases of a similar kind.

Another theory which appeals to the scientific mind is inoculation. The only thing approaching inoculation which natives ever mention in this connection is the eating of snakes. It is an attested fact that on some rare occasion, a man will kill one of his reptiles and eat it raw before the crowd. In no case, however, do they eat the head or that part of the body immediately adjoining it. I do not accept this as the factor producing immunity.

To the majority of the natives the explanation is on the surface: "Muhammed ben Aissa protects them." That is an explanation which few if any Europeans

will accept, and there are many and strong reasons for rejecting it.

The answers given to enquiries made as to what procedure is followed by the snake-charmer in capturing snakes confirm what I have on one or two occasions seen myself. The black type is the most dangerous of all in this country. I saw one captured, and this is how it was done.

The mouth of its den was filled with stones, and on top of these was placed a basket. In this case it refused to enter the basket, preferring rather to fight it out with the trapper. Having got it to a cleared piece of ground, the trapper adopted the simple expedient of moving swiftly round and round in a circle, so as to compel the snake to make a similar movement to protect itself from rear attack. As it grew tired, he gradually closed in upon it, stepping back now and then to avoid its darts.

This process he kept up for some twenty minutes, at the end of which time the snake was showingsigns of being both tired and dizzy. Round and round in a circle man and snake went, until the former suddenly broke his routine, and started in the opposite direction. The latter was for the first time taken by surprise, and found itself in an awkward position, where it had to bring its body to the ground in order to reverse its course. Before it could right itself, the trapper, by a swift movement, placed his hand on its head, and locked its jaws. The struggle was over and the snake captured.

When I enquired why this process was necessary, and why the descendant of Muhammed ben Aissa, if immune, was so afraid of being bitten, the reply was that he had not been to the saint's shrine for a long

time; the virtue received at his last visit was exhausted. A very unsatisfactory reply.

Another theory, and one that seems to be corroborated by facts, is that snakes are tamed in much the same way as other wild animals. A number of educated Moors whom I have questioned on this subject have supported this theory. "Just as you Europeans tame lions, make them sit on chairs and snap without biting, so the Aissouwa tame snakes." I have seen half-a-dozen of these reptiles sit up on their coiled tails at a signal from their charmer. I have seen him make a line of circles in the dust and place within each of them a snake coiled up like a rope, and then at a given signal—not a touch—they all crawled out and gathered round his feet.

The chief factor in the process of training is starvation. When they are caught, a band is fixed over the jaws to keep them shut. In this condition they are carried about in the man's clothes, allowed to crawl about the room, and sometimes coiled round the neck, the mouth binding only being undone at long intervals to give sufficient food to keep them alive. The process of training, I am told, is a long one, and is only undertaken with snakes caught young.

CHAPTER XII

INCIDENTS BY THE WAY

My first experience in Morocco was an exciting one, and nearly ended my career before it had begun. Our ship anchored about a mile and a half from the town of Mazagan on the southern coast, there to await favourable conditions to land her cargo by lighters. A small boat with three native rowers came alongside, and although the chief officer had warned me that

the sea was dangerous, I decided, as this was my landing place, to go ashore with these men. Scarcely had we covered half our journey, when a heavy wave struck us broadside on with an impact that nearly caused the boat to heel over. Two of the men let go their oars, and throwing their hands above their heads called out in a state of panic : " There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." That was the first time I had heard the " witness " of Islam in the Arabic language ; a tocsin note by Moslems who feared our tiny craft was not going to right itself again.

I spent two days in Mazagan, and then set out for the city of Marrakesh with two muleteers, whose black skin indicated the predominance of negro blood. After a four days' journey, spending the nights in villages, we entered the southern capital. That journey leaves in my memory three things : caravans of camels, cactus plant hedges and an attacking army of fleas. The nibbling process kept up by these last during the night prevented me from getting beyond the nodding stage.

In the year 1913, I was the only cyclist in Marrakesh. The natives called the machine " The wind horse." To ride through the narrow rough streets, often crowded with people, required some skill. One day, when riding out towards the gate called " *Bab-Irrab*," a man coming in the opposite direction refused to pay heed to my bell or cries of " *Balek !* " (look out). I ran into him and knocked him down. He got up in a towering temper, shouted and gesticulated wildly, until a crowd gathered. My Arabic would not stretch to explanation or rebuke, so I made wild faces and gesticulated too. Amidst the hurly-burly that followed, a man came forward and led away the other who had been knocked down, and I rode on again.

By a number of experiences akin to this one, I learned Marrakesh wasn't mine, and that the natives were not disposed to grant me a monopoly of the main part of their streets.

Some weeks after this incident, I was out in the same district, to take a photograph of the Casbah Gate. I left my cycle against a garden wall, and found when I returned to ride home, that someone had ripped both my tyres with a knife. I never knew with certainty who played me this trick, but imagine that the man who was knocked down had planned to take revenge—and succeeded !

When you delve a little under the surface of Moorish manners, which are profuse to the point of embarrassment, a deficiency of character becomes evident which shows itself in many ways. On different occasions I had been unable to account for the loss of loose money kept in my pockets. Then one day I caught the thief. A young Moor, whom I had employed to help me with the language was seated by my side. A movement on my part gave the impression that something was pulling at the side of my jacket. A quick side look, and I saw the hand of my teacher just being drawn out of my pocket. A silver coin dropped on to the floor ; some others I could feel dropping back to where they came from. In an instant I saw how my money during the past months had been stolen. Without taking time to think of the consequences, I landed a blow that sent him sprawling on the floor. A little reflection at leisure, and I repented my action.

My conscience would accept no camouflage. As a missionary, I should have said : " Now put your hand in this other and take from that also." But at that stage I was still at a considerable distance from a literal acceptance of the Sermon on the Mount.

I trust at this late time of day I have got beyond yielding to these sudden impulses from the "old man," but the incident related above was not the last of its kind. A weekly meeting I held was rendered practically useless by reason of a number of boys, who kept pounding on the door, and retreating, of course, when I appeared to investigate. I called at the house of their parents, and lodged a complaint. They just laughed or ignored me; and, after all, if I was preaching in that room a gospel opposed to Islam, why should I expect to do so unmolested? I set a trap. The meeting commenced—and so did the pounding. Climbing over a wall and slipping down a narrow lane, I pounced upon them from an unexpected quarter, and seized the biggest lad. In spite of the fact that I had caught him in the very act of hammering on the door, he laboured to convince me that, far from taking part with the other lads, he had intervened to stop them! "Tell that to a blind man," I said, and then proceeded to beat him soundly.

Several years after this affair, I was preaching to a group of men in the street. This big lad, now a young man, came forward and said: "Don't listen to that Englishman. His business is to turn you away from Islam and make you converts to Jesus." From the day I had beaten him he had not spoken to me. "Halloo, it's you!" I exclaimed. "Yes, it's me. I suppose you'll want to give me another beating?" "No," I replied, "I dare not do so; you have a moustache now." This remark greatly pleased him. Forward he came, smiling, shook hands, and then proceeded to tell his friends how, when young and foolish, he had annoyed me and "eaten the stick" at my hand.

One day, when preaching to a crowd of some two

hundred men in a country district, one of them, carrying a stick with a heavy knob at one end (*zerawatta* they call it) came forward with a vicious look and, lifting the club over my head said: "Another word against our Prophet, and I'll strike you dead." I wasn't afraid of his striking me dead—or of striking me at all—but was annoyed because his palavers were paralysing my efforts. In conditions of this kind, where some person goes on fooling, the best thing to do is to use his own weapon against himself. So I said: "I have never been killed on any previous occasion, and don't know how to adjust my head to receive the blow. But you, being something of a rogue, must have been killed several times in the manner you propose killing me, so perhaps you'll bend your head and show me how it's done."

The crowd broke out into peals of laughter, and when they had settled down, I began again.

The Moor holds the conviction that his Koran once handled by a European becomes corrupted. Again and again I have seen the book suddenly closed at my approach lest a glance of my eyes at its pages should have this effect. And yet, strange to say, I have rarely known anyone to object to my quoting its contents.

One day a man was sitting by the wayside reading the Koran. I stopped and saluted him. He did not reply. To my enquiry as to what he was reading, he told me to "enter my own market." In reply to this rudeness, I pulled my hand from my pocket, kept it shut, and said to him: "Give me fifty francs for the contents of my hand." This action surprised him. He took me for a travelling trickster. With some earnestness I urged him after his first refusal, to accept my offer, this time for twenty-five francs. "Catch me buying a cow I have not seen," said he. "I

wouldn't risk one franc on the contents of a closed fist."

" What I have done with my hand is what you have done with that book. I approached and asked a question ; you show resentment. I begin to talk, you shut your book and cover it under your garments. You would like me to accept your religion ; yet you won't let me read the book that reveals it. You would not stake one franc on the contents of a closed hand. Do you think I would risk my soul on a book I am not allowed to read ? "

Somewhat to my surprise, he brought out his book. I asked him to read the chapter entitled " The Earthquake." When he had finished, I said : " You are afraid to let me touch it." He passed the book into my hand. That was the first time a Moor had allowed me to handle his Koran. I gave him back the book, and in doing so quoted this passage from it : " God gave the gospel to Jesus the Son of Mary." Then handing him a New Testament, I informed him that it contained the gospel which was referred to in this passage. We read a portion together, after which he asked if he might retain it.

A teacher in one of the mosque schools was eager to win me to Islam. We had frequent and long talks together. I told him I was ready to accept the Koran, and would begin to practise its teaching on the very day he could prove to me its divine inspiration. His chief argument for its divine inspiration was that it made within its pages such claim for itself. When he could make no progress with me, he invariably reverted to this argument. On more than one occasion I pointed out that there were several religious books extant whose contents contradicted the Koran ; yet they claimed divine inspiration on the same principle

as the one he had enunciated. But still he would not drop his pet proof.

Finally I worked out a plan to shatter his theory. When we met again, I allowed him to get into his old rut without check. He quoted his favourite passage: "This perspicuous book has come down from God." I took two bits of paper from my pocket. On one piece was written: "I am the holiest of all men." This I pinned on his garment. The other piece, containing the words: "I am the richest man in the world," I pinned on my jacket. "Now then," I said, "you are the holiest man alive and I the richest. If anyone disputes these our respective claims, the proofs are at hand. All we require to do to convince doubters is to refer them to these papers, which make such claims on our behalf."

If at any time when we meet now he begins to revert to his old position, I check him at once by threatening to pin the paper on his garment. That always makes him smile.

A man who thought our servant girl had property was eager to marry her. He was a ne'er-do-well. He plagued me with petitions to arrange this matter for him, and would not take an answer in the negative as final. This went on for months, but the girl was not impressed by his importunity, and resisted all his approaches.

Then one very dark night, when I was on my way home, a man suddenly sprang out upon me from a side street, seized my arm, threw his garment round me, and said in a low but solemn voice: "*Ha Ilar dealí.*" The phrase is difficult to render into English. It signifies a last request in a desperate situation, and implies impending danger for the person who denies

the petitioner. I knew his voice, although I could not see his face in the dark. "What are you doing now?" I queried. "This is my last request for this marriage. *Ha Ilar deali.* The consequences be on your head if it is denied me." "Tell me," I said, "what may befall me if I fail to arrange this wedding?" He thought he had won his object at last. "Why, you may drop dead in the street before you reach home, or you may be smitten with blindness. You can't play with '*Ilar.*'" "Why, man," I said, "this is great fun. Now you go back to your hiding place; I'll go up the street a bit; and as I return and pass by here you spring out, throw your garment about me—just the same as you have done now, you know—and then say very solemnly: '*Ha Ilar deali.*' It amuses me greatly."

A few days after this meeting in the dark he left the town, and I have not seen him since then.

The religious phrase, "*Seerat Ilmoostakim*" (the straight way), is in everyday use among the people. When speaking to a group of countrymen on this subject, I sought to press the truth home by pointing to the metalled road before us. "You people who go barefooted know that if you leave the road and walk on the rough land by its edges, thorns will jag, and stones bruise your feet." One of the group, evidently not concerned about the spiritual application of my illustration, lit a cigarette, and after inhaling several puffs, as though to brace him up to make his little speech, said: "Your advice, my lord, is not good." I challenged him to show its defects. He proceeded: "If we keep to the rough paths, we get thorns in our feet, and occasionally get bruised with stones, but if we keep to the metalled road where there are no

obstacles, we may be run down by a car and killed." When he finished everyone roared with laughter, while the proud spokesman, pointing a finger at me, said: "*Abert bick had ilmera*" (I scored against you that time).

In this country a number of things are named the "father" of some outstanding feature which they present. Measles are called "the father of the red spots" (*bou himeroon*). The names of several diseases are formed on this principle. When an article of European origin arrives on the market, it is called the father of some characteristic inherent in it, until, at least, the proper name is learned.

One winter a friend of mine from Scotland paid us a visit. He brought his concertina with him. The village folk were delighted with the playing of this instrument; and in the case of the children, our difficulty was to keep their meeting from developing into a dance!

In one big village the heat was intense, and my friend and I got inside a straw hut to shelter for a time. The children became impatient; they wanted more music. I could hear them outside urging each other to call at the hut to inform us it was cool now, and we could come out to the open again. Then a little boy, who had been persuaded to undertake the job, appeared at the door of the hut. He was black as coal, and wore no clothes, except those with which he was born! When I asked what he wanted, he ran away, but soon returned again to take up the same attitude. "Now, my pretty little boy, what is it?" "I want that man to play it." I was curious to know what he would call the concertina—an instrument he had never before seen—and asked: "Play what?" "The father of the bellows," was the naive reply.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ATLAS

THIS range of mountains, which begins north of Cape Juby, throws its mighty bulk right across Morocco. Some of the peaks seen from Marrakesh rise to a height of nearly 1,400 feet. Viewed from a distance their rugged sides, gaping chasms and bulging rocks give the impression of a great natural boundary too precipitous and barren to meet the needs of a human population. But this is not the case. The intersecting valleys and high plateaux, which have an abundance of water from the melting snow, have rich soil, and produce, in normal years, rich harvests.

The inhabitants of the Atlas are Berbers, but take different names according to the region they occupy. Thus we have Ruafa, who inhabit the Riff country, extending along the Mediterranean from the outskirts of Tangier to the Algerian frontier; the Braber, who occupy the valleys and glens of the mountain section of Central Morocco; the Shiloh, who are confined to the Soos district south of Agadir.

Until quite recently, the Sultan's authority in these domains has been flouted. No tax-gatherer representing His Majesty has dared to present his credentials on this soil; and even in the lower ranges bordering the plains nothing more than a scanty recognition of his claims has been granted. In some parts powerful Caids hold sway, while in other districts a council of forty (*ait aarbine*) is responsible for keeping order and settling all disputes.

The succeeding invasions of Morocco by Phoenician, Roman, Vandal and Arab were all brought to a halt by this great obstruction of towering peaks and

yawning ravines. When Okba ben Nafee, the famous Arab general, reached the Atlantic off the west coast of Morocco, he found, for the first time in his long march from the distant East, a force which would not yield to his command. "Oh, Allah," he cried, as he drove his horse into the turbulent waves, "this is the limit Thou has fixed for me to do battle for Thy Faith." In like manner many a foreign invader has sheathed his sword at the Atlas base, and treated the barrier confronting him as the boundary to his bloody conquests.

France has laid her hand upon the passes of these mountains, and this is no doubt the beginning of an effort that aims at bringing this sturdy population into her domains. The task is a formidable one. Thousands of villages, placed and built in a manner that makes their detection difficult, stud these slippery slopes, where no footprint save that of the Berber has left its impress. There they lie snug in the bosom of fertile valleys, or perched upon precipitous ridges, untouched by anything save their own primitiveness. Here is the home of the walnut and the almond, a source of revenue to this hardy people, who bear them on mules to distant towns, bringing back with the purchase price sugar, tea, cotton goods, Manchester kettles and tea-pots, cigarettes and matches.

The history of Berber raids into the plains and against the towns is a savage record. Again and again from their lonely recesses and furrowed valleys they gathered in their thousands, and launched themselves, under the impetus of a furious fanaticism and lust for plunder, against the gates of Meknes, Marrakesh, Mogador and other cities.

The teachers sent by Musa of El Mogreb to convert the Berbers to Islam met with considerable success,

and it was hoped that this would tame their wild spirits and make them peaceful neighbours. This expectation was not realised. The new religion simply added fanaticism to their plundering propensities.

Who are these Berbers, and whence came they? No final answer has yet been given to the question. A theory put forward by some scholars is that in the Pleistocene Age, North Africa was joined to Europe, the great mountain systems in the south of the latter country being at that period a continuation of those in the former. The Berbers, according to this theory, are the original inhabitants of Morocco, and other sections of North Africa, and have an intimate link with Southern Europe.

Others think they are the descendants of "the people whom Joshua the son of Nun drove out before him." If we accept this theory, then the Berbers are not the Aboriginals of Morocco, but invaders who conquered them. The Berbers themselves are hazy about their own origin, but the belief prevails among them that they are descendants of Goliath, the giant whom David slew with a pebble.

In any case, when the Arabs arrived in Morocco, these were the people who possessed the land. They had their own language, which is called "*Shilha*," and their own religion, which had little in common with Islam. They put up a stiff and prolonged fight against the Arabs, but were ultimately subdued. The prouder part of the population felt the humiliation of their conquest too great to bear, and gradually retreated south, ultimately making the folds of the Atlas their home. The bulk of the people, however, preferred to submit to the invaders' yoke rather than set out upon an adventure that held out many risks, and offered no sure reward.

These became Moslems, gradually adopted the language of their conquerors and inter-married with them. This intermingling of blood through marriage, although carried out on an extensive scale, was not universal throughout the country. Some tribes, or sections of these, have kept the Arab strain pure. There is, however, in all probability a preponderating flow of Berber blood in the population of Morocco. The Berbers of pure racial stock, therefore, are those who, speaking the Shilha language, inhabit the Atlas Mountains and the province of Soos, south of Agadir.

Although it is claimed that, with the successful termination of military operations in Soos a year ago, all Morocco has now been pacified and brought under the Sultan's authority, there are still, in this year of grace, 1935, extensive zones inaccessible to Europeans, and others marked "insecure zone," which can be entered only by persons who have obtained from the Authorities a special permit.

Having obtained a permit, I have on several occasions penetrated into the Atlas glens from different sections of the range. I carried with me portions of the Bible in Arabic and copies of St. John's Gospel in Shilha. It was the first time most of these people, to whom I spoke, had met a missionary. The Bible was a new book to them, and the gospel in their own language, which has never been reduced to writing, was something of a curiosity. One old man who showed a special interest in what we told him of the Christian religion pulled out from underneath his garment a very old copy of the Koran in hand writing. His grasp of colloquial Arabic was weak and patchy, but the classic style of the Koran he read fluently. I tried to buy the book from him, but he would not part with it. He said

it had been handed down from his ancestors, and he hoped to die with it in his bosom.

Before we parted this old man requested two things: first, that I should link my fingers through his as a token of real friendship; and, second, that I should write my name on a slip of paper, and let him have it. When I proceeded to do this in Arabic characters his eyes kindled with amazement. Then round the name I traced a circle and embellished it with lines and dots. When he had taken the slip of paper, folded it and put it carefully away, he asked me to "do it again." So once again we linked our fingers in friendship. My hope is that he will read the Bible I gave him, understand its contents and enter into the Christian faith, for I would like to meet him, if not in this world, then in the one that lies beyond.

One day, when having lunch in a part where no village was in sight, a tall, lanky fellow appeared, and stood about six yards from where I was, with a silence and rigidness that suggested "his grandfather cut in alabaster." Then, suddenly, the silence was broken by the call of a cuckoo. I thought it was now time this man should open his mouth and say something. So I asked: "What is it? Listen!" "That's the *deecoo*," he said, and then became talkative. He informed me that every time it opened its mouth to call, it emitted a nasty type of insect, which attached itself to cows, and for that reason these animals, on hearing this bird call, would often run away. He was a dull fellow, and all my efforts to get more information about cows and cuckoos only elicited the reply, "When it calls the cows run."

I took a note of this, however, and when I got home questioned a number of Berbers with whom I am acquainted. They all held this belief, and were quite

convinced that the *deecoo* threw out with its call these nasty insects that plague the cows.

There are no towns in these mountain regions, nor shops. Buying and selling is confined to the weekly markets held in the various districts. Among the children, whose days are spent herding flocks, money forms only a small element in their summary of life. The absence of towns and shops rids them of the necessity of demanding from their parents any pocket money.

I was curious to see what effect the production of coins would have upon them, and found an opportunity one day, when, walking up a mountain path, I unexpectedly met some boys and girls herding. They met my approach with suspicion, while on the faces of the smaller ones was a look of fear. Some got on to their feet and shuffled as if preparing to run away. With careful handling of the situation, I gained their confidence, and soon they became chatty. Somehow a Bible text came into my mind. It was this: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me . . ." So I told them how, long ago, God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world, and how the shepherds, herding flocks like themselves, received intimation of His birth by the medium of angels. Yes, they listened, and I hope in time to come, when their thinking powers are enlarged, they will remember the European and the wonderful story he told them.

Having allowed them time to digest the Christmas message, I brought out several coins. When I opened my hand there was a circle of interrogating eyes. Having submitted the coins to their scrutiny, I placed them on the ground in a line two yards apart. Two of the bigger boys pounced down on them before instructions had been issued. The others, of course,

tumbled on top of them. After the coins had been put in order again, I took the youngsters to a point about a hundred yards distant, placing them in handicap, according to size. I took considerable pains to make them understand the rules of the race, but again and again someone, ignorantly or wilfully, ran before the hat dropped, which was to be the starting signal. Those who understood the game became impatient with the transgressors and rebuked them in language which would not fit in easily with my Christmas message.

At last all was ready; the hat dropped, and away they went. They all reached the line of coins almost at the same moment, and all I could see was bare legs, protruding hips and dishevelled hair amid clouds of dust. From the cries and screams issuing from the scramble it was evident that the good old law, that might is right, was in operation. I intervened, and said that, in view of this disorder, I would collect the coins and begin all over again. But when I turned round, after separating a boy and girl who were at grips, the others had bolted. So ended a day's preaching and play among the peaks.

It is interesting to notice how, here and there, a line of rugged peaks is broken by a high plateau which, from a distance, looks as flat as a pancake. The imagination conjures up a great giant who once trod the range and, finding no place to rest, drew his knife and sliced away a cone at intervals. Pointing to these clear-cut tablelands which lay deep in snow, I asked some men if they were inhabited. Yes, they were, and supported a considerable population, the pasture land being excellent feeding for flocks. They agreed with me, that at such a height the winter must be particularly severe; but from the remarks following

this observation, I gathered they lived like ants, working hard throughout summer and sleeping away most of the winter.

