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Dum

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~~A VI. d.~~

A x d

A. Prize for diligence
and regular attendance at
school.

Mrs Meredith

Tattenhall
June 16th - 1841.



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Dum

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~~A VI. d.~~

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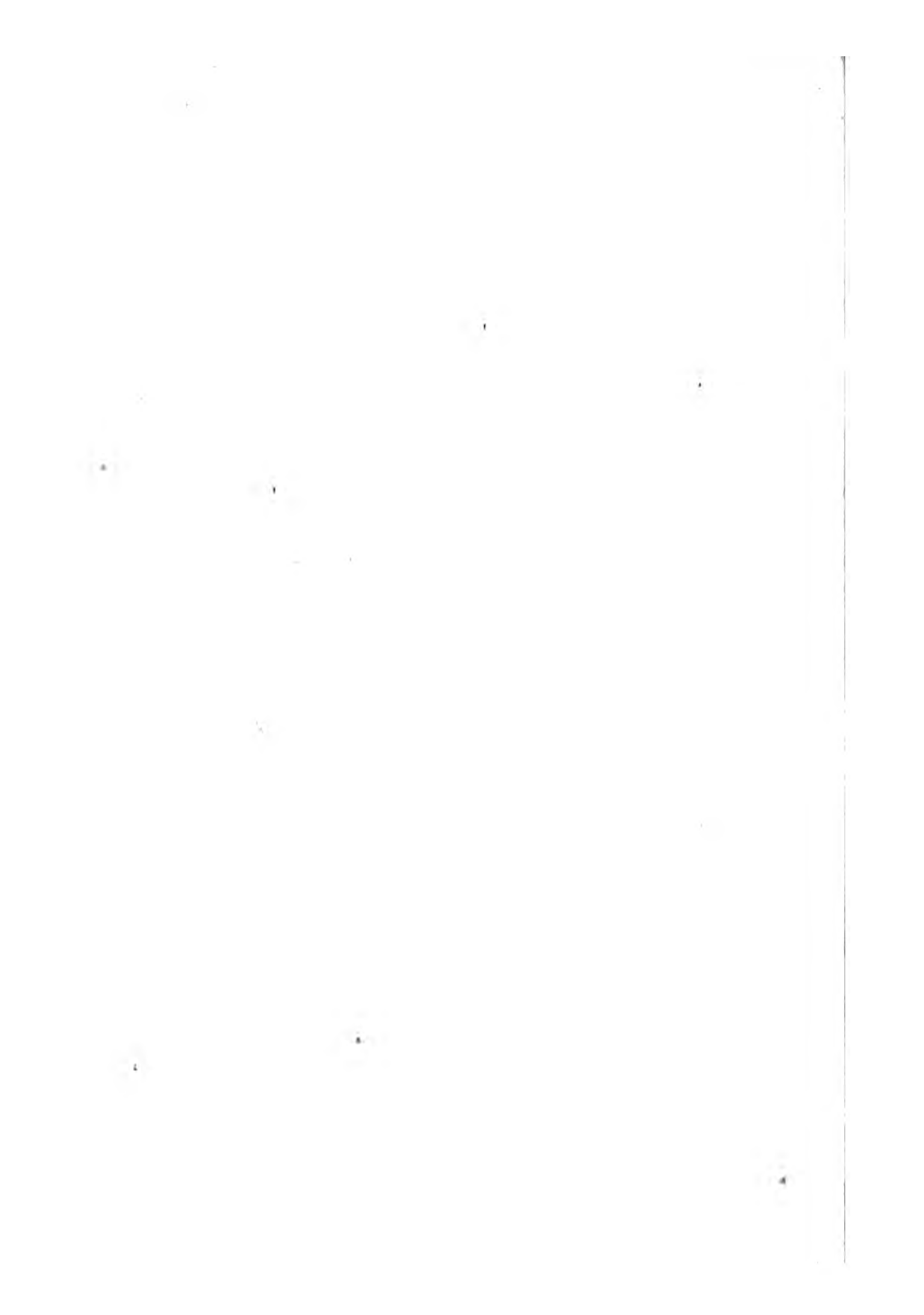
A. Prize for diligence
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Tottenham
June 16th - 1841.



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Mount Sinai.

TRAVELLING SKETCHES

IN

EGYPT AND SINAI;

INCLUDING A

VISIT TO MOUNT HOREB, AND OTHER LOCALITIES
OF 'THE EXODUS';

TRANSLATED, CORRECTED, AND ABRIDGED FROM
THE FRENCH OF

ALEXANDER DUMAS,

BY

A BIBLICAL STUDENT.



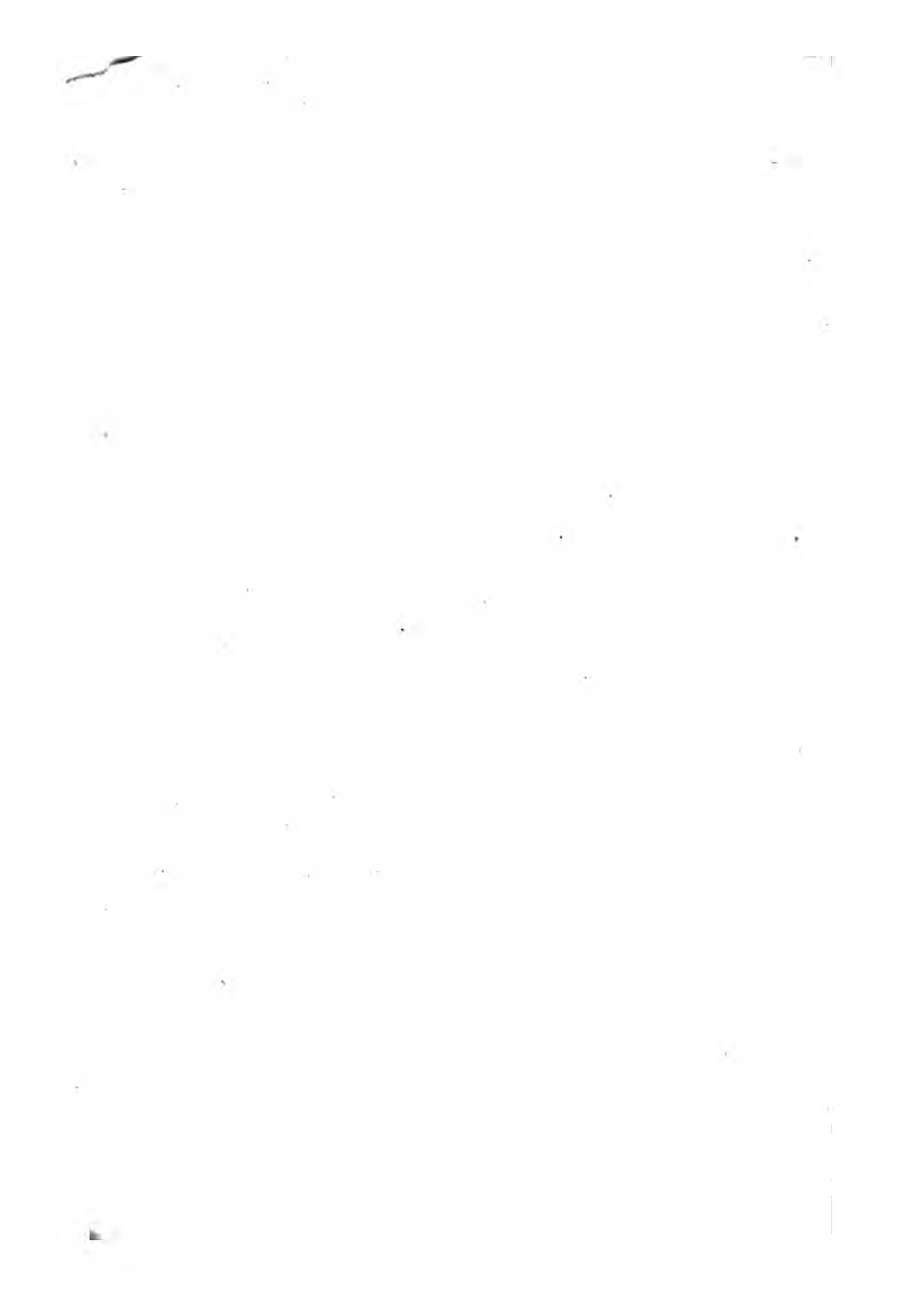
LONDON :

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND

M.DCCC.XXXIX.



TO THE
REV. ROBERT BELL, D.D.,
THIS LITTLE WORK
IS AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY
DEDICATED,
BY HIS OLD PUPIL,
THE TRANSLATOR.



P R E F A C E.

SINAI and HOREB are names too well-known to all who read their Bibles, not to excite the most vivid curiosity respecting the localities which were chosen for the visible manifestations of Jehovah's Omnipotence. The reader will find that the description of these sublime mountains is an instructive commentary on the narrative of the inspired legislator of the chosen people. Indeed, every new visit to the East, all the fresh discoveries of its monuments, tend more and more to illustrate the incidents, and to confirm the veracity of the Old Testament.

The two volumes which are here condensed into one, were recommended to the notice of the translator by one of the most enlightened travellers that ever visited the East, as the most graphic description of oriental habits, and the best calculated to give "stay-at-home travellers" a correct notion of the manners and usages of the people who now inhabit the interesting regions visited by the author.

A further recommendation was the attention with which M. Dumas had examined those localities in the peninsula of Sinai, which were the scenes of the most awful events recorded in Holy Writ. But mixed with abundant excellence, the translator found much that was merely calculated to gratify French vanity, and something that was objectionable to English taste. He has therefore omitted the historical disquisitions respecting Buonaparte's expedition to Egypt, the assassination of Kleber, and the crusade of St. Louis, which were contributed by M. Dauzats, and served to swell the work work unnecessarily.

W. C. T.

LONDON,
May 15, 1839.

EGYPT AND SINAI.

I. ALEXANDRIA.

ON the 22nd of April, 1836, about six in the evening, we were interrupted during our dinner, by the cry of *Land, land*, raised on board the brig *Lancier*, which conveyed Messrs. Taylor, Mayer, and me to Egypt. We hastily scrambled on deck, and under the last rays of the setting sun, saluted the ancient country of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies.

Alexandria is a sandy flat, an immense golden ribbon extended along the water's edge; at its extreme left, like the horn of a crescent, a point juts out, which you may call either Canopus or Aboukir, according as your thoughts turn on the defeat of Marc Antony or the victory of Murat. Near the town stand Pompey's pillar and Cleopatra's needle, the only relics of the Macedonian city. Between these two monuments, near a grove of palm-trees, is the palace of the viceroy, a wretched white edifice built by Italian architects. Finally, at the other side of the port is an immense square tower erected by the Arabs, at the foot of which Napoleon and

his army disembarked. With respect to Alexandria, this ancient queen of Lower Egypt, ashamed no doubt of its slavery, conceals itself behind the waves of the desert, in the midst of which it rises like an island of stone in an ocean of sand.

All this prospect arose successively from the sea, as it were by magic, in proportion as we neared the shore ; nevertheless we had not exchanged one word, so full were our minds of thought and our hearts of joy. One should be an artist,—should have long dreamed of such a voyage,—should have touched, as we had done, at Palermo and Malta, the two stages of the East,—then at the close of a lovely day, with a calm sea, amid the joyous cries of the sailors, should have seen appear in a horizon illumined as it were with the flame of a conflagration, naked and scorched, this ancient land of Egypt, the mysterious ancestor of the intellectual world, to which it has bequeathed as an enigma, the undiscoverable secret of its civilization. One must have seen all this, I say, with eyes wearied by Paris, to comprehend what we felt at the aspect of this coast, which resembles no other shore on the earth.

We only came to ourselves when we thought it necessary to make preparations for landing ; but Captain Bellanger stopped us, smiling at our haste. The night, which so rapidly descends from heaven in eastern climates, was already beginning to dim

this brilliant horizon, and by the last gleams of parting day, we saw, foaming like waves of molten silver, the waters breaking over the chain of rocks that enclose the port. It would have been imprudent to risk the entrance into the road, and the probabilities were a hundred to one that, not sharing our impatience, none of the pilots would venture out to our vessel during the night.

It was consequently necessary to remain patiently until the next day; I know not what my companions did, but for my part, I did not sleep a single minute. Two or three times during the night I went upon deck, hoping to see something by the aid of the stars; but not a single light was kindled on the shore, not a sound reached us from the city; I might have believed myself a hundred leagues from land.

At length day appeared. A yellowish mist covered the entire coast, which could only be recognised by a long line of dense vapours. Nevertheless we steered towards the haven, and, by degrees, the veil which covered this mysterious Isis, without being raised, became less thick, and allowed us, as through a gauze growing gradually more transparent, to recover once more the prospect of the preceding evening.

We were not a hundred paces from the breakers, when at length our pilot appeared. He approached

in a four-oared barge, having two immense eyes painted on its prow, as if to discover the most secret dangers of the sea.

He was the first Turk I had seen, for I did not regard as true Turks, the date-merchants I had met on the Boulevards; nor the envoys of the Sublime Porte, whom I had occasionally met at places of public resort. Consequently I regarded the approach of this worthy Mussulman, with the natural curiosity of a traveller, who, wearied of the men and things he had seen, and who, having come two hundred leagues to see new men and things, fastens himself to the picturesque as soon as he meets it, and claps his hands for having at length found the strange and the unknown which he had come from such a distance to see.

The stranger was a worthy son of the prophet, having a long beard; a splendid and flowing dress; a demeanour slow, grave, and reflective; and he was attended by slaves, to fill his pipe and carry his tobacco. When he reached our ship, he mounted the ladder with great gravity, saluted the captain whom he recognised by his uniform, crossing his hands on his breast, and went to take his place at the helm, which was resigned to him by our pilot. As I followed I never took my eyes off him; at the end of a few minutes, I saw his figure contract, as if he had got something in his throat which he could

not swallow; finally, after unparalleled efforts, he contrived to utter the words, "To the right!" It was time that he got them out; an instant more and they would have choked him. After a short pause, he was seized by a second paroxysm, but this time it was for the words, "To the left." These were the only words of our language he could pronounce; his philological education it appears was limited to what was strictly necessary.

This restricted vocabulary however sufficed to bring us to an excellent anchorage. Baron Taylor, Captain Bellanger, Mayer, and I, jumped into the boat, and from the boat to the shore. It would be impossible for me to describe what I felt when I touched the land, but I had not time to scrutinize my sensations; an unexpected event roused me from my ecstasy.

At the very port, ass-drivers wait for travellers, like the hackney-coaches and cabriolets on the stands of Paris. They are in every spot where one can put foot to ground; at the square tower, Pompey's column, and Cleopatra's needle. But it must be confessed that they surpass our coachmen and cads in foresight and tenacity. Before I well knew where I was, I was seized, lifted, placed astride on a donkey, whipped off the beast, hurried on another, tumbled from that on the sand, amid shouts and blows exchanged so rapidly that I had not time to offer the

least resistance. I profited by the moment of respite which the battle over my carcass afforded, to look round me, and I perceived Mayer in a position still more critical than mine ; in fact, he was fairly taken prisoner, and in spite of his cries, hurried off at a gallop by the donkey and its driver. I ran to his aid, and succeeded in rescuing him from the Philistine ; we hurried into the nearest lane to hide ourselves from this eleventh plague of Egypt, but we were soon rejoined by our tormentors, who having mounted their quadrupeds had over us the advantages of cavalry over infantry. I do not know how matters would have ended this time, if some good Moslems, recognising us as Franks by our dress, had not taken pity on us, and, without saying a word, or even warning us by gesture of their good intentions, come to our rescue, and put our officious assailants to flight with heavy blows of hippopotamus' thongs*.

We then made our way into the city ; but we had not proceeded a hundred paces, when we found that

* The Arabs and Turks beat the unfortunate *fellahs* with a heavy whip, made from the hide of the hippopotamus ; this instrument of punishment as we see by the monuments was used in the days of the Pharaohs ; it is the only inheritance the native Egyptians have derived from their illustrious ancestors, and their rulers seem resolved that they should enjoy it in perfection.

we had been imprudent in refusing our steeds; donkeys are the vehicles of this country, and it is almost impossible to dispense with them in the midst of the mud. It is necessary to water the streets five or six times every day, on account of the heat. This measure of police is intrusted to the *fellahs*, who go about with a leathern bag under each arm; they press these alternately to force out the water, accompanying the alternate squeeze with a double Arabic phrase, which they pronounce in a monotonous voice: "Have a care to the right—Have a care to the left!" Thanks to this system of portable irrigation, which gives these fine fellows the appearance of Highland pipers, the sand and water form a kind of Roman cement, from which asses, horses, and dromedaries can alone extricate themselves with honour; Christians in some degree protect themselves by boots, but the Arabs leave their slippers behind them.

Still we were only at the beginning of our mishaps; turning out of the dirty narrow street in which we were entangled, we tumbled into the middle of an infected bazaar. It was one of those mephitic spots into which the plague comes regularly once or twice a year for a fresh supply of putrid miasmata, which it then spreads through the city; but in spite of our haste to traverse so dangerous a place, it presented such an aggregation of packages, donkeys, merchants,

and dromedaries, that for several minutes we were knocked and shoved about and tumbled against the stalls without being able to advance a step. We were about to make a retreat, when we saw the Cadí, as described in the Arabian Nights, making his rounds at the head of his *kaffas* (attendants). No sooner did he perceive that the public way was obstructed than he proceeded to the thickest of the throng, and with admirable impartiality, he and his assistants commenced striking with their heavy clubs the backs of the beasts and the heads of the men. The means were efficacious, a practicable breach was made; the Cadí passed first, we followed, the crowd close behind us, like a river resuming its course. At about a hundred paces further on, the Cadí turned to the right, and we to the left; he to disperse some new crowd, we to make our way to the consul.

We pursued our course for nearly half an hour through narrow, irregular, tortuous streets, the houses of which have all projecting fronts, the successive floors coming out further and further to the very top, so that the upper space is so restricted as almost to exclude the light of day. We passed several mosques on our way, but they were generally unworthy of notice; there are only two or three in the entire city adorned with minarets; these are of no great height, and are destitute of galleries. The true believers were seated at their

thresholds, which a giaour had never crossed, either smoking or playing *mangallah* (a species of backgammon). Finally, after having spent nearly an hour in reaching our destination, that is to say in making less than a mile, we at last got to the consul.

M. de Mimaut received us with perfect grace; a distinguished man of letters, an indefatigable antiquarian, a zealous defender not only of the rights but of the dignity of his nation, every Frenchman is sure to receive from him hospitality as a traveller and protection as a fellow-countryman. He received us in a large room, which had formerly been inhabited by Buonaparte, Kleber, Murat, Junot, and others of the bravest and most renowned generals of our expedition. Almost all of them had adopted, on their arrival, the habits of oriental life, and the use of coffee and the pipe, which constitute its most usual recreations. They smoked, sitting on the large divans, or low couches, which surround the room; we were shown, in different parts of the floor, the marks which the fire of their long pipes had left. I mention these details to show that even the most trifling particulars of our Egyptian expedition still remain in the memory of the inhabitants.

During an animated conversation, such as might be expected between fellow-countrymen meeting each other at the distance of a thousand leagues from their native land, M. Taylor explained the

reasons of his voyage, and the mission with which he was charged to the Pacha: we then sent for guides and donkeys, having been cured of our pedestrian tastes for this time at least, and proceeded to the gate Mahmoudie, which leads to old Alexandria. Raised above the mud, and peaceably installed in our saddles, we could indulge in observations more curious in Egypt than anywhere else. Everything was to us Parisians an object of surprise; the social and physical order seemed overturned; there were an earth and sky such as are seen nowhere else; a language which has no analogy to any of our languages; manners which exist in Egypt alone; a people that seems to have taken our mode of life with the wrong side out. With us, people wear their hair and shave their beard; the Mussulmans shave the head and let the beard grow. We punish bigamy and censure concubinage; they proclaim the one and set no bounds to the other. Woman, in our social system, is a spouse, a sister, a friend; in theirs she is only a slave, and the most wretched of all slaves; her life is spent in a prison, and no one but her master approaches her habitation; the more lovely she is, the more wretched is her life; her existence is suspended by a thread; if she raises her veil, her head rolls in the dust.

As we went out of the gate Mahmoudie, we turned a few steps aside to see a little hillock, which to

this day retains the pompous name of Fort Buona-
parte. Alexandria is so level a town, that the
French engineers had only to heap up a few shovels
full of earth and crown them with a battery to force
it to surrender.

Ancient Egypt,—the Egypt that came down from
Ethiopia with the Nile,—existed only in the ruins of
Elephantina and Thebes. Memphis succeeded them,
and under its walls saw the empire of the Pharaohs
fall with Psammenitus, to be bequeathed by Cam-
byses to his successors. Darius ruled : his empire
extended from the Indus to the Euxine, and from
Ethiopia to the Jaxartes. Continuing the policy of
his predecessors, who, for a hundred and fifty years,
held Asiatic Greece in servitude and assailed Euro-
pean Greece,—sometimes with millions of men, and
sometimes with gold and intrigues,—Darius was
dreaming of a third invasion, when in a province of
this Greece, bounded on the east by mount Athos,
on the west by Illyria, on the north by Hæmus, and
on the south by Olympus, a young monarch, twenty-
five years of age, was found, who resolved to over-
turn this mighty empire, and accomplish what
Cimon, Agesilaus, and Philip had attempted in
vain. This young king was named Alexander.

He raises thirty thousand infantry, and four thou-
sand five hundred cavalry; collects a fleet of a hun-
dred and sixty galleys, takes provision for forty days,

sets out from Pella, marches along the coast of Amphipolis, passes the Strymon, crosses the Hebrus, and arrives in twenty days at Sestos; he debarks without opposition on the coast of Asia Minor, crowns with flowers the tomb of Achilles, his maternal ancestor, traverses the Granicus, defeats the satraps, slays Mithridates, subdues Mysia and Lydia, captures Sardis, Miletus, and Halicarnassus, subdues Galatia, traverses Cappadocia, and subjugates Cilicia; he encounters the Persians in the plains of Issus and drives them before him like chaff, goes up to Damascus, comes down to Sidon, takes and sacks Tyre, and drives thrice round the walls of Gaza, dragging behind his chariot the body of its governor Boetes, in imitation of the conduct of Achilles to Hector; he goes to Jerusalem and to Memphis, sacrifices to the God of the Jews and to the gods of the Egyptians, again descends the Nile, makes the tour of the Mareotic lake, and, having reached its northern limit, struck with the beauty of the place and the advantages of its situation, he decides on giving a rival to Tyre, and charges the architect Dinocrates to build a city, which shall bear the name of Alexandria.

The architect obeys; he traces an enclosure of fifteen thousand paces, to which he gives the form of a Macedonian cloak, and divides his city by two principal streets, that the Etesian winds, which come from the north, may cool it. The first of these

streets extended from the sea to the Mareotic lake, and was ten stadia, or eleven hundred paces, in length; the second traversed the entire extent of the city, and was forty stadia, or five thousand paces, from one extremity to the other. Both were a hundred feet wide.

The new city did not aggrandize itself by degrees, like other cities—it rose at once. Alexander laid the foundations, set out for the temple of Ammon, was recognised as the son of Jupiter, and when he returned the new Tyre was built and peopled. The founder then continued his victorious course. Alexandria, reclining between its lake and its two havens, heard the sound of his steps as they speeded towards the Euphrates and Tigris; a puff of the eastern wind brought it the rumour of the battle of Arbela; it heard, as an echo, the fall of Babylon and Susa; it saw the horizon redden with the conflagration of Persepolis; finally the distant report was lost behind Ecbatana, in the deserts of Media, on the other side the river Arius.

Eight years afterwards, Alexandria saw a funeral car enter its walls, rolling on two axle-trees, round which turned four Persian wheels, whose spokes and joints were richly gilt. Lions' heads, of massive gold, whose jaws gripped a broken lance, formed the ornament of the stocks. There were four poles, and to each pole a quadruple row of yokes, and four

mules to each yoke. Each of these animals wore crowns of gold, there were golden bells on each side of their heads, and collars round their necks studded with precious stones. On the car was a vaulted chamber of gold, eight cubits wide and twelve long; the dome was adorned with rubies, carbuncles, and emeralds. In the front of this chamber was a peristyle of gold, supported by four columns of the Ionic order, and in this peristyle four pictures were suspended. The first of these pictures represented a car of exquisite workmanship, in which a warrior sate, holding in his hand a magnificent sceptre; round him marched the Macedonian guard fully accoutred, and the battalions of the Persians: the Hoplites formed the advanced guard. The second picture displayed a train of elephants armed for war, carrying Indians on their neck and Macedonians on their back, covered in arms. Troops of cavalry, imitating the manœuvres and evolutions of combat, were figured on the third. Finally, the fourth represented war-galleys drawn up in battle array, ready to attack a fleet which was seen in the distance. Beneath this chamber, that is to say between the floor and the roof, the space was occupied by a square throne of gold, adorned with figures sculptured in high relief, from which hung rings of gold, and through these rings garlands of flowers were passed, which were renewed every day. On the

top was a crown of gold, so large that a tall man could stand erect in the circle that formed it, and when the rays of the sun fell upon it, the reflections cast back were like flashes of lightning. Finally, within this chamber was a bier of massive gold, on which, over a bed of spices, the body of Alexander was laid.

It was one of the twelve captains, whom the death of their general had made kings, that conducted the funeral. In the great division of the world which took place round the bier, Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, had taken for himself Egypt, Cyrenaica, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Africa. Then, as a palladium which should preserve the empire to his descendants for three centuries and a-half, he had turned the body of Alexander from its route and brought it to ask a tomb in the very city to which he had given a cradle.

From that day forward Alexandria was named the queen of cities, as Tyre had been, as Athens then was, and as Rome was yet to be; its sixteen kings and three queens added each a precious jewel to its crown. Ptolemy, called by the Rhodians Soter, or the saviour, built the tower of the Pharos, joined the island by a mole to the continent, transported the images of the god Serapis from Sinope to Alexandria, and founded the famous library which was burned by Cæsar. Ptolemy II., ironically sur-

named Philadelphus (a lover of his brethren), on account of his persecuting the princes of his family, collected the Hebrew Scriptures, caused them to be translated into Greek, and bequeathed to us the Septuagint version. Ptolemy III., called Evergetes (the Benefactor), went to search in the wilds of Bactriana for the ancient Egyptian gods carried away by Cambyses. The theatre, the museum, the gymnasium, the stadium, and the public baths, were erected by their successors. Six canals were carried across the entire extent of immense plains; four united the Nile to the Mareotic lake; the fifth led from Alexandria to Canopus; finally, the sixth traversed the entire isthmus, cut off the suburb Rhæotes, and, starting from port Kibetos, poured its waters into the lake beside the gate of the Sun.

At the present day, nothing remains of the ancient city but the mole, enlarged and strengthened by quays, and on this the new city has been built. In the midst of the almost shapeless ruins, which, however, are still recognised for those of the baths, the library, and the theatre, nothing remains erect but Pompey's pillar and one of Cleopatra's needles, for the other has fallen down and is half buried in the sand. All the part which was formerly an island, in the centre of which stood the citadel, and at the eastern extremity the celebrated tower of Pharos, which gave light at the distance of thirty thousand

paces, nothing now but a flat barren sand, in the form of a crescent, to encircle the new city.

Pompey's pillar is a marble shaft, surmounted by a Corinthian capital, fixed on a mass of ancient ruins and Egyptian fragments. The name it bears, which has been given it by modern travellers, has no connexion with its real origin, which, if we believe the Greek inscription attached to it, would only go back to Dioclesian. It has experienced towards the south an inclination of about seven inches from the perpendicular; neither the capital nor the base have ever been finished. I did not measure the height, but it exceeds, by nearly two-thirds, the palm trees which are growing around it.

With respect to Cleopatra's needles, one of which, as we have said, is still erect, and the other fallen, they are obelisks of red granite, with three columns of characters on each face. It was the Pharaoh Moeris who, about one thousand years before Christ, raised them from the Libyan quarries, and with his potent hand erected them before the Temple of the Sun. Alexandria, they say, envied them to Memphis, and Cleopatra, in spite of the murmurs of the ancestral city, took them away as jewels, which Memphis was not fair enough to possess. The ancient arches, which served as bases for these obelisks, still exist, and stand on pedestals of three steps; they are of Græco-Roman construction, and

by their architectural date verify the popular tradition, which makes their second erection ascend to about thirty-eight or forty years before the birth of Christ.

We were wandering for about two hours in the middle of these ruins, our Strabo and our Plutarch in our hands, when by chance my eyes fell on Mayer's white pantaloons; they were black from the feet to the knee, and gray from the knee to the fork. I thought at first that in his haste to visit the ruins he kept on the clothes with which he had traversed the miry streets of Alexandria; but on paying more serious attention to the phenomenon I soon perceived that this dark hue, which diminished its intensity as it rose from the earth, was moving, and must result from some special cause. Immediately and instinctively I looked at myself, and a single glance sufficed to convince me of the frightful truth; we were covered with fleas.

The best thing to do in such an extremity was to make all speed to the baths, of which we had often heard speak as a delicious refreshment; scarcely was the idea uttered by one when it was immediately adopted by the whole caravan. We made a signal for the guides to bring our donkeys, spurred them with more or less dexterity, according to our proficiency in equitation and remembrance of Montmorenci, and we came back to the town at full gallop.

Scarcely had we communicated to our interpreter the design which brought us back, than his countenance assumed a look of terror, which was very disgusting. The baths were shut against us for the whole of the day, and we should peril our heads by attempting to have them opened. The following was the cause of this interdiction.

Friday is the Turkish sabbath. On that day Mussulmans allow their wives greater indulgences than on other days of the week; hence Saturday is consecrated to female ablutions, and the baths are reserved exclusively for the inmates of the *harems*. Consequently we saw regular flocks of females passing, covered with a mantle of white or black silk, and wearing yellow buskins. Every countenance was shaded with a little piece of stuff about a foot and a-half long, and the breadth of the face. This species of beard was like a domino's mask, and pointed in the same way. It hangs over the figure just below the eyes, and is fastened to the veil which covers the front by a chain of gold or shells, according to the fortune or caprice of the wearer. These women, who never go out on foot, were mounted on donkeys, and conducted by a eunuch, marching at the head, staff in hand. We saw some of these squadrons which contained sixty, eighty, or even a hundred women, and in some few cases the husbands formed part of the escort.

II. THE BATHS.

ON the following morning, I presented myself at the baths, as soon as they were opened. The baths are next to the mosques, the most beautiful ornaments of oriental cities. That to which I was conducted was a vast building of simple architecture, and covered with ingenious monuments. Persons enter through a vestibule, having chambers to the right and left, where the outer garments are deposited. At the end, and directly fronting the entrance, is a door, hermetically shut, on passing which you find yourself in an atmosphere warmer than the exterior. Having got thus far, there is still time to withdraw; but if once you put a foot in any of the closets contiguous to this chamber, you are no longer your own master. Two servants take possession of your person, and you become part of the furniture of the establishment.

This was what happened to me, to my great astonishment. Scarcely had I entered, when two vigorous servants of the bath seized hold on me; in an instant I was as naked as my hand; then one of them tied a linen shawl round my waist, while the other fastened a pair of gigantic pattens on my feet, which at once added thirteen or fourteen inches to

my stature. This unusual dress not only rendered flight impossible, but, exhausted as I was, incapacitated me from preserving my centre of gravity without the aid of my attendants, who supported me, one under each shoulder. I was caught; there were no means of retreat; I allowed them to lead me as they pleased.

We passed into another room; but there, spite of my resignation, the steam was so intense, and the heat so great, that I felt almost suffocated. I thought my guides had made a mistake and got into an oven; I wanted to disengage myself, but my resistance had been foreseen; besides, I was not in a dress or situation favourable for showing fight, so I confessed myself conquered. It is true that in about a minute, as the perspiration began to stream from every pore of my body, I was astonished to feel the power of breathing return, and my lungs beginning to dilate. We thus passed through four or five rooms, whose temperature was graduated in so rapid a progression, that at length I began to believe that for the last five thousand years mankind had mistaken their proper element, and that our true vocation was to be boiled or roasted. Finally, we came into the stove-room: there the mist was so thick, and the heat so insupportable, that I felt myself fainting. I shut my eyes, and surrendered myself to the mercy of my guides, who made me advance

a few steps further, took off my girdle, unloosed my pattens, and stretched me half dead on a bench which was raised in the middle of the room, and which greatly resembled the marble table of an amphitheatre.

Nevertheless, this time also, after the lapse of a few seconds, I began to accustom myself to this high temperature; I profited by the gradual return of my senses to cast a discreet glance around. Like my other faculties, my sight was gradually familiarized with the atmosphere which enveloped me, and at length, in spite of the mist, I began to see surrounding objects pretty distinctly. My two tormentors seemed to have forgotten me for the moment; I saw them busy at the end of the room, and I resolved to take advantage of the few minutes of relaxation they had been pleased to give me.

I comprehended where I was by degrees, and at length could give the following account of my situation. I was in the centre of a large square saloon, incrustated with marbles of various colour to about the average height of a man; open spouts incessantly jetted forth volumes of steaming water on the flags, which drained off into four basins like caldrons, on the surface of which I saw shaven heads bobbing about, expressing the beatitude of their position by the most extraordinary grimaces, and grotesque expressions of physiognomy. I was so

occupied with this picture, that I paid slight attention to the return of my two bathing attendants. They came back to me, the one holding a wooden bowl, in which a quantity of soap had been dissolved, and the other a bundle of fine flax. Suddenly it seemed as if a million of needles entered my head through my eyes, nose, and mouth; it was the scoundrel of a servant, who had deluged my face with his soap preparation, whilst his comrade held me by the shoulders, and rubbed away furiously at my entire body, especially my head and breast. The pain was so insupportable, that it restored all my energies; it seemed quite ridiculous to endure such tortures without any attempt at defence. I knocked away one tormentor with a kick, tumbled the other with a thump, and seeing no other remedy for my misfortunes than total immersion, I hastened to that one of the four basins which seemed least inhabited, and manfully made a plunge. The water was boiling: I roared out that I was scalded, and grappling my neighbours, who did not comprehend my agitation, I scrambled up the side of the tub, almost as rapidly as I had descended. Nevertheless, short as my ablution had been, it had produced its effect: I was as red as a boiled lobster.

I remained stupified for a moment, and fancied myself under the influence of night-mare. I had before my eyes men cooking themselves in a kind

of stew, who seemed to take the greatest delight in such a punishment. This upset all my ideas of pleasure and pain, since what was pain to me was pleasure to them; so I took the resolution of making no further reference to myself, of not believing my own sensations, and of quietly enduring everything they pleased to do to me. My two torturers consequently found me perfectly resigned when they returned to me, and I followed them without resistance to one of the four basins. When we reached the steps, they made me a sign to descend; I obeyed passively, and found myself in water at a temperature of from 90 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. This appeared to me a very moderate heat.

From this basin I passed to another of more elevated temperature, but still supportable. I remained there, as in the first, about three minutes. At the end of this time, the men conducted me to a third, which might be about ten or twelve degrees higher than the second: finally, from this third, they led me to the fourth, which was the highly-heated one into which I had before plunged. Consequently, when I came to the descent, I felt the water with my foot; it appeared to me still very hot, but not much more so than those through which I had been progressively led. I resigned one leg, then another, finally the entire body, and no one can tell how astonished I was not to feel a

second boiling. This time I had come by degrees, and the gradual rise of temperature in the other basins had prepared me for this. In a few seconds I thought no more about it, and yet I think I can say with safety, that the temperature of the water was from 140 to 150 degrees; still when I came out, my skin had further deepened in colour; from scarlet I had turned to crimson.

The two rogues again took possession of me, and tied a fresh cincture round my loins; then they rolled a shawl round my head, and brought me successively into the rooms through which we had already passed, taking care at every change of temperature to give me a fresh cincture, and a fresh turban. At last I came into the first room, where I had left my clothes. I found a good blanket and pillow; they again took off my cincture and turban, enveloped me from head to foot in a heavy blanket, laid me down as if I had been a child, and then left me alone.

I experienced at the moment an indescribable feeling of comfort; I felt myself perfectly happy, but so weak, that when the door of my room was re-opened, after the lapse of about half an hour, I was found in the exact position in which I had been left.

The new personage who entered on the scene was a young Arab, vigorous and well made. He came

up to my couch with the air of a man who had particular business with me ; I beheld him advance with a kind of terror, natural enough to a man who had been subjected to similar experiments ; but I was so weak that I had not even an idea of getting up. He commenced by taking my left hand, every joint of which he made crack ; then he passed to my right arm, to which he rendered the same service. After the turn of the hands came that of the legs and feet ; then by a last effort happily combined, he put me into the position of a pigeon trussed for broiling, and just as if he were giving the finishing blow to a criminal, he made my dorsal spine crack. This time I could not refrain from shrieking out in real terror ; I thought that the vertebral column was broken. The Arab, satisfied with the result he had obtained, abandoned his first exercise to pass to another ; he commenced to knead my arms, thighs, and legs with admirable dexterity. This lasted about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which he quitted me. I was still weaker than before, and besides, my joints pained me exceedingly. I wished to draw the carpet over me, but I had not sufficient strength.

A domestic brought me coffee, a pipe, and perfumes ; then seeing me naked, he threw a woollen coverlet over me, and left me to enjoy the intoxication of the tobacco and the perfumes. I thus passed

half an hour between sleeping and waking, lost in the vague meditations of a delicious intoxication, feeling a sensation of comfort hitherto unknown, and perfectly careless about the world and all its affairs. I was roused from my ecstasy by a barber, who commenced by combing my beard and moustache, and ended by offering to depilate me completely. I had no taste for this kind of ceremony, and I repulsed him so rudely that he tumbled down.

The noise of his fall summoned back the shampooer; I made him a sign that I wished to go out; he brought my clothes, and helped me to dress; for I was still so weak and dislocated, that I could scarcely keep myself erect. He then led me to the room which opens on the vestibule, where I found my cloak. I then paid for this bath, which had lasted three hours; for the domestics, shampooer, barber, pipe, coffee, perfumes, and the sundry blows I had given, the charge was a piastre and a-half, about ten-pence English. Such cheapness is truly wonderful.

I found the donkeys at the gate, and this time I did not wait to be asked. I mounted the animal, and went on tranquilly at a slow pace. Although it was ten or eleven in the morning, it seemed to me that the air was very cool. This resulted from comparison: thenceforward I comprehended the fanaticism of the Turks for the refresh-

ment of the bath, which had appeared to me so intolerable a fatigue.

On returning to the consulate, I learned that we would be received on this very day by Ibrahim Pacha, in the absence of his father, who was in the Delta. The audience was fixed for noon: I had still two hours before me, of which I took advantage to go to bed.

At the appointed hour, one of the prince's officers appeared to take charge of the procession, and he placed himself in the van. Our caravan consisted of M. de Mimaut, Baron Taylor, Captain Bellanger, Mayer, and myself. It was escorted on the flanks by two *kaffas* (police officers), whose duty was to beat off with their clubs over-curious spectators who might have impeded the progress of the embassy.

A great sumptuary change had just been made by the Pacha. About six months before he had repudiated the old military and adopted the new uniform, called *Nizam-jedid*. Our *cortège* met several companies of infantry dressed in this uniform, which consists of a red cap, red vests, trousers, and slippers. These habits are universally adopted, and the regiments present a uniform mass of colour, quite satisfactory. It is true that the figures of the soldiers offer in opposition the most varied assortment of shades and complexions, from the fair and pale

skin of the Circassian to the ebony tinge of the child of Nubia; but all the efforts of the Pacha have not been able to remedy this inconvenience.

Another, and not less grievous inconvenience, arises from a cause to which I have already alluded. These regiments, which march through the muddy streets of Alexandria to the beat of drum, and play French marches, in spite of all the efforts of the serjeants placed to bring up the files and prevent straggling, are so far from being able to keep the step, that they cannot even preserve their ranks. The reason is, that every five minutes the red slippers of the soldiers stick in the mud, and their owners are obliged to stop for fear of losing them. This perpetual manœuvre, for which no provision has been made in the infantry drill, causes a confusion in the ranks of the Egyptian militia, which might at first view lead to their being mistaken for the national guard of the country. The mistake would be the more innocent, as under that burning climate, where every weight is a load, each man carries his musket as best suits his pleasure or convenience.

Finally, our procession conquered all difficulties, and arrived at the palace. We found a regiment of the same troops waiting for us under arms. We passed through the two lines, ascended the staircase, and traversed a suite of large white rooms without any furniture, in the midst of each of which

a fountain spouted up a jet of water. In the last but one, Baron Taylor stopped to arrange the presents designed for Prince Ibrahim. They consisted of equipments for colonels of cuirassiers and carbineers, fowling-pieces, and military pistols. When the arrangements were made, we entered the hall of audience.

It was in every respect like the preceding, and without any other furniture than an enormous divan which went round it. In the most obscure corner of the room, a lion's skin was thrown over the divan, and squatted on this skin, one leg crossed over the other, was Ibrahim, his left hand holding a rosary, and his right playing with his toes.

Baron Taylor saluted, and sat down at the right hand of the prince; M. de Mimaut did the same at his left; the rest of us accommodated ourselves the best way we could. Not a word was exchanged in this first part of the reception. As soon as each had taken his place, Ibrahim made a sign, lighted pipes were brought in, and all smoked. During the five minutes that this ceremony lasted, we had time to examine Ibrahim. He wore a Greek head-dress with the new military uniform, and appeared about forty years of age. In other respects, he was short, squab, stout, had lively and brilliant eyes, a red complexion, and a moustache and beard of the colour of the lion's skin on which he was sitting.

When the pipes were empty, coffee was introduced. Pipes and coffee together constitute a very high compliment. In common audiences, only one or the other is usually offered. When the coffee was finished, Ibrahim got up slowly, and, followed by Baron Taylor and us all, went into the room where the presents were arranged. He examined them one after the other with visible satisfaction; the equipments of the carbineers, adorned with their golden sun, seemed especially to afford him great pleasure. Still, when the inspection was finished, he seemed to look for something else; but not finding what he sought, he addressed a few words to the interpreter, who, turning to Baron Taylor, said:

“His Highness wishes to know if you have thought of bringing him any champagne.”

“Yes,” said the prince, accompanying his words by an expressive nod of the head, “yes, champagne! champagne!”

Baron Taylor answered, that the desires of his Highness had been anticipated, and that several cases filled with this liquid had been already left at the palace.

From that moment, Ibrahim exhibited a most delightful humour; he went back into the hall of audience, spoke much of France, which he looked upon, he said, as a second country, as he was himself the grandson of a French lady. Then, as a last

mark of honour, slaves brought in lighted censers, and perfumed our beards and faces. When this ceremony was completed, Baron Taylor rose and took leave of the prince, placing his hand successively on his forehead, mouth, and breast, which means, in the figurative and poetic language of the East, "My thoughts, my words, and my heart are yours!"

The embassy then returned to the consulate, in the same order that it had come to the palace.

In the evening, M. de Mimaut offered to take us to the theatre. There was a company of comedians at Alexandria, and they played two of Scribe's Vaudevilles.

III. DAMANHOUR.

IN order that we should not waste time at Alexandria, where he was forced to wait for the Pacha, Baron Taylor sent Mayer and me before him to design the mosques of that city of the Thousand and One Nights, which the Arabs call *Al Misr*, and the Franks Cairo. On the morning of the 2nd of May we quitted Alexandria, each mounted on a donkey, and followed by our drivers and our servant Mohammed, who went on foot.

This last-named personage was a young Nubian, vigorous, alert, and intelligent, speaking a little French, and wearing the costume of his country. This costume, one of the most simple, and at the same time one of the most picturesque, consisted of a white shirt and blue tunic, whose long sleeves were tied up and kept back by a silk cord, which formed a cross in the middle of his back. His head was covered with the *tarbush* (cap), and surrounded by a white turban; he had over his shoulders the black mantle which they call *abbaye*; and his waist was drawn tight by a girdle, from which was suspended a dagger with an ivory handle. His head, full of expression and cleverness, was enclosed in a frame of black hair, long and flowing; his moustache

came down at both sides of his mouth, as if it had been exquisitely pencilled, and his beard, rare on Nubian faces, formed a tuft under his chin, where it terminated in a point.

In addition to the donkey-drivers and the Nubian, our escort was strengthened by two *caras*, a kind of body-guards belonging to the city militia, which the governor of Alexandria had given us to facilitate our introductions as travellers. They wore a peculiar uniform, resembling that of the old mamlooks, and their duty was to obtain for us aid and protection from the Turkish authorities. It was not long before we had need of their good offices. For some hours we followed the road which leads from Alexandria to Damanhour, when we met the canal of Mahmoudie, which can be none other than the ancient Fossa, that brought the waters of the Nile from Schedia to Alexandria. The pass was guarded by Turkish troops, whose scruples we satisfied by exhibiting our *tcheriks* or passports. The chief made a low bow before the hieroglyphics with which they were ornamented, and declared to us that we were perfectly free to continue our journey, but—on foot and without attendants. We demanded an explanation of so strange a decision, and presented our passports a second time. To this fresh exhibition, the chief replied with repeated bows that our passports were quite regular; it was perfectly

true that they bore in their centre the plan and elevation of Solomon's temple, and at the four corners Saladin's cognizance, Solyman's seal, Mohammed's sabre and hand of justice, but—they did not contain a syllable concerning our servant, our donkeys, and our drivers. We then called our *cavas* to our aid, but found that they could form no opinion about the question in dispute. However they gave us their advice, which was, to offer a dozen piastres to the honest guardian of the post. As the Egyptian piastre is not a coin of high value, we saw no inconvenience in following their advice; besides, we soon perceived that it was the best plan. The gates of the canal were thrown open, and we passed through in triumph, ourselves, our beasts, and our attendants. With respect to the *cavas* they went no further; their mission extended only to opening the gates of the canal for us, and we have just seen how they fulfilled that duty. Still we did not the less give them *bakshish*, which is "remember the coachman" in England, "*pour boire*" in France, *Trinkgeld* in Germany, and a golden master-key all over the world.

We followed the banks of the canal, and after a journey of two hours through a flat, monotonous country, we halted at the gate of a Greek named Tiutza, who received us in his little square house, and gave us permission to eat in the shade, on con-

dition that we should provide our own breakfast and give him a share of it. This hospitality reminded me of Sicily, where it is the travellers that supply provisions to the inn-keepers.

When our repast was finished, we took leave of our host and resumed our journey. The road from Alexandria to Damanhour has nothing remarkable but its sterility; we were advancing through a sea of sand in which our men and beasts sunk up to the knees. Occasionally a burning blast of wind, mingled with sand, blinded us as it passed, and we recognised by the momentary oppression of our chest, that we were breathing the hot air of the desert. Occasionally we perceived to our right and left, on elevated points, which after the overflowing of the river become islands, round villages, the houses in which are of a conical form, built of bricks and clay; these houses are pierced with small square holes, designed to allow only just as much light to penetrate into the interior as is strictly necessary, and as little heat as possible. Finally, at unequal intervals, but sufficiently close, we met on the borders of the road some isolated tombs of hermits or dervishes, shaded by a palm-tree, the religious friend of the tomb, over which a rapid cloud of hawks was circling with shrill screams. It was nearly three o'clock, when we perceived Damanhour at a distance; it was the first truly Arabian town that we

had come to visit, for Alexandria, with its cosmopolite population, is only a mixture of various nations, whose character and originality have been gradually effaced by rubbing against each other.

The *mirage* exhibited the city to us like an island surrounded with water and mist; as we approached, the vapours of this false lake gradually evaporated, and the objects appeared to us under their true forms. Our shadows were lengthened by the last rays of the setting sun; the palm-trees gracefully extended their verdant shade to the evening breeze, when we dismounted at the gate of the town, whose elegant minarets rose lightly above the walls of mosques, painted in alternate bands of red and white.

We stopped for an instant to contemplate a prospect so novel to Europeans. A pure sky, of whose transparency and delicate shades no pencil can give an idea; tanks, which really bound one side of the city and reflect its walls in their tranquil waters, long files of camels led by Arabian peasants, gliding slowly into the city, all gave to this wondrous picture an air of life, calm and happiness, the more remarkable after the preparatory introduction of the desert which we had just traversed.

Damanhour possesses only one hotel, though its population amounts to eight thousand souls. Mohammed having made us traverse some streets of

savage originality, conducted us to this lucky caravanserai, of which we formed beforehand, after the descriptions of the "Thousand and One Nights," quite a fairy idea. Unluckily we were not able to compare our poetry with the reality; the hotel was so full that there was not even room for a mouse, and in spite of all we could say, and every offer we could make, we were obliged to turn back. Although already disappointed in many things, the remembrance of Arabian hospitality, so often vaunted by travellers, and celebrated by poets, came to my mind, and I requested Mohammed to make some trials with the proprietors of the most comfortable mansions we met on our way; but all was vain, we had our labour for our pains, and much humiliated with the repulses we had received, we rejoined our friends, who, more prudent than we were, did not choose to undertake a useless peregrination, but waited for us at the gate of Damanhour. Two choices were not presented; I looked round for a suitable place of encampment, and having found a dense grove of date-palms, I had our carpets spread under the foliage; I then gave the first example of submission to the will of Providence, by drawing my clothes tight about me, lying down, and turning my back on the inhospitable city which had repulsed us from its bosom.

Unluckily, at the opposite side of the city, and

just within the verge of the circle which my visual powers embraced, there stood a charming Arabic mansion, whose white walls seemed to repose on a background of mimosas, of a delicious verdure. I could not resist the desire to make a last attempt, and I sent Mohammed on an embassy to the owner of this oasis. He was in the city, and during his absence, his servants did not dare to take upon themselves the responsibility of receiving a stranger.

About half an hour after, I saw, coming out from Damanhour, and advancing towards us, a cavalier richly dressed, mounted on a superb white steed, and followed by a numerous escort; I presumed that this must be our man; and I caused our little caravan to draw up, recommending them to assume the most piteous air possible, at the verge of the road, by which he was to pass. When he was within ten paces of us, we saluted him; he returned our salute, and recognising us by our habits for Frank travellers, he inquired what was the motive that kept us outside the town at so advanced an hour of the night. We then recounted our misfortunes in terms most likely to soften his heart. Our recital produced a wondrous effect, and though the translation must have diminished the interest of our story, he nevertheless invited us to follow him, and to spend the night in the little white mansion

encircled by green mimosas, which had been for more than an hour the object of our desires.

They led us at first into a large room, round which was ranged a large divan covered with mats. We spread our carpets on the divan, which in spite of this precaution did not make a very luxurious bed. Scarcely had we finished these nocturnal preparations, when the servants entered, bearing each a porcelain dish, covered with a dome of silver, exquisitely wrought; the first dish contained a ragoût of mutton, the second rice, and the third vegetables. Mayer and I squatted down opposite each other, and commenced our apprenticeship in oriental gastronomy by making use of our fingers, which in spite of our appetite tended to diminish the charms of our repast. With respect to our drink, it was simply citron-water in a flask with a silver stopper. When supper was over the same slaves supplied us with conveniences for washing our hands and mouth; they then brought us pipes and coffee, and finally left us free to stay awake or sleep as we pleased.

We remained looking at each other for some time longer across the smoke of our pipes; then, having rendered homage to the hospitality of our host, we went to sleep, recommending him to the care of his prophet.

The next morning I awoke with the dawn; in two bounds I was on foot and out of the house. I

made the tour of the city in order to find the best point of view; then, having drawn a general outline, I made two or three sketches of mosques, and returned with all speed to find my caravan and give orders for our departure. Before quitting the house I was anxious to thank its owner, but our wise Mussulman was in the harem;—there were consequently no means of getting at him. I inquired his name in order to transmit it to posterity, and found that it was Rustum Effendi. I gave a *bakshish* to the slaves, we mounted our steeds, and about five hundred paces from Damanhour, found ourselves in the midst of the desert.

We travelled for six or seven hours through the sand; then at last we reached a ridge of no great elevation, from the summit of which, suddenly and without preparation, we beheld the Nile.

Delicious landscapes succeeded the arid plains; instead of a few palm-trees thinly scattered at wide distances under a burning sky, we met forests of trees laden with fruit, and plains covered with maize.

Egypt is a valley with a river running through its centre; the banks are an immense garden bounded on both sides by the desert; in the midst of these clumps of mimosas and dahlias, above those plains of maize and rice, were disporting birds of the finest song, whose plumage was a mass of rubies and emeralds. Immense herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep,

conducted by lean and naked shepherds, followed the course of the Nile, as we went up the valley. Two enormous wolves, attracted no doubt by the scent of the cattle, stopped on the road, as if to dispute our passage, and did not take to flight until our donkey-drivers pelted them with stones. Night came down rapidly, and the road, intersected by the canals necessary for irrigation, became more difficult at every step. Sometimes it was so marshy that our donkeys sunk up to their knees, and stopped short. In spite of our repugnance to walk through such bogs, we were forced to dismount; sometimes we were forced to traverse absolute torrents; we were soaked up to our saddles, and the baths, though more refreshing than those of Alexandria, were far less agreeable. Then the moon rose, and though it shed but little light on our road, it gave a new character to this wondrous landscape. In spite of the difficulties of the road, we could not remain insensible to the beauty of the spots we passed. At the summit of the low range of hills which separates the valley from the desert, we saw palm-trees which seemed to detach themselves from the soil and balance themselves gracefully in the sky. Whilst at every step we met mosques, whose bases were washed by the Nile, and which were surrounded by the shade and verdure of sycamores with long branches bending down to the ground. Unluckily every five

minutes we were forced to dismount by some canal only to be crossed on foot, or some morass through which we should scramble, so that when we perceived Rosetta, we were so perfectly soaked, that our shoes, like those of Panurge, took in water through the necks of our shirts.