Again, focussing attention on those high levels, I asked how long they thought it would take a battalion of European soldiers, accompanied by the paraphernalia of modern warfare, to reach them. There was an ominous silence, and I could see the question had a disturbing effect, and should not have been propounded. I had come among them preaching Peace by Jesus Christ, but after all that might be a very effective disguise for a spy. Their answer to my question took the form of a rebuke. "When God gave man a tongue, He locked it up within two gates—ivory-gate and lip-gate." "And the key?" I asked. "It is the man's brain," replied the spokesman.

In the sections of the Atlas I have visited I cannot recall having seen a hut or tent. The dwellings of the people are constructed of a mixture of earth, small stones and straw, the roofs being flat. Much praise has been lavished on the solidity and architectural design of Berber buildings; but close examination does not support the impression of a distant view. True, they have not the demoralised appearance of many Arab villages in the plain, but nevertheless they are ramshackle affairs without ventilation, light or sanitary arrangements of any sort. Here and there one sees a building, usually belonging to a Caid or one of his officials, which embodies the qualities of solidity, symmetry and largeness, with a fairy labyrinth of passages within, which bewilders the stranger; but these have no more in common with the average Berber home than English castles have with the ordinary homes of Britons.

The Berbers are a white race, but I have been

surprised, when making a tour of one or other of their secluded glens, to see so many people whose facial characteristics and colour betrayed the predominance of negro blood. No doubt the well-to-do farmers in the distant Atlas were in the habit of making periodic visits to the slave-markets in Fez, Marrakesh and Taroudant, where they bought slaves to provide free labour for their farms.

But more arresting than the negro in these outlandish quarters is the presence of the Jew. Here he is, with heavy earrings dangling from his jaw and a long beard tapering to a point, feigning subservience to those who tolerate his presence, but in reality outwitting them by his superior intellect. The Atlas Jews do not belong to the same group as those driven out of Spain in the fifteenth century, having come from the East in the third century. When the Arabs got control of Morocco, they treated the Jews with great harshness, fleecing them with constant demands for tribute. Their existence became intolerable, and they sought refuge among the Atlas Berbers who, having experience of a similar treatment from the Arabs, received their old neighbours with whom they once mingled in the plain.

How long these glens will retain their secluded primitiveness and those mountain peaks their undisturbed silence it is difficult to say. Already tourists are feeling the tug towards those heights whose mysterious history invites the spirit of adventure.

CHAPTER XIV

STRANGE CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS

ANYONE who sets himself the task of delving to the underlying meaning of the customs of this country,

or tracing the origin of some of its superstitions, will find it a formidable one. In the first place it will be found that explanations given by natives to European enquiriers are often disconnected and clumsy. From the manner in which they answer questions, it can be seen they are convinced that the subject is beyond all but those who have been brought up with it. But even when someone is found who is ready to take pains to elucidate these matters to foreigners, the language obstacle frequently blocks the way. Words and phrases in this connection are often subtle and involved, outside the range of the dictionary, so that the most painstaking care is necessary if reliable information is to be gathered.

I have known cases where natives, handsomely paid to help in the solution of these problems, have contented themselves by imparting information largely nonsensical or imaginative.

But a greater difficulty than that of clumsy explanations is the fact that numerous rites and superstitions practised to-day admit of no elucidation, because the outward forms of these have been stressed, while their root significance has been allowed to pass into oblivion.

Because this is a Mohammedan land, and has been so for many centuries, it is customary to seek for explanations that will harmonise with Islamic thought and practices. Undoubtedly many of the practices now in vogue are of Arabian or Islamic origin, but others, beyond all question, are anterior to that date, having been in use among the Berbers centuries before Mohammed was born.

A further consideration in this connection is the slave trade. It flourished in this country for centuries. The result is that Sudanese superstitions have been embedded in the general structure of Moorish magical art.

The ethnologist in seeking to elucidate these customs must keep these facts before him, otherwise he may be led astray by attributing in whole to Islam what in many cases has only been modified by it.

As an instance of this Islamic veneer covering a custom older than itself, take the rain procession held in Morocco to this day. In a country like this, which is subject to periodical droughts of long endurance, and at a time when there were no means of counteracting their ravages by supplies from outside sources, the Berbers who preceded the Arabs, sought to avert calamity by a solemn march of the population to some centre such as a shrine. On such an occasion their heathen rites and liturgy, embodying a plurality of gods, were used, and created an atmosphere calculated to give impetus to primitive instincts which led the people to work themselves up into a frenzy.

When the Arabs arrived they found this practice in existence. A plurality of gods was distinctively distasteful to a monotheistic people, whose mission was to proclaim the Oneness of God. But they approved of the instinct that leads a tribe in time of crisis to humiliate itself. Consequently, they did not do away with the rain procession, nor with the gathering at a shrine; they modified the heathen liturgy, annulled its appeal to many gods, and introduced a form of prayer modelled on Mohammedan theology as can be seen from its structure in the following stanzas.

(1)

Send rain, send rain, O God.
We are children young and small;
Chastise us not for the grown withal;
What sin is on our head?

(This first stanza is sung by children who take the lead in the procession.)

(2)

By the Prophet Select to Thee we draw near ;
By the Beneficent Gateway and by Omar. (*Abu Beker*)
Succour Thy servants by giving them rain ;
O Thou Almighty and Incomparable One !

(3)

O Lord, we seek thy favour ;
And we are standing at Thy gate.
To pity us there is none other,
O most Ruthful of the compassionate.

Let us now take an instance to show how a native, when being questioned on a custom whose origin he cannot trace, and the significance of which he is unable to explain, will dodge the issue rather than admit his ignorance.

Clairvoyance is mostly vested in women. They combine with the art a form of ventriloquism. This is called by the peculiar name of "*Totaghamari.*" One can hear them calling out in the street : "*Ya deraboo she fal.*" (Foretoken). They carry hidden in their garments a stone or stick about a foot long, and when called upon to peer into the future and tell someone's fortune, they tap these with their fingers as if to rouse them to action, and then speak in a manner that gives the impression that the stone or stick is speaking. This practice of foretelling the future is unlawful in Islam, and probably found its way to Morocco by way of heathen slaves from the Sudan or further south.

When trying to get at the significance of the part played by the stone, the man I was questioning, after some vain attempts at explanation which he saw were not impressing me, said : "Pray, and remember the porcupine." He was a Berber, and used the word *tarousht* for the animal. That surely is a rare mixture :

prayer, porcupines and ventriloquism! "That is interesting," I remarked; "now show me the connection." He did so by telling the following story.

A saint, at a time when his tribe was in peril, called his people to a day of prayer and fasting. Nothing was to pass the mouth, no work was to be done. A woman who ignored this call went out and, as usual, gathered her firewood, which in this country is often a bundle of thorny palmetto. When she arrived at the door of her hut, the saint cursed her. Immediately she put her burden down, it formed itself into legs, body, head and eyes. The thorns became long quills, and the newly formed animal fired these into the woman's body so that she died. This was the beginning of porcupines.

Why did this man meet my queries with this story? Simply to divert my attention from a subject which was embarrassing him, since he had pretended to know all about it, but was now, in face of my questions, being compelled to acknowledge it was beyond him.

Anyone with an imperfect knowledge of the language, or working through an interpreter, might be tempted to forge links between prayer, porcupines and ventriloquism; and thus would emerge an interpretation entirely fanciful. This dodge of diverting attention into another channel by introducing another subject is common among natives, and I could put my finger on not a few pages within books written on Morocco to show how it has been successfully employed.

Visitors to Morocco may have noticed when passing shrines by the wayside, a pole covered with bits of rags. The same thing can be seen on the handles of doors leading to mosques or zowias. People who visit such places usually do so for the purpose of presenting to God some special request; and before doing so

make this preliminary gesture of tying a rag to the pole or door. Why rags ? Part of the answer is that God works through mediums (*Elaabd sabab*).

On one occasion, when speaking to a number of people gathered round one of those poles, I laughed when they told me the rag was God's medium. My aim in doing so was to call forth a more detailed reply, and here in substance is the explanation given.

The spokesman argued that no one would deny that God sometimes conveyed His blessings through the medium of money. For instance a rich man whose wife failed to bear male offspring would remedy this defect by purchasing another wife, and another, until his desire was realised. A sick man would employ his wealth to regain health, and in like manner another would employ it to get the best advice and help in a lawsuit. Poor people cannot present such a medium for God to work through ; so they bring their rags, emblems of their poverty, and make their plea on that basis. God's resources are not exhausted when our money is finished. He works through a range of mediums, and rags is one of these !

Beating a person all over with a slipper as a means of driving out evil spirits is a common practice. This in Arabic is called "*taaweed.*" The origin of this custom is not difficult to trace. It was an understood thing that, when any saint of high standing was dying, he would bequeath to his eldest son, or to the whole family, some blessing which conferred extra-ordinary power. When the Shareef and saint, Sidi Mesoud bin Elhissen, was dying, he asked his eldest son to fetch his slippers. Taking up these, the former beat the latter and said: "Herewith my *baraka* ; the power of exorcism. Beat and say, '*Ya Shafee, ya Aafee*' " (O Healer, O Forgiver).

I asked one of the Shareef's descendants, who carries on this practice in our town, how much he would charge to drive out the evil spirits from my inside. "All depends on the type and number," he replied naively.

Henna is cultivated extensively in this country. It is made into a thick paste and used to dye the finger tips, the feet and other parts of the body. It plays a large part at all weddings, the bride, bridegroom, and his bachelor friends all using it profusely. If a European asks why this dye is used, he is likely to receive the answer, "Because it beautifies." But that answer only skims the surface; underneath there is a deeper meaning.

The belief prevails that demons are jealous over human weddings, and consequently the bride and bridegroom become special targets for their revenge. It is believed that an extensive use of henna will hypnotize the demons, until at least the ceremonies of the wedding have been completed. A person carrying a bowl of henna-paste from one house to another is frequently stopped by workmen, beggars and others, who ask to be allowed to dip their fingers in it. In their case, there is no question of beautifying themselves; their sole thought is that of its magical potency to stave off evil.

Among the Soos tribes who use the Shilha language more than Arabic, touching wood, as a protective measure against evil is common. The first time this practice came under my observation was in the following circumstances.

I was in a shop whose owner was one of those Shilha men. An Arab woman came along leading a little girl, and complained that he had given short weight to the purchase of sugar made a few minutes earlier by this

child. "What child?" asked the shopkeeper in an irritated manner. "This child, Hillema," replied the mother. On hearing this he drew his forefinger over his tongue, touched wood and said: "Hillema! That's a snake. May God protect us!" This word "Hillema," which is the name for a girl in Arabic, is in Shilha the name of a dangerous snake.

On different occasions after this, I brought in the word *Hillema* when conversing with these men, to see how it would affect them. They always touched something hard; wood, stone, iron or a coin. When asked why they did this, the answer was always the same: "When I meet *Hillema* may something hard be in my hand."

By the way, natives are always guilty of exaggerating any danger encountered. The snake they describe as having seen in the forest has to go through a slimming process and then be cut in half to get an idea of its true proportions.

The potency of salt to avert or neutralise evil is a superstition accepted all over Morocco. Its preservative qualities may originally have fostered this belief. But how it works to stave off evil is a question that does not concern one native in ten thousand. They are convinced it operates to this effect, and that to them is more important than any explanation as to how or why. The man who comes to clean out the cistern always throws salt into it before descending. His answer to my queries is always the same: "Evil spirits abound underground, and salt keeps them at bay." To convince him of the futility of this practice, I took off my clothes, and went down into the cistern before salt had been used.

He was amazed at my temerity. I rushed about in the water, called the evil spirits rude names, and

challenged them to combat. When I came up, I asked if he would now go down without salt. Yes, he would. But a messenger ran to his wife who, on hearing what was taking place, appeared with a bag of salt and dropped it into the cistern.

The "evil eye" is a constant source of fear to the Moor. If one asks the name of a child being carried or led by its parents, they must, on being told, say: "Blessed be God." If this is neglected, the parents will remind the enquirer of the omission. So with shopkeepers. When a man opens a shop, all who make a first call are expected to say, "Blessed be God," otherwise they will be accused of casting the evil eye upon him and his goods.

But as all callers are not well-wishers, a means of protection is set up in the form of five parallel lines, which sometimes take the form of a hand. This device can be seen sometimes painted, sometimes carved in wood or wrought into a carpet, in shops, homes and cars in all parts of the country. Many women wear upon their breasts a silver ornament with an embossed star having five points. It would appear that the number five, whether in the form of parallel lines, points or circles is potent to counteract the baleful consequences of the evil eye.

This combination of the eye and five points is not confined to Morocco, nor is it peculiar to the Mohammedan world, having been in use in Egypt, Greece and Chaldea long before the rise of Islam.

When Europeans are travelling along country roads they will notice many natives raising a hand to their forehead and then bringing it down after the manner of a military salute. It is usually thought that this salute is a token of respect, or acknowledgment of submission. Nothing of the kind. It is the five

points to protect themselves against the ravages of the foreigner's evil eye! The natives have told me so again and again.

CHAPTER XV

BEGGARS

THERE are two distinct classes of beggars in Morocco. Those who have some physical disability, such as blindness or advanced age and are unable to work have their "workhouse" in the street or other centre where people congregate. In a country where the sun shines for 300 days in a year, it is a comfortable enough dwelling.

The other class is made up of professional beggars. Just as boys go into a joiner's shop or other business, to learn a trade, so do others begin their career by entering the begging profession.

Those who beg because unable to work are ordinary men and women with nothing about their appearance, except their rags, to distinguish them from others. Not so the professionals. They usually call themselves Shareefs, that is, descendants of the Prophet, or claim some special connection with one or other of the long departed saints. They allow their hair to grow long, or shave the head in some fantastic fashion to give themselves an odd appearance. In the matter of clothing they touch extremes. There is the "carrot" type and the "onion" type. Those who have only one garment resemble the former vegetable with its thin covering, and those who have several, the latter with its many layers. The aim in both cases is the same: the person who wishes to attract attention to himself must break away from the fashion prevailing among the multitude.

In any Moorish town one can see these men sitting all day in the street smoking keef and shouting at the crowds the name of some famous saint whom they claim to represent, and whose potency they distribute by virtue of their Shareefian pedigree. The Shareefian pedigree as often as not is forged, but as the means of investigation are lacking, the claim usually goes unchallenged.

Most famous of all saintly names is that of Moulay Abd el Kadir. He was born in Persia in the latter half of the eleventh century, and as far as is known, never visited Morocco. But his descendants travelled west and settled in Spain, from which country they crossed to Morocco near the close of the fifteenth century. From Tangier in the North to Tiznit in the far south his name is in everyday use among ten thousand beggars. One of his direct descendants was for years a neighbour of ours. He was of the " onion " class, never worked, just moved about in town and country receiving gifts, until he amassed wealth. He built a large house, and when he died last year, the town turned out to his funeral. When he was buried, the bier on which he was carried was broken in pieces, followed by a wild scramble for bits of wood to be kept as relics.

To give alms to these beggars is equivalent to giving to the saint whom they represent; and he, having great favour with God, is likely to reward an hundredfold. At the bottom of all Moorish liberality the motive is the same: it is to heap up merit for themselves. It is all on the principle set forth in the proverb: " Herewith a present by donkey; please return it by horse." That is why the appeal of a starving neighbour, who has no Shareefian pedigree or special link with saints, may go unheeded, while

food and coins are given to the professional beggar who professes to deal out rewards.

One day a beggar of this professional class was vociferating his requests on the opposite side of the road from our house. Blessing and prosperity in the form of *rizak* (daily supplies of food), bumper harvests and other riches were being offered to all who would give him alms. I crossed the road, and asked what all the shouting was about. He, expecting to draw forth my pity, drew a long face, and in a shaky voice enumerated some of his needs. I went on to say that if the abundance he was calling down upon the heads of all who gave him alms materialised, how prosperous they would be! He seemed to think I had paid him a compliment, and began to call blessings down on my head. I then suggested that, as he was in greater need than myself, some provision should be made on his own behalf. I enumerated a sack of flour, a barrel of potatoes, leg of mutton with other bits of luxury as likely to be useful to one in his condition. His reply to this was, in effect that, as logic did not bring loaves, I should pass on.

On numerous occasions I have, in town and country, dealt with the professional beggar on that same basis of reasoning, and have received for my pains occasionally a smile, sometimes a scowl and in other instances a curse.

Now and then a man of venerable appearance with long hair and white beard, carrying a staff taller than himself, will walk into a town with the air of an ancient Patriarch. For a day or two, he walks the streets, moving his lips in silent prayer, at the same time tapering the beads of his rosary through his fingers. His attitude gives the impression of one too engrossed in heavenly things to heed what goes on around him. Men and women come forward to kiss his clothes. He

lays his hand upon their heads, but does not look at them.

Distance develops mystery. The man has come from a glen far in the Atlas range. The people know this, because they hear him in his mutterings mention the name of a long departed saint, famous in that region. He knows the tricks of his trade, and having injected into the mass of the people, by his rigid silence, a sense of awe and even fear, he takes to preaching in the town square. He enumerates with much detail the miracles wrought by the saint he represents, eulogises his virtuous life and reminds them that, although long since dead, his spirit is among them in the person of the speaker. I have stood in these audiencies and been amazed at the impression made upon a mass of people in the course of an hour's preaching. He sees the gullible crowd gulping down every word, and knows by its riveted attention that the harvest is ripe. He puts in the sickle : " Perhaps someone would like to send a gift to the saint's tomb ? "

Holy beggars and coins have always a strong connection !—There is an immediate and large response. I saw on one occasion, with my own eyes, a hundred franc bill put into the hand of one of these men.

After leaving the crowd, I asked a native friend of mine, too wise to be fooled by such tricks, why, since a beggar from a distant shrine receives such a hearty response from strangers, more of them did not come. His answer was, that two factors were necessary, if the appeal was to succeed. First of all the beggar must have the appearance of an ancient sheik ; secondly, he must know how to play upon the emotions and susceptibilities in a manner that will produce the desired result. " When did you ever see anyone with an appearance like that man ? And how many

people could handle an audience as skilfully as he does ? " asked my friend.

The passage in the Koran that enjoins the Faithful to mention the name of God often, lest they should forget Him, has been carried out with a literalism that could hardly be improved upon. Beggars' requests are always wrapped up in the language of theology. Their appeals for help are often made directly to God ; and thus the almoner is reminded that his place in the scheme of distribution is that of a medium between divine fulness and human need.

During my first two years' residence in Marrakesh, a blind beggar, carrying a wooden bowl, took up his position regularly every day in a narrow street a few yards from my window. He had one call, and it never varied : " *Aaiet Allah.*" (God's revenue.) For a whole afternoon he would repeat these words, with only short spells of silence now and then, with the steady beat of a piston.

" *Emtaa Allah,*" (belonging to God) is heard everywhere. The passer-by is thus reminded that all he possesses belongs to God. It is a concern of His that the poor should be fed, and He has the right to achieve this end by using what belongs to Him !

But the beggar has enough psychology to understand that the human factor cannot altogether be ignored. If men are going to give what belongs to God, they will at least claim the right to do so at their own discretion. The almoner will not hasten to alleviate the sufferings of one who treats him constantly as a mere channel. A common appeal to the human factor is made in the words : " I take refuge in you." This appeal presents the picture of one in dire need who, without food, friend or home, seeks shelter in the pity and liberality of those who have enough and to spare.

One night a man was sitting between two shops shouting with a deep bass voice: "I take refuge in you." It was raining, most people were indoors and his condition drew forth my pity. When asked what he required, he enumerated bread, tea and sugar, and a candle. I bought these and handed them to him. Much to my embarrassment he shouted repeatedly, in a voice that could be heard at both ends of the street: "See what this European has given me. Truly at heart he must be a Moslem." About half an hour later, I had to return to the place where I left him, and to my surprise he was still there, his deep voice sounding out, "I take refuge in you."

"What," I said, "you are still here? Why don't you go home and eat what you have?" He looked a bit shy, and then with a smile said: "I'm shouting for my rent now!"

"For the sake of your (dead) parents who brought you up and fed you." This is a plea that brings in Purgatory, a doctrine which has a large place in Moorish theology. The giving of alms is pleasing to God. When these are given on behalf of dead parents, it is believed that their punishment will be lessened on that account.

Sometimes the appeal is embodied in euphemism. The following is a good example of this method. Some men were sitting round a dish of rich food. A beggar approached and sat down near to them. As they ate, they spoke to him now and then, asking for his welfare and reminding him how God had made gracious provision for all. But the dish was being emptied and nothing coming his way. He put in a reminder of his need thus:

"*Jaalt kaliman mislothhan lihali;*
Skoot elam min ilcool tifihim macali."

The nearest translation of this I can make in English is as follows :

> " I have made a word that describes my condition ;
> Remove the ' L ' and you have got my petition."

By removing the " L " from the first word " *Jaalt*," which is the verb " to make," we get " *Jaat* " which is the verb " to hunger." They took the hint in good humour, and helped him to a portion of the food.

Here is another example of the same kind. Some men picnicking were eating boiled eggs, when a beggar approached. " What do you want ? " they asked gruffly. " The thing I will now describe," was the reply. He began with the characteristic flourish of the Oriental story-teller. " Oh learned, wise, and refined men, I saw a bird in the Arab's country. It had no flesh, no blood, no down, no feathers. It had two colours, one like silver, the other like gold. It is sometimes eaten raw, sometimes cooked, and is neither dead nor alive." They handed him a boiled egg.

A blind beggar who passes along our street every night on his way home, is merry or sad, according to the response made to his appeal for help during the day. If satisfied, he talks to himself and smiles. If it has been a specially good day, he teases the people whom he hears passing along the street. " I say, rich merchant, give me your daughter ; I'll marry with her." " Halloo, did I hear someone say he wanted to give me a sack of sugar ? " " And now to build a big house and have black men to serve me ! " " I move with the times, and all good things come to me " (*Kandor maa izman wa Kanjiber Kool Khear*).

But when the day has been a disappointing one, his language is foul and revengeful. " Favouritism in this world ; justice in the next." " At the judgment

day God will boil some people in their soup." "Glut in this life, clubs in the next" (*Shbaa hina, zerwata tima*). His favourite simile, when in this angry mood, is to liken the people to an unloaded gun, where the trigger responds to the pull but shoots nothing. I think he means that many people wish him well with their tongue, which is the "trigger," but their good wishes for his welfare, not being followed by good works, are merely play-shot.

These beggars in their dirty and verminous state are a danger to the public well-being. Periodically they are collected from the street and taken to a *funduck*, where they are shaved and washed. In some places—the town of Mazagan is an instance—they have been taken from the streets altogether, and housed in a large building renovated for the purpose. This is a new regulation brought into force the other week.

I have already called to see them in their new quarters. Everything is clean, beds are provided as well as good food. But they are not contented. "Oh, who will deliver me from this prison!" was the request of one man, whom I had frequently spoken to at his post in the street. Men and women who have wandered about at will naturally feel the discipline of such a place trying, and I'm sure most of them will never take kindly to it.

"God forgive the beef and bread," said some of them, "and bring us cigarettes."—Natives use the expression "God forgive," when they are willing to let a thing go.

There are many blind beggars about the towns of Morocco, who would not accept sight as a gift, if it had to be followed by work or other forms of discipline. The street, with its noise, dust and sunshine, is the nearest point of contact with heaven that they know.

When visiting them in their new quarters in the town of Mazagan, in spite of this laudable work by the authorities to provide for their needs, I come away with a sad heart, for on their faces I see written, not only discontentment, but despair. But the march of civilisation cannot be held up for their sakes. Its aim is to exterminate disease, and this cannot be achieved so long as thousands of people who are potential centres of epidemics are allowed to mingle with the multitude.

The ordinary beggar usually listens well when the Christian message is put before him, but does not see how the question of sin has any real bearing upon his case. The verdict he pronounces upon himself is "too poor to be guilty." I trust, however, that the kindness we have shown many of them, coupled with the simple presentation of the New Testament revelation, has been effective in leading some to embrace the grace of God as set forth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The professionals are different. Their prestige is propped up by mystery. If they are seen listening to a European who proclaims a gospel which clashes at many points with that proclaimed by the departed saints, the mystery is weakened, and they must suffer. Approach to them therefore is usually met with a finger pointed upwards and the utterance of a single word, *Moolana*, which is one of their names for God.

CHAPTER XVI

TALES TOLD ON THE HOUSE-TOP

THE stories told in this chapter are samples of those known all over Morocco, and which have been repeated century after century with little variation. In a

country where the number of literate persons does not exceed five per cent., there is only a small place for the printing press. A people used to oral literature must content themselves with the small quantity that can thus be produced. But the Moor, in spite of the fact that he has heard these stories—which originated among the masters of his own language—a hundred times or more, will still laugh or weep at the climax, as if he were listening to them for the first time.

Satan and the Old Hag

It is said to you, oh my lord, that an old hag visited Satan and claimed to have more power to work evil than he had. His Majesty of the underworld (may Allah's curse rest on him) did not waste words with her. "Go," he said, "and do your utmost in evil; I will do likewise, and we will weigh the consequences to see who is the conqueror."

It was not long until Satan found a man who had drawn out a list of good works he was resolved to do, so that he might heap up great merit to himself in the next world. Satan succeeded in convincing him of the futility of such a scheme, weakened his resolve, so that he abandoned his efforts, and led him to do more evil than the good he had planned.

The hag went to a young woman, a great friend of hers, who was happily married and loved by her husband. "How are you, my precious one?" she asked, on entering. "No evil is upon me," replied the young wife, "and how are you, beloved old lady?"

"Ah, dear me," said the hag, "you are precious to me like my eyes that gaze on you, and that is why the news I have heard of you makes me ill."

"What evil news have you heard about me?"

" You are laughing, because you think your loveliness has captivated your husband, and he will always be your protector, but you do not know that he has planned to take a second wife and already plans for the marriage are completed."

The young wife was startled with fear and said: " I did not think this possible; my husband and I have loved so dearly."

" That is because you don't know the men; there is no safety in them."

" Oh!—show from your wisdom how I must act to avert this evil," cried the wife.

" That is why I have come. By the use of my magic, I am going to charm him, and turn his love for this woman into hate, so that he will shun her."

" I have no mother but you, and for this deliverance you are going to work for me, may Allah reward you in Paradise." As she said these words, she wept upon the bosom of the hag, and kissed her profusely.

" Now put away your tears and gather your head together. Can you, when your husband is asleep, cut a little hair from his beard? For with this hair I am going to make the charm."

" If Allah will plan for me, I can do it."

The hag gave her a razor to carry through this delicate operation, and she took her departure.

She went to see the husband, and on finding him sat down and wept.

" May Allah protect us!" he said. " What, old lady, is the trouble?" he asked as he watched her swaying her body with grief. Through her tears she related how a man who was in love with his wife had laid a plot to kill him, so that he might marry her.

" This cannot be," he exclaimed. " My wife, who loves me dearly, would not receive him."

"You are just a boy. Women are as treacherous as silent rivers. Your wife is in the plot, and has a razor ready to cut your throat to-night."

"I cannot believe it; but if I find it so, I'll kill her." He begged her assistance.

"Go home, pretend to be very tired, and sleepy, snore loudly, and keep a watch on all movements through a slit of your eyelids."

On reaching home, he carried out these instructions, and his wife, hearing him snore, said: "Here is the opportunity Allah has given me; now I will act."

Lifting the razor, and taking his beard in the other hand, she was about to cut a tuft of hair, when he, no longer doubting the hag's information, pulled out a hidden dagger and slew her.

The hag then went to the young wife's parents. As she entered their home, she tore her garments, dug her finger-nails into her cheeks until the blood flowed profusely, uttered the death wail, and then screeched: "Your daughter, the lovely *gazelle*, has been murdered by her husband. Oh, come and take revenge!"

They hurried away together to the place of tragedy. On seeing the dead body of his daughter, the father rushed upon the husband, and slew him with the sword. While they were busy weeping over their daughter's body, the hag slipped out, her hair dishevelled and her face bleeding.

"Come, come!" she screamed as she entered the home where the parents of the dead husband lived. "The parents of your daughter-in-law have killed her and her husband, and all this for nothing else but to get their money and household goods."

They hurried to their son's home. There they found the dead bodies, and the wife's parents gathering the money and household goods together to bear away.

Without asking questions or waiting for explanations, they rushed upon them. The neighbours, hearing the tumult, gathered to investigate the cause. Some took one side, some the other, until a battle was fought in which many of them were killed.

A few days later, the hag and Satan met to weigh the consequences of the mischief done. When the latter gave his report, the former laughed and said: "Only that!"

"Then what is the weight of your mischief?" asked Satan. When she told him, he bolted, crying out as he ran: "Put distance between us. You'll burn me. I'm not fit to be your apprentice."

O Allah, let me meet an hundred devils rather than one hag!

The Wisdom of Slaves

It is said to you, my lord, that some slaves took counsel together to gather spoil from those who had more of this world's benefits than they could use. So out they went one dark night to see where Allah would lead them. Stealthily they entered a big house and began to search for treasure.

"In this tower," said one of them, "will be the hiding place of gold." As they entered the tower, the first thing their glimmering light showed up was a drum. One of the company struck it with his finger, and was pleased with its speech.

"Allah, that speech pleases me, too," said his friend. "Strike it now with two fingers." Said another:

"That speech from the drum reminds me of the old days. Strike it with three." And he did so. At the demand of another he struck it with four; then with his whole hand; then with two hands. Harder and faster he beat the drum, until the slaves

were carried away in imagination to their forest homes in the Soudan.

They danced, swayed their heads wildly, leapt into the air, charged at each other in mimic warfare, until they were worked into a frenzy. The noise awakened the owner of the house, who appeared and put them all in chains.

Such is the wisdom of slaves.

Counting the Consequences

Was, oh my lord, until was Allah in every place. Neither the earth nor other dwelling is left without Him; until there was a flowerpot and a lily. (Moorish stories often begin with such flowery phraseology to arrest the attention of the audience.)

One day a Sultan travelling incognito entered a market where people were buying and selling. In one shop was a man, but no goods. On being asked what he sold, he replied: "Guiding principles of life." The Sultan gave him one hundred dollars, and asked for a motto suitable for one who had large responsibilities to discharge. He wrote: "Concur in nothing, till you have counted the consequences."

The Sultan, on reaching his palace, commanded his servants to placard these words in every room, and paint them on all utensils used for cooking.

One day the Sultan's Vizier, whose aim was to kill his master and seize the Throne, appeared in his presence and said:

"May Allah's peace be upon you, O our lord. I have arranged that to-morrow the barber will come to cup blood from you."

"So be it," said the Sultan. "It is now three months since he was here, and my head is dull with surplus blood."

When the barber arrived, the Vizier met him and, after divulging his plot to seize the Throne, gave him a poisoned knife, promising him a bag of gold should the operation be successful.

The Vizier went out to attend to his duties, leaving the barber and Sultan by themselves. The former was given a utensil with which to catch the blood to be drawn off from the latter. He noticed writing on the vessel. He read it: "Concur in nothing, till you have counted the consequences." He was overcome with fear, and sat down in an attitude of deep thoughtfulness.

"Why don't you proceed with the cupping?" enquired the Sultan.

"I am counting the consequences, O our lord," he replied.

He then disclosed the plot to take his life. The Vizier was immediately called into his master's presence.

"You have been neglecting your duties of late," said the Sultan to his Vizier. "To remedy this defect, due no doubt to surplus blood in your brain, I have ordered the barber to draw off a double dose from the back of your head."

The barber carried through this work, the poison entered into the Vizier's head and he died. The Sultan then raised the barber to be master of his household.

This is what we have heard from the Generous Masters, and now repeat to others whom we trust will be generous too.

The Cock gives Treacherous Counsel

Some hens that slept in a small room saw their numbers being depleted night after night by a fox that found its way to their house. As darkness fell,

they were all struck with terror, for they had tried all means of protection and defence they could think of, but nothing availed for their salvation.

In desperation they held a meeting of council at which they decided to challenge their master the cock as to his power.

"What profit are you to us?" they asked. "You see the nightly ravages of the fox, and yet you crouch in a corner like a coward, and at dawn, when the danger is past, crow loudly as if you had achieved something."

"From now onward," replied the cock, "you will see my courage and strength, and no longer will I be despised among you. Now you know my charge against an enemy becomes more deadly when I can back it with a run. So all of you will sleep near the door, and I at the wall farthest from it. This will give me space to make my running charge at the enemy." They acted as he counselled.

Along came the fox as usual at dark, put his head in at the door and carried off the hen nearest to it. In the morning, when they found another of their number gone, they accused their master of neglect and cowardice.

"Don't rage against me," he said impatiently; "the fault is yours because you did not waken me. Had you done so, you would have seen what cocks can do in a crisis."

And so he lied to them every day until all the hens were eaten by the fox, and then, fearing he should be taken too, evacuated the room, and married some other hens in another district.

The Fox and the Hedgehog

A fox and a hedgehog went into a walled orchard to

make a dinner of grapes. The only entrance open to them was by way of a narrow drain. The hedgehog was wise, for every now and then after he had eaten a little, he returned to the drain to measure his width with it, lest he should eat too much and find exit impossible. The fox ignored this precaution and ate until his stomach was bulging on both sides.

When the gardener appeared they ran to the opening through which they had entered. The hedgehog, who had eaten with measurement, soon found himself on the safe side of the wall, but his friend, having eaten too much, could no longer get out by the way he came in.

"Show me some trick that will bring me deliverance from death at the hand of the gardener," he cried to the hedgehog, in terror.

"Allah remains," replied the owner of the spikes. "Now do as I tell you. Lie flat on the ground as if dead, open your mouth so that the ants may go in and out, and hang your head loosely. Then, when the gardener finds you, he will think you are dead, and throw you over the wall."

When the gardener arrived, he struck the fox two blows with his stick and said: "Oh, oppressor and destroyer of my vines, Allah has judged you." Then, lifting him by the tail, he swung the fox round his head and threw him over the wall. His action was so furious, that the tail came off and remained in his hand.

Finding himself safe on the other side of the wall, he cursed the gardener.

"Thought I was dead, did you? I outweighed you in that deal. May Allah curse your parents for those blows you gave me."

The gardener climbed over the wall and gave chase, but when he saw he could not catch the thief, he stopped and took an oath.

" Billah, I'll kill you next time we meet, and as you have no tail, I shall not fail to recognise you."

Next day, when the fox met the hedgehog, he thanked him for the advice that had wrought his deliverance, and then presented his other predicament.

" You see, I am now tailless, and by such defect the gardener, who has sworn he will kill me, will know me. O Owner of Spikes, plan a second deliverance."

" Your deliverance is my delight, and the plan is ready. Go, call all the foxes in the district to dine with us, and ask not why."

The foxes accepted the invitation. They were delighted with the dishes, and having gorged themselves, went to sleep. The hedgehog then tied all their tails together with strong twine.

Having completed this operation, he shouted:

" The greyhounds are coming—quick!—up and run!"

The foxes jumped up and in their terror tugged so desperately at the twine, that all their tails came off.

" Go in peace now," said the Master of the Spikes, " for no longer has the gardener a mark to detect you."

Thus is the World of Allah

One day a fox overtook a hedgehog travelling towards the East to visit Mecca.

" How are you, O Ball of Thorns, and whither is Allah guiding you?" he enquired.

" Since I am on a holy pilgrimage," said the hedgehog, " it is unlawful for me to hold conversation with the Infidel. Your master is Ibilis, whom may Allah curse."

" That is able to be so, but now you mention pilgrimage, I am resolved to accompany you; who

knows but I may return from Mecca a good Moslem ? " The hedgehog protested.

" I desire to travel alone, for contemplation by the way is a fitting preparation for the climax at the Holy City. I beseech you, leave me."

All in vain was the protest made ; to Mecca the Infidel would go.

As they travelled together, the Infidel teased the Pilgrim about the black-eyed maids of Paradise, and suggested that he be initiated into the prayers and ceremonies of the Meccan religion, so that he, through these religious exercises, might be permitted to taste such pleasures.

This blasphemy filled the hedgehog with horror, and he began to look around for a way of escape from his undesirable companion.

One day, when the heat was oppressive, they lay down near a well to sleep. The hedgehog was the first to wake and, looking at the well, saw an opportunity to carry out a trick that would rid him of his companion in travel.

Now, on top of this well there was a round pole, over which hung a rope, and at either end of this rope was a bucket made of goat skin. When one of these was lowered into the well the other came up to the top. My lord the Master of Spikes—whom Allah has blessed with much wisdom—jumped into the bucket at the top, his weight causing it to descend gently until it touched the water.

The noise caused by the running rope drew the fox's eyelids apart. What was it ? He could not tell. He began to search for his companion and, after winding about in many ways, peeped into the well.

" What are you doing down there ? " he enquired.

" Allah has decreed I should not travel to-day, and

I'm glad, for this water is so refreshing, the place so cool, that it seems a foretaste of Paradise," said the squeaky voice below.

" I am so thirsty. O my lord of the Spikes, show me the way down that I may share this pleasure."

" Such service is my delight. Jump into the bucket at the top and your weight will carry it down." And he did so.

As he descended, the buckets met midway in the well, and in passing he shouted :

" This is treachery, O Master of the Spikes ! " To which the other replied :

" Thus is the world of Allah ; it lowers some and raises others."

CHAPTER XVII

MARRIAGE

A MOORISH marriage is divorce in nucleus. This fact springs from another : namely, that the parties contracted to marry do not see each other until a few minutes before the union is consummated. The actual condition of the girl to be married often diverges widely from the fanciful description given of her by parents eager for a match. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear of frequent disappointments. But disappointment need not be permanent, indeed need not last many weeks, for at the disposal of the male is a law which gives him power to divorce his wife on any flimsy excuse.

A girl not previously married is at the absolute disposal of her parents. When it is recalled that they are marriageable from the age of twelve, this power of parents over their daughters is seen to be a

wise measure, for a girl of that age might all too easily be victimised by unscrupulous suitors.

The customs and ceremonies connected with marriage in this land vary greatly in different districts. Some of the ceremonies for instance enacted in Tangier would not be recognised as in any way attached to marriage in Agadir. But leaving out details and focussing attention on salient points, we find that these are much the same all over the country.

Among the poorer class of people the first step towards the union of a couple is taken by an old woman who visits houses where there are girls eligible for marriage ; and where she finds the parents agreeably disposed towards a match, her next move is to call upon the mothers of some young men, to whom she sets forth in panegyrical style the beauty of the maidens she has seen. But in better class families this preliminary work is done by two or three men, who are sent as mediators by the father of the young man who is in search of a wife. Notice having been sent to the girl's father of the proposed visit, he prepares food and tea, and on the arrival of the mediators, they sit down together to eat. The feasting over, the spokesman says : "*Kine Allah. Ahana khutbeen aandek fee bintek*" (God exists. We have come to betroth your daughter). To this the father replies : "*Billah, ma sukhina beeha*" (By God, we are not tired of her).

Talk of that kind may go on for the rest of the evening, the girl's father feigning reluctance to part with her, while the mother, speaking from behind a curtain or open door of another room, supports her husband's attitude by threatening to leave the house if he engages their girl. The tricks on both sides are known, and when these are laid aside, after much

shuffling, the parents give their consent; although, of course, not in every case. The mediators then depart, saying as they go: "*Leela ut barooka*" (Happy night).

After a lapse of some days the mediators return, this time with a notary, to write out the contract and the amount the young man's father must pay in *saduk* (dower). This is nearly always a ticklish business, and in some cases holds up progress for weeks or months, or may lead to cutting off negotiations altogether.

Among backward races the haggling factor always plays an important part in the exchange of goods. A man with a daughter has something to sell, and she is sold on the same principle as his cow in the market. If the first offer made for the animal is not satisfactory, he will wait for a second, a third or a twentieth. And if this last offer is not up to his expectations, he will retire the cow from the market—if he can afford to do so—and wait for more favourable conditions.

Before any offer is made by mediators, there is much talk seemingly wide of the business in hand, but in reality bearing upon it in undercurrents barely noticeable on the surface. In towns *saduk* is usually paid in money, and may range anywhere between £5 and £100, according to the family's standing. In the country it is usual to pay in animals, grain or ground. It is really great fun to be present among country folk when they are settling this matter. Relatives from both sides are formed into opposing camps. After some preliminary skirmishing, which may drag through a week or more, forces are marshalled to meet in a clash.

It is known that the figure stated first by either side

is not only not final, but a long way from it. "We will give an ox and two sheep with three measures of grain." In a case where such an offer is made by a well-to-do farmer, it is ridiculously low; so the other side makes an equally ridiculous demand at the other extreme. "We'll take fifty oxen, one hundred sheep and two hundred measures of grain, and may Allah be responsible for the remainder." It takes, on the average, several weeks' chat, most of which is no more intelligible than the barking of a dog at the moon, to bridge the chasm and clinch the bargain. But when this happens, as it frequently does, at the end of the harvest season when food is plentiful and work scarce, it is an intriguing diversion for simple minds.

The price being fixed, a notary, in the case of townsfolk, is called in to draw up and write out the contract; in the country, witnesses are called to the number of twelve, whose testimony may be called for, if there should be any hitch in the future. This ends the betrothment. Strange it is that there should be all this palaver over a union that too often is terminated before a year has run its course. It should be remembered, however, that these details apply only to a first marriage. Palaver and price play a much less prominent part where the *aazba* (maid) has become *hijalla* (a widow) or been divorced by a husband still alive.

The *saduk* has a double function: it compensates parents for the loss of a daughter, and provides the means to purchase the trousseau. Sometimes a father will eat nearly all the *saduk*—especially is this so among country folks—and leave only a small sum for wedding purposes. To prevent such a happening, it is common to pay half at the *Khutb* (betrothal) and the remainder when the time has come to make

preparation for the marriage. I have known cases where this precaution was not exercised, with the consequence that the bridegroom had to make a second contribution towards the trousseau. Where he refuses to do this recourse is had to a lawsuit to recover the *saduk* price.

But where all goes well, the next part is played by "*Itifkeera*" (presents of remembrance). In spite of the fact that the young couple are not allowed to meet, and in the case of town dwellers have nothing but a verbal picture of each other, they become madly in love, and send presents, accompanied by ravishing love messages, to each other. One may see frequently passing along the street a group of gaily dressed elderly women, bearing on their heads blocks of sugar, slippers, dishes of food, etc. These are the *itifkeera;* and that the world may know how fond the betrothed couple are of each other, the presents are carried openly from one house to the other. It would seem that human curiosity, being denied the pleasure of seeing the bride, seeks compensation for this loss by having a good look at these demonstrations of her love.

Following the gifts of remembrance comes what is called "*Idfoaa.*" This is a present sent by the family of the bridegroom to the bride's father. In town it may be given in kind or money, but in the country always in the form of produce, such as dates, butter, maize or an animal. There is often much squabbling over the *idfoaa,* because, unlike the *saduk,* which is a proper contract, there is no stated amount, it being understood that in the interim between betrothal and the marriage, this ceremony will duly be carried out.

But all business transactions among this people are carried out through the channel of haggling and

quarrelling, and although the process is a long and slow one, it succeeds in the end.

On the day of the wedding comes what is known as "*Libtat.*" It takes the form of a procession through the streets, or, if in the country, a tour of neighbouring villages. The trousseau is placed on a hand-cart—or several of these, if the wedding is an important one. It consists of mattresses, slippers, candlesticks, silk head-cloths, wardrobe in the form of a big wooden box, carpets, etc. I have noticed within the last year or two, that cheap Japanese goods are finding a place among the native articles. Headed by drummers and hautboy players, the procession starts from the bride's home and after winding its way through several streets heads for the house where, in the evening, the marriage will be consummated.

When the mattresses are spread and other articles put in order, the bride is secretly fetched, and installed in her new home. This journey affords opportunity for an enemy or any jealous person to employ charms or use the evil eye to do her hurt. In some cases she is lodged in a neighbour's house a day or two previous to the sending of the *libtat*, to avoid the risk of exposure. But where such arrangement is not convenient, she must make the journey between the two homes. Several women accompany the bride, who dresses just as they do, to avert detection. She may even dress up in somewhat old garments and walk with the gait of an old woman, while some other person in the group, closely veiled and well dressed, pretends to be the bride.

About 9 p.m., when it is dark, the bridegroom's procession starts out from a friend's house. It is a hilarious affair. Young bachelors surround the bridegroom, call him "*Sultan,*" and chant refrains in his praise. European fireworks in the form of squibs

are used on such occasions ; but that is an innovation of recent years.

The bridegroom is completely covered, body and face, by a garment called a "*jullabia.*" This is his method of protecting himself against magical forces which may be directed against him by some enemy in the crowd. An extra precaution is sometimes taken by having another man dressed in exactly the same manner as the bridegroom. Only intimate friends know which of them is the real one. When the procession arrives at the house where the bride awaits the bridegroom, invited guests are admitted, and the door is shut.

The guests sit down around dishes of food, which are supplied in courses. Then follows tea and tobacco. While conversation and laughter go the round, the bridegroom slips away to enter the room where the bride awaits him. As he crosses the threshold, he says, " In the name of God," and for the first time the young couple meet. This is the consummation of the marriage, and is heralded by a company of women, who beat tom-toms for some time indoors, after which they go out to the street and sing a refrain, which has too much of a Moorish flavour to be translated into English. In Arabic thus : "*Lilla bint elhoura ; khut irrijal ilmithdeea.*"

Conditions in the country are different from those of the town. Tents and huts afford little privacy, and this factor accounts for the more primitive, as well as more picturesque, manner in which the ceremonies connected with the bride and bridegroom's arrival are carried out. The former arrives at the village of the latter riding a camel or mule. When she is first sighted in the distance, volleys are fired from guns. Following this, all the females of the village

go out to meet her, and bring her home to the strains of a simple song: "*Merhababek ya lilla, merhababek ya lilla, merhababek ja maak*" (Welcome, O lady; welcome, O lady; welcome all who come with you). The friends who come with the bride reply in song: "Say to us, O owner of the wedding, welcome, welcome, welcome."