As we approached the city, our ideas assumed a more pleasing hue; we had in prospect a very narrow room, where we exchanged our wet garments for those of some good Mussulman, for our trunks were at Alexandria, and our wardrobes were limited to what we had on our persons. The stomach on its side began to cry hunger; we remembered with pleasure our supper of the preceding evening, and demanded a similar one, even though we should be obliged to eat with our fingers; with respect to bed, we were so tired, that the first divan we met would have served our purpose. We were, as may be seen, the most accommodating of human beings. It was with these dispositions that we reached the gates of Rosetta. They were shut!

This was a thunder-bolt; of all possibilities this closing of the gates was the only one which never occurred to our thoughts; we rapped at them in despair, but the guards would listen to nothing. We spoke of *bakshish*, the great means of conciliation, but unfortunately the chinks of the gate were not sufficiently wide to introduce a five-frank

piece. Mohammed prayed, supplicated, menaced, all was vain. He then turned round, and tranquilly told us his conviction that there was no chance of getting into Rosetta for that night. We saw that he was telling truth from the truly Mussulman resignation of Mohammed himself, and of our donkey-drivers, who immediately looked round them in order to find the most favourable spot for an encampment. For our parts we were so furious that we remained at the gates by ourselves for a quarter of an hour longer. At length Mohammed came to tell us that he had found a tolerably convenient bivouac. There was nothing left for it but to follow him, which we did with an exceedingly bad grace. He led us to a mosque surrounded with lilac-trees in flower, where we found our carpets spread under two magnificent palm-trees; we lay down with empty stomachs and wet clothes; but we were so completely knocked up, that after having yawned for some time, we at length fell into a kind of doze, which might pass very well for sleep. When we opened our eyes the next morning, we found that the early dew had come to aid the dripping of the preceding evening; so that we were stiff with cold; we wished to get up, but not a joint would bend. We were rusted in our clothes like old swords in their scabbards. We called Mohammed and the donkey-drivers; more familiar than we were with nights spent under a

starry canopy, they shook themselves and came to the rescue. We were all one lump; they took us up on their shoulders as Pantaloon treats Harlequin, and placed us against the palm-trees, with our faces turned to the rising sun. In a few minutes we felt the beneficent influence of its rays; life returned with heat, and we thawed by slow degrees. Finally, about eight o'clock, we found our bodies sufficiently supple, and our clothes sufficiently dry, to permit us to make our entrance into the city.

IV. VOYAGE UP THE NILE.

THE houses of Rosetta are built of brick; several of them have four or five stories; the arcades at the base are supported by columns of red granite, of various dimensions, all of which are brought from the ruins of ancient Alexandria. The Nile flows by the lower end of the town, where it forms a convenient harbour; it is enclosed by large and beautiful rice-fields, whose light green colour is pleasingly contrasted with the sombre masses of dark sycamores, and the slender palm-trees which fade away in the horizon.

The French consular agent, M. Camps, received us eagerly, and introduced us to his wife and daughter. We found a fellow-countryman with these ladies, named M. Amon; he was a veterinary surgeon, brought up in Alfort's school, and had been engaged for the last five or six years in the service of the Pacha of Egypt. He had married at Rosetta, and his spouse was a young Copt. The Copts, as is generally known, are Christians, so that no religious scruple impeded the union; nevertheless there was something extraordinary in the manner in which it was accomplished. When M. Amon resolved upon taking a wife, he inquired whether a young and

suitable spouse could be found in the country. The old woman to whom he applied, and who makes a trade of commissions of this kind, commenced her researches, and in two or three days returned with a satisfactory answer. She had discovered a young handsome Copt girl, about fourteen years of age. M. Amon asked to see her. As this demand was contrary to usage, they told him that the thing was impossible, but that he might make any inquiries he pleased, and that all proper questions would be faithfully answered. It appears that the investigation led to results perfectly satisfactory; for on the next day a suitable dowry was offered to the parents and accepted by them. In consequence, a day was fixed for the ceremony, and at the appointed time M. Amon on one side, and the parents of the bride on the other, met before the Cadí. The money was paid, the girl served as a receipt, and the husband brought home his wife. It was not until he reached his own house that he lifted her veil. Faith had been kept with him on all points, and M. Amon felicitates himself still on this marriage, and game of "Blind-man's buff."

Nevertheless, it must not be believed that such is always the case. Cruel disappointments sometimes occur. In such case the deceived husband sends back his spouse unceremoniously to her parents, giving her a second dowry of the same value as the

first. He even preserves this right when the deception is purely moral, if at the end of a certain time the married pair perceive that there is no sympathy between their tempers. The husband and wife then become free; and the morning after the divorce by mutual consent, they may, if they please, contract second, third, or even fourth unions.

M. Amon gave us these details, as he guided us from Rosetta to the mosque of Abú-Mandúr, which is erected on the banks of the Nile. This edifice, quite oriental, and placed in the midst of a charming landscape, projects into the river, leaving a narrow passage between its base and the other side, covered with small houses, surrounded by rice-fields. A dome in the form of an inverted heart, surmounted by a crescent, rises over the white and festooned walls; a minaret of rare elegance is erected at one of the corners; the parapets of its galleries are indented like point-lace; the opposite part seems to sustain an enormous mass of sand, placed like a peak on the declivity of the mountain; lofty palm-trees grow all round with a single stem, some of these cross, and crown, as with a plume, the flat and sombre dome of a large sycamore.

The true believers say that it is the holy dervish Abú Mandúr, who supports with his shoulders the mountains of sand which seem ready to overwhelm the mosque and choke the Nile.

A spectacle rather curious to Europeans awaited us on our return to Rosetta. A Santon, absolutely naked, was indolently stretched on the steps, and under the shade of a mosque. He waited in this costume and position, which were habitual to him, until the devotees of the neighbourhood brought him provision. Even ladies condescend to wait upon this disgusting fanatic, and deemed themselves honoured by his notice.

Both M. Camps and M. Amon had invited us to their houses, but for fear of giving trouble, we declined their hospitality, and went to establish ourselves in an old monastery of the Capuchins, a vast dilapidated edifice, where there only remained one brother of the order, a living ruin in the midst of dead ruins. The poor old man, like the soldiers of Ulysses, had eaten of the lotus, which destroys the memory. For twenty years no sound of the world which had forgotten him had reached him, and he paid back the indifference of Europe with equal indifference. His simple manners, his flowing robes, shaped in the oriental fashion, had procured him the respect of the Arabs; I forgot to notice his beard, which contributed not a little to this result.

We went to pass the evening with one of M. Amon's friends, an estimable Turk, who had sacrificed to his love of wine the most notorious precept of the Koran. The apartment in which he received

us, like most oriental saloons, was simple; according to the usual fashion of furniture in the East, a large divan was ranged round the whole; a jet of water in the centre, fell from a beautiful marble fountain into an octagonal basin; several rare and brilliant flowers were tastefully ranged round the basin, all sprinkled with liquid pearls, as if they had been kissed by the dews of morning, and their beauty and fragrance gave a joyous and charming aspect to the immense saloon. The Turk received us in the midst of his friends, made us take our places in the circle, and presented us with pipes and coffee. Half an hour after, lemonade prepared by his wives was served up, but this scarcely invigorated the conversation, which was of a languid character; for it was necessary that what we said and what he replied should be translated. There is no dialogue, however lively, which could stand such a test; this labour of the mind proved at last so fatiguing to the speakers and the interpreters, that we rose up with one accord and withdrew. It is only justice to add, that the Turk on his part made no effort to detain us.

The next day brought us our friends from Alexandria, Baron Taylor, Captain Bellanger, and Mr. Eydoux, the chief surgeon. This last came less through curiosity than a philanthropic sentiment, which in our opinion did him the highest honour. He had heard mention made of a frightful form of

ophthalmic disease in Egypt, and he exposed his own eyes to save ours.

As there was nothing to detain us at Abú Mansúr, and we were in a hurry to see Cairo, we freighted a *jerm*, of the largest dimensions, on the following day (May 6). The boat we selected might be about forty feet long, and she carried two latten triangular sails of frightful size. At the moment of starting, and when everything was ready, the wind proved contrary; we bore the mischance as patiently as we could, and consoled ourselves by going to the bath.

As at Alexandria, the bathing establishment was the largest and finest edifice in the city: as at Alexandria I passed through the experiments of dense steam and boiling water; but whether my lungs had been dilated by breathing sand, or my skin tanned by exposure to the rays of the Egyptian sun, I escaped my former sufferings, even the process of shampooing went off to my entire satisfaction; and under the hands of my bath-attendant I took without an effort positions which would have done honour to a posture-master.

On the morning of the 7th of May, the boatmen came to tell us that the wind was favourable; we received the good news with pleasure. We were beginning to grow tired of our irregular habits at Abú Mansúr, and whatever were my sympathies for the bath, I could not renounce the element which was

natural to me; hence it followed, that we resumed our journey with the most lively satisfaction. The day was splendid; the wind blew as if it had been under our orders; and our mariners, in executing their manœuvres, sung in chorus, both to give themselves courage, and to keep time in their work. We caused two of their songs to be translated. The first was composed of some verses in praise of God; the second was an assemblage of moral sentences and philosophic reflections tacked one to the other, and of which the least trite and most salient was,

This world is all a fleeting show,
There's nought but pain and grief below.

As we were in a merry mood, and these truths appeared too serious for such a state of mind, we invited our Arabs to sing us something of a more jovial character. They immediately went in search of two instruments necessary as an accompaniment. The one was a sort of pipe resembling an ancient flute; the other was a simple timbrel, whose frame of baked earth was widened at the top, and over the broader part was stretched a very fine skin of parchment, which had been tightened by exposure to the heat of the fire. Then a Charivari commenced, which by its savage wildness so absorbed our attention, that we did not think of asking the meaning of the words; we were so occupied with the attempt to disentangle

a single musical phrase or note from the cruel discord. Our curiosity was soon diverted from the poetry and its accompaniment, by a fat Turk, wearing a green turban to show that he was a Syed, or descendant of Mohammed, who, excited by this melody, rose leisurely, balanced himself alternately, and in cadence, on each leg, and after some preliminary attitudinizing set himself seriously to execute a dance of a most grotesque character. When he had finished, we complimented him on the unexpected pleasure he had afforded us; he replied, with a careless air, that it was in that way the *Almeh* (dancing girls) danced at the public places. Happily in our character of Parisians we placed no faith in such a prospectus, and consequently we took his exhibition for just so much as it was worth.

The day was spent in the midst of such musical and saltatorial recreations. During the whole of our voyage, the Nile had gracefully presented to us both its banks clothed with verdure of wondrous beauty. The evening sun set rapidly, and its last rays illuminated with their warm tints a charming village, entirely crowned with palm-trees.

We retired to the stem of the jerm, where our sailors had constructed a tent, or rather an arch, of silk, supported by round flexible rods, or canes; there we stretched ourselves on our carpets, and slept soundly.

When we awoke, the landscape had the same aspect as on the previous evening, except that as we ascended the river, the villages became less considerable and less numerous. The day was spent in the same amusements as before; only that the descendant of Mohammed appeared to us less facetious than on his former exhibition: we had grown too familiar with his grimaces.

On the next day, the songs commenced whilst we were asleep; we thought, as we opened our eyes, that a concert was given on board our bark. Not at all: the wind had turned against us, which forced the sailors to work hard to baffle the current. The captain of the vessel was singing a kind of litany with all his might, to each verse of which the Arabs in full concert squalled due response, but at every chorus we receded fifty paces.

As the captain judged that at this rate we should get back to Abú Mansúr the following night, or the next morning at the latest, he gave orders to moor the boat near a village to which we had retrograded. When the bark was made fast, I jumped ashore and hastened to the nearest house; with great difficulty I obtained a little milk in a bowl; we sheltered ourselves behind a mud-wall, to escape the clouds of burning sand which were drifting before the wind, and made ready for breakfast. Two hours after, the wind lulled, and we resumed our voyage.

We advanced slowly ; shallows had succeeded the inconvenience of contrary winds, and though we only drew three feet water, we often touched the sand. We were thus four or five hours advancing two or three leagues, and even this progress was not made without great labour. Towards evening we saw three symmetrical mountains slowly rising above a blushing horizon, and indenting their forms on the sky. They were the Pyramids ! The Pyramids, which gained greater height every moment, whilst on our left were developed the first peaks of the Libyan chain, which enclose the Nile in a frame of granite.

We remained motionless ; we could not take our eyes off these gigantic constructions, with which were associated such glorious ancient and modern recollections. There too, the modern Cambyses had fought his battle, and on the field we might find the bones of our fathers, just as Herodotus discovered the bodies of the Persians and Egyptians. As the sun descended, his reflection rose up the sides of the pyramids, whose base was enveloped in shadow ; soon the summit alone sparkled like a wedge of fire ; then the last ray seemed to float over the extremity of the pointed summit, like the flame of a distant beacon. Finally this flame detached itself as if ascending to kindle the stars, which immediately after began to shine forth with great brilliancy.

Our enthusiasm almost amounted to madness; we clapped our hands, and shouted applause to this magnificent spectacle. We called the captain to request that he would not advance during the night, in order that we should not the next day lose anything of the gorgeous landscape that was about to be unfolded before us. By a lucky coincidence he was coming to tell us that the difficulty of the navigation compelled him to come to anchor. We remained a long time on the deck, still looking towards the pyramids, although the darkness did not admit of our distinguishing them; we then retired to our tent, to speak of them, when we could see them no longer.

The next morning I was the first to awake, and was astonished, though it was broad day, to find everybody still asleep. I felt a sickly sensation similar to night-mare; I roused my companions; the same disease had attacked us all. We went out of our tent; the air was heavy and suffocating; the sun rose dusky red, and was half hid behind a curtain of burning sand raised by the winds of the desert. We felt oppressed, as if we were going down into too dense an atmosphere. Comprehending nothing of this phenomenon we looked round; our sailors and captain were sitting motionless on the deck, enveloped in their mantles, whose folds drawn over their mouths gave them the appearance of those supernatural figures designed by Flaxman. Their

eyes alone wandered over the horizon, which they seemed anxiously to interrogate. Our coming on deck did not in the least divert them from their pre-occupation ; we spoke to them, but they remained mute ; finally, I asked the captain himself the cause of this gloom, he extended his hand towards the horizon, and without uncovering his mouth, said " the Kramsin."

Scarcely was the word pronounced, when, in fact, we recognised all the signs of this disastrous wind, so greatly dreaded by the Arabs. The palm-trees, moved by capricious breezes, were swayed backward and forward ; the dust raised by the wind smote our faces, and every grain burned on the skin like a spark from a furnace. The birds, disturbed, quitted the elevated regions, and swept the earth as if to inquire the cause of the evil that tormented them ; clouds of hawks with their long narrow wings circled round us, uttering sharp shrill notes ; then suddenly they perched on a group of mimosas, from whence they again shot up to the sky, rapid and perpendicular as arrows, for they felt the trees themselves shuddering, as if inanimate objects had shared the terrors of living beings. None of the signs, we observed, escaped the notice of our Arabs ; but in their unpassive and fixed eyes, or their impenetrable physiognomy, it was impossible to discover whether the symptoms were propitious or menacing.

As, with the exception of its oppressiveness, the Kramsin did not appear to bring very terrible evils, we went ashore with our fowling pieces, and went in search of the river-birds. We strolled along the banks like true sportsmen of the plains of St. Denis, only that we had a greater abundance of game. We killed some herons, and a quantity of larks and pigeons.

Towards evening a cry of recall, followed by songs, brought us back to the bark, where we found our crew in jubilation. The Kramsin was over, and our sailors leaped for joy, and to refresh themselves bathed their arms and persons in the water of the Nile. This European form of bathing restored my individuality, so I resolved that the fête should not terminate without my having a share. I undressed myself in a moment and making a spring from the bark, plunged head foremost into the river. When I came to the surface of the water I saw the entire crew gazing at me with fixed attention. I knew that there were no crocodiles in the Nile below the first cataract; so that conceiving no other danger, I could not explain the interest which all seemed to take in a way so flattering to my vanity. My strength and skill were redoubled; I showed them all the tricks, motions, and bounds in the repertory of natation; but just as I was about to display "the stiff-float," I received in the right leg

an electric shock, so violent, that half my body was paralyzed. I turned over to swim to the vessel, but felt that I could not reach the boat without assistance. Half laughing, half shrieking, I asked for the pole, holding my right arm out of the water and trying to support myself with the left; my right leg was quite numbed and incapable of any motion. Luckily, Mohammed, as if he had foreseen the accident which happened, remained on board the jerm, holding a rope which he threw me; I gripped one end, he pulled by the other, and I got on board the bark in a far less triumphant manner than I had left it. Still, judging by the jocular carelessness with which the Arabs surrounded me, I supposed that the adventure had nothing in it very perilous; but I did not the less desire to know the cause, that it might serve as a warning in future.

Mohammed told me that besides a vast number of fishes, delicious to the epicure and interesting to the naturalist, the Nile contained a species of torpedo, whose electrical powers were so well known to the Arabs, that dreading the painful sensation I had experienced, they were content, as I had seen, to wash with precaution their hands and faces in the river. What appeared to me clearer than the rest was, that if electricity was disagreeable to them for themselves, they had no objection to study its effects upon Europeans. The explanation lasted

rather longer than the pain ; before Mohammed had finished, my leg and arm resumed their accustomed functions.

The wind suddenly lulled. We resolved to dine on the produce of our sporting excursion ; the meal was served on board. After dinner we examined our carpets, for fear that some scorpion might be disposed to renew the joke of the torpedo, which would have been rather more inconvenient. This time it was the Arabs who recommended such a precaution. This care accomplished, we went to sleep in hopes of seeing Cairo the next morning, from which we were only seven or eight leagues distant.

V. CAIRO.

THE next morning at daybreak we weighed anchor, and rapidly approached the pyramids, which on their side seemed to come forward and salute us. At the base of the naked and sterile Libyan chain, we began to perceive the towers and domes of mosques surmounted by bronze crescents, through a dense sandy mist. By degrees this curtain, driven before us by the north wind which wafted our bark, was raised up over Cairo, revealing to us the lofty pinnacles of the city, while the base was concealed by the elevated banks of the river. We advanced rapidly, and were soon abreast of the pyramids of Ghizeh. At a little distance on the same bank, was a waving forest of palm-trees, which occupies the site of ancient Memphis, and shades the bank where the daughter of Pharaoh walked, when she saved Moses from the waters. Above these palms, in a fog not of mist but of sand, we distinguished the ruddy summits of the pyramids of Sakkara, those venerable ancestors of the pyramids of Ghizeh. We passed several boats laden with slaves; one of them contained females. When our patron saw them, he drove a knife into the mast, and threw salt into the river. This double operation was designed to avert

the influence of "the evil eye." The spell was efficacious; an hour after, we disembarked at Shubra, on the right bank of the Nile. They showed us at some distance the Pacha's country-house; it was a charming residence, surrounded with bloom and verdure.

We found again donkeys and drivers; the former finer and larger than those of Alexandria; the latter more pressing and more vigorous competitors, if possible, than their brethren on the sea-coast. This time, warned by experience, we managed matters quietly, and taking our road through a delicious grove of sycamores, whose dark dome intercepted the rays of the sun, we set off at a pace likely to carry us soon over the league which we had to travel.

All the difference which landing had made in our mode of travelling was, that instead of ascending the Nile in a boat, we galloped along the banks on donkeys. As we were elevated about thirty feet above the river, our horizon was now more extensive; we saw opposite us the isle of Rondah, the base of the monument where the Nilometer is kept, an instrument designed to measure the height of the inundations of the Nile: lines traced on it indicate the years when the rise of the river, attaining an unusual elevation, brought seasons of memorable fertility. Here annually the sheikhs of the mosques, by publishing the height of the waters, give the exact

measure of public rejoicings, or as Mussulman fatalists announce, approaching sterility, and the famine to which the insufficient rise of the river condemns those who dwell on its banks. On our right were the pyramids of Ghizeh, which we beheld from their summits to their base, as well as the hillock formed by the great Sphinx, which has sentineled these edifices for three thousand years, and turns to the tomb of the Pharaohs its face, mutilated by the soldiers of Cambyses. Finally within view on our left, was the battle-field of Heliopolis, rendered illustrious by Kleber; its immense solitude, extending beyond the range of vision, is enlivened only by a single sycamore, which exhibits its verdant foliage in the midst of the burning sands of the desert. Our guides made us remark this tree, for an Arabic tradition declares that under its branches the Virgin Mary reposed as she fled from the wrath of Herod. "Joseph," says St. Matthew, "took the young child and its mother and fled into Egypt." According to the Mohammedans themselves, it was in consequence of the shelter afforded to the mother of Christ, that this tree has been blessed with miraculous longevity and eternal verdure.

We soon reached Boulak, a kind of suburb of Cairo, the sentinel of the city, charged to guard its entrance. We had not more than another half league to travel; we cast a glance at the roadstead,

animated by a multitude of barges and *jermes*, which when going up the Nile are laden with garden produce and when coming down, with the delicious fruits of Upper Egypt, which the more feeble sun of the Delta cannot ripen. In the village, the population, by its numbers and activity, denoted our approach to a great city. I pointed out the walls to Mohammed; he guessed my wishes. "*Ah Masi,*" he exclaimed, and putting his donkey to the gallop, invited us by a sign to follow. We did not wait to have the invitation repeated; and our donkeys, who felt that they were going home, seconded our impatience with all their might. We soon perceived Cairo perfectly isolated in an ocean of sand, whose burning waves beat incessantly against its granite walls, and would make a breach in the end, only that twice in the year the Nile, a potent auxiliary, delivers the city for a brief space from its troublesome besieger. As we approached, we distinguished the alternate tints of the edifices, and the elegant designs of the cupolas; then above the coloured points which crown the ramparts, the minarets of three hundred mosques spring up like enormous chess-men; at length we reached the Gate of Victory, the finest of the seventy gates of Cairo, and through which Buonaparte entered the city the morning after the battle of the pyramids, July 29, 1798.

Scarcely had we entered the city, when Baron

Taylor, who knew the inconvenience of proceeding through Cairo as leisurely as a countryman through Paris, set off at a gallop through the first street that offered; we were forced to follow, for fear of losing our way. In fact, we saw that our European habits drew upon us attentions by no means of the most favourable description. There are moments when a person almost instinctively divines danger; the uniform of our naval officers seemed particularly to attract notice. We redoubled our speed, upsetting the Turks and Arabs who passed in splendid costume before our dazzled eyes, and shouted to us *yamin* or *chemal*, that is to say, "right or left," according as this manœuvre appeared to them necessary on our part, to avoid deranging the straight and invariable line which they gravely follow, whether on foot or horseback. Finally, after such a course as one sometimes goes through in a dream, in the midst of fantastic and unknown beings, through the narrow and tortuous streets which Baron Taylor compelled us to traverse, as being the shortest road, we reached the centre of the Frank quarter, and dismounted at the door of an Italian hotel.

Our first care was to procure a tailor; our host soon procured one of Turkish blood. He first exhibited his patterns; when we made our choice, he took out of his pocket a thread with a plummet attached; he suspended the lead until it reached

about the knee, he then brought the thread to the shoulder, read the number marked upon it, did the same to all the rest, and walked out ; our measure was taken.

When this operation was finished, we thought of another no less urgent ; our pre-occupation, from the glorious recollections that crowded on our minds, the magnificent aspect of the landscape, and our immoderate anxiety to arrive at Cairo, had rendered us forgetful of breakfast ; but scarcely had we reached our rooms, to which the want of clothes confined us for the rest of the day, than our stomachs in a most imperative manner demanded the double allowance justly their due. The matter was too equitable for us to delay in giving proper satisfaction. We summoned our host, delighted to find a person to whom we could speak without an interpreter, and demanded dinner. In half an hour, our table was laid in the European style, and I confess that it was with no small satisfaction I sat down to my dinner like a Christian. Still our gastronomic engagements did not lead us to forget Mohammed ; we called him from the window, and at our invitation he squatted down beside us.

If we had been amused at the commencement of our voyage, when forced to substitute our fingers for knives, forks, and spoons, it was now our turn to triumph : poor Mohammed was quite astounded at

the dexterity with which we wielded instruments unknown to him. He tried to imitate us, but after having pricked his lips and gums two or three times, he returned to the natural system, and laid aside spoon, knife, and fork. Our sumptuous repast did not less surprise his Arab frugality; but on this second point he was more accommodating than on the first; he partook of everything, and pronounced everything good.

We profited by the obscurity of the night to get through the streets which led to the French consulate. The vice-consul, delighted to meet his countrymen, wished to give us a little treat: half a dozen native musicians came, squatted themselves in a circle before the divan, tuned their instruments with imperturbable gravity, and commenced playing national airs, intermingled with songs. One must have heard Turkish or Arabic music, to know the extent to which a charivari can be carried. Ours was one of the most complete; and if the musicians had not taken the precaution of blockading us, I verily believe that the infliction would have triumphed over my natural politeness, and I should have taken flight at the fourth bar. After two of the most torturing hours I ever spent in my life, the executioners at last got up, still grave and serious, in spite of the practical joke they had played off at our expense, and took their departure. The vice-consul then told us, that

in order to do honour to our arrival, they had played for us their gravest tunes; but that on a future occasion we should hear some gay and lively cava-tinas.

We returned to our hotel, conducted by a kaffa, who walked before us holding a lantern of paper rolled round a spiral coil of wire. The streets were quite deserted; we did not meet a living soul; we enjoyed the luxury of beds for the first time since leaving Alexandria.

Notwithstanding the superiority of our couches over divans and mattresses spread on the carpet, my nerves were so shattered by the horrid music with which we had been regaled, that I could not sleep. Soon a strange physical cause was superadded to the nervous agitation which kept me awake. I felt animals, which I could not distinguish in the dark, jumping and running on my bed, and which, in spite of my promptitude in trying to catch them when I felt their weight, made their escape with a cleverness and sagacity, which proved that they had considerable practice in this kind of exercise. During a moment of quiet, whilst I kept myself on the watch, I heard Mayer, who lay at the other end of the room, engaged in the same chase. There was no longer room for doubt; it was a regular and combined attack: having mutually consulted on our position, we supported ourselves on our bolsters, in

order to protect the rear, and commenced a regular defence. But words and deeds were powerless, like the Mameluke,

Who charges, combats, flies, and then returns
To charge, to combat, and to fly again.