When the camel bearing the bride enters the village, it is led three times round an open space formed by several huts placed in a circle. She then eats dates and drinks milk, and afterwards is carried into the bridegroom's hut or tent, from which she must not move until seven days after the consummation of the marriage.

I have been present at these country weddings, and in one case was an invited guest joining in the festivities which lasted some days. There is an appealing simplicity about these country folk and their primitive customs.

Let us return to the town. The evening after the wedding, when festivities are still in force, a strange ceremony is carried out called "*Elghorama.*" A man, chosen because of his strong voice, stands on a box to receive gifts of money from the guests on behalf of the young man now a husband. There is a good deal of fun on this occasion, although its chief aim is to get a refund from the guests of the money spent on their entertainment.

Someone makes a start by handing him, say, ten francs. "Si Mohammed, son of Aalal has given ten francs," he shouts in a voice loud enough to be heard far outside the house. One or two of the intimate guests, I am told, are put up to the trick of giving large sums—a portion of which they receive back afterwards—to shame others who, having eaten well, would

fain get off with as small a contribution as possible. This accounts for the vociferation of the man on the box. "Here is Mustapha's gift and handsome it is—twenty francs." "Elhashmi, hiding there at the back, has not yet made his contribution."

The natives are nearly always reluctant to part with money. Where payment of taxes and other things, from which there is no escape, has to be made, they hang on to the last moment before discharging their debts.

So the man on the box has a long night before him, in which he endeavours by jokes, coaxing or scowls, to draw out gifts.

An appeal of the same kind is made on behalf of the young wife. When money is received, her representative dips it in a solution of henna, a herb which they believe has magical force, and brings good luck. Some women prefer to give a garment rather than money; and so a rope is stretched across the room, on which such presents are hung for all to see.

Love affairs among Moors, vehement at the beginning, are soon vitiated by quarrels, and in many, if not most, cases end in divorce. A woman has no power to divorce her husband, but if eager for a separation, she may persuade him to take this step by arranging to pay a sum of money, or by allowing him to take possession of her trousseau.

A man of means will rarely content himself with one wife. At the end of a year or so he needs a new one. The second wife brought in is called a "*derra*" or one who hurts. Naturally she expects, and gets, more attention than the first one. It is then that jealousy, like a crouching tiger, becomes a source of danger. "*Allah hooma,*" cries the older wife, "*mout elirdim wala dud elkhdim*" (Oh God, rather than have a second wife as rival, let me be buried alive).

If the house is one of limited space, there is endless backbiting, quarrelling and fighting. Attempts at poisoning are common, and where this is known to be active, life becomes miserable through daily fear.

When the situation becomes unbearable, as it frequently does, the first wife may run away to her parents' home or other refuge. The husband may then use the law to compel her to return, or may divorce her. If he follows this latter course, the second wife soon finds herself in the same predicament as her predecessor, and may have to employ the same means to escape from a similar torture.

Polygamy, concubinage and divorce—these are the worms boring at the kernel of Moorish life; and although civilisation has done much for the betterment of the country, it has not yet dared to introduce its laws into this domestic region.

And what a chasm of difference there is between Islam, which makes a woman the plaything of a man, to be taken up, laid down or smashed, according to his whim, and the word of Him who solemnised marriage as a binding institution of God. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

CHAPTER XVIII

COUNTRY MARKETS

A TOUR of Morocco that leaves out a visit to one, or more, of its thousand markets is like a tour of England that skips London. The market is the hub of Moorish life. Every tribe has several of these, held on different days of the week, the attendance ranging from five hundred to six or seven thousand men and women.

In the early hours of the morning all the paths and

roads leading to the markets are full of animals carrying produce or articles to be put up for sale. The sneering camel carrying a load of earthen pots used for cooking purposes or as water containers; the donkey with its panniers loaded with eggs in varying stages of development, from those laid yesterday to the other extreme, where one can detect a beak here and there breaking out to the mysteries of a new world; the mule with a dozen dried ox-skins piled over its back; droves of cattle, flocks of sheep, sparred boxes where some fifty fowls are packed together in a manner that must cause them extreme discomfort, jars of wild honey, butter wrapped up in clothes that have been used as a covering during the night—all these and other articles are in evidence on the road.

Anyone visiting these markets for the first time would be struck by the disorder prevailing everywhere.

If first impressions were listed, they would almost certainly come under the heading of pandemonium. Each one present seems so engrossed in his own particular interests, that little or no consideration is given to the rights of others.

Here is a man selling sweet potatoes. To attract buyers, he laughs, shouts, claps his hands, and may even occasionally dance. The man at his elbow, selling beans, catches the contagion, and enters into a brawling competition with him. Next to the bean man is a group of men buying eggs. The seller, on being asked how many eggs he has got, often replies that he does not know. Then they must be counted as well as examined.

No sooner may he put down the basket of eggs, than another buyer tips him on the shoulder, offering a franc more per hundred. The man lifts his basket and takes it to him. The first dealers are annoyed at

this move, and seek to take revenge. When the eggs are being counted out, say, five hundred of them, the man who lost the deal keeps shouting, "Fifteen, twenty-one, thirty-three; that's one hundred now! No, you are wrong, that is only fifty-six." By keeping up this muddle in numbers, the seller, often enough a stupid person, loses count, and fearing he is being cheated demands that they begin again at egg number one.

A recount being refused, he picks up his eggs and returns to the first buyers. He gets a scolding: "Thought you were going to get a franc more per hundred, did you? Donkey you are! The increase in price, and more, was to be taken off by a false count. Put down the eggs and get on with the count."

They begin to count; one, two, three. It is now the turn of the other dealers to take revenge: "There! He counted fifteen and went back to twelve." The man trying to dispose of his eggs appeals for consideration: "Allah have mercy on your parents. Please don't oppress me." All in vain. "Silly you are to talk to us. While you turned round your head, they scooped several eggs in without counting them. Where are you now? Yes, that's two hundred and four."

A native guard is called to restore order; but he cannot do that by listening to a sentence from each party. Accusations accumulate from both sides, until the guard, utterly unable to sift the evidence, becomes bamboozled. But to these people "Time is not a tenant that pays rent," and the thing drags on till it dies a natural death.

Next to the egg dealers are three partners engaged in the grain trade. One shouts out the price, a second measures, a third pays out the money. These heaps of

grain are surrounded by beggars calling out for " God's revenue." On their backs they carry a basket called a " *goofa,*" a bundle of rags, and other impedimenta. Where God's revenue is refused—as it often is—recourse is had to doubtful means to obtain it. It is amusing to see them prowling around, poking the grain with their stick, and making themselves a general nuisance to the dealers. " Stop poking my grain with that stick." " Grain has no fluid guts like an egg; we are not breaking anything," is the retort.

It is remarkable how frequently they manage to snatch up a handful and get it into their basket without being caught. The dealers of course are busy in many things. When caught in the act, the grain actually in their hands, they will challenge the charge of theft with a scowl and a question: " Who buys grain without examining it ? " To the command: " Now get out of this or you'll find yourself in trouble," I have heard them impudently reply: " Can you show the title-deeds for this patch I stand on ? "

Next to the grain merchants is a tent where some fifteen men, having finished their business and being satisfied with results, are making merry. Tom-toms and the *ginbri* are in play, while an idiot dances and giggles shrilly.

The next scene is two men gripping at each other's throats (this is called " *shunak* "), trying in this manner to settle the limits of their respective ground upon which their goods are placed.

I have frequently seen a man who has been prowling round the market for the better part of the day, suddenly pounce upon someone who owes him money. " Pay me ! " A fatalistic shrug of the shoulders indicates nothing doing. Then louder: " Pay me ! " " By Allah, the price received to-day for my produce

will not meet half your demands. Take this fraction and be patient till next market."

This is met by refusal. The debtor then challenges the creditor's figures. As the dispute thickens the crowd gathers and begins to take sides. Shoals of assertions and denials pass from mouth to mouth, many taking part who do not even know what the quarrel is about, while curses crack all round like shrapnel-shell. Tethered animals, as if conscious of the tension, join the affray. A camel groans, a donkey brays, half-a-dozen others catch the contagion and bray all together. Cocks, not to be outdone, add their shrill quota to the general riot.

While this quarrel is running its course, a group of minstrels arrives. One beats a drum, another plays the lira, a third a violin, a fourth makes a snapping noise with a pair of big scissors, while two dancers bring their heels to the ground in a rapid succession of thuds. As the music becomes louder and quicker, the dancers quicken their pace. The crowd, no longer interested in the quarrel, joins in the fun, and emits wild cries not unlike the Scotch "Hoch-Hi." Mingled with the music one can still hear the demand somewhere in the background: "Pay me! Pay me!"

On we move past heaps of carrots, potatoes, turnips, oranges, etc., till we reach the butcher's quarters. It is a ghastly scene. To provide meat for several thousand people demands a lot of labour. One can hear the sanctifying phrase, "*Bismillah*" passing from animal to animal. Then the knife. Before an animal is quite dead, a slit is made in the skin at the shoulder. To this a man puts his mouth and blows until the skin is inflated. Then, shutting this with one hand, he lifts a stick with the other, by which he deals blows all over the animal's body. These opera-

tions draw away the skin from the flesh and so make the flaying a much easier job.

The entrails are sold by auction. The poorer people buy these and take them to their villages, where they are cleaned and eaten. These butchers handle the animals with a dexterity that demonstrates their skill and interest in the job. To see a camel slaughtered, skinned, cut up and put in the scales in the course of an hour, is to see something worthy the name of a feat.

On we pass now to meet the blacksmiths. There they are, squatted on the ground, doing all their work in that position. A few yards further on are the veterinary surgeons. As their methods of work have been described in the chapter "Forms of Cruelty," we will pass them by.

We now come to a section where there is a medley of things: rushes, out of which are made mats; big round basins, woven out of branches of palm trees, through which oil is pressed to purify it; old clothes, wool, earthen jars, charcoal and many other things which English words would hardly describe.

Near to this medley of goods sits the medicine-man. Spread out before him is a collection of powders, crystals, roots, birds' dried carcases and wild animals' skins. His art is not confined to doctoring the body, for by the use of magic, he professes to be able to tell what is going to happen to you to-morrow, or for that matter a millennium hence.

In these markets it is not sufficient, if one would do good trade, to convince people that they are getting value for their money; they have to be convinced they are getting a bargain. The man with something to sell must let words pour like a waterfall. The saying, "One 'see' is worth a hundred 'tells'" is

not applicable to market trading. The other, " Praise and price are twins," suggests the principle to work on.

Now the medicine-man makes his words march like an army until he almost bullies people into buying. He reminds the fatalist that man is God's medium ; (*Ilaabd sibab*) that medicine has a mission to fulfil.

Taking a long cane in his hand, he touches one medicine after another in rapid succession, at the same time swaying his body to and fro and shouting out the healing virtues of each. " Allah, Allah," he cries ; " this powder cures piles, this indigestion, this headache. Look at this line of crystals. The lot is from the bed of a dried river near the Sahara. If you have a bounding heart, take these crystals. These dried roots cleanse the bowels, the liver, and dry up all discharges. A few drops of this liquid and that pain in your back goes. I see you want to know what these chips are for. Melt them in water, drink a glass every day for a week, and you will renew youth."

The pace at which he talks and sways his body brings beads of perspiration to his brow, but it also brings customers, so he makes a pause to serve these.

The next tradesmen we encounter are the barbers. In a country where all the males must keep their heads shaven, if they wish to be respected (holy men are excepted), there is a wide demand for the barber's service. The Arabs have hard skins, and do not mind a blunt knife working on their heads, more like a scythe than a razor ! A head disease known as " *amjod* " or " *karaa* " afflicts about eighty per cent. of the people. When the knife is drawn over the head, it tears away the scab formed by the disease, and causes bleeding.

The barbers not only shave but cup blood. When the Arabs feel dull and heavy about the head, they

believe it is caused by a surplus of blood about the brain. They, therefore, visit the barber periodically to have this surplus cupped. I have often watched this being done and been amazed at the amount drawn off from the back of the neck. It is a practice which seems to be dying out in the towns.

In a market where some 7,000 souls were gathered, I was the only European present. I was having a glass of green tea and a "*sphinge*" (a kind of doughnut) inside a tent, when two men outside started a brawl. In a short time it developed into a fight. (The only cinema I attend is the one presented to me in the course of my missionary work among this people.)

I got up, went out and stood near the fighters. Up to a point it was amusing to watch them, but when they got into a sort of catch-as-catch-can grip, digging their teeth into one another's shoulders, I was tempted to interfere and get them apart. I imagined that being the only European among them my influence, if not strong enough to effect reconciliation, would be strong enough to check what had developed into a beastly struggle. I threw myself between them, placed a hand on each of their foreheads, and said firmly: "That should do now." They looked up, slackened their grip and then let go.

As I stood between them, urging them by word and gesture further and further apart, they cursed each other with language vile enough to vitiate a whole community.

Much to my surprise, they took up stones. The crowd ran back to get out of danger.

"Throw, throw, you pig!" screamed one of the fighters.

"Throw, throw, you son of rascality!" responded the other, and stones began to fly. One of these stones

struck my camera, which was hanging from my shoulder, pierced the case and damaged the instrument.

"They have struck 'the son of the English nation.' Well, now there is going to be trouble," I heard someone say. The crowd did not urge me to take action, but expected I would do so, and waited to see what I would do. I seized the offender, now a very penitent man, and said to him:

"You see that path leading out of the market?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Well, take it and be off right now, or accept the alternative—three months in prison." I never saw him again.

When the affair was all over and the people were talking among themselves, I heard one man say to another in reference to myself: "I know that man. He lives in Mogador. Even if that son of rascality had struck him on the head with an iron bar, he would have let him off. He is known to be meek!"

In a market called "*Isibt*" I once gave away six copies of the gospel of Matthew. One of these copies had been in my bookshop for years, and the covers were faded and perforated by some kind of vermin. Some months later, I was walking in a street of a certain town, when I reached the quarter where the sorcerer plies his trade. Several of these men were in the place with their books and other paraphernalia. One man, with a woman by his side, who possibly was being instructed in the steps to be taken to compel an old husband to divorce her, with a view no doubt to marrying a younger man, was using a book which had all the appearance of the ragged gospel of Matthew I gave away in the *Isibt* market.

Pretending to be interested in another object, I gradually crept nearer to this sorcerer. At a glance I

saw it was my book. No sooner had I asked : " Where did you get——" than the book was shut and hidden away.

Some days later, I found this man by himself, and the following conversation took place between us :

" Where did you get that book I saw in your hand the other day ? "

" That's a great book ! It's hundreds of years old."

" Where did you get it ? "

" I bought it from a man in the country, who found it buried in the ground."

" Is it any good for the kind of work you do ? " I asked.

" Any good ! Why, bury it in the soil, and stones will rise and fly upon the head of your enemy." And so on he talked about its damaging potency, until I stopped him and said :

" You are either a very ignorant man or a rascal ; maybe both. The book is part of the New Testament and belonged to me, was in my shop for years, before I gave it away in the *Isibt* market. Now don't begin to dispute. I know that book as well as I know my own face. I am suggesting to you now that you read it, and if you can't read—I don't think you can—get a reader to go over it with you, and you'll find within its covers that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world."

In an effort to save himself from embarrassment, he began :

" In this box I have some wonderful old, old books. They were brought——"

" That's enough. Don't think you can fool me with your lies about old books. Get up and search for a man's job."

But there he sits, still in the old place, and every time I meet him, he greets me with a big smile.

CHAPTER XIX

TRAPPING THE TOURIST

MOROCCO has been for many years a centre of attraction for tourists. Before the French Protectorate was established, the trade was confined almost entirely to the coast towns, beginning with a landing at Tangier and ending at Mogador, which was then the last port open to international commerce on the south coast. The French pacification of the country has provided the tourist with a much larger range of territory to satisfy his curiosity.

This chapter, as may be gathered from its title, does not aim at giving information relative to facilities for travel, hotel accommodation or places of interest. It aims at giving an insight into the character of the people likely to be encountered by visitors to this country.

I have often been surprised to see how a Moor, by the sheer force of a mixture of impudence and cunning, has scored a decided advantage over foreigners who, because of their education, training and wealth, consider themselves vastly superior. He has a witchery in his nature, not patent to the casual observer, by which he wheedles the unwary into his trap, where they become helpless in the grip of a situation which he dominates. This is particularly true of those who act as guides or porters at stations, wharfs and hotels. They are experienced tricksters who make considerable sums of money by coaxing or coercing their victims.

The Moor acting in this capacity will rarely accept from foreigners, who are visitors to the country, the first payment offered for his services. He nearly always asks for more; and to achieve this end, he

makes a number of moves which range between a towering rage and a tame repentance, all calculated to create the maximum of embarrassment for the person who has hired him, who too often seeks escape by meeting the exorbitant demands made.

Instead of putting forth his hand to accept the sum offered, he will fold his arms over his chest and stare in an attitude of astonishment and silence. His next move is to relax, and as his arms hang loosely in front of him, there passes alternately over his face genial smiles and impish grimaces. He believes English people are all rich, and they are his chief victims. "It is too poor for much work," he remarks in broken English. In cases where these tricks fail to call forth the desired increase more vigorous methods are introduced. Since coaxing has failed, he will try coercion. Throwing his arms above his head, then bringing them down with a swoop in front of him, he gives way to a rush of words, fierce and hot, which are interspersed here and there with an English word or phrase, so that the visitor may understand that this volley of vituperation is directed against him, or her as the case may be.

By this time a number of curious natives has gathered around, and to these the guide, or porter, rehearses his story, after which he returns to his attitude of astonishment. The stranger has now a score or more of interrogating eyes focussed on him, and being unable to lay his hand upon any set of hard and fast regulations governing this kind of service, begins to feel that, after all, the sum offered, though he considered it handsome payment, must be inadequate, otherwise there would not be this fuss. So he adds another five francs, say, to the original sum. This is still below the demands of the guide. He refuses it. All this is most disconcerting, and one may ask why strangers put up

with it. But how are they to escape? They must not use force. If they walk away, a crowd follows. If they call a policeman, the language obstacle confronts them at once; the Moor will do all the talking and get his version of the dispute detailed. He knows the situation perfectly, has been in it a hundred times and rarely been defeated.

Now for his next card. Having refused the addition of five francs, he tucks his left hand in his right armpit, supports his head by placing his right hand under his chin, then with a sneer, says: "If the lady very poor, she go, pay nothing!" That is his master stroke, and he knows how disturbing it can be to people embarrassed by a situation which is entirely new to them. And so, in the end, the rogue gets not always all he demands, but usually a considerable advance on the original sum, for most people pay up to get out of his clutches.

On one occasion when I reached the town of Casablanca, a man offered to carry my case. When we arrived at the car station, I offered him five francs. He did not know I was resident in the country, and as I had not spoken to him, was unaware that I knew Arabic. As he put me through the process detailed above, I kept up the pretence of being a stranger. I was amused to hear him tell the group of loafers, who had gathered to support him, that I was English, and "By God, I am going to take it out of him." I was sorely tempted, on hearing this, to break into Arabic and reply: "You are wrong; I'm Scotch!" but I was enjoying the fun and refrained.

Then he gave the thrust under which so many strangers wince: "The gentleman very poor?—pay nothing: all right!" He crossed the road, hoping, of course, I would call him back and add another five

francs to my offer. But as I didn't, he continued his crossing, to take up a position on the other side, where he could watch me, so that if his plan were defeated, he could come and accept—as these men always do, if one holds out against them—the original sum offered. But I took him at his word: "pay nothing: all right," and as he was crossing the road with his back to me, I disappeared.

A tourist ship—especially if it is English— arriving at Moroccan ports is looked upon by the natives as a potential mine of wealth, which may be exploited for their benefit. This exploitation cannot be carried out by simpletons who offer their services with shyness, nor inexperienced persons who retreat under the first rebuffs of indifference usually displayed by visitors busily engaged in conversation among themselves. Those engaged in the trade are not only adepts in the art of affability, but work with an engaging persistence calculated to oust all suspicion of ulterior motives. And yet, underneath this affableness, conspiracy crouches ready to leap into action at the first favourable opportunity.

The element of competition is keen in this service, where the livelihood of many depends upon what they can gain from tourists; and to ensure success a good deal of planning is done a day previous to a ship's arrival. Rival cliques are formed, with a man at the head of each whose patchy knowledge of the English language is the deciding factor for raising him to this honourable position. The next person in importance is the burly fellow whose job is to support the members of his party who, during the day, are liable to attack from some opposing camp that has failed to get tourists in sufficient numbers to employ all its members.

A number of isolated individuals, who have been

disappointed in the distribution of pooled gains, work on their own account, and usually aim at attaching themselves to those solitary passengers, found on all ships, who desire to explore the sights alone.

The passengers having landed, an effort is made to lure as many of them as possible into shops where carpets, and all kinds of Oriental curiosities are sold. The guides get commission on purchases made, and various tricks are played to induce people to part with their money. In a corner of these shops may be seen a workman laboriously carving a table or other piece of furniture, while exposed to view in a back room are one or two old men cutting out designs on gold or silver ornaments, with hand instruments. From what has been seen on the premises one is expected to believe that all the articles shown in the shop are hand-made with the labour of months embodied in some single piece. The pet phrases are : " All done by the hand," and " very old."

Consequently, the price is high, but the tourist puts the money down and flatters himself he now possesses an ornament that displays the patient and cunning workmanship of the East. He may have the genuine article or he may not, for the bulk of the goods stocked in these shops are not hand-made, nor are they of Oriental origin ; they have been produced by machinery in Europe. It is no secret that lace and carpets manufactured in Europe are sent to ports where tourist ships call, there to be palmed off as native productions. This does not mean that the genuine article cannot be purchased ; but it reveals the fact that not a few, who imagine themselves to be in possession of something made by hand in the East, have nothing better than a product turned out by machinery in the West.

Another trick played in these shops is this : a visitor shows eagerness to buy some article that takes his fancy. He examines it, but when told the price protests that it is prohibitive ; he cannot afford such an expensive luxury. When every device—backed by a mob of words—has failed to convince the potential buyer that the article is offered at bargain price, one of the guides edges him aside and whispers : " The price is too high. He sold the same kind of article to a tourist I brought here last week for ten dollars less than he now asks from you. Make an offer at this lower figure, and I'll back you."

When the offer is made, the shopkeeper hesitates, and pretends to be reluctant to consider the reduced price. Then he suggests that they split the difference. Ah no ; the tourist has now got some insight into the shady dealings of these Orientals and refuses to budge —" My price or nothing, not a penny more." The article is handed over to him with protests that, had it not been for the difficult times, and scarcity of money, it would not have been sold for a penny less than the original figure. The purchaser flatters himself over the bargain made, and mumbles, " That's your affair, not mine."

He has not realised that the oily-tongued guide who was supposed to be helping him is a confederate of the shopkeeper ; that this whispering trick has been played successfully in the same premises for years ; and that the lower figure is still a handsome price sufficient to provide the guide with good commission and the shopkeeper with an excellent profit.

People accustomed to buying at fixed prices do not know how deeply the propensity to haggle is embedded in the mentality of Eastern people. Few transactions are clinched, until clamour has played its part. A

proverb current throughout North Africa runs thus: "Ring out your price at the highest figure; with mutual movement we'll come together." The picture presented by the proverb is that of a man at the top of a stair, while another is at the bottom. Each tries to urge the other in his direction. Movement becomes mutual until they meet midway. Visitors not accustomed to these methods too often walk right up stairs and pay top price.

Another trick, which proves costly to those upon whom it is played is to lead a number of sightseers by gradual stages, a long way from the port. The ship is sailing at, say, 4 p.m. Some native examines his watch, and suggests it is time to go back. Then a guide exclaims: "It cannot be that time! Your watch is wrong." Watches are compared, and the time stated is confirmed. The guides then feign concern for the passengers because the return journey cannot be made in the time at their disposal. The only thing to do is to hire a car, or they will miss their boat. One or two of the men are dispatched to search the neighbourhood to see if a car can be found. Two cars are near at hand, of course, according to prearranged plan. A chauffeur arrives without any appearance of hurry, to tell them he is engaged—waiting for a doctor, or some excuse of that nature—and cannot, therefore, favour them with his service.

After a lot of shouting, accompanied by wild gestures, which seem to indicate an effort on the part of the guides to persuade the chauffeur to take pity on these people, who have no time to waste, the chief guide informs the visitors that the man won't budge. Here and there a native is running about wildly, pretending to be searching for other cars; but these two are all they can

find, and as time is passing something must be done without delay.

The two chauffeurs then hint that if they are paid a given sum, they will run them down to the ship, and risk being back at their post before their masters finish their business. The price is exorbitant, but refusal of their offer would be more costly still, and so the money is paid down with protests that take no effect.

Having fixed up this matter, they are confronted with another: these men who have acted as guides, showing the visitors places of interest, arranging for the hire of donkeys, etc., wait for payment. But, one may ask, is not one guide, or two at the most, sufficient for a party of, say, six men and an equal number of ladies? Why, when they started off to see the town and places of interest on its outskirts, did they not engage two men, arrange with them and take no further responsibility? Well, they just started off without any definite plans. Then, one or two of the older members of the party, finding the heat too much to walk in, hired donkeys that were pressed on their attention. They noticed several natives following them, but thought they were curious persons with nothing better to do.

Not at all. They all consider themselves engaged in a common service. Three donkeys were engaged. They belong to one man, but three different men come forward as hirers. The hirers were responsible for nothing more than hiring the animals, and so another three men come on the pay list—those who took charge of the donkeys. Those who ran here and there searching for cars appear next, wiping the sweat from their brows and demand payment. Last of all come the chief guides—two of them, perhaps—and

they are not easily satisfied. The ship's siren is blowing, signal that she will sail in half-an-hour. The tourists are trapped. There is no way of escape; they must disburse the sums demanded or take the more serious consequence of missing the boat.

Meanwhile, at the approaches to the port, a similar scene is being enacted among other tourists from the same ship. Groups of men and lads, most of whom have done nothing except walk alongside of the party, are pushing their demands for payment. I have seen more than one perplexed person trying to get out of the clutches of these rogues by explaining that the money given to the chief guide was for distribution among them all. He is promptly told the leader has gone, and considers the sum paid him to be remuneration for nothing more than his own services. He finds it difficult to break through the ring and seeing villainy backed by vociferation that charges him with meanness, disburses more money as the only means of escape.

From the deck of the ship one may now see the leader appear to collect all money received, and then in a quiet corner deal to each his share. Cursing is freely indulged in, as one after another protests he has not received a share proportionate to his services. They come to grips, and as the ship puts out to sea in the dusk of evening, the tourists are privileged to see one of those bouts among the swarthy sons of Morocco, as they fly at one another's throats in an effort to settle a dispute which is the climax to the day's campaign.

CHAPTER XX

FEZ: THE NORTHERN CAPITAL

IMAUM MOHAMMED lived in Mecca, where a combination of adverse circumstances, created by the intrigue of notabilities, who were jealous of his high standing as a descendant of the Prophet through Ali and Fatima, brought disaster upon his household. The defeat and death of Imaum Mohammed overwhelmed his son Idrees with grief, who, unable longer to hold up his head among the great of the town, set out to seek a refuge in another land. After a series of varying fortunes, he ultimately reached Morocco, where he found a welcome and a home among the Zerhoun hills near Meknes.

He had not been long settled in his new quarters, when the fame of his saintly character and Shareefian pedigree led the people to enthrone him as their king. This was an event of very great importance, for it was the beginning of the Idreesi dynasty, whose activities laid the foundation of the Moorish empire, and paved the way for those large developments that made it great. But his reign was a short one. Haroun El Rashid, in far-off Baghdad, on hearing of this saintly king's influence and extensive triumphs in arms, became jealous, and sent a secret messenger, who slew him before he had completed six years of his reign.

He left behind him a son, Moulay Idrees II, who took his father's place and all the responsibilities attaching to it. For years this youth had dreamed of building a great city, that would become famous in the world and, having completed his plans, began with his own hands, about the time the "long ships" from

Denmark were making their first raids on British soil, to dig its foundations. This was the beginning of Fez, a city whose history covers eleven hundred years.

In the centre of the city is the shrine of its founder. It has drawn like a magnet millions of pilgrims from every quarter of Morocco, who believed that the subtle, mystic thing they call the "*Baraka*," though not confined to this one sanctuary, could be found here with a fullness not obtainable elsewhere, except at Mecca itself. It is a place where a Moor, making his first visit, becomes momentarily breathless. Even the approaches are sacred, and to lay the hand on an outer wall is to touch a talisman that may tap the resources of Paradise for the believer.

Every year thousands of men and women, whose lives have been shattered by a too passionate indulgence in the vices of the flesh and the world, come here to present their oblations, repent, make their vows, and then go mournfully away to wait for death, believing that their prayer, "Oh Allah, by the mediatorship of this Thy Saint, open to me the gate of repentance and of Paradise," will be heard and answered. Here, too, amid the dense throngs that fill all the surrounding streets, may be seen parents, children in hand, wriggling their way towards the Saint's sarcophagus, to seek for their little ones the benediction that will give them immunity from the evil eye, disease and pain.

From this sanctuary Europe has been anathematised a thousand times. It has been the cradle of many crusades against the "*Infidels*." Warriors, who took vows to seek neither shade from the sun nor shelter from the cold until they had driven the Portuguese invaders from their coast, gathered courage here and went forth in the grip of a turbulent fanaticism, that foamed up into desperate deeds. Sultans, whose

palaces were corrupted by debauchery, whose hands were red with innocent blood, came with their white beards and drooping shoulders, leaning upon the black slaves who supported them, to seek the shade of Moulay Idrees, if haply, through his intercession, a way of salvation might be found. Neither in Morocco nor far beyond its borders has any saint been credited with so extensive an efficacy as the Founder of Fez; and even at this late time of day his name, far from being forgotten, is more revered than ever. And why? Because may it not be at this place that Islam shall re-kindle her expiring embers and launch against the world the battle of the Jihad?

Fez will disappoint visitors unless they know something of its history and penetrate to its soul. If they are content to wander about the streets, laughing every now and then as they find themselves in another cul-de-sac, or amuse themselves in an effort to penetrate the mentality of those thousand men occupying as many shops, not much larger than a wardrobe, they may get some fun, but not much else. If they are content to wander about the Millah, where cheap Japanese goods are much in evidence; and where crowds of Jewish children, with their sharp-eyed fathers and ponderous mothers, move about in streets that are conceptacles of a hundred mixed smells, they may feel at the close of the day that they have exhausted the possibilities of sight-seeing, and be off next morning for home.

But the soul of Fez is not in these petty surface things. It lies in its Gateways, Medersas, Mosques, Fountains and Shrines which, though now in a mouldy and dilapidated condition, still show by their massiveness, cusp-shaped symmetry, cloistered silence, geometrical carvings, turquoise tiles, mosaic drawings

and beautiful marble arches something of the dignity that belonged to this city. Upon these things successive dynasties, Zanatas, Almoravids, Almohades and Mareenids, lavished their wealth in an effort to fulfil the dreams of Idrees II.

After Islam in Spain had passed through its cycles of growth, greatness and glory, a period of languor set in, that developed into debauchery and degradation. This was followed by the fall of Granada. Spanish Moors of the better class, unable to bear up against the humiliations of defeat at the hands of a people whom they had ruled for nearly eight centuries, crossed the Straits and settled in Morocco. Many of these men of culture and learning, Divines of Islam, felt the tug towards Fez, a centre with an atmosphere suited to their standing and pursuits. Such additions to the city were welcomed by the Mareenid Sultans, who built the Medersas to lodge them. The news of their arrival and the fame of their learning, particularly in matters pertaining to Islam, spread all over Morocco and beyond it. In this way Fez became a university city.

Thousands of students arrived every year eager to imbibe the learning now put at their disposal. The Medersas could not accommodate all the arrivals, many of whom had to seek lodgings in outside quarters. The city grew rapidly and was extended to meet the requirements of an ever increasing population. One Sultan after another sought to out-rival his predecessor in building and decorating these colleges. By general agreement the Bou Annaneea, a work of the Mareenid Sultans, excels them all.

Rich men, eager to have their names associated with good deeds, and just as eager to heap up merit for the world to come, endowed these places; thus

making it possible for poor students to find food and lodgings at a very low figure. Undisturbed by examinations, and under no compulsion to finish the curriculum in a given time, many students remained at college until middle age, and always a few, attracted by the serenity and beauty of their surroundings, remained till death knocked at their cloister and called them away.

The Jew, strange to relate, has a link with these colleges. Many of them, driven out of Spain at the Inquisition, were scattered over North Africa. A considerable body of these found their way to Fez and were admitted to the city. But severe restrictions were placed upon them, which proved to be a serious handicap to their activities. The only way to free themselves from the circumscribed conditions imposed upon them was to become Moslems. This step the older people would not take; but their sons, eager to enjoy the fuller life attaching to such a condition, went over to Islam. Many of these converts entered the colleges, became more fanatical in their new religion than those born to it, and displayed a zeal for proselytism that astonished the Fasis.

In the course of time the Medersas became something more than seats of learning. For although several subjects were taught by the professors, as astronomy, astrology, law, grammar, etc., the Koran was the chief text-book, and all disputed points were finally settled by reference to its contents. Thus, learning and religion overlapped, the latter have final authority over the other. For this reason Mosques became attached to the colleges either by appropriating part of them for worship or by additional building alongside of them.

The Karouine College boasts the largest mosque in

Morocco. It is so extensive, that as many as ten thousand worshippers may kneel together at prayer. Many of the riches brought from Spain were deposited here, including several thousands of books, many of which are in hand-writing. There is a museum in an upper room, where thousands of gold coins, astronomical instruments, books in silver casings and gold flaps are said to be stored.

But the information which the modern Fasi imparts to the outside world concerning the riches contained within the Karouine College and its Mosque, is a description of what was, as related by Arab chroniclers, rather than of what is. For this city, founded on tragedy, has had a boisterous history. Rival Sultans from the south fought their way through its gates, and in the clash that followed the whole city was disorganised for weeks at a stretch. The invading hordes, as also the riff-raff of the resident population, took advantage of the disorder to enrich themselves with plunder. Berber Caids also kept a constant eye on the city, and at weak junctures in its history took possession of it, and for a few weeks or months reigned as Sultans. These men knew that they could not keep the city for any prolonged time, so they gathered what valuables they could, sent them forward to the impregnable slopes of their Atlas dominions, and when their position was no longer secure within the walls of Fez, took their departure.

The ravages of time, combined with the raids of enemies, have left their mark upon Fez. The French Authorities are doing what they can to preserve the historic buildings from further decline; but modern patchwork has at best serious defects. The arabesque carvings, geometrical designs, chiselled gubs and

intricate work upon the cusped gateways can neither be restored nor imitated

This old-world city passed through its zenith during the reign of the Mareenid Sultans. Efforts were made at intervals by modern Sultans to stay the decay and denudation which confronted them on all sides; but all in vain. The new mosques, palaces and gateways they built could not capture the departed glory. Such efforts were nothing more than the flare-up of dying fire.

In 1912, when the French Protectorate was proclaimed, the city rose in revolt against a yoke that was to bind Believer and Infidel to draw in the same furrow. An outburst of virulent fanaticism drove a number of men to the minaret of a mosque inside the gate called Guissa, and from this position they poured their powder into French officers and soldiers. The French, eager to stave off a clash, had moved slowly, respecting all the Fasis held sacred by abstaining from intruding upon the precincts of any shrines or mosques. Under the compulsion of this provocation, however, they called up reinforcements who, seeing their comrades lying dead at the gate, entered the mosque and, with a line of bayonets, revenged their blood.

From that day Fez was wrenched from its ancient past. Its gates were thrown back against the walls. Its control passed into the hands of Europe, a country against which it had hurled its missiles of scorn and curses throughout the course of a millennium. To-day, under French Protection, any European may enter within its massive walls and feel as much at ease as in the streets of any European city.

Fez has ceased to function as a propagating centre for Islam. Its students to-day are no longer numbered

by thousands, a few hundreds being all that are left. The contemplative life with its prolonged prayers and mysticism cannot flourish amid the din and gaudery of modern civilisation.

For good or evil, it is now linked to the outside world with its railways, motor cars, cinemas, newspapers and a hundred other things which are a plague to the old and a plaything to the young. And if Moulay Idrees II still takes an interest in his city, as the Fasis believe he does, what must he think of this modern life that surges through its streets?

CHAPTER XXI

MARRAKESH: THE SOUTHERN CAPITAL

THE city of Marrakesh is Morocco's chief centre for tourist traffic. It is sometimes called "Morocco City," or "*Ilhamra*" (The Red), on account of the red glow which its tabbia walls give forth under the action of a fierce sun. It was built by Yusuf ibn Tachfin in the early half of the eleventh century. At the time the Battle of Hastings was fought, Marrakesh could boast of several mosques and a considerable population. Its claim to be an old-world city is therefore justified. It has been described as "the most African of all North African cities." The population, although not quite at the 200,000 mark, is, according to the latest census returns, nearing that figure.

On making a first approach to the city, four outstanding features arrest attention: (1) a stretch of some twelve miles of massive walls which enclose the city and the Sultan's garden; (2) many thousands of date palms; (3) the large number of mosques; the

chief of these is the "*Kootabia*," built in the twelfth century by Ilmansur, who also erected the "twin" tower of the "*Giralda*" in Seville; (4) the Atlas range. Something of the grandeur of the peaks in this range will be appreciated if we mention that opposite Marrakesh they rise to a height three times that of Ben Nevis.

But the city, enticingly attractive at a distance, is disappointing when actual contact is made with it. The wall is built of tabbia. Great fissures running from the foundation to the indented parapet at the top rip it open at different sections, so that one can easily see through them. In every section between battlement and battlement there are rough, patchy repairs, bulging out like a troublesome superfluity from a diseased body. And yet this wall in its dilapidated, and, in some parts, toppling condition, presents the picture the tourist delights to see.

Seven main gates pierce the wall at different sections. These have all been constructed in a manner calculated to confuse an enemy trying to capture the city. Since the French took possession, two new gates have been opened to facilitate traffic towards the new town of Gueliz.

Having entered the city by one or other of the gates, we are struck by a condition of things that suggests impoverishment on every hand. Lines of shops, like oblong boxes, run along both sides of the streets. A glance into these, and we see men, some lying down, some asleep, and others in a sitting posture with a facial expression that reveals fatalism in its most intensified form. The pace at which the people walk, a shuffling saunter, bears the stamp of "All is decreed." Groups of idle people squatted everywhere suggest some kind of subsistence that thrives on sunshine.

Islam's theology is a vast maze, but these idlers have lopped away its entanglements and brought it down to the simplicity of "God is well, and so are we."

Many of the streets have a covering of trellis work and palmetto to afford some shade from the intense summer heat. A lot of queer things crawl about these street coverings, and I know one person at least whose hat became the buffer for a snake that had lost balance, and dropped into the street.

The slave trade, which had a run of a thousand years in this country, has left an indelible mark upon the inhabitants. Marrakesh was always the chief centre for this traffic in human beings. Add to that fact this other—that Moslem law allows every man four wives, and as many concubines as he can handle and feed, and then we shall not be surprised if we see in the streets of this city many strains of blood. Just as we may know the countries or districts through which a rider has passed by observing the variegated specimens of dust about the horse's hair, so in walking the streets of Marrakesh we may trace upon the faces of many of the people, not only those strains of blood brought from the East, when conquering Arabs mingled their blood with other nations, but also the effects of the slave traffic between Morocco and the Sudan as well as other countries south of the Sahara. To the Moor this traffic was not only a legitimate form of trade, but afforded him opportunity, by the possession of slaves, to flout his superiority.

One has no difficulty in picking out from the crowds in the streets the white-skinned aboriginal Berbers. The origin of the people is still something of a puzzle. Europe and Palestine have both been mentioned in this connection, and we have met more than one learned professor, who believes that they are "The

people whom Joshua the son of Nun drove out before him."

Marrakesh is a town of many trades. These are segregated ; slipper makers, perfumers, dyers, weavers, tanners, spice merchants and so on. The volume of some of these is diminishing with disquieting rapidity. Cheap European shoes, and more particularly the rubber type from Japan, are ousting the indigenous article ; while the triumph of the motor car is sounding the death-knell of saddlery.

Marrakeshies have always been indifferent to the exterior appearance of their dwellings, and one is apt to take this as a criterion of conditions inside. We have to remember, however, that there is a considerable body of wealthy Moors who have spent lavishly upon the interior of their homes. One may pass from a tortuous, smelling, narrow cobbled street to an interior that intoxicates with its variety of colours, tiled floors, ornamented woodwork, fountain and wide patio, where wives and concubines gather to sing, dance, weep or quarrel, according to mood.

It is recorded of one of these wealthy men, that, when he wished to show his appreciation to a soldier whose bravery had on more than one occasion staved off disaster, he gave him three wives and four houses. The gift of a fourth house is significant ! These big houses usually have an eunuch posted at the door. One can see written on the face of this man : " Positively no admittance."

The first time I was allowed to pass this guard and proceed to the interior was during an epidemic of smallpox. Fright had modified fatalism, and I was asked to go and vaccinate a household.

Marrakesh is still in too backward a condition to open its mosque doors to Europeans. The only mark

civilisation has made upon the mosque is seen in the electric bulb which has ousted the candle. The exteriors of these buildings present few attractions. Native guides, whose English is none too good, have a pet phrase, and they know it has an attraction for the tourist : " Very old ; very old." That said, there are few things about these mosques to interest one.

Moors believe that when anyone expresses a wish, good or bad, towards another, an angel says " Amen." It follows therefore, that if a man build a mosque and thousands of people entering call upon God to bless him, he will have a rich heritage in both worlds. Moved by such a motive more than one wealthy man has erected a public fountain in different parts of the town. The most popular of these, and the one guides are likely to lead tourists to, who make enquiries about them, is that known as " *Shurb wa Shoof.*" In these words the thirsty people are invited to drink and then to admire the ornamental work overhead. At one time it must have been an attractive work of art ; but the years have bereft it of all beauty.

The town has a good supply of water. Indeed, but for this factor, its foundations never would have been laid. Melting snow from the millions of tons deposited yearly upon the Atlas is, and always has been, the source of prosperity for the inhabitants of all villages and towns situated in the plain.

A sight worth seeing in Marrakesh is a street jam. Camels and mules coming from opposite directions with bulging panniers loaded with grain, wood or stone, try to pass and find they cannot. The absence of street regulations in these native quarters opens the way for a dispute. As the owners stand cursing each other—always the remedy resorted to by this people in times of tension—scores of other loaded animals

arrive from both ends of the street. Like a dam with its sluices choked and a river flowing into it from behind, where there must be a burst or overflow, so is this street with a block at the centre and fresh arrivals pouring in to increase the pressure. Donkeys packed together greet each other with loud braying. Camels with their characteristic sneer, their heads above the crowd, grunt, groan and threaten to bite. Pariah dogs slink in and out under the animals' legs, while pedestrians, claiming a right of way, wriggle along by slow degrees.

Sticks are used freely, and amid the confusion the mule, which is the target, may be missed and its owner struck. This sets up other quarrels, and adds to the pandemonium. Loud demands for compensation are heard from different sections of the street, where clothes have been torn or perishable goods damaged. The dam is now full, dangerously full, and ready to burst. A number of camels, followed by mules, are urged forward by successive blows. Donkeys are knocked down, panniers are dragged from the backs of others, a load of apricots is flattened against the wall, a man carrying several gross of eggs cries out for mercy, and others with perishable goods, scenting danger, retreat towards the mouth at which they entered. Those going in the direction of the triumphant camels follow close behind, keeping up a steady stream, until the way is once again normal.

Nearly all visitors to Marrakesh find their way to the big square in the centre of the city called "*Jemaa Elfina.*" Once used as a place to hang up the heads of rebels brought in after tribal wars, as the name indicates, it is now, and probably has been for a century, a centre for amusement.

Every day, without exception, thousands of natives

spend their leisure time—of which they have enough and to spare—listening to stories old as "a thousand and one nights," or watching performers who are rarely concerned about producing anything new. Anyone glib of tongue or with a trick to show is sure of an audience. The European, after spending a couple of hours in this place, feels he has exhausted the possibilities of excitement. A native would sit there for a lifetime and remain charmed to the end. Here is a man from a far-off glen among the Atlas peaks. A monkey caught in his district has been tamed, tumbles somersaults, sits on a dog's back, and holds out its paw for coppers. That is all, but it is sufficient to keep a thousand people amused for the greater part of a day, and for years. Passing on to the next circle of admirers, we find some boxes placed on the ground, open at both ends, and several rabbits chasing each other in and out at these openings. This sport calls forth peals of laughter. Our next attraction is a Highlander, also from the Atlas, playing a wind instrument which in appearance and sound does not differ greatly from the Scotch bagpipes.

Berber dancers are so largely patronised, that one has to stand on tiptoe to see them, unless a place is secured in the inner circle. Their dance consists of jerky hip movements accompanied by foot movement that brings the flat of their feet to the ground with a thud. Troops of acrobats from the Soos country are always welcome here. In pre-War days several of these troops travelled in Europe and America. I have seen them at Bertram Mills' Circus.

Time would fail to tell all one may see in this amusement centre: Holy men who drink boiling water, idiots eating mud, fencers whose play is a piece of foolery, wizened old men who walk round and round,

doing nothing more than havering, women with long loose hair dancing themselves into a frenzy—these and other varieties keep up a stream of amusement from the early forenoon till midnight.