Our enemies were unseizable. I made a sortie with my extinguished candle into the ante-chamber, where a lamp was burning, and immediately returned with a light. If we could not touch our antagonists, at least we could see them; they were enormous rats, as old and as fat as patriarchs; at the sight of the lighted candle, they took to their heels in the greatest disorder, and with cries of terror, effecting their retreat under the door, which did not come within four inches of the threshold. We employed our engineering skill in devising a plan for raising a barricade at the accessible point; after several plans had been proposed and abandoned, I saw that the time for an act of heroic devotedness was come, and, a new Curtius, I sacrificed my great coat to fill the chasm. Scarcely was the barrier fixed, the light extinguished, and we in bed, when the siege was renewed. But this time the entrance was secured, and we slept with the certainty that my tactics had succeeded. I had put a great coat under the door at night, in the morning I took out a spencer; the skirts had disappeared, they were the *spolia opima*. This deficiency in my toilette, joined to the impos-

sibility of venturing out of the Frank quarter, when there was nothing worth looking at, without being insulted, kept me in the hotel. I profited by this guarantee to put on paper some architectural reflections, the result of the old studies which I had made with Baron Taylor in the north, and the new course which I had begun under him in the east.

Arabic architecture offers at the first glance a character of strange individuality, which may lead to its being regarded, like indigenous plants, as essentially belonging to the soil, and having no analogies beyond the limits of a certain oriental radius. Nevertheless, though this ungrateful daughter shelters itself beneath the golden cupola, binds its head with verses written in an unknown language, like the hieroglyphic bandlets of an Egyptian mummy, and envelops its stature in a mantle of marbles of a thousand colours,—when once the eye of an antiquarian becomes familiar with the dazzling riches of its ornaments, and passes from the details to the general plan—when once the first covering is removed, and the subject laid bare, we can recognise by its muscles and organs, the ancient family, the common origin, the fraternal source where the North and the East, Christianity and Mohammedanism, have each sought for what was wanting in themselves, that is to say, the hand that traced the mosques of Cairo and the Basilicas of Venice.

For here, in a few words, is the history of architecture. Born with the ancient civilization of India, it began to dig caves before it erected palaces; it had monolithic temples before airy cathedrals; then, by degrees, what was beneath ascended to the surface, and stands now in light, the art of great nations, and of great epochs.

Did Indian architecture traverse the Red Sea to reach Ethiopia? We know not. Was Egyptian architecture the sister, or only the daughter? Of this too we are ignorant; we only know that it came from Meröe, grave and stately like a venerable matron; it built Philöe, Elephantina, Thebes, and Tentyra; it then halted, gazing at the ramparts of Memphis built by strangers, who ascended the Nile as she came down. This is the second epoch. It is the epoch of progress which precedes the epoch of art; it is the epoch when men raise, by dynamic means unknown in our days, gigantic masses on monolithic shafts; it is the epoch when architraves of single blocks, joining over the centre of the chapter, form the flat, square, and massive vault. Finally, it is the epoch in which all the monuments, whatever may be their destination, have the appearance of being built by giants. Grandeur is the dominant motto of this epoch; it is written from Babylon to Palanquè, and from Elephantina to the walls of Sparta, not with stones but with rocks.

Greece succeeds Egypt, a graceful and coquettish daughter to a silent and veiled mother,—art to ideality,—the beautiful to the sublime. Then words before unknown arise, purity, proportion, elegance : Athens, Corinth, Alexandria, spread a people joyous in its nymphs under four orders of columns : construction remains stationary, ornament reaches its apogee.

Then comes Rome the laborious, with its world of labourers and soldiers, for whom already granite, porphyry, and marble, have become rare, for they have been expended by the elder-born, nothing remains but the travertine. Small materials succeed great, but science comes to the aid of poverty, and invents the semi-circular vault. Henceforth the arch forms the principal character of Roman architecture; it is applied to everything, to temples, aqueducts, and triumphal monuments; only that at the extremities of the empire, architecture reflects the neighbouring countries. At Petra it excavates monolithic temples, like those of India; at Persepolis it substitutes for the Tuscan or Corinthian capital, heads of the elephants of Darius, or the horses of Xerxes.

Suddenly this immense Babel is interrupted; the East hurls the North on the West, both together sweep across the ancient world, which they envelop as a serpent, which they destroy as a conflagration. Rome, the queen of the world, hastily prepares her

holy ark, which lands at Byzantium with the seed of each art, as Noah landed at Ararat with the germ of each race.

Not only does one world succeed another, but in the midst of the cataclysm, a voice is heard from heaven, a new idea has been revealed, an unknown symbol has beamed forth. The barbarians turn their eyes to Byzantium; they recognise the cross on the dome of St. Sophia; the symbol and the monument are united; the Christian idea is complete.

Byzantium then is the common source; its children, degenerate descendants of their ancestors, come to rebuild the world with their ancient recollections and their present unskilfulness; they make essays, trials, copies; in this first period, the Basilica of the Christian, and the mosque of the Mohammedan, are twin edifices; it is not until the exigencies of the Gospel and the Koran have spoken sufficiently loud for stones to hear, that the granite and marble obey their voice. The sister architectures then separate, never to meet again.

Each labours to complete its visible symbol; the Basilica first takes the form of a Greek, but soon of a Latin cross, which is the cross of the Redeemer. It raises the spire near the door, to point out, with its stony finger, heaven, to those whom the bells summon; it builds twelve chapels in memory of the twelve apostles; it inclines the choir to the right,

because Jesus when dying, inclined his head on his right shoulder ; it pierces three windows in the choir, because God is Triune, and all light comes from God. Now comes the thousand-coloured glass, breaking the solar rays, and supplying at every hour a twilight suited to meditation and prayer : now comes the organ, that mighty voice of cathedrals, which speaks every tone and language, from those of vengeance to those of mercy ; and the Christian sentiment receives its complete developement, and attains its highest perfection, in the Gothic cathedral of the fifteenth century.

With the Mussulmans, on the contrary, where everything must address itself to the material being, not to the soul,—where the recompense of true believers after pleasure in this life is a voluptuous paradise, the religious monument assumes a different character. Its first care is to open its roof to the eternal smile of heaven ; under the pretence of ablution it causes fountains to spout liquid silver, whose very murmurs are refreshing ; it surrounds them with graceful and odorous trees, under the shade of which it invites its nightingales and its poets, reserving only a narrow and rectangular space, where the body of the Mussulman sent will repose beneath a dome enriched with ingenious arabesques. Near this will rise the minaret, a tower of several stories, from whence three times every day, the muezzin will

summon the faithful to prayer, reminding them of the fundamental maxims of their creed.

Local influence will come next to religious influence. Mohammedan art, though sprung from Byzantium, will not pass with impunity, so close to Persepolis and Delhi; its arches enlarged at the centre will close at the base with Persian elegance; India will furnish its elegant combinations of fret-work and tracery, and will cover the walls with point-lace in stone. The Mohammedan sentiment will then be complete, and will embody itself in the mosque, as the Christian sentiment in the cathedral.

The architects of the two sentiments have had one principle in common; they have destroyed to build. All have built their new world with the ruins of the old. They have found the skeleton extended on the earth; they have stolen from it the strongest bones, and its most beautiful wonders. The sources to the Christians were, the Parthenon, the Coliseum, the temple of Jupiter Stator, the golden house of Nero, the baths of Caracalla, the amphitheatres of Titus: the sources to the Arabs were, the Pyramids, Thebes, Memphis, the temple of Solomon, the obelisks of Karnac, and the columns of Serapis. And this by the immutable will which permits that nothing should be created anew, but ordains that all humanity should be linked together,

and by this chain has given man an explanation of eternity.

Amongst these architects and builders of cities, was Ahmed-Ebn-Taylún, the founder of Old Cairo, whose father was captain of the guards under the Khaliphs of Bagdad. This nomade conqueror called it *Fostan*, or "the tent," and erected in it the mosque of Taylún. The Fatimite Jouhar in 969, conquered this stone camp, and traced the site of a new city, which he called *Al Kahirah*, or "the Victorious." At the commencement of the twelfth century, Salah-ed-Din, the lieutenant of Núr-ed-Din conquered Egypt, and subdued the Victorious city, as well as the rest. It was under him that Kara-kush, one of his captains, erected the citadel and the walls. Some years later, Bibars, the chief of the Mamelukes, poignarded the vizier, and reigned in his stead. Finally, in 1517, Sultan Selim made Egypt a Turkish province. During the course of these different reigns, while the city of Taylún fell to ruin, that of Jouhar beheld its splendid edifices successively arise.

Cairo occupies an immense extent of ground; its population amounts to three hundred thousand souls; it is divided into several quarters, like the European cities of the middle ages, the quarter of the Arabs, of the Greeks, of the Jews, of the Christians; but each quarter is separated by gates, at which guards keep

watch every night. We were, as I have said, in the Frank or Christian quarter, from which it is dangerous to go out in a European dress: a danger to which the reader is indebted for this long antiquarian and chronological dissertation. I humbly request him to pardon me, but I thought a disquisition of the kind necessary, once for all, in a work of this nature.

VI. CAIRO, CONTINUED.

THE next morning, at the appointed time, the tailor came with our clothes. In this exactness, as in many other points, I was forced to recognise the superiority of the Turkish over the French tailor. Some of our countrymen, attracted by curiosity, came to assist at our metamorphosis. The tailor brought a barber as his companion, through whose hands, or rather through whose legs, it was necessary to pass before getting to him. Baron Taylor, who was engaged with the business of the mission, had gone to the consul, and left us to the cares of our toilette. The barber placed himself on a chair and made me sit on the ground; he then drew from his girdle a small iron instrument, which I discovered to be a razor, from seeing him strop it on the palm of his hand. The idea that this species of saw was about to run over my head made me arrange my hair, but almost immediately I found myself fixed between my adversary's knees as if it were in a vice, and I saw that the best thing I could do was not to stir. In fact, I felt the bit of iron I had so despised, run over my head with a gentleness, skill, and velocity, which went to my very heart. In about five minutes the barber relaxed his hold, I

raised my head, I heard everybody laugh, I looked in the glass, I was completely shorn, there remained no other trace of hair on the whole cranium than the charming blueish tint which adorns the chin when the beard is cleverly removed. I was stupefied by this promptitude, I had never seen myself in such a condition, and had some difficulty in recognising my identity. I searched on the top of the bump of philosophy, for the lock of hair by which, they say, the archangel Gabriel is to raise the pious Mohammedans; even that was not there. I thought that I had a right to protest; but, at the first word on the subject, the barber stated that this ornament had only been adopted by a particular sect, little venerated by the rest on account of the irregularity of its morals. I stopped him in the midst of his reply, assuring him, that I would only belong to a sect eminent for purity, because, whilst I was in Europe my morals had been the theme of general admiration. This point settled, I passed without regret into the hands of the tailor, who began by placing on my head a white skull-cap, over this cap a red turban, and round the turban a shawl neatly folded, which almost transformed me into a true believer. He then put on my robe and *abbayes*, and girdled my waist with a shawl; and, to this shawl I proudly hung my sabre, and also fastened a dagger, pencils, paper, &c. In this costume, which did not make a

single wrinkle on my person, my tailor declared that I was fit for any company. I made no doubt of the fact, so I waited with the greatest impatience, like an actor about to make "his first appearance on any stage," until the metamorphosis of my companions was completed. They were forced, in their turn, to undergo before my eyes, the operation which I had sustained before theirs, and decidedly I was not the person whose head cut the most ridiculous figure. Finally, when the toilette was completed, we went down the stairs, crossed the threshold, and made our *debut* in Turkish life.

I was greatly embarrassed by my dress; my forehead was weighed down by my turban; the folds of my robe and mantle embarrassed my walking; my slippers and feet, not yet well acquainted with each other, committed frequent breaches of continuity. Mohammed walked at our side, marking time by the words, "gently, gently." Finally, when our French petulance was a little calmed, and a more slow and measured pace permitted us to observe the balancing of the body necessary to give the Arabic finish to our gait, everything went on better. This costume, admirably suited to the climate, is far more commodious than ours, for it only restrains the waist, and leaves all the joints perfectly free. With respect to the turban, it forms a species of wall round the head, permitting it to perspire without

inconveniencing the rest of the body, which does not fail to afford great satisfaction.

Having spent half an hour in Mohammedanizing ourselves, we began our investigations. Our first visit was to the palace of the Pacha; the road which led thither was filled with fragments of exquisite taste, from the contemplation of which Mohammed was forced to tear us every minute. It is impossible to give any idea of the exquisite beauty of Arabian ornament; in every direction Cairo is great in its details, as well in the *tout ensemble*, when it allows you only to see the end of a street, or the corner of a mosque, as when it displays in the general view its three hundred minarets, its seventy-two gates, its extensive walls, its tombs of the Khaliphs, its pyramids, its Nile, and its desert.

We traversed rapidly sumptuous bazaars and streets covered with tents; then we came to the great mosque of Sultan Hassan, separated by an open space from the citadel, towards which its principal front is turned. We took the scarped path leading to Joseph's divan, near which is a remarkable well, to which Baron Taylor directed our attention. It is a quadrangular edifice, intended to supply the citadel with water, and its depth, they say, is carried down to the level of the bed of the river; it is sunk in the solid rock, the descent is by steps, lighted at first by loop-holes; but after

going down a certain distance, torches are indispensable.

With respect to the mosque, called Joseph's Divan, it is sustained on monolithic columns of beautiful marble, which support arches, in a slight degree re-entrant, on their Corinthian capitals; they are sculptured with Arabic characters, representing particular verses of the Koran. Continuing our ascent, we at length reached the platform of the rock; the palace of the Pacha has been erected on this culminating point; it is a confused heap of stones, wooden pillars, and Italian pictures in the most detestable taste; the whole badly suited to the exigencies of the climate.

Karah-Kúsh, the captain and prime minister of Salah-ed-Din, as we have already said, built the citadel, sunk the well, and traced the walls of the new city; consequently, his memory is very popular; and as he was a hump-backed dwarf, his name has been given to the Arab punch, who enjoys great liberty in the streets of Cairo, and ventures upon the most grotesque and scurrilous jests.

We were accompanied in our excursion by M'Moara, interpreter to the consulate, and formerly dragoman to the Mamelukes of the guard, whom we had found on our arrival established in the hotel. To his old business, he had joined a new trade, namely, that of a traffic in antiquities; he possessed,

besides, an abundance of anecdotes, which rendered him a most interesting *Cicerone*. It was he who explained to us the magnificent panorama, which was opened to us from the elevated point we had reached.

The citadel commands all Cairo. Facing the east, with the back to the river, taking the south to the right hand and the north to the left, an immense semicircle is opened to the spectator. Over the aisles at our feet rose the tombs of the Khaliphs, a city of the dead, silent and inhabited: it is the Necropolis of giants. Every sepulchre is as large as a mosque, and each monument has its guardian, silent as the tomb.

We shall hereafter visit it with torches, evoke its spectres, and terrify its birds of prey, which perch every day on the pinnacles that surmount it, and at night return to the tombs, as if to tell the ghosts of the Khaliphs that it was their turn to go out. The chain of Mokattan passes behind this monumental city; it is a peaked and arid rock, which reflects the scorching rays of the sun as far as Cairo.

Turning round you have at your feet the city of the living instead of the city of the dead. Your glance falls on tortuous and jumbled streets through which a few Arabs stalk slowly and gravely, clothed in their magnificent *m'sallah* (cloak), or some Turks ride on asses; then there are cumbrous heaps from

which ascend the cries of camels and the voices of merchants—these are the bazaars; a roof of cupolas like the shields of giants,—a forest of minarets like masts or palm-trees. To your left, is Old Cairo or the tent of Taylún; to your right, Poulak, the desert, Heliopolis; in your front, beyond the city, the Nile with the islet of Roudah, and on the opposite bank, the battle-field of Embabeh: beyond this, the desert. To the south-east, are Ghyzeh, the sphinx, the pyramids, a forest of immense palm-trees, where the Colossus rests, and where Memphis stood; above their tops the pyramids again, and beyond, the desert. On all sides of the horizon the desert: an immense ocean of sand, like the real ocean with its flux and reflux; its caravans which cleave it like navies, its dromedaries which furrow it like boats, and its simoons which agitate it like hurricanes.

It was on the platform where we stood, that the Pacha of Egypt, in 1818, mowed down with grape, the ancient militia of the Mamelukes, whom he had invited as if to a feast. They came according to their custom, clothed in their most gorgeous costumes, armed with their finest weapons, bearing upon them all their wealth. At the signal of the Pacha, death appeared on all sides; cannons crossed their flame and shot, horses and men rolled in blood. The hopeless troops dispersed, dashing their heads

against the walls with senseless cries of rage and vengeance; they mingled in crowds, they divided in groups, they dispersed like leaves scattered before the wind, and suddenly reunited in a last effort to break down the batteries' jaws of flame with the breasts of their horses; then again, they separated like terrified birds, pursued in their flight by the perfect hail-storm of bullets which followed. Several then precipitated themselves from the summit of the citadel; steeds and riders were dashed to pieces. Two however arose from the mass; the horses and riders, stunned by the fall, shuddered for an instant, like equestrian statues, whose pedestals are shaken by an earthquake; then, dashing forward with the rapidity of lightning, they crossed the gate of the city, which was not closed, and found themselves out of Cairo. They directed their course to the city of the tombs of the Khaliphs, they traversed that habitation of solitude, which echoed to their horses' hoofs like a catacomb, and reached the foot of the Mokattan mountains at the moment when a troop of the Pacha's cavalry issued from the city in pursuit. One took the road to Al Arish, the other spurred up the mountain; the pursuers divided and continued the chase.

Truly wondrous was this race for life or death, and those horses of the desert bounding over rocks, clearing torrents, and skirting precipices. Thrice

the steed of one of the Mamelukes fell, at the end of his breath, and almost of his life ; thrice, hearing the gallop of the pursuers, he rose and resumed his speed. The fourth time he fell never to rise again. Man then gave a touching example of reciprocal fidelity ; instead of stealing behind some rock, hiding in a defile, or clambering some peak inaccessible to horses, the Mameluke sat down by his fallen steed, laid the bridle across his arm, and quietly waited the stroke of death. The soldiers cut him down, without his uttering a complaint or breathing a sigh. The other Mameluke, more fortunate than his comrade, passed through Al Arish, gained the desert, and became governor of Jerusalem, where we afterwards saw him, the sole surviving remnant of the formidable corps, which thirty years previously rivalled the picked soldiers of the French army.

The circumstance which most attracted our notice in our first excursion was the number of ears and noses wanting to the faces of those we met, which gave a very fantastic appearance to the fine fellows mutilated in this strange fashion. I asked Mohammed for an explanation of this singular phenomenon ; he replied, that these honourable invalids were specimens of the administration of justice by the correctional tribunal of Cairo. This required some further elucidation, which M'Moara, always talkative and officious, gave us on the instant.

At Cairo, a primitive country, which has not yet had time to reach our state of civilization, there is not an army of police to watch the army of robbers ; besides, the most minute researches, and the most careful vigilance, would be easily deceived,—the person suspected clears the walls of Cairo, and is in the Desert. Now, justice has the same dread of sand that it has of water ; every ocean terrifies the stern dame ; it was necessary to remedy this inconvenience. The Cadí, whom the business chiefly concerned, cast about, and at length hit upon an ingenious mode of distinguishing thieves from honest people.

When a robbery has been committed, and the robber taken, which does sometimes happen, the Cadí summons the accused, hears the charge, and, when the criminal is convicted, which is soon done, he takes the robber's ear in one hand and a razor in the other ; he adroitly passes the instrument between his hand and the head of the convict ; long practice has rendered the operation so familiar, that the piece remains in the Cadí's hand, and the convict walks off *minus* an ear.

Every one must see that such an operation simplifies the business of police. If the thief be taken for a second crime, there is no denying the record of previous conviction, unless the ear has grown again, which rarely happens ; the second ear is then cut

off, by virtue of that axiom of jurisprudence "*non bis in idem*" (not twice to the same). If the robber is incorrigible, and falls a third time into the same fault, the Cadí takes him by the middle of the face and cuts off his nose, as he had cut off his ears. The citizens of Cairo have then fair warning to keep out of the way of people whose heads want such accessories, for the proprietors have such a ridiculous sorrow for their loss that they search for the ears and noses in the pockets of every one they meet. Should you, when at Cairo, find a hand in your pocket, your best plan is to draw your dagger, give a smart cut, and walk off. Should there be rings on the fingers, so much the better for you; you may make yourself easy, the proprietor will never come to claim them.

Just as M'Moara ended his explanation, we saw the Cadí going his rounds. He starts every morning, without giving a hint of the direction he intends to take; he takes his course across the city, halts at the first bazaar he meets, sits down in a shop taken at random, verifies the weights, hears public complaints, and examines the merchant found tripping; then, without lawyer or judge, and especially without delay, he pronounces his decree, inflicts the punishment, and sets off in quest of a new delinquent. On this occasion the character of the penalties is changed; in spite of the resemblance, mer-

chants cannot be treated like robbers, for that would destroy the confidence necessary in commerce. The ordinary sentences are of three classes ;—1. lenient, confiscation ; 2. moderate, closing the shop ; 3. severe, exposure. This exposure is effected in a peculiar manner ; the victim is placed erect, lifted from his feet in such a way that the whole weight of his body rests on the point of his toe, his ear is then nailed to the door-post, which gives him the appearance of executing a pirouette, like Elslér or Taglioni. This ingenious punishment lasts two, four, or six hours. It is useless to say that the patient may abridge his sufferings by tearing away his ear ; that rarely happens, the Turkish merchants are jealous on the point of honour, and for no consideration would they consent to resemble robbers by losing even a small portion of their ears.

I stopped before one of these wretches, who had been nailed up at the moment ; I was about to bestow pity on him, when Mohammed told me that he was an old offender ; and on looking close to his ears, I saw that they were like cullenders. My feelings towards him were completely changed : he had still an hour and three-quarters to complete his punishment, a much longer time than I required to take his portrait. I desired my companions to go on with M'Moara, and to leave me with Mohammed ; but my friend Mayer would not abandon

me; we three remained together whilst the rest continued their route.

The picture was quite complete. The baker, nailed by the ear, held himself erect and stiff on his great toes; near him, seated on the threshold, the guard, charged with the superintendence of the execution, smoked his pipe, the charge of which he seemed to have calculated for the duration of the punishment. Round these two personages, a semicircle of spectators enlarged and contracted, as new-comers arrived or the old-comers went away. We took our post on one of the wings, and I commenced my observations.

At the end of ten minutes, the baker, seeing that he had no pity to expect from the spectators, among whom perhaps he recognised some of his dupes, ventured to address the guard.

"Brother," said he, "one of the laws of our holy prophet is, that men should mutually assist each other."

The guard had no objection to make to this admirable precept, so he quietly continued smoking his pipe.

"Brother," resumed the sufferer, "did you hear me?"

The guard gave no other sign of assent than a large puff of smoke, which went up to his neighbour's nose.

"Brother," said the baker, "one of us could assist the other in the way that will please Mohammed."

The puffs of smoke succeeded each other with a regularity not calculated to console a wretch who wanted something else.

"Brother," he continued, with a plaintive voice, "put a stone under my foot, and I will give you a piastre."

Absolute silence.

"Two piastres."

A long pause.

"Three piastres."

A cloud of smoke.

"Four piastres."

"Ten piastres," said the guard.

The baker's ear and purse had a conflict, which was vividly depicted on his countenance; finally, pain carried the day, and ten piastres fell at the feet of the sentinel; he clutched them, counted them, put them in his purse, laid his pipe against the wall, searched for a pebble about the size of a sparrow's egg, and placed it delicately under his neighbour's feet.

"Brother," said the sufferer, "I can feel nothing under my feet."

"Nevertheless, I put a stone there," said the guard, coolly taking his pipe, "but I proportioned the size to the cash. Give me a *talari* (about four

shillings), and I will put under your feet so beautiful and comfortable a stone, that when you get to Paradise, you will regret your position at your shop door."

The final result was, that the sentinel got the *talari*, and the baker the stone. I do not know how this strange judicial procedure terminated, for I went away, my sketch being finished in about half an hour.

As the heat began to be fatiguing, and our tour was far from being completed, Mohammed gave a signal, and two donkeys, richly caparisoned, were brought. They were the most spirited animals we had yet met, but as we had gone out to make sketches, not to gain the Chantilly stakes, we forced them to go our pace; this, however, was no easy matter, especially for Mayer, who, being a naval officer, had very little taste for equitation. Mohammed assured us, that before the French came to Cairo a donkey had never been seen in a gallop, but that when the pacific quadrupeds had felt the ingenious devices used by our soldiers, prods of the bayonet, &c., they adopted their eternal gallop, which has come down from generation to generation. Nevertheless, Mohammed pretended that they had generally sufficient intelligence to distinguish the race of men to which their rider belonged. In fact, I have seen animals, which I recognised as the most

troublesome to manage on the preceding evening, proceeding very quietly under the conduct of a grave Turk, or trotting gently under a Coptic merchant, whilst those which I saw hired by Frank travellers were generally as spirited as Bucephalus.

We visited several bazaars in succession; each bazaar is usually appropriated to one class of merchandise, as each merchant is to one kind of trade, and each slave to one kind of service. We began with the provision-bazaar; the first and principal article was rice, a commodity easy of transport, and the principal support of the population; next apricot-paste, rolled out like a carpet, each piece being from twenty-five to thirty feet long, and three or four feet wide; it is sold by the yard, a circumstance tending to derange our notions of oriental sweetmeats; then choice dates, then dates too ripe, and dates too green, piled together and heaped in cubes which weigh from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds each. Dates are, next to rice, the chief support of the population; only that one is considered as the dinner, and the other as the dessert; the delicacy, however, sells at a very low price.

The cloth-bazaars are very rich; they contain vast quantities of Indian shawls, their price being about half what they would cost in France. The military-bazaar is sumptuous; the weapons of polished steel are magnificent, but scarce and dear. Sabres and

daggers are rarely sold mounted ; you must first buy the blade, then have a handle fixed on by the armourer, a sheath supplied by the proper maker, ornaments added by the silversmith, tassels and belt furnished by the laceman, and, finally, it must be taken to the assayer to receive the proper stamp. Some blades bring exorbitant prices ; they have been valued at 2000, 2800, and 3000 francs (80*l.*, 112*l.*, and 120*l.* English).