I always notice lots of women, closely veiled most of them, mingling with this crowd. Many of these are divorced, and not having married again are at liberty to please themselves. From the seclusion of the harem to this haunt of fun—what a contrast!

When the French entered Marrakesh, it did not take a long examination to convince them that, owing to the huddled construction of dwellings, not to mention their shallow foundations and flimsy fabric of building material, it could not be modernised. Any attempt at widening streets would have resulted in a general collapse of whole sections of the town. Another one was therefore planned and laid out at the base of a hill called "*Gueliz*," from which the new town takes its name. It has all the characteristic features of modernity: broad streets, long avenues lined by a variety of trees, open cafés, excellent hotels, attractive shops and so on.

In my early days in Marrakesh an excursion to the Atlas Mountains would in all probability have ended in execution. The tribes living away in the depths of those mountain glens, or on the high plateaux where a measure of cultivation is possible, tolerated visits from none save their own kinsfolk. The Sultan's rule was never accepted; the tax-collector dared not show his face. The most that was attempted was to send, at long intervals, an expeditionary force to the base of the mountains, up one or other of the passes, to remind the Berbers that they had a ruler, and were expected to recognise him. But those turbulent tribes kept themselves at a safe distance from their

ruler's admonitions, and carried on in their own primitiveness for centuries without encountering serious interference from the outside world.

That day is past. When it was decided to subdue them, they put up a spirited fight, but they found long range guns and aeroplanes too much for their defences. They surrendered to the Sultan's authority with the resultant emergence to a new epoch.

Public buses now run from Marrakesh daily to various sections of the Atlas. At the beginning of 1935 a new road, leading through the Gundafa Pass, to the Soos town of Taroudant was opened. Taroudant is making a bid for a share of the tourist traffic which is expected to make great progress in the near future, now that parts of the Atlas are within the secure zone. The last time I was in the town I went to see a new hotel in course of construction. All the comforts demanded by people with money to spend were being installed. Shower-baths, electric light, shady gardens and dancing hall are all there.

There is now a skiing club in Morocco, which finds ample space on the Atlas slopes for its sport. One of the daily papers published in Casablanca devoted, during this winter, a weekly column, accompanied by photos, to the activities of these skiers. Maybe in the not distant future those mountain tribes will leave their herds to follow the more lucrative employment of guides.

CHAPTER XXII

FOREIGN MISSIONS TO MOORS

Is there any sound reason why Christian missions should make a country like Morocco a sphere for their

activities and propaganda? Does not the religion of pure monotheism, which the natives hold, with its exalted doctrine of God's power, holiness and justice, suffice to meet the demands of their spiritual needs? Why should they be plagued by the intrusion of a parcel of doctrines and creeds from another religious system which do not fit into their mentality, but clash with their convictions?

I have been asked such questions on many occasions, sometimes by friends who themselves professed the Christian faith, and by others who maintain that all great religious systems, though having defective details in their super-structure, are sound in their foundations, having evolved an idea of the Supreme Being that harmonises with their observations and beliefs about the Universe.

Educated people who have visited our mission stations in Morocco have frequently voiced their admiration for the philanthropic side of our work, demonstrated in dispensaries, schools, night shelters and care of the poor, but have raised objections to the preaching part of our programme which—so they assert—is a clumsy attempt to prove the superiority of Christianity over Mohammedanism by comparing all that is best in the former with what is worst in the latter.

It is further asserted that if the missionary would cease to put forward those elements in his religion, for instance, the Trinity and Atonement, which he knows to be obnoxious to the natives, the latter might in turn be induced to drop, or at least keep in the background, those elements in Islam that irritate Christians. In this way the cleavage between the two systems could be diminished and a bond of friendship forged.

The implications of these suggestions are neither veiled nor obscured: they set forth a programme which ousts the preaching of a large section of the New Testament, and make what remains a mere adjunct in the larger undertaking of educational and philanthropical work.

To this criticism the missionary retorts: since you urge us in matters of religion to leave the natives alone, asserting as you do that their beliefs and practices in this domain are admirably suited to their mental capacity and contemplative nature, might we not suggest also that in material and social affairs you allow them to work out their own salvation? Why, for instance, introduce a complex and expensive scheme of sanitation which aims at extirpating epidemics, when the old and deplorable sanitary conditions were so admirably suited, not only to the mentality, but also religious convictions of a people who believed, and still believe, that all epidemics are direct from the hand of God, and have no more connection with sanitary arrangements than the death of a beetle in their back garden with a landslide in Europe?

Again, why should we press upon their attention the benefits of a modern education, when they have been content with a fragmentary curriculum that has satisfied their mental demands for a thousand years? The Koran, they claim, is the perfection of all wisdom and knowledge. Then why not leave them alone in this domain also?

The missionary, however, has a more effective way of justifying his presence in this country than that of answering his critics' questions by propounding others. He believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book containing a revelation from God, which

is final for this dispensation. What the critic of missions has to do therefore is something more than merely to gather statistics to show that results are not commensurate with expenditure in time and money, or that numerous Christian doctrines are distasteful to Moors; he has to prove that when Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," He issued a command that outstripped His discretion.

When people say to us, "Islam is admirably suited to the contemplative nature and temperamental make-up of the Moors, and therefore only impudent or unwise people will interfere with them in this sphere," what implications are involved in their statement? It is implied, if not asserted, that Jesus has sought to impose upon all mankind, Moors included, a religion which in practise is found to be suitable only for a section of the world here and there. This blunder cuts at the roots of all claims He made to infallibility.

The missionary refuses to believe this because it has never been proved. In my own contact with numerous people I have met, and who have urged an attitude of non-interference in the sphere of religion on the grounds already stated, not one has been courageous enough, when the implications of their demands and assertions were set forth, to say: "Yes, Jesus was mistaken."

Said a business man, who is a member of a Christian church, to me: "Imagine two young women settling down to spend the best part of their lives in a dirty, dull Moorish village, where they are to convert natives —if they can!" "Imagine the folly of Jesus Christ commanding them to do it! Isn't that what you mean?" I asked.

Another cogent reason for the presence of the missionary in North Africa is found in the fact that, before the Arabs broke through the confines of their own country and began a crusade to convert the world to Islam, Christian churches dotted the land from Morocco to Lybia. This Church was something more than a community of souls holding the Christian faith loosely. It was deeply taught in the spiritual realities of the New Testament. Again and again it clashed with the heathenism around it, and shed its blood profusely in martyrdom as it weathered the fury and storm of a prolonged series of persecutions which were brought to an end when Constantine placed the Church under state protection.

But, alas ! this Church to whom Tertullian, Cyprian and Saint Augustine all ministered in turn met with a disaster which can only be summed up in the word extinction. It was wiped out.

The Moslem crusaders, flushed with a succession of victories that brought multitudes to their faith and rich spoils to satisfy their rapacity, appeared in North Africa. They launched themselves against the Church with a fury that deadened their sense of mercy and blinded their eyes to the beauty of the magnificent buildings which they demolished. With their swords they ravished the ranks of the Christians, and after breaking down all resistance, proceeded to build mosques from the debris of demolished churches. To this day there can be seen embedded in the structure of these buildings, stones bearing the sign of the Cross, once the emblem of God's love to a people who had passed from paganism to the fold of Christ. The extent of the disaster measured in geographical terms runs from the west coast of Morocco to the Suez Canal.

The missionary is here to remove that reproach,

not by drawn sword, but by the presentation of a gospel of love and atonement.

Some people, not at all antagonistic to Christian missions, point to such fields as China, Central Africa and sections of India, where a large response has been given to the Church's appeal. The paucity of results in a field such as Morocco becomes glaringly impressive when contrasted with the baptismal statistics from these other centres. And so they reason: Let the Church concentrate her energies upon fields where results are commensurate with the effort put forth. Why spend time upon a people too dull to understand anything but the rut of their own reasoning, or too prejudiced to examine any evidence that holds out the possibility of their being convicted of error?

That not a few missionaries have yielded to this reasoning may be proved by noting the large number of workers who, during the space of ten or fifteen years, have abandoned their work in North Africa, and gone to other lands to seek larger and more rapid results for their efforts. At the home end, too, not a few contributors have cowered before this obstacle and turned their gifts into other channels.

The problem facing these people is a real one, and their change of attitude is not a matter than can be judged by others. Nevertheless, we are bound to give reasons for the attitude of those who, despite slow movement and meagre results, refuse to retreat. There can be no satisfactory solution to this problem until we bring it into touch with the Fatherhood of God and the Cross which exhibits His love.

Let us suppose, by way of illustration, the case of two brothers, one of whom is mentally deficient. They are out in a boat, and it capsizes. The parents on the bank of the river see the tragedy, and finding the

life-buoys at hand, prepare for rescue work. Can we imagine the mother saying to the father, "Throw both life-buoys in the direction of John, he is intelligent and alert, and will lay hold of one or the other as soon as they are within reach"?

No, in spite of the deficiency, the other lad is as precious to his parents as his brother, and a life-buoy will be thrown to him also. Even if he fails to make use of it when it comes within his grasp, the parents will follow him down the river's bank, making every effort to save the lad, until they succeed or have their hopes extinguished by death.

The whole trend of New Testament teaching supports the view that Divine Love is not quenched by antagonism, indifference or dullness as displayed among mankind.

The disparity between this North African obstacle, and the means in hand for its removal, are glaringly apparent even to superficial investigation. With the present staff and equipment, the effort to evangelise the country is as likely to be successful as an attempt to irrigate the whole of the Continent from the waters of the Nile. The missionary penetration of a system into which is compacted the entire life of the people; a theocracy of Ishmaelite conception; a concentrated fanaticism that has fulminated for a millennium against every code of laws not found in the Koran, cannot be successfully achieved by a process of nibbling.

A thousand ships have sailed through the Mediterranean bearing missionaries to the Far East, as many have sailed along the west coast of Morocco, bearing missionaries towards Central and South Africa, while in this northern section, where Islam's mocking challenge is loudest, and where once a Christian community could boast a noble army of martyrs, the

Church shows fear and hesitation. And yet, in this neglected field are men of worldly wisdom and enterprise, building an Empire out of the very stuff which has stunned the Church!

A country that is worth civilising is worth Christianising, and a people that can be packed into the ranks of a modern army, where they show their mettle to advantage, are worthy of something more than the feeble effort which the Church, so far, has made to evangelise them.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTOLERANCE OF ISLAM

THOSE of us who have given the best part of our life to missionary work in North Africa would be encouraged to continue our efforts for the envangelisation of the country, if we received a larger measure of sympathetic prayer from the home Church.

The lack of enthusiasm for this field is usually attributed to the paucity of results which do not appear to be commensurate with the prolonged effort and expenditure put forth. The reports issued in the magazines of the various missionary societies operating in this country are frequently compared with those coming from other parts of the world—including Africa south of the Sahara—and the result of such comparison is derogatory to North Africa. If we turn from the wording of these reports to study the photographs which accompany them, the disparagement in North Africa becomes even more pronounced. For it can show no picturesque groups of converts standing by rivers, as in China and India, and upon the shores of African lakes, waiting for baptism.

Indeed, converts in North Africa are only registered in ones and twos, and these at rare intervals.

How are we to account for this state of affairs? It cannot be said that we are tied up to creaky methods which have been superseded by modern developments, for we are ready to adopt any line consistent with New Testament teaching which might afford us more effective means of advancing God's Kingdom. Nor is the spirit of sacrifice lacking among us. The nature of our work, combined with the peculiarities of the country, compels most of us to live in towns; but almost to a man I believe we would move into bamboo huts or tents, and abandon the comforts afforded us by town life, if such a step would lead to larger and more rapid results. The country villages and markets are not neglected. By motor car and cycle, and in some cases by animal transport, outlying districts are visited, and if space would permit, interesting details of this work could be given.

All this, one is aware, only serves to give more intense focus to the question: then why are results so meagre? If the coldness of the home Church towards this field is to be changed into one of warm and hearty interest, we must find an answer to this question.

The first part of the question is found in the peculiar circumstances in which missionary work is carried on in North Africa. In all non-Christian countries one perceives a tendency on the part of the people to persecute converts to Christianity. But in this country not only is there a propensity to persecute, there is also the command of Mohammed *which puts his followers under obligation to do so.* Consequently, when Moslems find one of their co-religionists has become a convert to Christianity, their efforts to get him back to Islam are something more than a mere

nagging process of occasional and petty annoyances; they become a campaign of ruthless and virulent attacks. The first profession of faith by the convert provokes a protest which is sustained in its fierceness by numerous passages from the Koran which not only permit to strike, but urge to kill. In these modern days one does not expect to see a convert stoned to death in the street, for Colonial Powers could not, if such an incident took place, stand aside and ignore it. But hidden, underhand means can be, and are, used to attain the same end.

I am writing this during the Sheep Feast. The few converts here in Mazagan who make open confession of Christ have refused to be present at the Killing of the Animal or to eat it when cooked. From all sides—husbands, parents, relatives, friends—pressure is being brought to bear upon them. They come to our house with ashen faces which tell their own tale, shaken in nerve by the ordeal of these days. Feeling that a way of escape might be found by taking them to the country for a picnic, my wife arranged accordingly, only to find on her return in the evening that relatives had been calling at our house enquiring for their daughters, determined that in one form or other, they shall make contact, through other members of the family, with the sheep. We have stood by them in fear and trembling, afraid lest at any moment the pressure might prove too much. In one case—that of a married woman—the convert was not allowed to leave the house, so she sent for fish and ate it while the other members of the family, gorging themselves with mutton, sat and scowled at her with a bitterness painful as blows. The strain of all this proved too much for the body, and at the moment of writing she is ill.

If these circumstances give a partial answer to the question we now face, another addition towards a fuller reply is found in what we might call the "Hidden Ones." I am convinced that, following on our preaching of Jesus, a considerable body of men and women have fallen under conviction of sin, and according to the measure of their light, have accepted Jesus as Saviour. Again and again I have spoken at gatherings, sometimes for an hour or longer, when one could not resist the feeling that souls were responding. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, weighing every sentence I write, I repeat that it is my conviction that not a few have met with Christ and been saved. Well, where are they? They are hidden; unable or unwilling to face the consequences that would inevitably follow a confession of faith. They are not ashamed of Christ, but afraid of their neighbours. These assertions—if space would allow it—could be supported by the recital of incidents too real to be doubted. Let one or two suffice.

One night, when walking home in the dark, a young man to whom I had often spoken approached me: "That tract you gave me," he said, "contains the truth. I now see that Mohammed, being a sinner himself, cannot be a Saviour for me." When I reminded him that with the dawning of this truth upon his soul there devolved upon him the responsibility of making it known to others, he remarked that he was prepared to "whisper" it but not to proclaim it aloud.

Another man with whom I frequently talked, seemed to reach a decision for Christ. On more than one occasion when I have been dealing with groups in the street, he has come forward, and though in a timid way, he has given his support to the gospel. I was eager

to see this man make a clean break with Mohammedanism, and urged him to make open confession of Christ. His reply was significant: "You are English—no one dare touch you; I am a son of the country without protection. You are like a bird at liberty; I am caged and may become the sport of any passer-by who thinks he may poke and annoy me as he pleases."

A few days ago a young man knocked at our door. He wanted to see me. On being invited to come in and sit down, he unfolded a book from the wrappings of a newspaper. It was a New Testament which he had purchased from the bookshop in Casablanca. He had been under the influence of missionaries and was searching the Scriptures himself. On being asked if he had received Jesus, he replied in the affirmative. I then proceeded to ask what his parents and companions would say if he told them what he had told me. It was the same story in his case: he must go softly.

In no case do we give these men money, food or any promise of work. A man at the bottom of a pit, awakened to the sense of his danger, will not ask a man at the top, who offers to throw him down a rope, how much he is going to pay him for the privilege of being allowed to effect his deliverance. Let the Moslem come under the conviction of sin, behold the wonder of Calvary, and he will move as the rest of us have done in similar conditions.

The formation of an aggressive Christian Church in this land is held up by Islam's tyrannous denial of religious liberty to those who desire to make a break with a system which works no deliverance, gives no peace. In circumstances such as these, we must not hurry to hurl the epithet of "coward" against men

and women whose difficulties in the way of open confession can hardly be exaggerated.

At this juncture it would be unwise, we think, to urge native converts to a form of evangelisation which, by reason of its aggressiveness, would lead to open conflict with both the political and religious bodies of the country. The time is not yet ripe for the open-air meeting in the public square. But nevertheless we pray and look for such a climax to our missionary efforts, and in the meantime our task is to make the necessary preparations for such an event.

To achieve this end, which will lead to widespread and open preaching, and upon which the evangelisation of the people depends, our first step is to form native churches, wherever possible, however small.

In some towns such groups are already in existence. As their number grows, and the feeling of fellowship becomes deepened and intensified, there will come to some of these converts at least, an experience of Divine fullness which by its overflow will reach outsiders, demonstrate its reality in patient self-denial, and so create the atmosphere where a more aggressive testimony for Christ becomes possible.

As a result of advancing education and leavening of public opinion with more tolerant ideas, the ground is being prepared to give the native Church its opportunity of a reasonable hearing.

CHAPTER XXIV

RACHMAH : A CONVERT

THIS chapter sets forth the career of a Moslem convert, who, for twenty years, lived a life that manifested the excellency and power of the grace that wrought her deliverance. Her conversion was so thorough, that every chain that bound her to the past was snapped ; such a flood of light was poured into her soul, that anything in the nature of compromise, even for peace's sake, was treated as crime, and crushed.

For reasons that need not be detailed here, a veil must be drawn over some very important stages of this convert's pilgrimage ; but it was such a heroic example of faith under conditions of peculiar trial, that only a pentecostal experience will account for its potency, and it is this consideration that leads us to believe that the story told will be an inspiration to others.

Her name was Rachmah ; she was born and brought up in a Moorish town. Her parents, though not rich, were well-to-do ; we might say they belonged to the middle class. In the home religion was taken seriously, " No God but Allah, and Mohammed His prophet " was their creed, and it was held with the tenacity of those who will tread through fire rather than surrender it.

Their daughter Rachmah was very dear to them, but was diseased in her body. Visits were made to Saints' tombs, native doctors were consulted, talbs were called in to read, but their remedies, believed to be efficacious in most maladies, proved futile in hers. It was readily acknowledged, however, that God moves in mysterious ways, and might it not be His

will that the sick one be sent to the Mission Hospital for treatment? True, the people running that concern were infidels, and Rachmah's people were singularly suspicious of them, but if a cure were wrought there, it would but add strength to their belief, and prove that God can use the industry of infidels to advance His cause. At first this reasoning appeared perfectly sound, but on further examination flaws began to show through it, for if the patient was cured she might think Jesus wrought the miracle, it being a well-known fact that in hospital He got credit and glory for everything. But this Moslem family, shackled as it was by false fears about Jesus, had to send their girl to hospital or face the approaching alternative of death. To hospital, then, she was sent, and the missionaries, true to their calling, preached the Gospel to the soul while tending the body. To some minds it would seem that the story of the Cross, which they were presenting, did not provide them with a tithe of the equipment necessary to accomplish the work they were aiming at. What effect could it have upon a soul soaked in Moslem theology, as Rachmah's was, and who had heard a hundred times a day through all her life, of the finality and infallibility of Mohammed and his message? Did they expect her suddenly to loosen her grip of the past, and throw aside beliefs that bound life to what was believed to be God's best? But the preachers were not cowed by these considerations, and persisted in their attack until one day they saw the whole structure of Mohammedanism in the patient's life collapse: Rachmah was converted to Jesus! Yes, but was it the kind of conversion that stands when opposition begins to thicken, or the kind that snaps at the first shock it receives? Confession of faith is easy when circumstances combine to support

us, but Rachmah, now healed in body, had to go home and witness in an atmosphere antagonistic to the Christian faith, where she had to muster all her strength to keep herself from going under.

At first her people were merely annoyed and took measures to annihilate the antipathy now being manifested toward her father's religion. But their task was a greater one than they had anticipated, and to their dismay they found, as the months passed away, that this new religion had taken such deep root, that drastic measures would require to be employed if it were to be destroyed. One thing after another was tried ; an appeal to the affections at one time ; a reminder of the disgrace being brought upon the family name at another, but these tactics seemed only to stiffen her resistance. Then followed sore persecution with threat upon threat, but this Moslem convert would not budge even if they beheaded her. With no signs of recantation following their threats, the parents were now to seek relief from their sorrow by getting rid of their daughter : she was to be poisoned. But before their threat had materialised, she ran away and sought refuge at the Mission House. Here she remained in hiding for two years, but the constant dread of seeing her father step in at the door to drag her home, began to tell on her body. One could hardly be surprised if, in these circumstances, there should also be a shrinkage of faith, but it was not so. There was Divine grace in combination with a character of a very robust type, manifesting a faith that could neither be eradicated nor suppressed. For health's sake a change became necessary, and one morning early two missionaries, taking Rachmah with them, set out for a town in the interior, some ninety or more miles distant. It was mid-winter, and the rivers were

swollen with recent rains. There were some anxious moments when mules in mid-stream, the water up to their necks, began to stumble. At the foot of the mountains a snow storm delayed them three days. It was an exceptionally trying journey, and poor Rachmah, unaccustomed to travel, reached her destination in great weariness.

At the time of which I write there was no European power protecting Morocco, and not long after the party had arrived at their new quarters, rebellion broke out among the tribes. It continued for some months until it became dangerous for Europeans to remain in the interior, and so they were ordered by their Consuls to make for the coast. It was impracticable to take Rachmah, but she found a home for the time being with a native colporteur. Later on, however, when the country became settled again, she was able to travel to the coast and say good-bye to her friends, who were going home on furlough. It was at this juncture of her life that she was sent to Mogador, and when Mrs. Haldane landed there from England she became greatly attached to Rachmah, who taught her Arabic. When we were married, she asked us to take her into our home as a servant, which we did. Up to this time her life had been full of stress, storm and uncertainty, but now became tranquillised and settled. For some years she did the work of our house, but it caused us some disquietude to see so fine a Christian giving all her time to the drudgery of the kitchen, when she might be doing a really good work by serving Christ in the gospel. Here we must stop to say that, during the years she acted as servant with us, we tested her truthfulness and honesty in every reasonable way, and without the slightest exaggeration can say we never once found them to fail. When dealing with natives

—even those professing conversion—about anything that has gone wrong in the house, we notice that frequently a question, instead of receiving a direct answer, is surrounded with a mob of words, which is simply an attempt to shift the blame to other shoulders. Those who have known Rachmah will bear witness that she never yielded to this form of weakness. She had her faults and failings, for a strong character touched with pride, and a hasty spirit that would work havoc if not constantly guarded, were part of her natural make-up, but no one ever found a crack in the constancy of her straightforwardness. Here is an incident characteristic of her. One evening Mrs. Haldane and I went out, leaving our boy, who was then barely two years old, in Rachmah's care. When we returned we found a valuable vase lying broken. Mrs. Haldane, assuming that baby had bumped into the table and knocked the vase down, said: "Oh, baby, see what you have done!" Immediately Rachmah replied: "Please it was me: it fell from my hand while I was admiring it." If anyone at home reading this should say: "Well, that is just what any Christian would have confessed," may I remind him that the story of the Gospel among primitive people is scarred by lying, a sin so deeply ingrained into the Oriental life that years of Christian teaching is needed to oust it from native churches.

After prayer and much wavering, we ventured to write our Field Superintendent to see if Rachmah could not be given a place on our staff as a native helper. At that time there were no paid native workers, but the Superintendent took the matter up with Home Council, and a new day dawned for Rachmah when she left the kitchen and was separated unto the Gospel of Christ. It seemed to us that the best scope for her

talents lay in a girls' school, the nucleus of which already existed in three or four girls that spent much of their time running in and out of the Mission House. This number was soon augmented when Mrs. Haldane, in visiting homes, invited mothers to send their girls along. Rachmah knew the Gospel and the Bible throughout, but had had no training in teaching or controlling a girls' school. As her intelligence was above the average, it was not difficult for her to learn. This work in Mogador brought her experience which proved of great value when, later on, she took up a much larger work in Mazagan. The school had been running for about two years when we were asked to go and take charge of the work at Mazagan. The question as to what was to be done with Rachmah was never raised, she had become part of our home, and it was understood that wherever we went she would accompany us. This brought the school in our house at Mogador to an end, and caused much sorrow among the girls who had grown to love their teacher with all their hearts.

When we reached Mazagan we found a school in existence, but the number of children attending was small. Rachmah, with her usual thoroughness, threw herself into the work, and Mrs. Haldane went round the streets and into houses, inviting children to come to school. With each succeeding month numbers increased; mothers were delighted with the samples of sewing the little girls brought to them, and, later on, were surprised to find, not only that they could sew, but also read! The news went round to an ever-widening circle, until we found it necessary to enlarge our building to double its size. For seven years Rachmah carried on this work, which when once established never flagged in interest, and showed

little fluctuation in numbers. When mothers brought their little ones to school for the first time, they usually had some conversation with the teacher, and were able at once to get the gauge of her character. Many of the girls, when they grew up, left school to be married. Each of them took a gospel to their new home, which was brought out and read, if husbands would allow it. These husbands were of the usual Moorish type: quick to quarrel; fussy about their wives' behaviour, feeble in their own; men who knew the law of coercion, but were strangers in large measure to compassion. Rachmah had no power to regulate those marriages. Fathers, in most cases, put their girls down to the highest bidder, and they (the girls) had no more power to choose where they would go than the article under the auctioneer's hammer. But the girls were not abandoned after leaving school, for Rachmah paid visits to them, and the manner in which she frequently scolded unscrupulous husbands for their behaviour was a great accessory in aiding young wives to hold their own.

On Sunday afternoon Mrs. Haldane has a meeting of Moslem women. When, for any reason, she was unable to speak at this gathering, Rachmah was always ready to take her place. To see her in that meeting, Arabic Bible in hand, preaching the Gospel and driving home facts with the gestures of an Oriental soul kindled to enthusiasm was always an inspiration. It is comparatively easy to be a Christian even in a Mohammedan land, if the convert confines his confession to the missionary, and becomes detached from the world. But to "blaze the matter abroad," as Rachmah did, makes demands upon courage and strength to an extent that is only purchasable by experience. These women as they sat and listened

had no idea of the battle the preacher fought in days gone past, they knew nothing about her home connections, for as the search had not been abandoned they were still a secret. They longed to know who she really was, where she came from, but as her presence seemed always to dazzle and dwarf them, they never could muster courage to ask.

Ramadan, the fast month, was always a time of real testing for her. Moors stake their souls on Ramadan ; to eat during that month is to leap into the Devil's lap. In this town of Mazagan, Rachmah was for years the only grown-up woman who would not fast ; although, later on, she won others to her side. By keeping quiet and secluded until the month ran out, things could have been made much easier, but her nature revolted against both cowardice and deceit. She was not fasting, then the fact must be heralded from the house-top. It was always a time when friends became cool, when admirers began to waver, and when a feeling of hostility was in the air.

With the passing of the years she began to feel the tug towards home territory, and frequently spoke of parents and relatives in a tone of great sorrow. Sometimes she had almost made up her mind to pay them a visit, but when the consequences were summed up, it was invariably postponed to a later date.

Touches of real happiness were brought into her life through the kindness of a few friends at home. Rachmah longed to visit England, but never had the money to cover expenses. But we did not encourage her much in this direction for there is always the danger of native converts thinking their own country too drowsy to live in after they have doffed native habits and dress during a prolonged stay in London.

And now we come to her last illness and death.

Typhus broke out in the town, and Rachmah visited some of her friends who were stricken down. Unfortunately she caught the infection, and after a ten days' illness, passed away. During the last three days of her illness she was quite unconscious, and no last message, for which we had hoped, was given. We called in the French doctor, nursed her day and night, did everything that could be done, but the Lord took her. When the news of her death got around, people came from all quarters of the town to mourn over the dead body. Most Moors are buried without a coffin, but Rachmah had frequently hinted to Mrs. Haldane that, if she should die in our house, a coffin be provided. So a few hours after she died, she was laid in her coffin—people in this country are buried on the day of their death—and a large number of people gathered round. We held a funeral service. An address was given in which the company was reminded how Rachmah had gone in and out among them all, followed by an exhortation to fall in line with her faith and receive her Saviour. The children sang hymns learned in school ; one of these was, " We'll never say good-bye in heaven." Then the body was carried away by Moors, but no mention was made of Mohammed's name. We told the bearers that, as she was a Christian, we desired a quiet funeral, with no Moslem ceremony. Rachmah had changed her religion, she was a Christian, but could not change her nationality, she was still a Mooress, and because of this was buried in a Moslem cemetery. A few Christian women followed in the rear of the procession, waited until the grave was filled in, and then placed a bunch of flowers on top.

There lies Rachmah waiting the sound of the last trump, when the dead shall rise and a new order be

established, for " They shall see His face ; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there . . . for the Lord shall give them light and they shall reign for ever and ever."

CHAPTER XXV

A SOUSSI AND HIS SHIELD OF PARABLES

ONE morning, when I looked out from my bedroom window, I noticed that the shop on the opposite side of the street, which had been empty for some months, had now a tenant. A short man, elderly in appearance, with a facial expression indicating intelligence above the average, sat reading. I was interested to notice in the following days that he had a collection of books which, judging from the rapid swaying motion of his body, he read with ease and fluency.

An arrival of this kind at the door of a mission house in Morocco is an event of some importance, since less than five per cent of the people are literate.

He had not been settled many days in his new premises, when women of all ages could be seen calling upon him. This seemed to indicate that he was a writer of charms. A little investigation on my part brought out the news that this man was a very learned Fakir just arrived from the Soos district, and that he was an expert in producing the type of charm that prevents a husband from bringing in a second wife to his home, when the first, or present, one is getting old ; that is about thirty years of age.

I called to see him one day, and after a lengthy run of salutations, the following conversation ensued.

"You must be a stranger in this town, as I have never till these days seen you about our streets." To which he replied:

"Allah is Omnipresent! I am a Soussi. My son, a mere lad, came north to seek for work some months ago, and as we have received no communication from him since his departure, I and my household have come to search for him." After expressing the hope that without undue delay the lad might be found, I expressed my interest in the fact that he was a reader, and then hinted that I might be allowed to see what he read.

He gave a furtive glance towards a column of books beside him, and then, turning to me said: "All these books are sacred. No one is allowed to handle them save those who witness to our Prophet." Then, laying his hand on the Koran, he continued: "Everything worthy the exercise of a man's brain, or the contemplation of his soul is here: Law, astronomy, chemistry, theology: as I say, everything worthy of man's intelligence."

"That is interesting. Now I am a missionary, my business being to search for truth and, having found it, to make it known to others."

"At five thousand francs per month?" he suggested with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

"Not so much as that, friend, but anyway my point now is that, since I am a searcher after truth, and you claim it is all in that book, surely you ought to allow me to read it."

"If you will here and now embrace Islam, the book is at your disposal," was his snappy reply.

"That won't do, friend. Examination precedes purchase. You are inviting me to purchase a house I have not seen."

These remarks prompted an irrelevant question: "Who taught you Arabic?" It was asked to divert conversation into another channel, but I refused the bait.

"Now," I continued, "I have a book which I am convinced contains God's final word to men. I am not urging you to become a Christian, but would like you to read this book, and tell me what you think of its claims and teaching. A book that claims to contain the word of God must throw its doors open for investigation, and I am asking you to accept my offer."

He had never seen a copy of the New Testament, and when I gave him one, he delved eagerly into its contents. I kept away while he was reading it, but when he had finished it, I called to see what impression had been made upon him. The teaching of Jesus had appealed to him, but not Paul's epistles. The idea of sin presenting a problem which God had to solve by means of sacrifice was foreign to him. But he was willing to listen to any interpretation or explanation I had to offer, and as the weeks passed, I became hopeful of seeing him accept the New Testament as the word of God. I gave him several books, including Dr. Pfander's "Balance of Truth," all of which he read carefully.

He was eager that I should appreciate his position as being, in the matter of brains and thoughtfulness, distinctly above the average. He was always on his guard against any effort on my part to jolt him out of his entrenched position; and lest I should think of him as dull or stupid, he frequently reminded me, in one of his own proverbs, that "little by little the camel goes into the stewpot."

I spent much time with him, and that for two reasons.

First, I had no hesitation in believing that, if he could be won over to our way of thinking, his knowledge, penetrating insight and attractive nature could become a force for the Kingdom of God. Second, I got from him in the course of an afternoon's conversation a deeper understanding of the intricacies of Moorish life and mentality than could be found elsewhere in the course, perhaps, of a whole year.

But I found to my confusion that Embarek—for that was his name—had subterranean patches in his make-up which took one by surprise and showed that his smooth surface was not the gauge to test his whole outlook.

It had not occurred to me that he expected any remuneration for his interesting conversation, any more than I had thought to ask payment for mine. But he surprised me on that score. There was a knock at the door, following which the servant handed me a letter. It was from Embarek, who had appeared to me as picking his steps towards the Kingdom.

This is what he wrote : " In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful. From Embarek to the English doctor. My lord, behold the tree with its drooping foliage. How the green leaves delight the eyes! Under its shade what restfulness! But in this case it is not a fruit tree and therefore if one tries to live under it, he will die of starvation. My lord, you are that tree."

The next day, bearing the letter, I called at his shop.

" What kind of a letter is this you have written me ? "

" Have you read it ? " he asked.

" Yes, and to make sure I was not mistaken got a reader to confirm my reading of it."

Now he became bold, but not impudent: "You bring me books, books, books! And how you talk! It reminds me of a river in my country after heavy rains. And it's all nice, good words, but I have been compelled to let you know that no man can live on leaves. Did I ever find a five-franc bill within the covers of any book you gave me? No: nothing but leaves." At this juncture he quoted a proverb to further expose my parsimony, but as I had not previously heard it, could not come by its meaning. At my request he wrote it on paper. Its force would be lost in English, unless we made it rhyme, as it does in Arabic. I would run something like this:

> The blessing is found in open hands.
> Nothing but words? The man succumbs.

I was glad to see, however, that he continued his reading of the Scriptures and his welcome in the following weeks was as hearty as ever, despite the fact that so far there was nothing but leaves.

But in different ways he occasionally teased me for my lack of generosity. One day he lifted a reed-pen and without dipping it in ink began to draw it across the paper as if he were writing. When I drew his attention to the lack of ink in his pen, I fell into the trap he had prepared for me.

"Exactly," he said with manifest glee: "I am the paper; you are the pen; and until the pen is dipped in a dollar, the paper is not impressed."

I urged that if there was to be any remuneration, it should be given to the person at the top of the pit who finds a rope and endeavours to haul up the victim who has fallen into it. I had too readily taken it for granted that our relative positions had been agreed

upon; that he was the victim and I the deliverer. But his reply to this showed he was thinking in the reverse order.

"Exactly!" he exclaimed. "I don't say I have got you out of the pit yet, but you are on the way towards the top, and a little remuneration by the way would give fresh impetus to my efforts!"

On one occasion, when I referred to his trade in charms as being nothing more than a fraud and a work of the Devil, he lifted a bit of paper and wrote: "Follow your father's trade and you'll always prosper." To clinch the assertion he produced a handful of dollar bills: "If that isn't prosperity, what is?"

He resented my poking at his profession, and was annoyed at being classified among evil-doers. "See, here are your books. Please take them away, New Testament with them. I'm not prepared to follow their teaching." I took them, but not without warning him that he could not escape the consequences of rejecting the truth contained in the books. I suggested that, when he got over this bout of irritation I might call again. His response to this was recourse to writing: "What is the good of all this talk and argument?" ran his note. "The world is the ocean; we are the fish; death is the fisherman who will in due time haul us all out. Then we shall know who is right." To which I replied, that it might be too late then to remedy matters.

Some weeks after he returned my books, I was addressing a group of men outside the night-shelter building. I had been speaking for ten minutes when Embarek arrived and joined us. My message being delivered, I suggested that perhaps someone in the audience would like to give their opinion on what had been said. All eyes were turned upon Embarek.

He being the recognised scholar of the group had the honour to reply.

He did a bit of clever talking, which was kept up for some fifteen minutes, and which might be summarised as follows: We are willing to examine (*Bhit*) Mr. Haldane's message, and more especially that part which deals with the forgiveness of sin based upon the death of Jesus the Son of Mary. He urges us to abandon Islam and embrace the Gospel, but that would involve us in a risk we are not prepared to take at this stage, for he has not yet convinced us that his Scriptures are superior to our own. He concluded by saying that he objected to the way I paraded the sins of Moslems before the eyes of the vulgar, then added with a smile as he turned his head in my direction, "but I am sending him to-morrow a letter dealing with that point."

The letter came, and ran thus: The parable of the pointed finger. When we despise and insult other people, such action, by revealing the meanness of our own nature, shows we are worse than they are; better leave God's creatures to His judgment. If, however, a man is your oppressor, these remarks do not apply. As to the pointed finger, that is God's prerogative.

But Embarek's elucidations of his parables are always more instructive than the parables themselves; and so I called at his shop and asked him to expound the parable of the pointed finger.

"It has a double meaning," he said. "First, when you point your forefinger at men and charge them with sin, as you did to us the other night, three of your other fingers are turned back over the palm of your hand, pointing at yourself. For every sin I can lay to the charge of another man, my heart charges me with three of my own.

" That is the first meaning, and here is the second : when the forefinger is stretched out pointing the direction of the straight way (*Tarek Ilmostakima*) three are turned back suggesting the opposite direction."

Having expounded his parable, he took to preaching. " Don't you see," he proceeded, " that life is like the stretched-out hand with three fingers opposing one ? When desire is in the heart to do a good deed, three others of an opposite nature arise to challenge it. We must be satisfied if in this world we succeed in throwing into the balance one good deed against every three bad ones."

I had been reading a book on astronomy, when it occurred to me that possibly Embarek might have some interesting, if quaint, observations to make on the subject. He brought out a book on astronomy, showed me numerous diagrams and geometrical subtleties, each with detailed and—so it seemed to me —fanciful interpretations.

At the end of a long talk, he concluded thus : A community of people lived on a plain where sand, lime and stone lay scattered about in profusion. This people had not found the art of combining these materials, so as to make use of them, and consequently had no shelter save that of straw huts. Then a stranger arrived to live among them, who knew how to use these materials for building purposes, and soon everybody began to follow his example, until a great and substantial city was reared.

He continued : The *Koran*, the heart of man, the Universe—when we know how to communicate method to these, so as to relate them one to the other, we can burn our huts where fear, doubt and worldly cares (*Him idooneea*) oppress us, and proceed to build a stronghold that will be our salvation.

And now after all this effort, stretching over a period of two years, where does he stand ? At the time of writing this, he is again engaged in reading the epistle of Paul to the Romans. I saw him this week. He stated his position thus: " I have faith in Jesus Christ, but three obstacles confront me and block my way to becoming a Christian. In the first place I do not like the phrase ' Son of God.' I do not understand it. Secondly, if I become a Christian, my livelihood goes, for I cannot continue in my profession. And thirdly, if I confess Jesus before men, I may find myself in prison."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GOSPEL AMONG GARRULOUS BOYS

It is 6 p.m., and the caretaker has just opened the hall door. Fifty Moorish boys, ranging in ages between seven and fifteen, rush into the building. The bigger lads line up for a game of tug-o'-war, some take to skipping, other make a dash for the ropes dangling from the roof, and endeavour to pull themselves towards the top. The smaller boys tumble about upon the matting, while a few of the quieter type sit down to look at the pictures in the " London News."

Having allowed them a good half-hour for the overflow of their surplus energy, I make my appearance. Two boys who have quarrelled and come to grips are unaware of my presence. They have got to the stage where they are cursing each other's parents. The extent to which these boys curse is almost too terrible for description. One may succeed in curbing the habit during the time they are in the mission premises,

but that does not effect a cure against its recrudescence in the street. What kind of Deity is the "Allah" of the Moors—so one may ask—since they mingle His name familiarly with filth like this: "*Allah unzzil aalek ilhara.*" Shall I translate this literally? "May God cause to descend upon you (like rain) human dung."

The two boys are turned out to the street. The others are asked to sit down, while we endeavour to show them how awful must be the consequences of this appalling practice of cursing indulged in by ninety per cent. of the population. I suggest that if they must curse, they leave out God's name, and ask the Devil to do this dirty work. On hearing the Devil's name mentioned one lad says with great solemnity: "May God preserve us!"

As we talk, there is a knock at the door; the cursers have sent a message by the caretaker, and I gather from its trend, that he has added his own view of the matter to their message which, after a request to be allowed to come in, is to the effect that they will not use bad language any more. What I suspected to be the caretaker's addition to this simple request and resolve—for his sympathy was on the side of the lads turned out—ran like this: "Not in this life will there be a cessation of the conflict between the mud-grovelling sins of the tongue and the celestial longings of the soul, and we all know the tongue wins." This fatal assumption that the body has the soul in its grip to bind and loose, much as it pleases, has effected in the mind of the Moor a coalescence of those corrupt religious sentiments that make him a victim to every impulse that agitates his life.

"Shall I let them in?" asked the caretaker. I refused them entrance, put them on trial for a month, and suggested they return at the end of that period,

if they felt confident they could control their tongues while in my premises. The other lads evinced some surprise at the severity of my sentence, for after all the expulsed lads had only done what they all do, except when under my eye.

To get a few elemental Christian truths into the minds of this raw material is an achievement only possible to those who have a large measure of Job's characteristic virtue.

My boys are mostly poor, and what they earn is spent on cigarettes and cinemas. They clothe themselves by picking up European tatters from the second-hand clothing shops and sometimes out of the dustbin.

One evening, a lad who was in a funny mood and wanted to appear clever, stopped me in the middle of my address and said: "You, Mr. Haldane, you're nothing. The Moslems go to Mosque, the Jews to Synagogue, and Europeans to the Catholic Church; you nowhere. Europeans all go to the cafés, where they dance and drink, to cinemas, where they spend the night. You don't go; you're nothing!"

"My dear boy," I said, "whatever would I do wasting money on a cinema, when you boys come here three times a week? Look at yourself; on one foot is a heavy man's boot, on the other a high-heeled lady's shoe. Your jacket was never made for your figure, for the pockets are down at your knees and the shoulders at your elbows. The collar you are wearing is an inch too big, there is no stud to hold it down at the back, and the tie, which should be under your chin, is nearer the back of your head! You spend money seeing Charlie Chaplin! Have a look at yourself twice a week, save your money and buy decent clothes." (Loud applause, in which the chief culprit takes vigorous part.)

But that boy took revenge on me; this is how he did it. We had memorised some New Testament texts, and one day when I was passing through the market, which was crowded with natives and Europeans, my opponent shouted at the top of his voice: "Mr. Haldane, 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' 'His blood cleaneth us from all sin.'" He then broke into a laugh and shouted what in English would amount to "It's all bunkum," and then bolted.

One night, one of the lads took a fit and collapsed. As he lay groaning on the floor, all the others present became terror-stricken. "Evil spirits," whispered one. "Allah preserve us," said another. When the boy recovered, I proceeded to tell them that the fit had its root in some physical defect and was not the result of any activities displayed by evil spirits. I was annoyed because it was obvious no impression was being made upon them. I stopped talking and invited the whole class to follow me into our garden. It was a dark night, there was no moon, and we carried no lamp. We grouped together at the bottom of the garden some fifteen yards from a big fig tree, the root of which was overgrown with tall shrubs.

"Now," I said, "if there are evil spirits lurking about as you believe, the root of that tree must be one of their strongholds." Someone gave a weird yell; a stampede followed. I got them back again, and said that the first boy who ran away would be nicknamed "coward" for the rest of his life. "If there is a stronghold of evil spirits," I repeated, "it is there at the foot of that tree." There was some shuffling, suggestive of another rush, but I managed to steady them by calling their attention to the fact

that there was another fig tree at the top of the garden. "Now, who among you will go to that fig tree, walk round its root and return?" No one moved, and when one boy urged another to go the retort was: "Why don't you go yourself?"

"You chaps are always telling me about the brave deeds of the Moslems, but it is all bluff; you're a batch of cowards! Why, I could find a score of European boys in this town who would not only walk around the tree but sleep under it. Cowards! Don't talk to me any more about your deeds of bravery."

One boy of slender build did not like this thrust, so off went his upper garment, and the belt round his waist was tightened. "Are you going to the tree?" I asked.

"Europeans!" he replied. "What they can do I can do." And away he went. It was so dark that we could just see his form reach the tree, and then he was lost among the shrubs.

After the lapse of something like five minutes, during which time we heard nothing but the rustling of leaves, a voice shouted from the tree, "God is great; there are no evil spirits in this quarter, but the figs are just jolly!" The rogue was sitting among the branches eating my figs. All the others rushed to the tree, and the powers of darkness were exorcised by the power of the stomach. From that day to this I have heard little talk among these lads of the ravages of evil spirits.

On another occasion, when about to address the class, I noticed a boy of about fourteen years of age sitting in the rear all alone. He was a stranger, having just arrived from Rabat that week. I bade him welcome, and asked him to come forward and sit

among the others. He signalled with a shake of the head that he desired to remain where he was. He was beautifully dressed, his clean, expensive garments presenting a striking contrast to the dirty rags of the others. His reason for remaining in the background, I judged, was fear of gathering vermin.

To make him feel more at ease in his new surroundings, I asked how long he was going to stay in Mazagan ; but instead of replying to my question, he informed me he was a Shareef. Another lad eager to supplement this information added, " He is from a wealthy family."