In order to facilitate trade, the Jews frequent the bazaars, offering to change gold or silver, or to lend money to known persons, who may not have brought out with them enough money for the article they wish to purchase ; they are easily recognised at the first glance by their black dresses, the sumptuary laws of Cairo forbidding them to wear any other colour.

To finish the day, we went to the women's bazaar. The building which contains them is divided into miserable square courts, with cages fixed against the walls. A partition divides each court into two, the first division has the best apartments, designed for slaves of high price. We found in these courts Jewesses, Arabian, Nubian, and a few Grecian girls. One of them was a young girl of ravishing grace and beauty : I inquired her price, and learned that it was 300 francs (12*l.*)

All these slaves have generally a joyous appear-

ance, for badly fed by their owners, beaten for the least fault, or rather slightest caprice of their master, no condition can be worse than that of those who remain in the bazaar, and therefore they employ every art to attract purchasers.

There are magnificent fountains round each bazaar ; they are beautiful, and almost always isolated monuments, and their openings are covered with bronze gratings. At each opening a copper bowl is suspended by a chain ; passengers put their hands through the grating, take the water, drink, and leave the bowl suspended for the next passenger. There are eternally twelve or thirteen Arabs seated at each fountain ; they go round the monument with the sun, so that they have always the enjoyment of the most precious things in this climate, water and shade.

We went out of the bazaars so pre-occupied with what we had seen, that we allowed our donkeys to take their own way ; as we turned into a street leading to the Frank quarter, we found ourselves in front of a troop of women going to the bath ; they were all covered with white silk mantles, mounted on mules, and escorted by a eunuch in the livery of the Pacha. Every one drew up on the road as they passed, the men turning their faces to the earth, or screwing themselves up against the walls, so that Mayer and I were alone in the middle of the street.

Mohammed, who saw the danger, caught my donkey's bridle, and dragged us under a porch, calling to Mayer, "To the left! To the left, Sir Frank!" But the advice was easier to give than to take; Mayer, like a sailor, could only understand larboard and starboard, so that, for fear of a blunder, he pulled both reins together, and the donkey stopped short. At this instant Mayer found himself face to face with the eunuch, who, accustomed to remove all obstacles by a sign, lifted his stick and gave the donkey a blow on the head. The donkey reared, Mayer lost his stirrups, and nearly fell, but pulling himself up, half by the pommel of the saddle, and half by the neck of the beast, he no sooner recovered his perpendicular than he advanced upon the eunuch, and tumbled him to the ground by the neatest thump that ever the face of a eunuch received, then, like a true Parisian, he took out his card, in order that the eunuch should know where to look for satisfaction. But the eunuch, affrighted by treatment to which he was so unaccustomed, raised himself on his knees, and seeing Mayer hold out a paper, kissed it respectfully. Mayer, satisfied by this demonstration, at length effected the manœuvre indicated by Mohammed, and rejoined us, whilst the *cortège*, which had halted for a moment, continued its way to the bath.

Scarcely had Mayer rejoined us, when Mohammed,

without saying a single word, seized the bridles of our donkeys, and putting his own to the gallop, dragged us through the middle of several narrow streets, until we reached the consul's court-yard. There we asked our interpreter the cause of such extraordinary speed, but he only replied, "Speak to the consul! speak to the consul!"

Unable to obtain any explanation from Mohammed, we went to the vice-consul, to tell him what had passed. He listened with terror, and when we concluded, said, "Come, all has turned out for the best this time, but if the eunuch had stabbed you both I could not have dared to claim your bodies."

The circumstance which saved us was, that the blockhead, finding himself so unceremoniously treated, thought we must be very great personages, and mistook Mayer's card for our *firman*.

We remained concealed at the consulate until evening, and at night were led straight to our own quarters.

VII. THE PYRAMIDS.

HAVING devoted a day to visiting the battle-field of Embabeh and Erbekieh, the scene of Kleber's assassination, we resolved, on the following morning, to extend our researches to the pyramids, crossing the battle-field, and returning by way of Ghizeh. At day-break, they brought us donkeys of the first order, with which, in less than ten minutes, we reached Boulak. There we crossed the Nile, and instantly found ourselves on the plain, where, forty years ago, the last great quarrel between the East and the West was decided. The investigation was brief; every part was discernible from the heights of Embabeh: but as this is a subject for memory and contemplation, there is nothing for description.

We took a direct line to the pyramids; we were soon forced to proceed at a snail pace, for our donkeys sunk up to their knees in sand at every step, so that we were nearly five hours in reaching the first pyramid, though, when we landed, it seemed as if we could touch it by stretching out our arms.

The largest of the pyramids, and that most usually ascended, rests on a base, nearly equal to the area of Lincoln's Inn Fields, in London, and from below it

appears slightly sloped at the top. The stones are laid in courses gradually receding, so as to form a gigantic staircase, every step of which is about four feet and a half high, and one foot wide. The ascent at first appeared, if not impossible, at least rather inconvenient to accomplish ; but Mohammed attacked one corner, fixed his knee on one course, grasped the second, and made us a signal to follow him, as if it was the simplest thing in the world. Moderate as was the pleasure of mounting more than four hundred and fifty feet, under a burning sun, whose heat was aggravated by the reflection of the stones, to which we clung like lizards, shame prevented any from remaining behind. Mayer, accustomed to climb the shrouds and rigging of his ship, was quite at home ; he now triumphed in his turn, and leaped from course to course like a goat at play. Finally, after twenty minutes of very hard work, after having torn our nails, and barked our shins to our hearts' content, we reached the summit ; but it was necessary instantly to think of coming down again, under pain of seeing immediately the little flesh which an Egyptian sun had left upon our bones quite melt away. Still I had time to take a survey of the landscape. Turning my back to Cairo, I had on my left the immense forest of palm-trees which conceals the ruins of Memphis ; beyond this forest the pyramids of Sak-kara, beyond these the Desert ; in front the Desert,



on my right, the Desert: that is to say, this vast plain, the colour of fire, and which offers, as its only variety, hillocks of sand heaped up and again levelled by the wind. On the opposite side was Egypt; that is to say, the Nile, flowing through its emerald valley; then Cairo, a living city, between Fostat and the tombs of the Khaliphs, its dead waters; beyond the tombs of the Khaliphs, the sterile chain of Mokattan, which seems to bound the horizon with a wall of granite.

I walked for a few minutes on the platform at the summit of the pyramid, which appeared to me about thirty-five or forty feet in length. Some enormous blocks resting on the top resemble peaks torn from a mountain-crest. These rocks are covered with names, among which there were still visible those of some of the generals of the French expedition of 1798. Beside these illustrious names, were those of Charles Nodier and Chateaubriand, which Baron Taylor had written in a former visit.

I then turned my eyes down, and saw our donkeys and their drivers like grasshoppers below. I tried to throw a stone, but with all my force I could not fling it beyond the sides of the pyramid; and it reached the ground, bounding from one course of stones to another.

This last exercise led me to think of descending; and it must be confessed that the matter appeared at

first not less difficult than the ascent, though in a different way. Each course of stones, on account of the disproportion between the height and breadth, hides the step beneath, so that it would seem as if there were no means of descending the inclined plane but sliding down in a sitting posture. Luckily one thinks twice before venturing on such a slide; besides, when you get down the first step, you see the second, and so on to the end. Still I must repeat, that the road is no way convenient, and persons who are subject to vertigo, had better let the ascent alone.

When I reached the base, I fell on the sand, half dead with heat and thirst; I had not felt them during the descent, being too much occupied in looking after my safety. Mohammed gave me a lecture on the necessity of drinking only a small sup at a time; I snatched the bottle from his hands, and swallowed its contents at a single draught. No sooner had I quenched thirst, than I felt hunger. Luckily each of us frankly confessed to similar feelings, so that breakfast was voted unanimously. The donkey that carried our provisions was brought, and we joyously discovered that no accident had happened to our stores.

We made the circuit of the pyramid to discover a shady place. Unluckily the sun was in the zenith, so that the four sides of the tomb of Cheops were

equally scorching. We went round the whole without finding a spot where a person could remain for five minutes together, without being driven mad. At length, our Arabs showed us on the northern side of the pyramid, and at about the third of its height, the entrance by which persons get to the inside of the monument. This dark mouth, which the colossus seems to have opened for breath, appeared to us so shady and cool, that in spite of our fate, we began clambering up again, and in less than five minutes attained our point. We found a spot for a breakfast-parlour, which, though not very convenient, was very cool, and this was all we required.

When our repast was finished, we lighted our torches to visit the interior of the pyramid. The entrance into the monument is through a narrow square corridor, through which the visitors must crawl; this gallery slopes down an angle of about 45° . As you advance, the heat sensibly diminishes; but the smoke of the torches, mixed with the impalpable dust raised by the visitors, renders respiration difficult. At length we reached two chambers, called those of the King and Queen; the first contains a sarcophagus, the cover of which is broken, the second is quite empty.

We quitted the chambers of their majesties, where there is absolutely nothing to see but empty walls, to go and salute his or her highness the sphinx; it is some hundred paces nearer the Nile than the

pyramids, and may be called the gigantic dog which guards this flock of granite.

Near the great pyramid is a smaller, whose top is complete, and terminates in a point. It is rarely ascended, and our Arabs told us that the first who scaled it was a French drummer, who, pursued by the Mamelukes, found no better means of escape than to scale this wall, where his enemies would not follow. Having reached the summit, he resolved to beat his drum; and the rattling he made was heard for a league round. General Regnier sent two companies, who put the Mamelukes to flight; the blockade was raised, and the besieged came down with all the honours of war.

We again mounted our donkeys, and proceeded to Ghizeh, not to see the once celebrated pleasure-house of Morad Bey, for I believe not a vestige of it remains, but to visit the Foundling Hospital for orphan chickens.

Every body knows, that instead of hens, which with the best inclinations and greatest devotedness, cannot sit on more than fifteen eggs at a time, the Egyptians employ two immense ovens heated by steam, in which they hatch myriads of chickens at a time. This interesting institution is conducted by a director, who not only does business for himself, but undertakes the incubation of all the eggs brought him, for a trifling retribution. The dormitory of his

oval pupils is a long gallery, in which may be seen, at each side, a series of cells ranged in two stories, communicating with each other by small openings in the centre, through which warmth is conveyed from a stove always heated to a calculated degree. The doors of these cells open on the gallery, they remain closed for ten or twelve days, and are then opened for a longer time every day until the twentieth, when the incubation is complete.

We arrived just as the contents of an oven were about to be hatched, and we were present at the first appearance of the chickens. The operation is simple; the attendants break the eggs as if they were going to make an omelette; they shell the chickens like beans, and throw them one on top of the other into the oven, where they have been heated into life, with no more precaution than if they were so many paving stones. The first act of existence perpetrated by this brood, is to squall the best way they can: the second is to look for food; this, however, is an unlucky ambition, for the proprietor of the establishment is only bound to hatch, but not to feed them. Yet they will live in this way three or four days, no doubt upon the heat. At the end of this time, if not claimed by the proprietors, they belong to the hatcher, who sends them to market, and sells them without any further attempt at fattening.

We went back to Cairo, and passed by the isle

of Kondah, where the Mekias or Nilometer is built.

This instrument, which serves to measure the height of the inundation of the Nile, is nothing but a column eighteen cubits high, including the capital. The level of the river at its greatest elevation, is marked upon it every year. This Mekias was greatly injured after the occupation of Cairo by the French; but it was rebuilt by order of General Menou, under the direction of the principal engineer, Chabrol. When the repairs were finished, they built a portico at the entrance of the monument, and under its peristyle, just above the gate, was fixed a tablet, on which was graven an inscription in Arabic and French, (which has not the slightest interest for any human being but a Frenchman endowed with a double portion of the national vanity that is everywhere the characteristic of his countrymen).

On that very evening, when we came back to Cairo, M. Eydoux, the doctor of the *Lancier*, who had accompanied us with the philanthropic design of curing us, should we be seized with ophthalmia, was himself attacked with that disease. Mr. Msara advised us to send for M. Dessap, a French physician from Besançon, who had remained at Cairo since the time of the French expedition, and had acquired experience in affections of the eyes, to which he exclusively devoted his attention. We instantly

followed his advice, and about an hour after, we saw a splendid old man come in, clothed in Eastern costume, and supporting his beard in his hand ; this was our fellow-countryman.

The Arabs, who measure a man's science by the length of his beard, have the highest veneration for M. Dessap. I must add, that he well deserves it, and that with him the symbol does not promise more than it performs.

VIII. VISIT TO COLONEL SELVES AND CLOT BEY.

BARON Taylor having learned the viceroy's return to Alexandria, set out for that city, leaving us to make preparations for our journey to Sinai.

Thanks to the wondrous topographical instinct of the Parisians, we began to know Cairo as if we had been born there ; our Mussulman costume, which in spite of native modesty, I must say, that we wore with oriental dignity, opened to us all doors and gates, even those of the mosques ; indeed, they were our usual promenade. The mosques are the *oases* of the city. In them, you find coolness, water, shade, trees, and birds. In the midst of these you will also find some Arab poets, who come during the intervals of prayer to recite commentaries on the Korán, and whose songs lull the pious idlers that dawdle away existence, reclining in the orange-groves. We were pleased with the monotonous and measured summons of the muezzin, convoking the pious to prayer from the top of the minaret ; as years advance, he descends a story, and lowers his voice ; until, when he becomes a feeble old man, he ascends no higher than the lowest gallery, whence he can only be heard by passengers in the street.

We were often in the mosques at the hour of ablutions, and shared in the acts of devotion as if we were genuine Moslems ; one might have supposed, from the fervour with which we bathed our faces and hands in the water, that we had just arrived from the holy cities of Mecca or Medina. There was always a very amusing scene at the close of the ceremony, when the worshippers, on leaving the mosque, claimed their property. Every Moslem on entering a mosque leaves his slippers at the door, so that there was always a regular mountain of slippers, of all forms and colours beyond the threshold. My readers may have heard of the close of a ball at Paris, when everybody takes not his own hat but the best hat he can find. It was just the same with the slippers ; it was a scene of pillage, where the plunderers did not give themselves time to match the colours : every one retired with what was generally an unfair exchange. The devotees returned home with feet quite naked : while those who had too much reason to complain of what had been left them, made quantity compensate for quality, and marched off with two pair of slippers, one on his feet and the other in his hands.

It is easy to see how frequent and varied this pleasure might be in a city like Cairo, where nearly sixty mosques may be counted in one street ; we sketched the most remarkable of these monuments

successively ; the gigantic mosque of Sultan Hassan, where the insurgents sought refuge during the revolt of Cairo (1798), and whence they were driven by cavalry and artillery ; the mosque of Mohammed Bey, whose cupola is supported by columns taken from the ancient Memphis ; Mu Rustam, enriched with precious mosaics, marvellous specimens of art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries ; Halaun, whose square pillars are covered to the very top with porcelain and dazzling hues ; Sultan Húrí, with its rich ceilings ingeniously decorated with arabesques ; and finally, Taylún, which was founded by the conqueror, who gave it its name ; this is the mosque most venerated by the Arabs, who pray in it more willingly than anywhere else ; it is also very curious to a stranger's eye : its date of the ninth century, its prodigious extent, and its minaret, girt by an external staircase, produce the most picturesque effects.

Whilst sketching the interior, I had nearly given inexpressible offence to the devout frequenters of this mosque. As Christians cannot enter the mosques without exposing themselves to a punishment, generally left to the caprice of those who surprise them ; and, as on the other hand, few Mussulmans practice painting ; every time that we made a sketch, we took care to choose the moment when the mosque was all but deserted, or at least, only peopled by

drowsy idlers indulging their opium dreams under orange-trees; or by poets, who, absorbed in the interpretation of the Korán, or in admiration of themselves, paid little attention to us. I then took from my girdle, in addition to my sketch-book, a leaf of paper, covered with Arabic characters, and commenced my work. If I heard a slow and measured step approach, I covered my sketch with the written paper; as the Moslem passed, he cast an oblique glance, and seeing the writing, took me either for a copyist or a poet, and passed on, wishing me either courage or inspiration, according as he deemed that it was my head or hand which worked. One day, I was so profoundly absorbed in the contemplation of my work, that I did not perceive the approach of one of the most pious frequenters of the mosque: suddenly, I perceived a shadow between me and the light; instinctively I drew out my written page, but it was too late; the saint had seen the sketch, and recognised me as a Frank. This discovery inspired him with such horror, that he fled to one of the inner-doors, roaring like a wild beast; I lost no time; sketch, sketch-book, and written page, were thrust into my girdle; as he had made a run in the holy place, I ran likewise; I gained the outer-door, and this time did not wait to find my own slippers; I whipped on the first pair that came to hand, dashed down the next street, and was soon beyond the reach of my persecutor's voice.

I had scarcely escaped the fate of St. Stephen, when I was near meeting that of St. Laurence. A house in the Frank quarter had taken fire: I saw a crowd running, and, as I had my own reasons for speed, I hurried on with the rest. We soon reached the scene of the conflagration, which took its own course, without any one resisting it otherwise than by cries, gestures, and prayers. In the midst of the tumult the Cadí arrived, attended by his guards, armed with bamboos,—in less than no time the place was cleared. A company of soldiers, aided by a hundred volunteers, rushed on the houses next the fire, and as they were made of wood, they worked so hard with hands and feet, that in less than an hour not a vestige of them remained. The conflagration was thus isolated; the four chief props of the burning house were then cut down, and it immediately fell; water was poured on the smouldering pile, and everybody went about his business, save the sentinel left to watch the smoking ruins.

Our second source of amusement, less perilous than the first, was the coffee-houses. As these establishments are profane, everybody may frequent them without running any risk if recognised. Opium-smokers, chess, and *mangallah**-players, are the chief customers of these places. As we had no taste for such games, we at once asked for pipes and

* Backgammon.

coffee. At first, we had some difficulty to accustom ourselves to the coffee, which is prepared very differently in the east from what it is in Europe. The grains are slightly roasted, and then bruised with a pestle; boiling-water is poured over the crushed grain, and the decoction is used as hot as it can be swallowed. I had at first the weakness to desire some sweetening, and I called for the necessary ingredients. The waiter brought me a little moist-sugar in the palm of his hand, and when I asked for a spoon to stir it, he picked up a piece of wood from the ground and presented it to me with great politeness. As it is one of my principles never to humiliate any person, I held out my cup in spite of the disgust caused by the sugar-bowl, and scraped my bit of wood with my penknife, so that I quite succeeded in spoiling my beverage. I asked for a second supply, which I swallowed in all its oriental purity; I found that it possessed a wondrous aroma and exquisite taste. A person may drink from twenty-five to thirty cups of coffee in a day; it acts as a tonic, while the pipe serves as an amusement; so that whenever you pay a visit, coffee and tobacco are offered; the coffee restores the vigour of which you have been deprived by the heat; the pipe supplies the place of conversation.

The accident which had so nearly happened in the mosque of Taylún, took away our amusements

at sacred places, and we resolved to make a second excursion beyond the city. Passing by Old Cairo, we had one day paid our respects to Colonel Selves, who had expressed a desire to receive Baron Taylor in his tent, and charged us to transmit the invitation. Colonel Selves, now called Soleyman Bey, has renounced the Christian religion* to adopt the Mohammedan creed, and his French customs to embrace oriental habits of life. In spite of this change in creed and habits, his heart is still European, and all his recollections are national:—the most celebrated battles of the Revolution and the empire: and thus by the united aid of vision and memory he sometimes dreams that he is in the midst of his countrymen. He showed us these memorials with a sad smile, which revealed how great his struggle must have been before he became an apostate: he

* This statement is not quite correct; Selves left France when Atheism and Jacobinism were in the ascendant, and when ostentatious blasphemy was not only the fashion, but almost the religion of the state. He had no Christianity to lose; he adopted Mohammedanism purely from interested motives, for the soldiers he commanded under the Pacha, indignant at being subject to a *giaour*, fired at him more than once. His apostacy, if the adoption of some creed, instead of none, can be so called, is treated by himself as a good joke, and the shame and repentance attributed to him by Dumas, have not been noticed by any other traveller.—*Trans.*

asked us to spend an entire day with him : we consented, and he came one morning to ask the fulfilment of our promise. Baron Taylor found a magnificent barge placed under his orders at Roundah, to carry us to the pyramids of Sakkara, and the ruins of Memphis ; on our return we were to dine with the French officers in the service of the Pacha. We took M'Msara with us, indeed, he was our companion in most of our peregrinations. .

The wind was favourable, the landscape charming. The Nile, which the ancients called the Father of Rivers, rolled beneath our feet ; the waves that dashed against our barge had washed the ruins of Thebes and Philoë ; the men, who followed us along the banks, were clothed as in the days of Ishmael, and the women as in the time of Hagar. Under such circumstances it was impossible to feel *ennui*, even though the conversation of Soleyman Bey and of M'Msara had not added fresh poetry to the localities. Among his French tastes, Colonel Selves had preserved his love of the chase, and he related many sporting anecdotes of the animals he had encountered in his excursions, particularly respecting the crocodiles, of which he had gone in search above the first cataract : for the animal is not found in Lower Egypt.

After a delightful sail of two hours we landed in front of the pyramids of Sakkara. They are more

ancient and less striking than those of Ghyzeh; their form is irregular; in some the courses of stone have very narrow dimensions; others have only ten colossal steps, which seem built for giants, to their summits. The ground at their base is covered with bones; you have only to scrape the sand with your hands or feet to bring up fragments of mummies, cloths, amulets, glass-ornaments, and scarabæi. Beneath the surface are the immense catacombs in which the inhabitants of ancient Memphis repose; indeed, this entire bank of the Nile is their Necropolis.

Besides the catacombs of men and women, there are catacombs of animals, in which are found, cats, ibises, and lizards; each of these individuals, formerly a god, is folded in sacred cloth, hermetically sealed in an earthen jar, and placed in a recess along the walls of the common tomb. I put an ibis under my right arm, and a cat under my left, which seemed from their cases to have been very considerable personages in their day, and marched off with my brace of deities to repose for a while in a cavern covered with hieroglyphics, wondrously preserved in some places,—horribly mutilated in others by travellers, those barbarians of civilisation.

From the pyramids of Sakkara, we went to the grove of palm-trees which covers the site of ancient Memphis, and which is about a league distant from

the pyramids. This ancient ruin of Egypt could not have chosen a more magnificent tomb for its bones. Several fragments of pillars pierce the ground with their marble corners; the colossus of King Rameses the Great, commonly called Sesostris, like the eternal genius of these proud ruins, lies before you, hurled from its base, and covers forty-feet of ground with its fragments.

Within a few paces of the colossus appears a Biblical monument almost cotemporary with the conqueror whose statue is nigh. It is a cave which the Arabs call Joseph's prison; according to their traditions, it was to this prison that the son of Jacob was consigned by the deluded Potiphar, and it was by the steps they showed us that he ascended to explain the dreams of Pharaoh.

We returned as we came by the Nile, the only high-road through Egypt; we landed in front of the camp of Shubra, and went to the abode of Colonel Selves, where we found dinner waiting. The feast was served in the European style, and revived all the associations of home, so dear to travellers in a foreign land.

The next day we began our preparations for our pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, and claimed the aid of our countryman, M. Linant, a young Frenchman, who had formerly accompanied Count de Forbin into Syria, and after having fulfilled his duties to

his companion, settled in Cairo, seduced by the climate, the buildings, and the *tout ensemble* of the poetical east. He had offered his services in procuring us Arab guides; the time was come for our introduction to the sons of the desert, and consequently we went to remind M. Linant of his promise. There was little delay in the accomplishment; on the morning of the second day a deputation came to us from the tribe of Waleb-Said, one of the most considerable in the peninsula of Sinai, and we bargained with the chief to bring Baron Taylor from Alexandria to Cairo, reserving our more serious agreement for our journey to Sinai and return to Suez, until we had seen this species of prospectus. In this first bargain we agreed to pay fifty piastres (about fifteen shillings) per dromedary.

I had seen the Arabs and their cattle enter the court of our hotel, and for the tenth time the sight had awakened serious considerations. Every time that I had heard travels in the east mentioned, I had also heard camels mentioned as the ordinary means of conveyance; and every time that I heard this animal mentioned, it presented itself to my imagination just as M. Buffon has described it, with a double bump on its back. I had familiarised myself with this image, and a thousand times fancied myself astride in the natural valley which Nature seems to have placed as a saddle on this interesting

quadruped; but of late days my ideas had been singularly rectified. I found that they called indifferently the camel a dromedary, and the dromedary a camel, but that the animal with the double hump did not exist in Egypt. The camel is to the dromedary what the cart-horse is to the racer. This discovery upset my entire system of equilibrium; instead of a valley I had a mountain; and besides, instead of this mountain serving as a support in front or rear, the Arabs had chosen to crown it with a saddle, ten or twelve inches high, so as to raise the traveller twelve or thirteen feet from the ground. Add to this a trot likely to shake the stoutest to pieces, and you will have some notion of the comforts of oriental travelling.

This was no very amusing prospect for a man who, in every excursion, regularly tumbled two or three times off his donkey.

Luckily, my system is never to anticipate events, so that seeing eight or ten clear days before me, I prepared on the following morning to resume the reckless and pleasant life which we had spent for the last three weeks.

Once more we were invited to visit a Frenchman; Clot Bey, the celebrated physician, whom we met at Paris in 1833, and who has rendered eminent services to the Egyptian Pacha, came to invite Baron Taylor to visit his new hospital at Abuzabel,

and afterwards to spend the evening with him in the Turkish fashion. The baron had not arrived, but we accepted the invitation with great pleasure.

The Pacha bestows very particular attention on the hospital at Abuzabel, which is destined to become the seminary of his young physicians. We saw there all the monstrous maladies of the East, unknown or forgotten amongst us, but which we find mentioned in the Bible,—elephantiasis, leprosy, enormous hydroceles. Young Arab surgeons, lively and intelligent, pointed out the cases with an eagerness which showed their anxiety to please their chief. Clot Bey, feeling that such a spectacle, however interesting to men of science, could only be to us a matter of passing curiosity, soon led us from the wards to the gardens; these were really oases of lilacs and orange-trees, where convalescents rapidly recovered from the sole effects of coolness and shade.

About two o'clock Clot Bey perceived that the weather looked threatening: he therefore proposed that we should mount our donkeys and profit by the education the Franks had given them, to reach Cairo as soon as possible. He thought, if the hurricane surprised us at Abuzabel, that we would have no particular inclination to spend the night; and besides, he had made arrangements for his evening party, which recalled him to the city. We returned at full gallop, and though there are two

confoundedly long leagues between the hospital and Cairo, in less than an hour I found that the return was completed without any divorce between me and my donkey ; and this gave me some confidence for the coming case of the dromedary.

Whilst we waited for dinner, Clot Bey led us to the bath. I have already explained the process of this operation in my chapter on Alexandria, and need not repeat it here ; besides, I had become used to it, and was now in my turn a furious amateur.

We returned to dine with Clot Bey ; it was quite a Turkish repast, only that we were allowed to use knives and forks. The dinner consisted of a pillau, boiled mutton, rice, fish, and pastry.

After dinner Clot Bey led us into a saloon, and seated us on an enormous divan ; several cups of excellent coffee, whose fragrance was perceptible at a distance, were served, then each of us was supplied with a pipe, while a negro sat at our feet to charge, light, and empty them ; seeing that we were comfortably settled, Clot Bey clapped his hands, and four musicians entered.

I confess that my first movement was one of terror ; I remembered the musical party we had at the vice-consul's, and had no anxiety for a similar *charivari*. I cast an inquiring glance at the instruments, and derived no comfort from their form or nature. The first was the famous timbrel, with

which I had formed an acquaintance on board the barge; the second was a violin, whose iron head rested on the knees of its executioner, and the two others, mandolins with enormous handles. The scoundrels besides had voices, which they concealed for the moment, but with which they too soon made us acquainted.

The concert was about to commence, and it promised to be no way inferior to that which we had heard before, when our attention was diverted by the entrance of a kind of buffoon, clothed in white. He preceded four females, whom we at once recognised as *almeh* (dancing girls); they were the Taglionis of Cairo. Thenceforward we cared little for the music, but paid all our attention to this novel and interesting performance.

They wore an elegant and graceful costume; their heads were covered with turbans, richly embroidered, and adorned with jewels. From these hung long plaited tresses, adorned with Venetian sequins set very thick, which, falling over their shoulders, formed a splendid and glittering mantle of gold; their vests fitted close, and left the neck and bosom exposed: below the waist they were loose and floating; the sleeves were close at the top, but they widened at the elbow, opened a little above the waist, and hung down to the ground. Their trousers exhibit graceful folds; a superb Cashmire shawl, tied carelessly round

the waist, completed the dress, which, simple as it seems, is often of immense value.

Besides these, they had the nails of the hands and feet stained with henna, and their eyebrows painted black, which gave extraordinary brilliancy to their eyes. Their dances, though graceful and novel, are too frequently offensive to correct taste, and even worse than the most degrading exhibitions at our European operas. But such exhibitions suit the voluptuous imaginations of the orientals, and are purchased at an enormous price. They are amusements for a sultan, which a host cannot give his guests without incurring an expense of from two to three thousand piastres, (from twenty to thirty pounds), and such a price would procure a much better entertainment.

IX. THE CITY OF THE KHALIPHS.

ONE evening, whilst we were preparing for dinner, we heard a great noise of men and dromedaries; we looked out of the dining-room window, and saw Baron Taylor. He had left Alexandria the preceding morning, and, with the rapidity of Arab couriers, had traversed the forty-five leagues which separate that city from Cairo.

M. Taylor had succeeded in his negotiations, and was very anxious to continue his journey: our departure, at his desire, was fixed for the evening of the following day.

On the morning of this great day, we went with our Arabs to the vice-consul of France, M. Dantan, to make our bargain in the presence of a witness. We first fixed the number of men and beasts; we then opened the principal question, namely, how much we should pay both for the journey, which, going and coming, would occupy more than a month.

Disputes are the glory of the Arabs: cunning, steady, insatiable, they baffle your arguments by affecting not to comprehend them, or oppose you by statements which, from ignorance of persons, places, and customs, you are unable to contradict. Fearing to ask too little, they make such extravagant de-

mands, that when, with the air of men making a sacrifice, they consent to some reduction, they are still paid double the value of their services. Their constant answer to our chaffering was, that the peninsula of Mount Sinai was divided between three different tribes, and that there was a convention between them, securing travellers under the escort of one tribe from being annoyed by the others: as this was a purchased neutrality, they declared that the sum they asked, great as it appeared, was in reality reasonable, since, after subtracting the portion due to the other two tribes, the remainder would scarcely defray the expenses of drivers and conveyances. This was manifestly one of those obscure and stubborn arguments to which there is no reply; so we nearly agreed to their demands: the only concession we obtained was, that they should feed themselves during the journey; but we were to supply provender for the dromedaries.

When the bargain was finished, M. Dantan, who had assisted at it, warned us not to put absolute confidence in the amicable relations between the tribe of Waleb Saide and their brethren of the Desert; "Still," said he, "it is a brave tribe, and in case of necessity, will assist in your defence." He therefore recommended us not to forget adding weapons to our baggage, and powder and ball to our provisions.

Our Arabs paid great attention to M. Dantan's

speech, and though too distant, they perceived its effect reflected on our countenances, and guessed that it was not to their advantage: their first notion was that we repented of the bargain which we had just concluded, and that we were seeking an excuse to break off: immediately one of them, named Bechara, who spoke, came to us as if he was not sensible of the interruption. He invited us to come and see his dromedaries, thus taking me by my weak side. I followed Bechara, who led me into the court, and stopped in front of his beasts. He begged me to consider that there were dromedaries and dromedaries; that those we had hired were true *Haghins*, light as gazelles, strong as lions, gentle as lambs; that each of them had his genealogy recorded as regularly as the best-blooded courser of Arabia; finally, he declared that if I followed them in the desert, I could not find their traces on the sand, so rapid was their course, and so light their tread.

This assertion, I must confess, seemed amply confirmed by a simple inspection of the wretched beasts which were the subject of this eulogy; their leanness was absolutely wonderful; their skins, which seemed to have formerly served animals of double their size, hung in folds over a kind of steel carcass, in which all the springs were open to examination. On the other hand, their aspect was mild and gentle, and the iron ring passed through their nos-

trils seemed to me an advantageous substitute for the bit and bridle; so that, with the exception of their extraordinary height, I had no reason to complain. Besides, I began to take pity on the future companions of my travels; their vaunted sobriety was written on their meagre forms; but I had doubts of the continued health of such wretched-looking animals. At once all the Arabs replied in chorus, and Mohammed took the same side. Everything that inspired me with fear was with them an additional motive of security; everything, which seemed to me a defect, was exalted by them as a perfection. I saw that I was beaten, and held my tongue; still I could not help thinking that I had never seen dromedaries of such gigantic stature.

Baron Taylor and M. Mayer came to join me; it was necessary to purchase provisions; we put off our market until the evening, and made the Arabs give us a list of the necessary articles. Short as the catalogue was, it forced us to visit almost every bazaar in Cairo, because, as I have said, each bazaar is limited to articles of one class.

I insert a list of our purchases; it will give an idea of the simplicity of nomade life, which reduces the requisites of a traveller to the absolute necessities of life.

Leather bags for water.

Leather bottles to hang at the saddles, so that

a person wanting to drink need not halt the caravan.

Rice for three persons coming and going: they told us that we could obtain a supply in Sinai, but we thought it better to lay in our stock at Cairo.

Flour for bread.

Beans for the dromedaries.

Dates, the fruit most easily preserved on similar journies.

Mich-mich; that is apricot-paste dried in the sun and rolled up like pieces of cloth; I have already said, in my description of the provision-bazaar, that it is sold by the yard; it is easy of transport, and when boiled with water makes excellent marmalade.

Tobacco for presents to our escort and the Arabs we might meet on our journey.

Sugar, a gift to the convent on Mount Sinai.

A tent to shelter us against the heat of the sun and coldness of the nights.

Finally, iron vessels to dress our food; earthenware would not resist the dromedary's trot for ten minutes.

This last article brought me back to my fixed idea; among the qualities of his *haghins* he had forgotten to vaunt their formidable trot, and I thought, although the comparison was not very flattering, that we were destined to play the part of the earthen pot in La Fontaine's fable.

Still as we had to traverse a dozen bazaars in two or three hours, I made what haste I could; we ran to the nearest donkey-stand and mounted those estimable quadrupeds which had already rendered us so much service, and which I valued most at the moment I was going to exchange them for new conveyances. As we made our purchases, Mohammed sent home the goods, and in about three hours our business was done. I forgot that we added tapers to our list, that we might be able to read or write after sunset.

We now bade farewell to shoes and slippers, exchanging them for long red Morocco boots, which are as flexible and pliant as silk stockings; in addition to the turban, my head was shaded by a handkerchief, striped yellow and red; the extremities hung down at each side, shading the body, and to these were attached silk balls, enclosed in a net-work of silver. Accoutred in this fashion we entered the Frank quarter to preside over the packing of our baggage, and, though exhausted by fatigue, resolved to start that evening.

We found the business almost done: the Arabs are the most expeditious packers that I know; everything was rolled up, fastened and corded, when we arrived, and two out of the four baggage dromedaries were already loaded. M'Msara, seeing that the rest of the operation might go on in our absence,

since the first part had succeeded so well without our presence, advised us to apply for letters of introduction at the Greek convent of Cairo, which is suffragan to that of Sinai. The advice seemed good, and we set out to follow it; but when we had gone through three or four streets, our progress was barred by a nuptial procession. The bride was hermetically enclosed in a large piece of silk; four eunuchs held a canopy over her head; a crowd of women, veiled like her, followed, making a clucking noise peculiar to Arab ladies. It is sound made by vibrating the tongue close to the roof of the mouth, and was used on this and on similar festive occasions, as an expression of joy. This melody formed the interlude of a still more barbarous music. A dozen singers squalled at the top of their voices, accompanied by the instruments I have already described, whilst jugglers and buffoons played their antics before the multitude. The procession, considerable in itself, was followed by an immense crowd, of which we could not see the end, though we stood up in our stirrups. We calculated that at the rate they advanced, we should have more than an hour to wait; and as this was too much time to lose, we turned back.

We found our Arabs ready, and our dromedaries loaded; it only remained to complete our bargain, and this conclusion consisted on our part of giving pledges, and on the part of the Arabs in giving

hostages to the consul for our safety. These hostages, whose life was to answer for ours, were two warriors of the tribe with their dromedaries. We observed that we were three in number, and that three Arabs were necessary to represent us; but our chief replied that two of us were represented by the two warriors, and the third by the two dromedaries. Whether the excuse was good or bad, we were forced to accept it, though the equivalent was far from flattering to our vanity. Having swallowed the insult, we bade farewell to Messrs. Danton, Msara, Dessap, lighted our torches, and began our march.

Horses were supplied us for the first stage, because there was reason to fear that our want of acquaintance with the dromedary's trot might cause some accident in the narrow and winding streets of the city. For this precaution we were indebted to Mohammed, which inspired me with real friendship for him; finally, about nine o'clock at night, the Arabs mounted their dromedaries and we our steeds. We issued majestically from the hotel, illuminated by the torches which our guides carried before us, and traversed Cairo, to the great admiration of the citizens, whom the splendour and novelty of the spectacle brought out of their houses, in spite of their usual apathy.

We went out by the gate of Victory, the nearest

to the Frank quarter; then turned to the right, and skirted the city wall. After an hour's journey, we were close to another city—the city of the dead;—more beautiful, rich, and monumental, than that of the living. It is the necropolis of the Khaliphs, where the vicegerents of Salah-ed-Dín and the descendants of the mameluke Bibars, repose in their tombs of marble and porphyry, side by side with the richest and highest aristocracy of Cairo. We had reserved the exploration of this place for our first halt, and no better hour could be chosen for a visit to the tombs.

We left the Arabs to arrange the tent, and prepare the encampment. We took four torch-bearers with us, and advanced on foot to the sepulchral city, which we saw before us like an enormous black mass, wherein neither shape nor form were discernible.

After we had advanced about two hundred paces, our torches were reflected by the walls of an immense and splendid edifice, whose base, illumined by the flickering light, allowed us to see the verses of the Korán, which surrounded it like sacred bands. The light, diminishing as it ascended, was suddenly interrupted by the cornices and salient angles, which projected their shadows, and it was quite lost before reaching the tops of the minarets, whose gilt crescents shone like stars in the sky.

We rapped at the gate of the monument; the noise, unusual at such an hour, roused the hawks which had found shelter in the arabesques of the monument; they took to flight, uttering piercing cries. Prolonged howlings replied to them, and for some time we believed that birds and beasts of prey were the sole inhabitants of this necropolis. At length we heard human footsteps; our Arabs exchanged a few words with the person who was approaching, and finally, the gate opened, and the guardian of the dead appeared on the threshold of this splendid sepulchre.

He was an old man, still more sparing of his words than the generality of Moslems. When he learned the cause of our coming, he made us a sign to enter, pointed out the different parts of the edifice, and finally led us to the tomb, the walls of which were enriched with flowers in mosaic, of exquisite workmanship; the sarcophagus was of granite in perfect preservation.

Still we did not wish to confine our researches to a single tomb. We told our design to the old man, who made us a sign that he was at our disposal; we left the monument, and came down into the street. There we again found the owls, which, as soon as they saw the light, began to scream once more, and fluttered so near our torches that they were mixed with the smoke; at the same time hundreds of

houseless dogs, whose days are spent in the city of Cairo, and their nights in the tombs, surrounded and followed us, howling most horribly. Roused by these screams and howls, which seemed to protest against life and light, so unusual at this place and hour, the Bedouin Arabs, an untameable race, who would look upon themselves as prisoners if the walls of a city separated them from the Desert, even during their sleep, ranged themselves on the steps of the mosques or entrances of the sepulchres, wrapped in their *bournouzes*, seeming like the sheeted and shrouded ghosts whose repose we had troubled.

In the midst of so dismal a company, and such sepulchral apparitions, we reached a retired place, where we were shown the tombs of the *Jezam*, a branch of the Arab tribe of *Kohlan*, which settled in Egypt after the Mussulman conquest. Two sumptuous monuments rose above all the rest; they were the tombs of two men celebrated for their hospitality and munificence; one, named Tharif, had daily a thousand guests at his table, who were invited by his slaves, placed for that purpose at the gates of the city; the other, named Mokenna, being in want of fuel to provide food for some travellers who had visited his tent, burned for the purpose a rich spoil which he had just taken from his enemies. The magnificent hospitality, which they had displayed during life, was repaid after death; they

reposed in tombs as spacious and splendid as palaces.

On quitting these monuments, we visited the last of all, which seemed more ancient than any we had seen; the walls were cracked through their whole extent, and open in several places. Moham-med pointed out to us over one of the openings, an epigram written by some Persian poet, the point of which turns on a novel conceit.

The gaping chinks that these proud walls divide
Are open mouths which laugh at human pride.

We had passed nearly two hours in the city of the dead, and had visited the most remarkable buildings. It was time to revisit our Arabs; we returned therefore to the first tomb we had visited, still attended by the hawks, accompanied by the dogs, and escorted by the phantoms. As if, however, this fantastic *cortège* had been retained by a superior power in the sepulchral city, it halted at the gate which opens on the plain of the living; we parted from it without regret, to return to our tent. But for some time longer we heard the screams of the hawks, and the howls of the dogs; but re-assured by silence and night, the first returned to their nests of marble, and the others to their kennels of granite; so that, after some time, every sound died away, and no noise awoke an echo in the city of the dead, which we had roused for a moment from its eternal sleep.

On our return we found our Arabs seated round the fire they had kindled, telling stories. Behind them the dromedaries were couched on the sand, and confounded with it, from their similarity of colour, forming a wider circle: our tent was pitched apart; it was a favourable moment for examining the group by which we were to be accompanied, and of taking note of the men to whom we had intrusted our lives.

X. OUR ARABS AND THEIR DROMEDARIES.

THE chief or sheikh was named Taleb. He was small, thin, and muscular; though ugly, he had an affable expression of physiognomy; he spoke rarely and briefly; his words sharply accented, and his rapid glance, held a constant mastery over our Arabs: in the sequel, we had opportunities of estimating the promptitude and energy of his character.

At his left was Bechara, with whom I had already formed an acquaintance in the court-yard of the hotel, when he proved to me the excellence of his dromedaries, and pointed out their admirable qualities. He was as meagre as his chief, but while the latter was severe and taciturn, Bechara was a merry fellow, of infinite jest. During the whole day he was singing on his dromedary, and when night came, this Scheherazadè of the Desert, recounted stories of merciless length to his companions, until he put them to sleep. He then went on with a monologue until he fell asleep himself. This loquacity, so precious on a long road to those who are taciturn themselves, made Bechara the idol of his companions. If Taleb was chief during the day, no sooner had the sun set,

than undisputed possession of the sceptre of command was transferred to Bechara.

On the other side of Taleb was Bechara's brother in arms, friend and confidant; he was an Herculean Arab, in high favour with the chief, and respected by the rest of his comrades, because he was the strongest of the troop. He was the first sent forward when any anxiety shaded the brow of Taleb, and the last who went to sleep when Bechara at night recited his eternal stories; thus he was highly valued by both; he was an arm to the one, and an ear to the other.

The only one deserving of remark, after these three men, was Abdallah, our cook; he had been recommended to us by M'Moara, with an assurance that he had studied his art under the best masters in Cairo. He was then living under sentence of condemnation; it is impossible to form a notion of the filthy mixtures that this prisoner served up at our meals.

We need not say anything about Mohammed, our old friend, who had followed us from Alexandria, and also accompanied us on this journey.

I have nothing to say respecting the intellectual character of the rest of the group. In their physical aspect they were real sons of the Desert; slim, active, and lithe as serpents; meagre and abstemious as their own camels. At the first glance, we saw that we

had not saved much by the abatement of food; during this first halt, no one thought of a meal. We thought that, like ourselves, they must have supped in Cairo, and we went into our tents without troubling our heads further about the matter.

I threw myself on my carpet, perfectly convinced of the honesty of our guides, and consequently of the safety of our journey. The only subject of inquietude which remained was the immense hump of the dromedaries; on which, especially without stirrups, I did not see how I could keep myself for five minutes: at last I went to sleep, leaving the matter to fortune.

I awoke at dawn, and went noiselessly out of the tent, in the hope of selecting the smallest of the dromedaries. I found our Arabs awake, and saddling their beasts. I made a sign to Bechara, whose favour I was particularly anxious to conciliate, and bade him lead me to my courser. The three dromedaries were kneeling, close to each other, with their necks stretched out like serpents; and in this posture it was difficult to judge of their height. I was walking round to examine them, when Bechara warned me not to go too near their heads. I asked him if there was any danger, and if their character gave the lie to the timid and languid air which formed the principal charm of their physiognomy. He told me that dromedaries have been known, with-

out warning, to seize a man's arms or legs, and snap them like a bit of glass; one of his comrades, whom he pointed out, had been the victim of a similar accident in a former journey; and some days before our departure from Cairo, an honest Turk, who was unsuspectingly purchasing marmalade in one of the bazaars, had been seized by his turban and lifted off the ground, to which he fell senseless. The spectators hastened to his assistance, but soon discovered that the upper part of the head, skull, and brain, had remained in the turban. The dromedaries act thus not from viciousness or malice, but in those rare movements of joy or ill-humour, which upset the equilibrium of the best of characters.

Never had Bechara been listened to with such serious attention: never had his words sunk deeper into the mind of his auditor. I immediately showed how much I appreciated his advice, by wheeling round and advancing, from behind, to the dromedary which I had selected. He was kneeling carelessly, his legs bent under him, and his neck extended; so that in such a position the saddle was not higher than that on the back of an ordinary horse. I resolved to make my first important essay while my companions were absent, and in the presence of Bechara alone; trusting that the result would render me familiar with the animal. Consequently, as there was no one to mock, I grasped,

with a shudder, the pommel of the saddle, and the cords which hung from it; and after three classic bounds, I climbed the hill and found myself mounted. Scarcely was I firm in the saddle, when the dromedary, who knew his business as well as I did mine, brutally raised up his hind quarters, which at once brought my nose some inches lower than my knees, and gave me a dreadful blow in the stomach against the fore-part of the saddle, which is raised to about the height of a foot, and terminated by a wooden ball covered with copper. At the same instant the fore-quarters rose with the same spontaneousness that I had observed in the hinder quarters, and I felt the back of the saddle, by a blow in the loins, pay back with usury the thump I had received in the breast. Bechara, who did not lose sight of me for an instant during my tumbling exercises, made me remark the excellent effect of these two prominences, without which I should infallibly have tumbled backwards or forwards. He made this judicious remark with a smile, as if he wished to prove that I was ungrateful to the saddle; and I began thenceforward to regard him as a malicious joker. So when he proposed that I should get down, I told him with a tone of contempt, though I felt I was going too far, "that I would stay as long as I pleased, and that it was no affair of his." He comprehended that his jest was ill-timed,

and to make up matters, proposed that I should take advantage of my situation to enjoy the landscape.

In fact, from the elevated point which I had attained, the view took in an immense horizon. The dromedary got up as he lay down, with his head to the north, and his tail to the south. On my right were the tombs of the Khaliphs, backed by the chain of Mokattan, whose peaks were in light, and the base in shadow: before me was the battle-field of Heliopolis, and at my left was Cairo, whose minarets were glittering with the first rays of the sun. This magnificent view, supported by the Nile, made me anxious to complete my enjoyment by surveying the opposite side of the circle. I drew the dromedary's rein to make him turn round, but he did not seem to understand my wishes; I pulled more vigorously, he raised his head; I lugged with all my might, and off he set on the road before him. Instead of the bridle I now endeavoured to use my legs, but I soon discovered that the effort was beyond my powers; as the dromedary still went on the straight road to Damietta, I was forced to call Bechara to my assistance. He ran up, without showing spite for my late contempt, stopped the animal by offering him some beans in the hollow of his hand, and made him turn round with the docility of a trained donkey, so that I soon had the horizon before me.

The landscape began at Old Cairo, and extended

to the forest of palm-trees which cover Memphis, above which rise the pyramids of Sakkara; to the right are the pyramids of Ghizeh, to the left the chain of Mokattan, which ascends in the direction of the Nile, and is lost in Upper Egypt; still further the Desert, immense like the ocean, and like it prolonged by imagination beyond the verge of the visible horizon.

I had just finished my contemplation, when the veil of the tent was raised, and Mayer came out. I pretended not to see him, for abstraction gave me an appearance of ease very flattering to my vanity. Still I cast a side glance at him, and saw that I was the object, if not of his admiration, at least of his envy, and that he would have given something to be in my place. Luckily, a circumstance, which would have greatly embarrassed me, came to his aid; his dromedary, seeing his comrades on their legs, imitated their example and got up. The Arabs would have made him kneel again, but Mayer saw his advantage, and would not let it slip. Like a sailor, he found no difficulty in clambering up any animal however high, his only trouble was to keep his seat; with a piece of rope, provided it was long enough, he would have climbed to the weather-cock on a steeple. When he saw a cord hanging from the saddle, he made a signal to let him alone, and in a second he was mounted on the dromedary, amid the

loud cheers of the company. Baron Taylor's former journey to Upper Egypt, and his return from Alexandria to Cairo, had made him an accomplished cavalier. Every body was ready but Bechara, who was searching in the sand for something he had lost: one of our Arabs rode in front to point out the way, the whole caravan commenced a round trot, and the journey was begun. Heaven preserve you, gentle reader, from the trot of a dromedary.

Still I was not so occupied as not to see that Bechara's beast was leaving its owner behind, and taking its place in the cavalcade; but this seemed to give no concern to the owner, who continued to look for what he had lost. At length, either having found it, or fearing that we should get too far to be overtaken without trouble, he set off at a gallop, and rejoining his dromedary, which trotted by the side of mine, he profited by the moment when the animal lifted its left leg, put one foot on the shoe, the other on the knee, jumped from the knee to the neck, and from the neck to the saddle, and this with so much rapidity, that I could scarcely see the proceeding by which he attained his point. I was overwhelmed with astonishment.

Bechara came up to me with as much mildness and good humour as if he had not just made one of the most marvellous displays of skill. Seeing that to escape the jolting, I grasped the pommel in front

with one hand, and grasped the back pommel with the other, he began to give me instructions on the manner of keeping myself in my saddle. The word saddle reminded me that we had been told that ours were perfectly padded, whilst the first thing I felt was that I was seated on a piece of hard wood. Bechara replied that he had not deceived us, and that, at the first halt, he would let me see that my saddle was padded with the greatest care: it is true that the padding was underneath, but this, he said, was right, for in such a journey as we were about to make, it was better to spare the dromedary's hide than the traveller's skin. This appeared to me true Arab reasoning, to which I would not condescend to make a reply; we continued the journey without another syllable.

After half an hour's travelling, we reached the foot of Mokattan. This granite chain, scorched by the sun, is absolutely naked; a narrow path cut in the rock enables the traveller to ascend the precipitous side of the mountain; it is only wide enough for a loaded camel to pass. We went in single file, the Arab who acted as a guide leading the way. This ascent gave us a little respite, for the difficulty of the road compelled the dromedarics to exchange their horrid trot for an endurable walk.

When we had been ascending for about an hour and a half, we reached the top of the mountain.

For about three quarters of an hour, the summit offered to us an undulating surface; in the midst of which, continually ascending and descending, we frequently lost sight of the western horizon, but found it the next moment; at length, as we went down the last eminence, we ceased to see the houses of Cairo; then the loftiest minarets disappeared in their turn; some time afterwards, the pyramids of Ghizeh and Sakkara appeared to us like the pointed peaks of another chain of mountains; finally, their last pinnacles sunk, and we found ourselves on the eastern declivity of Mokattan.

On this side there was nothing but a boundless plain, an ocean of sand, which extended from the foot of the mountain to the horizon, where it was mingled with the sky. The general aspect of this shifting carpet was tawny, like a lion's skin; still some beds of nitre striped it with white, like the dresses of our Arabs. I had already seen such arid flats, but never of the same extent; besides, never did the sun look on earth with such ardour, its rays were absolutely visible, and this dust never materially varied.

We were about half an hour descending, when we found ourselves in the midst of fragments which we took for those of a city; but, seeing that the earth was only strewed with columns, we looked closer, and found that these columns were trunks of trees.

We interrogated our Arabs, who told us that we were in the midst of a forest of petrified palm-trees. Such a phenomenon appeared to us worthy of a closer examination than could be given from the backs of our dromedaries; so, as we were near the base of the mountain, and the time for the mid-day halt was come, we told Taleb that we wished to halt. The Arabs slid down from their dromedaries; our beasts, understanding the affair, knelt down; it was the reverse operation of starting; they began by bending up the fore-legs, and then the hind-legs: this time I was prepared, and I clung so tight to the saddle, that I escaped with a good shaking. Mayer, who had not been forewarned, received two terrible blows in the breast and loins.