I spoke for fifteen minutes on the text : " Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The address finished, a boy put up his hand to indicate he wished to speak. Permission being given, he related how an hour before coming to the class he had bought a knife with three blades. Eager to stage his purchase, he brought it out before I entered, to show the other lads. While the knife was going round to be examined and admired, its owner was exercising upon the trapeze. When he descended, the knife had disappeared and no one could account for its loss.

As he related the incident, tears were trickling from his eyes. He asked me to give him permission to search all present—a lengthy business with fifty boys—but I could not deny him his request. All in vain ; there was no knife. Moorish boys can stage a lie with consummate skill, and I began to doubt the loss of any knife, having a suspicion that the whole thing was arranged with a view to drawing out my pity in the expectation that I would put down the money to buy another. With this suspicion simmering

in my mind, I said: "Enough of this weeping and searching for thieves. Let's have a round at gymnastics."

Down sat the boy who lost the knife to weep in a corner, while two of his chums affectionately put their arms around his neck to comfort him.

Now I could see why the Shareef from Rabat had come to the class: he was a gymnast, having had training in a college in his town. He was in great form, and even the boy weeping in the corner forgot his loss, got up and drew near to see the skill of this new arrival. His display was drawing sweat, so he took off his two upper garments, leaving only a pair of baggy knickers as a covering. And now for his final feat! Catching two ropes which hung parallel from the roof, he pulled himself up half way, and then turned his body so that his legs pointed to the roof and his head to the ground. Then, just as the boys began to clap their hands in applause, the lost knife dropped from the baggy trousers of the gymnast!

This lad, being a stranger and a Shareef, was the only one not searched, and I'm sure no one was suspicious of him.

I remained in my seat in silence, wondering what would now happen. Simulating indifference, my lord the Shareef proceeded to put on his garments, and as he did so, talked incessantly and vaguely about all things being decreed by God until he succeeded in convincing some, at least, that it was a debatable point whether or not he should be charged with the theft.

I said nothing, but I heard two boys, who were going out with their arms around each other's necks in an affectionate manner, say: "True it is, there is only one God, and just as true it is that if a child is

brought up in the way it should go it won't depart from it when it is older."

On another occasion, when a boy was swinging on the ropes, some fluid matter began to ooze from the pocket of his badia. On seeing this another shouted: "God curse the devil! Look! Look! Aalal who steals his mother's eggs to buy cigarettes forgot to sell them before he came into the class."

Once in about every six months I have to weed out the class. Some of the boys who come sit through the address with a blank look on their countenances that reveals the vacuum of their minds. One of these "weeds" had the high-sounding name of Abd El Kreem (Son of the Generous One).

"Now, Son of the Generous One," I said, "your term is completed, and I don't want you back here." He protested he had listened attentively and understood all I had said during the past months. To this I replied that I would apply a test, and if he came through, I would not classify him among the weeds. He had heard the story of the Prodigal Son at least a dozen times, so I asked him to repeat it. He did not know where to begin; couldn't frame a single sentence that had any bearing on the subject.

Finding himself classed among the weeds, he asked to be allowed to come in during the gymnastic exercises. This I refused. Following my refusal a sharp lad turned to him and exclaimed: "Hi! Hi! God is great! Do you imagine you are getting into the gymnasium without taking the class too? No: my father told me that the class is the important thing, and Mr. Haldane only uses the gymnasium as bait (*bash yijibidna*) to draw us in."

Two different sections of the town had arranged a football match between them. A number of the

players were lads belonging to my class. The captains of the respective teams called to ask if I would referee the game. When I showed reluctance to do this, they pleaded that unless I played this part, the game would break up in disorder, as games had done in the past, long before time was up.

I consented on the one condition: that there would be no cursing. A crowd of boys was waiting outside the gate, to know what decision I would give. When it was announced that I had consented to be their referee, a great shout went up. This annoyed one of the Captains, who was eager to make a speech. "Shut up, you crowd of animals! May God smite you with dizziness," he shouted. Tapping him on the shoulder, I said: "That is a nice beginning." "I beg your pardon, my lord," he said, "but we are not yet playing!" He then completed arrangements, and finished with the warning about swearing.

The game ran a normal course until about twenty minutes before time would be up. The "*Sidi Dowy*" team was then leading by five goals over the "*Darb Pasha*" team. There had been a few curses, but they were restrained, and I was pleased at the spirit manifested throughout the game. A goal kick was declared for the "*Darb Pasha*" team. From then the ball lost its resiliency, gradually deflated and then flattened out. There was no second ball, and the game was abandoned fifteen minutes before time was up. In these circumstances the match was declared a draw.

A few days after this the goalkeeper of the "*Darb Pasha*" team approached me with a mischievous smile, and informed me that, when he saw his team was hopelessly outclassed, he stuck a pin in the ball to save himself from the humiliation of defeat.

And what is the net result of this boys' work carried on now for many years? It would be difficult to calculate. Some have been in prison, others I know have taken to drink and drugs; but now and then as I move about I meet others—now young men; some of them married with families—who show some of the fruit one looks for from those who have had the advantage of Bible teaching.

CHAPTER XXVII

FIGHTING FANATICISM WITH FOOLERY

THE Moor has a simple classification of mankind: those who are God's favourites, and those who are the objects of His malediction. He is certain he belongs to the former category, and under this caustic inspiration turns loose upon the latter the offspring of fanaticism—scorn, hatred, cruelty, and curses. The changes that have taken place in his surroundings during the past quarter of a century have undoubtedly modified this clear-cut distinction and blurred the lines of demarcation; but this must not be taken to imply that his fanaticism has furled its banner and said good-bye. For the present he is under control, and having allowed himself a cynical adjustment to the regulations now in force, waits for what he calls, "*Mool Isaa*" (the Man of the Hour).

His favourite simile in this connection is of a fire whose flame is subdued by a heavy covering of ashes, but which is not extinct, and will flare up with their removal. The missionary preaching a gospel that levels all distinctions inevitably clashes at many points with Islam, and for that reason he is frequently

a target for those irascible passions seeking vent from within the breast of the Moor. This kind of thing cannot be fought out with the fists; it is frequently blind to logic, and will not submit to the ordinary conditions of reasoning. The missionary, therefore, in such cases is shut up to one of two alternatives: he may walk away and treat the situation as hopeless; or stand his ground and play off antagonism under the disguise of foolery. The incidents detailed in this chapter belong to the second alternative.

The Quarreller

A shopkeeper here in our town is nicknamed "The Quarreller." The appellation is appropriate, for he seems to live in a whirlpool of strife. On many occasions I have put before him the message of Jesus Christ, but that meek and lowly Person does not greatly impress him; Mohammed, with sword in hand, strikes a cord that harmonises with his own boisterous nature.

One day, when I entered his shop, he informed me that on the morrow he was setting out for Fez, where he hoped, at the Shrine of Moulay Yacoub, to find a cure for a disease troubling his boy. This information was conveyed to me with a brisk hopefulness that demonstrated his faith in this long-departed saint.

"Why," I asked, "since you believe in the living God, do you ask favours of dead men?" This question was not anticipated, and put him in an awkward position. He tried to wriggle his way out by quoting a passage from one of their books:

"There is no stir nor stoppage, except by the will of God." Then followed a lengthy discourse based on this passage, which was clenched with a question

and its answer : " Why am I going to Fez ? Since God stirs me to go, to stay is impossible."

I endeavoured to get him to admit a distinction between what God permits and what He prompts. He would not have it.

" Everything, even to the movement of your small finger, is of God."

" Adultery ? " I queried.

" I said everything. Why go into details ? "

While I was busy proving to him that some movements could not be attributed to God—as, for example, when a thief puts forth his hand to steal or the murderer lifts the knife to strike—two boys rushed past, and the garment of one caught the corner of a box of apples, which was projecting slightly into the street. The box came down with a thud, the apples being scattered in all directions.

The shopkeeper's temper was roused to the strength of a tempest, and from his lips there flowed a storm of curses.

I helped him to pick up the apples, and when we were seated again, and he had wiped the sweat from his brow, I laid my hand on his shoulder and said, " Mustapha, there is no stir nor stoppage except by the will of God ! This theory of yours is, presumably, applicable to apples just as it is to little fingers. Why then do you curse in this appalling manner, since God has arranged the whole thing ? " He did not take this thrust either kindly or patiently.

" Get out of this, you and your Jesus, the Son of Mary ! It's to hell you and all your kind must go, for you do not believe in our Prophet." As I got up to go, I said in a low voice, but loud enough for him to hear :

" No stir nor stoppage but by the will of God."

I had moved away but a few yards when a European woman stopped at the shop of my friend. Some complaint she had about short weight he had given to her girl.

"If there was short weight," I heard him bawl out, "she must have eaten or lost the goods on the way. I don't live by evil practices." For five minutes there was a wild scene as they volleyed each other with vituperative language. As usual, a curious crowd of people gathered to enjoy the fun. Finally the woman went away to lodge a complaint at the police station.

"What do you all want staring at me?" shouted the shopkeeper at the crowd. "Be off to your own market!" Then eyeing me in the crowd, he yelled at the top of his voice: "What I have been telling you about Europeans, is it not true?—a pack of infidels, and God loves them not." For a moment all eyes were turned on me. As I did not reply to his insulting words, he continued: "Don't pretend to be looking for some other body; you know I'm addressing you. That woman with the wagging tongue belongs to your species."

"Brother," I remarked quietly, "your theory, propounded a few minutes ago, permits me to say of her wagging tongue, 'There is no stir nor stoppage except by the will of God!'"

He went to Fez, but the boy did not recover. When he returned after an absence of ten days, I approached him with a smile, he stretched out his hand to shake mine, and then, with a rather embarrassed look said: "*Fat: fat*" (Let bygones be bygones).

This kind of thing may not sound like missionary work, but in my experience I have frequently found it effective in preparing the way for a future effort.

The Man with the Bleached Beard

"I think that will do now. I have heard enough about your devotions and prayers. Let me tell you something about God's way of salvation." Thus I spoke to an old man with a white beard who, the moment I introduced the gospel, shoved it into a siding and ran Islam and his own piety on the main line.

"What do you know of God and His way of salvation?" he asked with a smirk. I could see he was not going to listen to an "Infidel's" talk about God and salvation; but still I determined to try. I began:

"You know we all must die."

"That's commonplace" (*Haja misilama*), he blurted out.

"Now, you are an old man and——"

"Who is an old man?" he asked with a frown.

"You are,"

"I'm not."

"Well, your beard is white," I retorted.

"It is, but not with age; it is bleached with sitting too much in the sun." He walked away, gesticulating and talking to himself.

Some months later, I met him at the hospital.

"Hallo, young man!" I greeted him. "What do you want here? This is a place for old people whose backs and bones ache, not for young fellows like you." A smile lit up his face, broken now and then by a twitch which indicated pain, as he proceeded to tell me that since last he met me he had discovered he was an old man. A pain in his side, "as if a cat were clawing the raw flesh," was wearing him down. "May God guide you, Doctor; but you do tease me. Oh, my side!" Then very solemnly he said: "*Irracus*

dil moot (The messenger of Death) is on his way to call me."

Just where we stood I told him how our Lord came, and by shedding his blood for our sins was now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and that if the messenger of Death was nearing us, we could, by acceptance of such a Saviour, have a peaceful end. He listened reverently: I know no more.

A Difficult Case

A Moor was sitting in a little shop reading a book. An old man he was with furrowed face, glazed eyes and a long white beard. Right in front of him was the main street with its cars, coaches, cinemas, cafés, bootblacks and constant stream of natives, whose dress and drinks showed clearly that they had abandoned the standards of discretion set up by their fathers.

I desired to pay this man a visit, but his downcast eyes, ascetic countenance and moving lips, which were brought into play when not reading, indicated the Saint or Fanatic, or possibly a mixture of both. As I stood hesitating, a sense of responsibility seized me. I crossed the road and stood at the door of his shop. When I greeted him, he pursued his reading without deigning to notice me. My first impression was that an effort to impress this man with the Gospel was as likely to be successful as an effort to crack a walnut under the pressure of two feathers.

"What are you reading?" I asked. Without speaking he raised his head, and there upon his pouting lips sat anger, contempt, defiance and challenge. Before these had a chance to explode, I proceeded

with another form of salutation: "How are your bones, friend?" His face relaxed slightly, and he condescended to reply:

"There is no evil upon me."

This was encouraging, so I repeated my question as to what he was reading. Down went his eyes in silence, the head half hidden in the hood of his upper garment. Was he going to answer a "fool" according to his folly, or was he exercising that reticence which holy men consider necessary to sustain their mysterious ascendancy?

Suddenly he raised his head, and like a pea from a pop-gun there shot forth from his lips, "*Dooz-dooz!*" (Pass on). Again he began to read, this time with a vociferation that seemed to indicate an effort to chase me from his door. I interrupted him:

"Does this bit of ground on which I stand belong to you? Have you the title-deeds to confirm your claim?"

"And the door against which you lean," he asked, "is it yours?" This joke between us seemed to contribute something towards the end aimed at, for, under its stimulation he rose and stretched out his hand, which I grasped and shook, at the same time stepping into his shop. This sudden intimacy on his part more than surprised me, and I sat down to have a talk.

"I don't want you in this shop; please go out," he requested. I protested there was a lack of consistency in his manners:

"One moment you stretch out your hand for me to shake, the next you order me out."

"You made a mistake," he replied sharply; "I put forward my hand to shut the door against your

interference, and you mistook my action." So my joke, instead of breaking his resistance, had stiffened it!

But I caught him with guile before he had time to deliberate on his next move.

"If I wanted to become a Moslem, could you show me what I must do?" In all probability no European had ever asked him that question, and its uniqueness seemed to clutch at his mind. At first his reply was only a muttered mono-syllable, but as I pressed for an answer, he let himself go. On he rambled, through the maze of Koranic theology, without a suspicion of his error, until he became bogged in the intricacy of his own explanations.

I tried to listen as if I found his discourse entrancingly absorbing, in the hope that he would accord me an intelligent hearing when my turn to speak came. But, alas! my preaching seemed all in vain. There was no sensitive surface about his nature upon which a new impression could be made, and every argument I put forward was snapped by the weight of his creed, "No God but Allah, and Mohammed His Prophet."

In a last effort to find a way to his heart I put my hands together, bowed my head and prayed audibly, "O Lord, have mercy on this man, open his eyes to see the Truth."

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Praying for you."

He lifted his key from a shelf, stepped out and proceeded to lock the door. Before stepping out at the open flap, I put a New Testament on his table.

A young Moor had just finished his devotions in the mosque, and was making his way towards home. His measured step, solemn mien and downcast eyes revealed the saint in embryo. His rosary, praying mat and dress, which bore no mark of European innovation, exhibited the man replete with the armour of Islam.

When he reached that part of the street where I was preaching to a group of men he stopped, scowled at his co-religionists, and then proceeded to scold them. He was quite cognisant of the facts of the situation, having on more than one occasion broken up gatherings where I was preaching. Some weeks previous to this he entered one of my meetings, told the following story and hastily took his departure: Two men were crossing a river, one with a donkey load of apricots, the other with a camel load of iron. In mid-stream, where the water began to wash over the donkey's back, the owner of the apricots began to shout in a loud voice: "Oh Allah, have mercy on the camel-man and save his load of iron!" Having told this story, he looked at me and said: "How foolish of you with your perishable goods of Christianity to pray for us, who have the imperishable cargo of Islam."

On the present occasion, when he had finished scolding the men, he sent them about their business, and as they dispersed, he shouted after them:

"You donkeys! May God judge you!" Then turning upon me, he continued: "It is mean of you to try and force Christianity upon the notice of these illiterate donkeys."

"Are you an Arab?" I enquired.

"Yes, Blessed be the Highest."

"These men I was talking to are not Arabs, are they?" I further enquired.

"Yes, they are, and that is why I will not have them listen to you."

"Then they must be Moslems?" I suggested.

"You know they are," he replied haughtily.

"In that case the only difference between them and you—if I accept your estimate of them—is that they are untaught donkeys and you are a reading one."

For the next five minutes he did the talking. Before we parted, I offered to shake hands. He responded. I then invited him to call at my bookshop where, laying aside both hatred and foolery, we might search for, and succeed in finding, the way of salvation.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE POTENCY OF PATIENCE

"TAKE what is, trust what may be: that's life's true lesson." Students of Browning know that these words sum up his creed. It avails nothing to complain that the world might have been built to a better plan; that life might have been easier and happier for all. Since we cannot alter it, our wisdom is to use it as we find it, and wait for further developments and future revelations which will dissipate our fears.

The evangelisation of the world proceeds slowly, and it is easy to ask hard questions relative to that fact, which are difficult if not impossible to answer. But here, too, our duty is to take the situation as we find it, do what we can to establish righteousness, and then wait patiently for God.

" Where is the promise of His coming ? " That is the question of a scoffer whose patience has reached the point of exhaustion ; the man who is disappointed because God will not employ rush tactics to establish new heavens and a new earth.

In the spiritual realm short cuts usually end in sharp reverses and God does not employ them. When He would make a man a saint, He does not give him wings, but puts him through the mill of experience where the grinding is slow. The kingdom of God will be brought into being, not by magic, but by a process of mellowing. To try and force the millennium into existence by jerky and detached movements is as futile as an effort to ripen the harvest by kindling fires around the field. " The end of the Lord " is full of graciousness and pity, but it is conditioned by the exercise of patience. " Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and seen the end of the Lord."

Job was whipped out of his place of security and made to stand with his face to the blast. Under the force of the gale that broke upon him, his faith had its fluctuations : sometimes it seemed to be waning toward extinction ; at other times it was almost ousted by fatalism ; and again it soared to triumphant heights : " Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." His wife, placing an interpretation of permanency upon what was but a passing event, suggested to her husband that he should curse God and die. In all the riches and honour that God had bestowed upon them she now saw nothing but a scheme that had made their path more slippery and thus accelerated their fall.

Had Job acted on his wife's advice, he would have died in circumstances which to him at that juncture

were an overwhelming puzzle; and a multitude of onlookers whose faith was none too robust would have received a wrong impression of God and have found cause to sneer.

Our business is not to explain the mysterious working of God, but rather to demonstrate the reality of our faith by clinging to Him when He drags us over rough places without offering reasons for doing so. "This is the victory that overcometh the world"—not our clumsy explanations of God's movements in the present, nor our clever guesses about His plans for the future: no, not these, but faith.

When the question was put to Jesus, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" His reply was: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate"—stressing the fact that our duty is, not to peer prematurely into the future of the kingdom, but rather to fulfil such conditions as secure our entrance into it. God expects us to take the initial step now without dragging in complex questions relating to later developments. How foolish it is for us to sulk because there is not an easy solution to all our problems; how feeble we are when our prayers become tinged with impatience that seeks to coerce God into cutting short His work, so that it may be brought within the scope of our finite understanding.

"Those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Thus our Lord warns His hearers that so many complex factors enter into the working of Divine Providence that a clear picture is not always visible. The thing of paramount importance for them, however, was not to explain the mysterious works of God, but to repent, and thus secure their own salvation. This is the

first step, and until that step is taken, our questions will tend to obscure rather than clarify the issue! It is upon the outcome of things rather than their origin that we must focus our attention, if we are to profit by them. May we not become so engrossed in tracing the origin of things that the divine end to which they are driving us may be thwarted?

Some things which on the surface seem to be a ghastly failure are proved later to be the beginning of a divine plan. When Bunyan was cast into gaol, he did not spend his time poking at a mysterious Providence; he exercised faith and patience, and produced "The Pilgrim's Progress."

The two men who walked to Emmaus were puzzled by the crucifixion of Jesus: "We hoped it was He which should redeem Israel." The Cross had crushed their hopes of redemption. It was only when the Lord drew near, that they saw in the crucifixion, not the collapse of a mighty oak, but the planting of an acorn with its "embryo vastness." And just as there lies within the acorn the boards that will roof a cathedral, the slabs and trunks that will build a ship, so within the Cross lie the potentialities which, when let loose upon the world, will take away sin, cancel its power, exhaust its consequences, and establish a kingdom of righteousness that will know no end.

What we need is patience to wait for this "end of the Lord," and faith to believe that despite the fact of a thousand opposing forces it shall assuredly materialise.

I was travelling in the boat train to Tilbury Docks. There sat beside me a mother and her child, who were going out to Bombay to join "Daddy." When the train stopped at Tilbury and the big ship came into view, the child exclaimed with manifest glee:

"Is this Bombay, Mammy? Shall we see Daddy, now?" We are frequently as childish as that. We make an attack on a slum district, and because the kingdom of God does not immediately appear we are disappointed. Sometimes the young missionary, irritated by what he calls the "antiquated methods" of the veteran, gets up steam, rushes round a score or more of African villages, distributing tracts and shouting "only believe"; and having finished that task, and convinced himself that these villages are sufficiently evangelised to take care of themselves, he asks his fellow workers to behold the kingdom of God. These hurried visits, sometimes reported in books and magazines, give the impression that Bombay is in sight; but the experienced worker, left to carry on when the flair of the hurried visit has died down, knows that they have only got to Tilbury! Ah, no; continents are not conquered by showy feats that rise with a sudden gush of spectacular effort that lasts for a month or a year.

When Livingstone had accomplished the geographical feat of exploring Africa, he knew it was only the beginning of the larger task of evangelising its millions. The log-book of Columbus had many of its pages filled with three words: "Just sailed on." The same weary waste of waters; sailors clamouring for a return to their country; weeks without a single incident to beguile the monotony—"Just sailed on." But at last, when patience had done her perfect work, they furled their sails and let go anchor in a new world. Where there is firm faith in the reality and greatness of some objective, distance instead of extinguishing faith excites it to greater effort.

These are days when the world takes special pleasure in plaguing the Church with hard questions; and

within her own ranks are those who confine their faith to narrow bounds, and will not allow it to dip beyond the horizon in an absolute trust in God.

What God requires to-day is a Church that, despite a thousand unsolved problems; despite mysterious movements throughout the world that do not seem to harmonise with the promise of a triumphant and gracious end, will trust Him, and go forward in patience and faith to accept the challenge of an antagonistic environment, in the sure belief that He will bring us through all our trials to an end where we shall taste such a measure of grace and pity as shall justify the wisdom that has brought us along a path of thorns.

There is a river in Morocco that takes its rise away among the Atlas Mountains. It pours its waters down the mountain side, winds its way through the valleys, and breaks forth upon the plains; a broad and deep river where tired oxen at the plough quench their thirst, and the farmer cuts his trench to fertilise the soil. But as it pursues its course it loses its vigour and volume, for a powerful sun beats down upon it for several months every year, and great sand dunes are encountered which consume its force. Its waters are gradually dried up, so that it reaches the sea with little more than the breadth and depth of a ditch.

This is the history of some Christian lives. They begin with a vigour that demonstrates their spiritual force and depth, but when they get to grips with the sand dunes—those difficulties inseparable from Christian life and work—they dry up and come to their end in driblets. Our choice lies between a faith that will cling until it sees the end of the Lord, and the mood that wants to measure Him, and when it finds it cannot, despairs, curses and dies.