We began to examine the strange spot in which we had dismounted; the ground was covered with trunks of palm-trees, like the broken shafts of columns. One might have said that the whole forest had been suddenly petrified, and that the simoom, striking against the naked sides of Mokattan, had unrooted those trees of stone, which were broken as they fell. To what cause could this be attributed? To what convulsion of nature may we attribute this phenomenon? It is impossible for us to tell; but it is a fact, that for more than half a league, we travelled in the midst of these strange ruins, which at first sight, with their thousand columns, fallen and

shattered, might be mistaken for some unknown Palmyra.

Our Arabs had erected one tent at the foot of the mountain; we soon rejoined them, and found them reclining under the shade of their loaded dromedaries. Abdallah began his service, and came to prepare our dinner; it consisted of boiled rice, and a kind of crumpets of wheaten flour, thin as wafers, which he had broiled on the coals; they were soft and stringy, like barley-sugar, instead of being crisp, like bread. I judged of the man by his prospectus, and from this moment he lost my confidence. We dined on some dates and a portion of our marmalade, which we broke off. Mayer was so wearied by his exertions to keep himself on his dromedary, that he could take nothing. As to our Arabs, one would have supposed that they partook of the nature of *Jins* (fairies); for since we had left Cairo, we had not seen them swallow a single grain of maize.

We slept nearly two hours; then, as the fierce heat was past, our Arabs roused us. Whilst they folded up the tents, we mounted our *haghins*, and prepared to make, on that very evening, our first halt in the Desert.

the caravan passes and repasses this road twice a year; and these bones, so numerous and so often renewed, which the winds of the Desert never entirely disperse—these bones, which you may follow without a guide, and which will lead you to the Oases, the wells and fountains where the Arabs seek for water and shade, and which will eventually lead you to the tomb of the prophet, are the bones of dromedaries that have fallen, never to rise again. Perhaps, on looking closer to these remains, you will recognise among them, from time to time, smaller bones, and of a different structure: these are the bones of worn-out travellers, who have here found a resting-place before they reached the end of their journey; these are the bones of true believers, who, consulting their zeal rather than their strength, have been anxious to obey the precept which commands every Moslem once in his life to perform the holy pilgrimage; and who, having been detained by the pleasures or business of life, have undertaken the journey at too advanced an age. Add to these some stupid Turk, some swollen eunuch, who fell asleep when they ought to have been awake, and broke their necks by a fall: allow a share for the plague, which often decimates half a caravan, and another share for the simoom, which sometimes sweeps away the rest, and you will easily see how these memorials of death are so frequently repeated,

The fact was sufficiently extraordinary to induce me to ask an explanation. I summoned Bechara, who did not even wait for my question, for my astonishment had not escaped the profound penetration with which these primitive and savage tribes are eminently gifted.

“The dromedary,” said he, drawing close to me, “is not an unsteady and braggart animal, like the horse: he journeys without halt, food, or drink; nothing on his part reveals disease, fatigue, or exhaustion. The Arab, who can hear at a great distance the roar of a lion, the neigh of a horse, or the cry of a man, cannot hear, however close, anything but the respiration of the *haghin*, more or less contracted or panting; but never a complaint or groan. When nature is overcome by suffering, when privations have exhausted strength, when life fails in the organs, the dromedary kneels down, extends his neck over the sand, and closes his eyes. The rider then knows that all is over; he dismounts, and without making an effort to raise the animal, for he knows his honesty, and does not suspect him of fraud or laziness, he takes off the saddle, places it on the back of another dromedary, and sets off, leaving the fallen *haghin* behind. When night comes on, the jackals and hyenas come, attracted by the smell, and leave nothing of the poor animal but the skeleton.

“We are now on the road from Cairo to Mecca:

that the skeleton of the man is sometimes found at a distance from the carcass of his camel."

I had listened to Bechara's long harangue, with my eyes fixed the road, recognising, by the multitude of bones which showed it, the truth of his sad recital. Among these fragments there were some so old, that they were reduced to dust, and mingled with the sand; others, fresher, were white, and polished like ivory; finally, there were some to which portions of the dry flesh still adhered, which showed that the death of those to whom they belonged had been very recent. I confess that the idea, if I broke my neck by a fall from the dromedary, a very possible matter,—if I were stifled by the simoom, no unusual occurrence,—or if I fell a victim to disease, also a natural supposition,—I confess, I say, that the idea that I should be left on the road, that on the very same night I should receive a visit from the hyenas and jackals, and, finally, that in eight or nine days my bones would serve to point out to travellers the road to Mecca, did not present the most agreeable images to my mind. It naturally brought back to my mind the recollection of Paris;—my study, so small, but so cool in summer, and so warm in winter;—my friends, who at this hour were continuing their Parisian life, in the midst of business, or of pleasure, whom I had quitted to come and hear fantastic stories from an Arab, on the top of a

dromedary. I asked myself what madness had sent me to the place whither I was going, what I meant to do, and what object I proposed to attain. Luckily at the moment that I put these questions to myself, I lifted my head—my eyes wandered over this immense ocean, those waves of sand, that yellow and burning horizon; I looked at the caravan, the dromedaries with their long necks, the Arabs with their picturesque costume; the whole of a strange and primitive landscape, of which an adequate description can only be found in the Bible, written under the direct inspiration of its Creator;—and I found, on casting up the account, that I was fully compensated for quitting the mud of Paris and crossing the sea, at the risk of leaving a few additional bones in the Desert.

Such a rapid succession of different thoughts, by separating the mind from the body, delivered the latter from the painful occupation which had so painfully engaged me at starting. I was at ease on my dromedary, “as if to the manner born,” and Bechara, who witnessed my progress in riding, with all the pride of a master, overwhelmed me with compliments. The other Arabs, less loquacious than their companion, contented themselves with closing their hands so as to let the thumbs project beyond the knuckles of the fingers, and then stretching out their arms horizontally, they exclaimed “*Taib*,

Taib," which is the height of compliment in the Arabic, and corresponds to our superlative "very well." But though our guides preserved an air of indifference, under which they conceal an eternal curiosity, they did not lose sight of us for an instant. Every motion of our bodies, every expression of our countenance, every sign we made, however imperceptible, and intelligible only to ourselves, were the subject of remarks which they communicated to each other by a whisper, a gesture, or a glance. This is an exercise in which they display marvellous skill; a man once seen, his portrait is taken, and the portrait once taken is never effaced from the memory; we have been assured, that when an Arab returns to his tribe, he gives so minute and accurate a description of the traveller he has guided, or even of one he has met, that long afterwards, should any of the hearers meet him, they will recognise him, though they have never seen him before.

We continued our road, Bechara singing, and I meditating, when in one of those moments when the sun, which was beginning to hide his disc behind the peaks of Mokattan, permitted me to raise my head, I perceived a black spot on the verge of the horizon. It was the tree of the Desert; it was the land-mark which divides into two equal parts the road between Cairo and Suez.

This tree is a sycamore, isolated like an islet in

the midst of the sea, for which the eye vainly seeks a companion. Who has planted this solitary tree at an equal distance between the two cities, as if to show the caravan that it is time to halt? Nobody knows. Our Arabs, their fathers, their ancestors, and the ancestors of their ancestors had always seen it in the same place; "it was," said they, "Mohammed, who having reposed there without shade, threw down the seed of a sycamore, ordering it to become a tree." The sycamore covers a monument badly built, and worse preserved, which covers the bones of a worthy Mussulman, whose sanctity the Arabs remembered, though they had forgotten his name.

Scarcely had our guide perceived it than he put his dromedary to the gallop, and ours followed with a rapidity that would have shamed the best race-horse. This pace, far more easy than the trot, suited me much better; so I forced on my *haghin*, which was young and vigorous, so stoutly, that I was second in the race. As soon as I reached the tree, without waiting for my dromedary to kneel, I clung with my left hand to the pommel of the saddle and dropped to the ground.

The slight degree of coolness which the shade of this tree afforded, was an enjoyment which cannot be conceived, unless it be experienced. So, in order to render our happiness complete, we wished to drink

a little water, for we had emptied our bottles at the noon-tide halt. They brought me one of the water-bags; I felt through the skin that the water was at the same temperature as the atmosphere, but nevertheless I raised the aperture to my mouth, and took a long draught. But rapidly as I swallowed, my stomach rejected it still more rapidly; never in my life had I tasted anything like it. In one day the water had become fetid, rancid, and putrid. At the terrible grimace I made, Bechara came up: I handed him the water-bag without a word, so busy was I in ridding myself of the last drop of the abominable fluid. He was a connoisseur in water; an experienced taster; he winded a well or a cistern before the camels themselves; so that each of us waited in silence for his judgment. He began by smelling the bag, nodded his head, protruding his lower lip, which intimated that something remained to be said; finally, he took a sup, which he rolled about between his teeth, and then turned it out in a way that pronounced emphatic sentence of condemnation. From the moment in which our fate was fixed, our thirst was aggravated tenfold. Bechara told us, that if we waited until the next evening we should find excellent water at Suez. This was enough to drive us mad.

Nor was this all. We supposed that we had reached our encampment; but Taleb had decided

otherwise. After a rest of half an hour, it was necessary to mount our camels, which proved to us as they rose, that, more experienced than us, they had only regarded the halt as temporary. As to our Arabs, they neither ate nor drank, which was quite incomprehensible.

At the end of two hours, 'during which, from the smart trot of the camels, we must have made five French leagues, Taleb made a clucking noise, which seemed to be a conventional signal between him and his dromedaries, for they instantly stopped and knelt down. We dismounted, heartily fatigued by this long march, and enraged at having no water to drink when it was completed. Our Arabs seemed to share our ill humour; they were silent and pensive: Bechara alone preserved a small portion of his gaiety.

Nevertheless, in a few minutes the tent was fixed, the watch posted, and our carpets spread. Although much fatigued, I exposed my drawing-paper on the hot sand to the last rays of the sun, for it was quite saturated with wet from hanging to my girdle; I then came back to lie down, involuntarily praying that God would renew for us, unworthy as we were, the miracle vouchsafed to Hagar.

In the mean time I saw Abdallah, who had girt up his long skirts, and who displayed all the importance of a cook, making preparations for dinner;

it consisted of bread, and the accompaniment I have already mentioned, soured and seasoned with the water from our bags. Our Arabs rendered him all the assistance possible, splitting for him, with their daggers, little bits of wood like matches, and aiding him with their breath to light his fire, stirring his rice, and turning his crumpets on the red charcoal. Besides these, Bechara and Mohammed were employed in disinfecting the water, pouring it from one bag to another, that the air might purify it. I recollected that charcoal was a disinfecting agent, and I offered my assistance to our chemists, who, seeing that I was about to try a novel plan, made no objections on the score of scarcity, but allowed me to do as I pleased. We strained the water through wood ashes, obtained from Abdallah's chafing-dish, and a linen cloth; Bechara, our regular taster, was then summoned to make a trial. This time the answer was favourable; the water was fit for drinking. The news roused Mayer from his carpet, where he was trying to go to sleep supperless, for fear that eating would augment his thirst. They lighted up the tent; Abdallah brought us rice in a wooden-bowl; we sat down in a circle, like tailors, and attempted to swallow some handfuls of his pillau, and to taste his bread. But we had not yet reached a taste for Abdallah's culinary delicacies, so we soon ordered him to remove his cakes and pillau, and to

bring us dates and coffee. At this instant Mohammed approached us with a paternal air, which intimated that he had something to ask: I perceived his intention, and turned round, after having attempted to swallow, without tasting, half a glass of our filtered water.

"Well, Mohammed," said I, "what is the matter?"

"Our poor Arabs," replied Mohammed, "are very sorrowful."

"And why are they so sad?"

"Because," answered Mohammed, "they are hungry."

"And in the name of wonder, if they are hungry, why do they not eat?"

"There is nothing they would like better; but, they have nothing to eat."

"How! nothing! have they not brought provisions? that was our bargain."

"Yes, but they thought, that as it was only two days' journey to Suez, they could manage to do without eating until they reached that city."

"Well; I suppose that they cannot hold out."

"Oh! yes they can, but they are sorrowful."

"No doubt of it—so they ought to be. Have they eaten nothing since yesterday?"

"Yes; they ate two or three beans along with their camels."

“ Well, tell Abdallah to get them their supper as quick as possible.”

“ That would be useless; but if you will give them the remains of your rice and your cakes they will have enough.”

“ How; the leavings of three, sufficient for fifteen !”

“ Oh,” said Mohammed, “ if they had breakfasted at their proper hour, they would have made three meals of it.”

Baron Taylor could not help saying with a smile, “ Take and eat, my friends, and I wish for your sakes that there was more.”

Mohammed returned to the circle of Arabs, who affected not to have heard one word we said, and made a signal that the request was granted. Instantly gaiety returned to every countenance, and each prepared to take his share of the splendid feast which our munificence had afforded.

Two circles were formed. The first consisted of Taleb, Bechara, Araballah, Mohammed, and Abdallah, who were all persons of rank in the little society: Taleb as chief, Bechara as story-teller, Araballah as warrior, Mohammed as interpreter, and Abdallah as cook. The second circle was composed of twelve other Arabs, who occupied less elevated positions in the social scale, and were obliged to eat last, and to stretch their hands between their

comrades of the first rank. The exercise was performed with admirable precision: Mohammed gave the signal by taking a pinch of rice in the tips of his fingers, which he raised to his mouth; Taleb followed his example, then all in the first rank imitated the chief; next came each of the second rank, who with wondrous skill fished out every one his ration, and raised it to his mouth without dropping a single grain of rice. This evolution continued with the same regularity and precision until the bowl was empty, which was not a matter of much delay. Bechara then rose to return thanks in the name of the company; he asked our names, in order that he and his countrymen should preserve them in their hearts in memory of our generosity: we told them our names, and added a boon of two dates per man, in order that they should not only keep them in their hearts, but transmit them to posterity.

Our Arabs had undertaken a task in which there was more good will than foresight. Our three names, with their diversity of accents, and agglomeration of consonants, were badly suited to oriental organs; so, after several efforts, they butchered them in such a way, that so far from being likely to reach Ismaelite posterity, they were not to be recognised by our most intimate friends. This philological labour was besides too hard for the children of the Desert, who bear like martyrs fatigue of body, but who

reject like lazzaroni any labour of the mind. The result was, that at the end of ten minutes, Bechara rose, and coming to us again, asked, in the name of his comrades, who could not pronounce our Nazarene names, that we should be baptized with Arab names, which they begged that we might retain for the rest of the journey, in order that they might address us in a reply. As no inconvenience was likely to arise, we readily yielded our consent. In consequence, the substitution was made that very instant. Baron Taylor on account of his rank and age, rather more advanced than ours, was named *Ibrahim Bey*, that is, Abraham the Chief: Mayer, whose appearance was somewhat like that of one of our Arabs, from the slenderness of his figure, and the sallowness of his complexion, was saluted by the name of *Hassan*; and I, on account of my precocious advance in Arabic, my courage in riding, and my constant occupation, in taking notes and making sketches was gratified with the name of *Ismael*, to which, as the height of honour, was added the epithet *Effendi*, or the scholar.

This weighty matter being settled to everybody's satisfaction, Bechara crossed his hands on his breast, wishing us good night, and praying Mohammed to preserve us from Salem's visits.

As I was on the watch for everything which could give a picturesque character to our journey, I asked Mohammed who Salem was? He replied that he

was an Arab robber, famous in the country for his courage and skill, and who had achieved one of his most wondrous feats in the very place where we had halted. Nothing more was wanting to stimulate our curiosity: though wearied, we had no longer such a wish to sleep as to hear Bechara's stories. We went and took our places in the circle of Arabs; tobacco was distributed, pipes were lighted, and with the aid of Mohammed, Bechara began his story, half in French, and half in Arabic, which would have been unintelligible in either language, had not his gestures completed the sense for his companions, and the interpreter explained to us the most difficult phrases and passages.

This Salem was an Arab; the simple son of a nomade tribe, who in his childhood had manifested the most favourable symptoms of a thieving propensity: this taste had been encouraged by his parents, who well knew the great advantages to be derived from such a vocation. The young Salem respected the property of his tribe and of the allies of his tribe, but even in his boyhood had exercised his growing faculties on those tribes with which his own was at war. Lithe as a serpent, active as a panther, swift as a deer, he glided under a tent without shaking the curtain, or disturbing the sand; he cleared a torrent sixteen feet wide at a bound; his speed outstripped that of the best dromedary in full trot.

As he grew up, his propensities were developed; but in place of attaching himself nightly to a solitary tent, or to some imprudent traveller, he collected round him the young men of his tribe, who, long accustomed to obey him, hesitated not to recognise him as their chief, and supported by these forces, he began to attempt more important enterprises. His stratagems were developed with his strength; he began to operate on a great scale, without, in the mean time, renouncing those individual enterprises which had laid the foundation of his fame. Sometimes he spread a report of the passage of a caravan richly laden and lightly guarded: the warriors of the neighbouring tribes then assembled to intercept it; during their absence he burst upon their tents where only old men and children remained, and carried off all the cattle and provisions. When a rich caravan actually set out from Cairo to Suez, or from Suez to Cairo, he sent an emissary to tell the warriors who watched it that their camp was attacked, and the warriors returned at full speed to their tents; in the mean time Salem, the master and king of the Desert, pillaged the caravan at his ease, and ransomed the merchants and pilgrims at his leisure. At length his repeated and daring robberies came to the ear of the Bey of Suez. That city is the mart of Indian commerce, and the gate of Arabia. Already half ruined by the discovery of the passage round the

Cape of Good Hope, it is only at distant intervals that caravans convey merchandise thither; the Bey of Suez was therefore seriously annoyed by the depredations of Salem, which tended further to diminish the traffic of the city, and he issued the strictest orders for the arrest of the brigand. A year was spent in vain researches,—not that Salem concealed himself, on the contrary, every day some new and daring exploit of the brave robber was reported; but he slipped through the fingers of his pursuers with a dexterity and boldness which raised the Bey's anger to such a height, that he resolved to take the field himself, and swore never to return to Suez unless he brought back Salem captive.

The Bey pitched his camp between Cairo and Suez at the spot where we had halted, and his tent was placed on the exact site where ours stood; secure in his camp, surrounded by his most faithful troops, guarded by his most vigilant sentinels, his fleetest courser ready saddled being picketed outside, he ungirds his sabre, lays aside his honorary *mashallah*, lies down on his carpet, places his purse under his head, breathes a prayer to Mohammed, and resigns himself to sleep, full of confidence in Allah, and his prophet.

The next morning at day-break, the Bey wakens; the night had been tranquil. No alarm had troubled the camp; every man was at his post, everything

was in its place, except his *mashallah*, his sabre, and his purse; all three had disappeared.

The Bey clapped his hands twice, and his confidential slave appeared; he started back with astonishment at the sight of his master, whom he had seen go out on horseback an hour before day, and had not seen him return.

This inspired the Bey with a new fear, namely, that his horse might have gone off in company with his sabre, *mashallah*, and purse; the slave ran to the horse-picket, and asked for the Bey's favourite charger. The groom replied, that the Bey had clapped his hands thrice, which was the appointed signal; he had then brought the horse, the Bey had mounted, and galloped towards the Desert, and had not yet returned.

The Bey's first thought was to cut off the heads of the sentinel, the slave, and the groom, but he reflected that such a proceeding would not bring back his sabre, his purse, or his steed, and besides, as he had been himself deceived, his sentinel, his slave, and his groom ought, *à fortiori*, to have been deceived likewise.

He reflected three days and three nights on the manner in which such a robbery could have been committed; then, seeing that he only lost time, he resolved to address the robber himself, the surest means of obtaining official information, and he pub-

lished among the surrounding tribes, that if Salem would come and tell the particulars of a robbery, the boldness of which declared the perpetrator, not only would he be dismissed uninjured, but he should receive a thousand piastres (about 20*l.*), to defray the expenses of his journey. The Bey pledged his faith as a Mussulman, and in the East the word is sacred, that should this information be given, Salem should be free to retire whither he pleased.

The robber did not long delay. That very evening a young Arab, about twenty-six years old, low-sized, of a slim figure, with lively eyes and a bold countenance, clothed in a simple shirt of blue linen, presented himself at the Bey's tent, and declared that he was willing to give his lordship all the information he desired. The Bey received him like a man who respects his word, and renewed the promise of the thousand piastres, if he perceived that he told the truth. Salem replied, that he had not come for filthy lucre, but merely to make a proper return for the politeness of so great a chief; he only asked, in order that his details should be more precise, to have everything put into its former place, and to have the sentinel ordered to let him pass, and the groom to obey him, as on the night of the robbery. The Bey considered this a reasonable request; he hung another sabre to the tent-pole, threw another *mashallah* on the *divan*, placed another purse

under his carpet; ordered another horse to be saddled, and lay down as on the night when Salem paid his first visit; but this time he kept his eyes wide open, to lose nothing of what was about to happen. Everybody occupied his post, and the second representation began in the presence of the whole army.

Salem removed to a distance of fifty paces from the tent; he then took off his shirt and the girdle which fastened it, and hid them in the sand, in order that his motions should be more free. Then, extending himself on his breast, he began to glide forward like a serpent, in such a way that his body, the colour of the ground, was half buried and hidden in the sand. From time to time, to render the reality more complete, he raised his head as if disturbed, and having ascertained by a rapid glance that he was neither seen nor heard, he resumed his progress, slow, but silent and sure. Having reached the tent, he insinuated his head under the curtain, and the Bey, who had not seen it move, suddenly beheld two steady eyes, bright as those of the lynx, fixed upon him. His first emotion was fear, for he did not expect such an apparition; but soon remembering that it was only a play, he kept himself motionless, as if still asleep. After a moment of mute inspection, the head disappeared; some instants of calm and silence succeeded, during which no sound was

heard, save that of the measured tread of the sentinel. Suddenly an opaque body intercepted the light which came through a circular opening in the top of the tent, near the centre-pole: a man glided like a shadow by the pole, and in a twinkling was at the head of the Bey's bed. This man knelt on one knee, and whilst he supported himself on his left hand, to listen to the breathing of the pretended sleeper, a short curved dagger glittered in his right. The Bey felt a cold perspiration bursting from his forehead; his life was in the hands of the person for whose head he had offered an immense reward. Still he continued bravely to play his part in this strange comedy, not an irregular breath, not even a beat of the heart betrayed his fear. The Bey thought that he felt a hand slip under his bolster; but though wide awake, the movement was so imperceptible that he would not have felt it if he had not been on his guard. Salem then insensibly raised himself, still keeping his eyes fixed on the sleeper, but the left hand, empty when he stooped, was full when he rose; he clutched the purse.

He then grasped dagger and purse in his teeth, marched backwards to the divan, keeping his eyes fixed on the Bey, took the *mashallah*, quietly put it on, took down the sabre, suspended it to his waist, rolled round his head and waist two Cashmire

shawls, which served the Bey for turban and girdle, went boldly from the tent, passed before the sentinel, who saluted him, and clapped his hands thrice to have the horse brought; the groom obeyed the summons, which was, as I have said, the Bey's usual signal. Salem bounded lightly on the courser, and returning to the tent, where the Bey half naked was watching the completion of the repetition of the adventurous enterprisè,—“Bey of Suez,” said he, “see how, four days ago, I managed to take your sabre, shawl, purse, and steed; I forgive you the thousand piastres; for, the sabre, Cashmires, purse, and horse which I now take off, are worth fifty thousand.”

At these words, he put the Bey's charger to the gallop, and disappeared like a shadow in the obscurity of night and the depths of the Desert.

The Bey offered Salem the place of *kachef* (captain) in his guards, but the bold Arab replied, that he would rather be a king in the Desert than a slave in Suez.

“Such,” continued Bechara, “is the history of what passed between the Bey of Suez and Salem the robber. Take care of your sabres, shawls, and purses, for we are on the spot where the circumstances occurred which I have just related.”

He then wished us a good night, and retired;

escorted by the joyous laughs of his comrades, always delighted to hear that a Turk has been deceived by an Arab.

The night was perfectly tranquil, and in the morning we found everything in its place. Salem was probably exercising his profession in some other locality.

XII. THE RED SEA.

WE were on our road before day-break. The first dawn revealed to us flocks of gazelles, which fled in terror at our approach. Nothing is more strange than the contrast between this graceful animal and the place which it inhabits; one would suppose that it was born for gardens of flowers, and banks of velvet moss; but it is at present a living anomaly when viewed in connexion with the wild and savage nature of these regions. I had the curiosity to wander for a moment from the road to see the tracks that the gazelles had left in the Desert. Scarcely had their light feet made an impress on the sand; it might have been supposed that they were wafted over the surface by the wind, which now came up from the south in hot and tempestuous gusts.

I resumed my road over the dry bones. At day-break, the line of skeletons glittered on the yellow sand like a line of silver. As the sun ascended above the horizon, the heat became more scorching and intolerable than it had hitherto been. The Arabs advised us not to leave any portion of our persons exposed to the blaze. Still, in spite of their advice and our precautions, it was impossible to guard

against the oblique rays of the morning and evening sun; we received several sun-strokes, which immediately raised blisters: the calcined skin rose like a bell, but at the end of a few hours the swelling subsided. I may venture to assert, that while we were travelling in the Desert, I had regularly a new nose every evening.

After a march of three hours, a white point appeared in the horizon. Soon, as we approached, we saw a square, around which it seemed as if some huge serpent, whose coils the eye could not follow, had been partially unrolled. This town, which is about three leagues from Suez, was the residence of a sheikh. It is here that the caravan to Mecca makes a short pause, to part from the travellers who are merely going to Suez. The pilgrims continue their road towards the east; the travellers turn a little to the south, and soon meet the first branch of the Red Sea, whilst the others have still a march of ten or twelve days, before they discover the second branch, along whose eastern coasts they hold their course until they reach the holy city. The seeming coils of an immense serpent round the town, were countless donkey-drivers, who came to procure water for the use of the city; for Suez, being on the verge of the Red Sea, has only saline wells and fountains. Scarcely had we received this information, when the hope of fresh water roused all our energies. We put

our dromedaries to the gallop, and in less than an hour cleared the three or four leagues which separated us from the anxiously expected fountains. When we arrived, the chief of the khan filled our water-bags for a trifling remuneration. We could not be satisfied without drinking from the fountain itself. The water was slightly brackish, but we were too thirsty to stop for such a trifle.

We had left to our right, and on the other side of the chain of mountains which we had seen during the last two days on the verge of the northern horizon, the road which the fugitive Israelites had taken, when led by Moses, guided by the pillar of fire, and carrying with them the embalmed body of Joseph, as the patriarch had directed on his death-bed, they quitted Rameses, traversed the chain of Mokattan, and went to encamp at Etham, on the verge of the desert. It was at this halting-place that God spoke to Moses, and said, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in." The Israelites then came down westwards to the spot where we were, probably attracted by the springs at which we were quenching our thirst. It was from this spot that they perceived

the mighty army of Pharaoh, and completely terrified, said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Then Moses answered, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

In fact, the Hebrews resumed their march, and proceeded direct to that point of the Red Sea on which the city of Suez now stands. This is nearly a three hours' journey, although we accomplished it in a shorter time, for our camels, leaving the Mecca road, commenced a smart gallop towards the south, and never changed their gait from the moment we left the sheikh's tower until we reached the city. As we advanced, the heavens assumed a silvery hue; on our right rose the chain of mountains which bounds the western coast of the Red Sea; on our left the Desert was spread as far as eye could reach; and between the mountains and the Desert, detaching themselves from the sea, rose the white walls of

Suez, whose monotony was broken by a few scattered minarets, lifting their heads over its parapets. The port is on the other side of the city; in it are moored the barks which come from Thor, and the ships of whimsical shape which venture down as far as the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, and return after touching at Mocha. (A steam-boat now plies monthly between Suez and Bombay; her arrival adds greatly to the singular aspect of the city, especially as whole tribes of Bedouin Arabs come to witness the singular spectacle of a ship whose progress is not impeded by wind or tide.)

Having come within a short distance of the coast, we ordered our tent to be pitched, and hastened down to the shore. It was here that the Lord said to Moses, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen."

It was impossible to look upon this scene without having all the circumstances of the Exodus before us.

When with bow and banner glancing,
On exulting Egypt came,
With her chosen horsemen prancing,
And her cars on wheels of flame ;
In a rich and boastful ring,
All around their furious king.

But the LORD from out his cloud,
The LORD looked down upon the proud ;
And the host drave heavily,
Down the deep bosom of the sea.

With a quick and sudden swell,
Prone the liquid ramparts fell,
Over horse, and over car,
Over every man of war,
Over Pharaoh's crown of gold.
The loud thundering billows rolled
As the level waters spread,
Down they sank, they sank like lead :
Down sank without a cry or groan,
And the morning sun that shone
On myriads of bright-armed men,
Its meridian radiance then
Shed on a wide sea heaving as of yore,
Against a silent solitary shore.

When we reached the shore, it was high tide. If persons are hurried, the creek is then passed in boats. But as we were not pressed for time, and as we were anxious to examine more minutely the localities of the Exodus, we resolved to wait for ebb-tide, and

to make during the interval a short visit to the city of Suez.

We came to the gates, and having exhibited our passports, we went to the Turkish governor, who, having examined our letters of recommendation, received us most graciously. But what touched us most in our reception, was the promptitude and affability with which he presented to each of us a goblet of sweet fresh water. We swallowed it at once without ceremony, expressing, as we drank, our sense of gratitude, by waving our hands. He invited us to visit him on our return, we readily promised compliance, and then, fearing to be delayed, took our leave.

As we quitted the governor's palace, Bechara stopped before a house, to which he pointed with his finger, twice exclaiming, *Bounabardo! Bounabardo!* We halted, for we knew that this was the name the Arabs give Buonaparte; and as we remembered that he had come to Suez, we thought that this house contained some historical reminiscence. In fact, it was the house in which he had lodged; we went in and asked to speak to the owner; he was a Greek, agent to the English East India Company, his name was Comauvuli. Recognising us as Frenchmen, he immediately conjectured the object of our visit, and did the honours of his house with great politeness. The room in which Buonaparte lodged, is one of the

most simple in the house ; a divan is ranged round the apartment, and the windows open to the harbour ; but there is no important memorial to remind visitors of the commander-in-chief of the army of Egypt.

Buonaparte reached Suez, December 26, 1798 ; he spent the 27th in visiting the city and the harbour ; on the 28th, he resolved to pass the Red Sea, and visit the fountains of Moses ; at eight in the morning, the tide having fallen, he crossed the bed of the sea, and found himself in Asia.

While Buonaparte was sitting near the springs, he was visited by some Arabs of Thor and the neighbourhood, who came to thank him for the protection he afforded their commerce with Egypt ; but he soon mounted his horse to visit the ruins of an aqueduct, built during the wars between the Portuguese and the Venetians : this war took place after the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, which proved fatal to the commerce of the latter. We discovered the aqueduct to the left of the road we travelled ; it had been destined to bring water from the fountains to cisterns sunk near the shore, and to form a reservoir for supplying the vessels which navigated the Red Sea.

Having made this visit, Buonaparte prepared for his return to Suez ; it was dark night when he reached the coast. The flow of the tide had begun,

and it was proposed to encamp and spend the night on the shore; but Buonaparte refused; he called the guide, and commanded him to lead the way. The guide, confounded by an order from a person whom the Arabs regarded as a prophet, mistook the ford, and the passage was lengthened by about a quarter of an hour. They were scarcely half way, when the waves of the flowing tide began to rise round the legs of the horses; every one knows the rapidity of the swell on this coast; the darkness hindered them from seeing the distance they had yet to go; General Caffarelli, whose wooden leg prevented him from holding firm in his saddle, called for assistance. This cry was deemed a signal of distress; the little caravan was instantly thrown into disorder; everybody fled his own way; Buonaparte alone continued tranquilly to follow his guide. Still the water rose; his horse became frightened, and refused to advance; the position was terrible, the least delay was death. One of the guides, remarkable for his great height and Herculean strength, leaped into the sea, took the general on his shoulders, and holding fast by the horse's tail, carried Buonaparte like a child; in a few minutes the water rose to his arm-pits, and he began to lose his footing: the sea rose with frightful rapidity—five minutes more and the destinies of the world would have been changed by the death of a single man. Suddenly

the Arab shouted ; he felt that he touched the shore ; the guide, quite exhausted, fell upon his knees ; his general was saved at the moment his strength was gone *.

The caravan returned to Suez without the loss of a single man, but Buonaparte's horse was drowned.

When we returned to the shore, the tide was falling, and the time seemed perfectly favourable. We folded our tent, mounted our dromedaries, and

* Napoleon frequently referred to this incident during the later years of his life, and spoke of it as affording an explanation of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. It is obvious, however, from the sacred narrative, that the miracle cannot be explained away by natural causes ; the Egyptians must have been as well acquainted with the ebb and flow of the tide as the Israelites, and it was manifestly a supernatural event that the lowest ebb should be succeeded by the highest flow. But the Scriptural narrative not only asserts supernatural agency, but actually names the agent employed by the Omnipotent, a circumstance which seems to have escaped most commentators. Moses in his triumphal hymn, says, "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them : they sank as lead in the mighty waters." The exact form of the miracle appears to have been, that the wind at the divine mandate protracted the flow of the tide until the Israelites had passed over, and then Moses stretched out his rod, "And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them ; there remained not so much as one of them."

dashed into the sea: in the deepest part there was not more than a foot of water; forty minutes sufficed for crossing the ford, and at two o'clock we stood on the shores of Asia: we ascended some sandy hillocks, and again found ourselves in the Desert.

On reaching the peninsula of Sinai, our caravan assumed a military aspect, proving that we had reached a country where natural rights prevailed over social. Araballah led the way as outrider, at about a hundred and fifty paces in front; Bechara followed us at about the same distance in the rear, in order that nobody's attention should be distracted by his stories and songs. We had advanced about a league in this order, when, Araballah suddenly halted, and pointing his lance southwards, showed us two black points at the extremity of the horizon. Taleb ordered two Arabs to join Araballah and advance with him; the orders were obeyed instantly and silently; scarcely had they joined when all three set off at a gallop, and soon disappeared behind a grove of palm-trees, which swayed their graceful heads in the breeze, a little to our left, forming an islet of verdure. Still all the caravan had halted, and in order to be ready for all hazards, we were beginning to prepare our arms, when suddenly Taleb gave a loud shout, and set off at a full gallop; our *haghins* imitated his example, and followed at the

top of their speed ; we rapidly approached the grove of palms, behind which the two black points had been discovered ; these points had, within a few minutes, grown into cavaliers, whom we were hastening to meet, without knowing whether they were friends or enemies.

They were probably friends, for Taleb ceased to pay them any attention ; having reached the little oasis to which he had hasted so rapidly, he slipped down from his dromedary ; our *haghins* knelt down, and we found ourselves near five lovely fountains, shaded by a dozen palm-trees, whose branches formed a cool and beautiful harbour. We had come to the wells of Moses ; it was here the Israelites halted when they sang their triumphal hymn, and when Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand ; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

We had no deliverance to celebrate ; we immediately plunged our heads and arms into these ancient springs, and we were still enjoying so pleasing a pastime, when Araballah appeared with his companions : he was followed by two men clothed in black ; they were monks of Mount Sinai. Taleb had recognised them at a distance by their dress,

and it was then that, free from all fear, he had shouted for joy, and brought us at a gallop to the fountains of Moses.

The two monks dismounted from their dromedaries, and came to sit next us. In the Desert every one is a friend or an enemy; you either share your tent, rice, and bread, or exchange blows with the lance, and shots from carbines and pistols. The new-comers had no hostile intentions: on our side, when we found that they belonged to the convent, we regarded the meeting as an extraordinary piece of good luck, consequently acquaintance was easily made; they saluted us in Latin, and we answered the best way we could. Abdallah was already at his duty; Baron Taylor asked them to partake of our repast; they accepted the offer; we sat down under the shade of palm-trees, on sand moistened by the filtration of the water, and soon found ourselves enjoying more tranquillity and comfort than we had experienced since leaving Cairo.

It was the time for free communication; we profited by it to ask our hosts the explanation of a matter which appeared to us very extraordinary; how two men, without escort, without arms, without means of defence, belonging to a rich convent, should expose themselves alone in the Desert to be stripped, or robbed, or put to ransom by the first Arabs they met? We knew well that in the eyes

of such men, neither their age, religion, nor dress, were sufficient safeguards; consequently we expressed to our pious guests our admiration for their courage, and our astonishment that it did not produce disagreeable consequences. The elder of the two then produced from his breast a case richly embroidered and worn as a scapular; he opened it and showed the contents; it was a *firman* signed by Buonaparte.

Such a signature in the midst of this desert, where the name of that wondrous man still continues illustrious by the memory of his victories—the veneration with which Taleb rose and approached us, saying, *Bounabardo! Bounabardo!*—the curiosity of the Arabs, who immediately formed a circle around us, as close as respect would permit,—all conspired to give this scene a character full of interest, especially to Frenchmen. We then asked the old monk how the *firman* came into his hands, and the following is the substance of his reply.

“The convent of Sinai, isolated between the two branches of the Red Sea, placed at the southern point of the peninsula, distant ten days’ journey from Suez, and twelve from Cairo, in consequence of its position depends entirely on these two cities, whose governors, professing a religion opposed to that of the monks, were generally little disposed to lend them aid against the Mamelukes of the cities, and

the depredations of the Arabs of the Desert. Obligated to draw their subsistence from Arabia, Greece, and Egypt,—the corn they used growing at Scio, the wool of which their garments are woven coming from the Peloponnesus, the coffee which they drink ripening at Mocha,—it followed that, after the revolt of the Beys and the domination of the Mamelukes, the latter levied an enormous tax on the different supplies which the monks derived from Alexandria, Juddah, or Suez: but this was not all; it was necessary to treat with the Arabs for the transport of the goods, and to pay an escort, which nevertheless did not hinder some more numerous or braver tribe from stopping the caravan. By such an accident the convent lost, not only its provisions, but some of the fathers, who, when once taken prisoners, were not liberated without an enormous ransom. Thus the life of these brave monks was a continual struggle for the first necessities of life. Moreover, the Bedouins, like a cloud of birds of prey, incessantly hovered round the monastery, ready to enter at the least imprudence of the monks, seizing everything which wandered from the walls, whether man or beast. The misery of these good fathers was therefore at its height, when one day they learned from the Arabs themselves, that a man had come from the West, with the words of a prophet and the power of a deity. They resolved to seek this man,

and ask his protection. In consequence, the monks assembled, elected two deputies, bargained with the chief of a tribe to escort them to the person they sought; and the delegates then departed, taking with them the last hopes of the convent. They followed the coast of the Red Sea for ten days; they then reached Suez, and saw a strange flag floating over its walls. They asked where was the Sultan of the Franks, and were told he was in Cairo; for in eighteen days he had made the conquest of Egypt. They continued their road across the Desert; they traversed Mokattan, and arrived at the city of El-Talún. Their ancient enemies, the Mamelukes, had been driven out like dust; Morad Bey, defeated at the pyramids, had fled into Upper Egypt; Ibrahim, conquered at Al Arish, had sought refuge in Syria; and the same flag which they saw at Suez, floated over the minarets of Cairo. They entered the city, which they found calm and tranquil: they arrived at Al Bekir; they asked to speak with the Sultan; they were shown his residence, and presented themselves at the gate. An aide-de-camp led them into the gardens to the tent where Buonaparte usually sat, when the first hours of evening allowed him to quit the lower rooms, which were kept cool by currents of air and by fountains.

“Buonaparte was sitting at a table with a large map of Egypt unfolded before him. There were

with him Caffarelli, Fourrier, and an interpreter. The deputies addressed him in Italian, and explained the object of their journey.

“Buonaparte smiled; they had flattered him more than the most adroit courtier would have done; his fame had reached Asia, and was about to penetrate to India through Yemen. He was still ignorant of the power of his name, when two poor monks came a hundred leagues through the desert to declare its amount. He made the delegates sit down, and while coffee was preparing, dictated a *firman* to the interpreter. It was this document which the monks showed to us, and which still ensured the safety of their travels, and the secure transport of their provisions through the cities and across the Desert.

“From that day the monks had been respected. One day the Turks recovered their power, the Mamelukes regained the cities, the Arabs once more were masters of the Desert; but neither Turks, Mamelukes, nor Arabs dared to violate the *firman* granted by their enemy; so that even at the present hour, the monks of Sinai, objects of veneration to the surrounding tribes, may pass the Desert alone and without escort, under the safeguard of the magic signature of Buonaparte, half effaced by the religious kisses of the descendants of Ishmael, who had some days before pillaged a caravan bound for Mecca, and carried off the daughter of a Bey into slavery.”

This evening Bechara had been a listener, contrary to his custom, although he could not comprehend the old monk's recital, save by his gestures; but he remarked the attention we gave the narrative while it lasted. Judging that at so late an hour it would require a very extraordinary history to efface the impression which had been produced, he recognised his insufficiency, and dissembling the shame of his defeat under a gracious farewell smile, he wished us good night, and stretched himself on the sand at the door of our tent.

XIII. THE VALLEY OF WANDERING.

THE next morning, before leaving us, the monks of Sinai asked us if we had any letters of recommendation for their convent. We told them, that when leaving Cairo we were about to apply for letters to the monks of the Greek convent, when we had been stopped by the nuptial procession; so that we had set out trusting to ourselves, and hoping that our personal appearance would serve instead of passports. It appeared, from their reply, that if we had not met them, the physical recommendation on which we relied, would have afforded but moderate aid, and that we would not even have been admitted into the convent. But they could obviate this inconvenience; and in return for our hospitality, gave us what we wanted, that is to say, letters of introduction by means of which we should be hospitably received. They then scribbled some Greek lines, which we folded up with as much care as if they had been the firman of Buonaparte itself.

We had spent a detestable night; fatigue is not always a sure road to sleep: ours was accompanied by dull pains in every part of the body; then on certain points these pains were fixed more sharp and

intense. Quite different from the Homeric knights of Ariosto and Tasso, who were cleft downwards, we were cleft upwards. Every sharp trot of the dromedary had been like the blow of an invisible sword, inflicting acute torture. To complete our happiness, we had this day quitted the sea-coast, leaving the road to Thor for our return, and advanced eastwards, so that the sun was right in our faces; besides, the new desert on which we were entering, was still more dry and arid if possible, than the preceding. The vast plain extended before us, was divided by zones running from east to west like waves; and the sand in which our *haghins* sunk every moment up to their knees, was soft and white like the ashes of a powerful furnace. About nine o'clock the wind rose; not a mild and refreshing breeze like the wind of the plains, but a true wind of the Desert, loaded with burning particles, heavy and hot like the breath of a volcano. Bechara believed that it was the time to produce a great effect; he rode in between Mayer and me, and to amuse us he began an Arab song in praise of the dromedary; the following was the most remarkable stanza.

This matchless courser sweeps the plains,
As if quicksilver fill'd his veins;
His graceful gait, his form's soft swell
With envy fill the wild gazelle;

For his strong legs the pard would yield
His claws, the terror of the field.
My *haghin's* motions, firm and sure,
As those of the round world, endure,
Yet swift as mountain-torrent red,
When bursting from its rocky bed ;
Ardent as flames, and light as winds,
For him no match creation finds.

Unluckily the singer could not know what was passing in our minds ; he was eulogizing the executioner to his victims, and consequently was far from successful. The panegyric of the *haghin* under such circumstances, served only to exasperate us, and to render us unjust to the animal. Nothing sooner leads a person to deny an individual's good qualities, than sufferings arising from his failings. He might as well have sung the burning heat of the sun which weighed down our heads, the fineness of the dust in which they were swimming, or the scorching monotony of the surrounding landscape. In fact, we were struggling through the most fatally celebrated of the Wadi's, or valleys of the peninsula ; it is called the Valley of Wandering, on account of its moving sands, whose constant shiftings at the caprice of the wind, efface all traces of a road. We were surrounded by little hillocks, from the summit of which the wind detached a gauze of sand, whose net work extended round our heads, and limited our horizon to a dis-

tance of a hundred paces ; so that we were stifled in these whirls of sand as if they were natural crucibles. Finally, at the hour of the first halt, our Arabs pitched our tent, and we expected a moment's repose ; but the wind, harsh and constant, blew down the tent. A second attempt was similarly unsuccessful ; the shifting sand could not hold the pegs, and even if it could, our cords could not resist the wind ; we were therefore obliged, like the Arabs, to get under the shelter of the dromedaries. I was just reclining beside mine, when Abdallah came to tell me that it was absolutely impossible to kindle a fire. The news was not quite so bad as the poor fellow thought ; we had neither wish nor want to eat ; a glass of cold water was for the moment the object of our ambition ; unluckily, that which we had brought from the fountains of Moses, was a little brackish ; this defect, joined to the smell which the bags had communicated, and the heat which it had acquired during the journey, rendered it perfectly useless. We made an attempt to drink, but disgust compelled us to desist.

The sun continued to ascend the horizon, and at length was so completely over our head, that the camels threw no shade ; I removed to some distance from our *haghin*, to escape the animal's heavy smell ; I then lay down on the sand, and covered myself with Bechara's mantle. At the end of ten minutes, I

found that the side exposed to the sun could not endure the heat any longer, and I turned on the other. During the two hours that the halt lasted, I did not sleep for a minute; I only shifted sides under my coverlet. I do not know how my companions fared, I could not see them, and it would have been too great a fatigue to ask them how they got on; all I know is, that under my mantle I suffered the pains of a turtle boiled in his shell.

Finally, the nature of our sufferings changed; it was almost a relief; Mohammed came to tell us that it was time to resume our journey; I arose. The sand on which I had lain was as wet as if a bucket of water had been spilled over it. We remounted our dromedaries like helpless and involuntary criminals, not caring whither we were going, but morally convinced that it was necessary to push forward. I only asked if we should find fresh water in the evening. Araballah, who was next me, replied that we should spend the night close to a well; I did not inquire further.

Still the sleeplessness of the preceding night, want of food, the perpetual state of fusion in which we were since leaving Mokattan, made somnolency irresistible. I at first resisted it from a notion of danger; a fall of fifteen feet, even on the sand, was far from attractive; but the idea of danger became soon purely instinctive. A hallucination similar to

that which I had formerly experienced, seized me ; my eyes were shut, but still I saw the sun, the sand, and even the air : they had however changed their colour, and assumed strange tints. I then imagined that I was aboard a ship tossed by a troubled sea. I suddenly dreamed that I woke and fell on the sand, while my dromedary continued his road. I wanted to call for aid to my companions—my voice failed—I saw them vanishing in distance. I tried to rise and run, but I could not stand erect on the waves of sand which submerged me, as if under water. Next I attempted to swim, but I had forgotten the motions by which I could support myself. In the midst of this raving, there passed through my mind, with the rapidity of lightning, ravishing recollections of infancy, which had been forgotten for more than twenty years. I heard the murmur of a delightful brook, which flowed through my father's garden : I reclined under the shade of the chestnut-tree which he planted on the day of my birth. I then felt two very opposite sensations, which I never supposed that it was possible to experience at the same time :—the one fictitious, that of water and shade ; the other real, that of fatigue and thirst ; nevertheless my ideas were so confused, that I could not tell which of the two was the dream. Suddenly I was roused by a violent blow in the stomach ; it was from the pommel of the saddle, and warned

me that I had nearly lost my balance. I opened my eyes, and shuddered ; the garden, the streamlet, the chestnut-tree and its shade, had disappeared like the baseless fabric of a vision ; nothing remained but the sun, the wind, and the Desert.

Several hours rolled away, without my being able to calculate the time ; I felt the motion stop ; I roused myself from my somnolency, and beheld all the caravan grouped round Taleb ; we three Franks remained alone where our camels had halted. I cast a glance on Taylor and Mayer ; they were bent and exhausted, like myself, by the excessive heat. I made a sign to Mohammed to come to me, for I had not strength to go to him, and I asked him what our Arabs were doing, and why they looked round the horizon with so undecided an air. The Valley of Wandering had not falsified its name ; they had not been able, on account of the sand and wind, to hold a direct course, so that we had gone astray, and our Palinurus, doubting his own skill, sought aid from that of his comrades. Finally, opinions were nearly unanimous respecting the direction we ought to take ; we inclined a little to the right, and our camels commenced the most magnificent of gallops. The real danger of going astray and wanting water, dispelled, as if by magic, all the fantastic visions which had agitated me since our starting ; perhaps also the decrease of the heat had some share in my

revival. Still even this decrease was a source of new anxiety; the sun was sinking beneath the horizon, and should night once come on, our road would be more difficult to find than ever. To be sure there were the stars; but if the wind continued, there were no means of discovering them through the clouds of sand which rolled above our heads.

After an hour's silence, I asked if we were far from the place of encampment. "There!" said an Arab who was riding near me, pointing to the verge of the horizon. This answer restored my life; it seemed as if I was already at the well; besides, the pace at which we went must soon have brought us to it, if it were within a reasonable distance. At the end of another hour, I asked the same question of another Arab, who made the same reply. This time I was convinced that he spoke the truth, for during the last two hours we must have advanced six or seven leagues. Finally, another hour passed away, and the sun disappeared, with that striking rapidity peculiar to tropical climates. Baron Taylor then asked in his turn if we were far from the well, and Abdallah having taken an observation, declared that it would take us two long hours of hard riding to reach it. It was a dark night; we were sinking from fatigue, rather than thirst; we declared that the hand of death was indifferent to us, but that we would not go further to die. Taleb immediately

chuckled to the dromedaries ; they knelt down, and we let ourselves fall, rather than dismounted, on the sand.

Still the inconvenience at our first halt was continued at the second ; scarcely was the tent pitched, when a blast of wind tore it from the ground, and it was necessary to run after it, as one runs after a hat on the bridges of Paris. You may easily guess that this exercise devolved upon the Arabs ; we were so tired that we would have allowed the tent to fly back to Suez without an effort to detain it. The accident was less disastrous this time than the first. The night had brought, if not absolute coolness, at least a cessation from the burning heat which threatened to drive me mad. Abdallah, more lucky than he had been in the morning, found a fragment of rock, under the shelter of which he made his kitchen. He brought us our rice ; we swallowed a few grains, about as much as would have satisfied a blackbird or thrush ; we endeavoured, but without success, to swallow a mouthful of water ; but we moistened our hands and faces, and went to sleep.

I was sound asleep, and had lost all consciousness of our position, when I felt that I was shaken by the shoulder ; I instantly awoke and asked for drink. In reply to this demand, a goblet, formed from a gourd, was thrust into my hand ; I at once raised it to my mouth, and swallowed with delightful sen-

sation, a long draught of cool, sweet water. As the goblet was not taken away after the first trial, I supposed that I could dispose of the whole; I consequently emptied it before I returned it to the beneficent genius by whom it was brought. This genius was Bechara; who had mounted his dromedary when the tent was pitched, and alone, in the middle of the night, led by instinct, rather than sight, had galloped four leagues to search for this refreshing water at the well, which we had not the courage to reach.

During the five minutes that passed before I went to sleep again, I thought that a noise, hitherto unknown, was mingled with the murmur of the wind; it was like groans, inarticulate cries, distant and stifled sighs: I thought that I was still under the influence of hallucination, and turned to my sleep, momentarily interrupted, without asking for an explanation. When I awoke the next morning, I remembered only the episode of the goblet. This night of repose, the cool water which had come to me as manna in the wilderness, the certainty that our gourds were full, and that we should not want for the day, had restored our strength; and at day-break we mounted our dromedaries, fresh and vigorous. Unfortunately, at the first step they made, we found that this water, strengthening and refreshing as it had been, was not a universal remedy.



At sunrise, the landscape had changed its aspect; during our night-journey we had entered a kind of volcanic chain, and were surrounded by naked, barren, and ricketty hills, like those at the foot of Mount *Ætna*. We travelled about three leagues over this volcanic plain, and then entered on a flat of sand, so fine that it might be supposed to have been sifted. We halted two hours sooner than usual; I asked *Bechara* the reason; he replied, that it was to have time to choose a place of encampment. This answer appeared very singular, for *Taleb* had not been accustomed to take such exact precautions.

In fact, our Arabs dismounted from their dromedaries and began to look round for a suitable place, diligently scrutinizing the ground. This strange proceeding excited my curiosity, and I began to search with them. Seeing that I found nothing, I called *Bechara*, and asked him what we were seeking; I said that the spot where we stood seemed as good a place for encampment as any other, and I did not see why we should give ourselves more trouble. He then pointed out to me tracks on the sand, which I did not previously perceive, precisely on account of their number; they were in such multitudes, that a foot could not fall without treading on some print; they were the tracks of serpents and lizards, whose holes could be seen here and there, open like funnels. The Arabs recognised by these

traces, not only the animal to which each belonged, but his age, size, and strength; and, what is still more extraordinary, if the tracks were of the preceding evening, that morning, or that minute. They made me distinguish these several traces, and I learned their theory so well, that in a few days I had a sound practical knowledge of the subject. The lizards, for instance, leave the marks of their fore-claws perfectly printed, and a little tremulous mark where the tail has touched; the serpent, which glides by its coils, leaves parallel and interrupted tracks wherever the circumference of the rings meets the tangent of the sand; the gazelle, leaves a light and coquettish trace, capriciously unequal, suited to its lively character. It resulted from this examination, that the Desert we traversed was inhabited by a numerous society; and that if some of the animals were pleasant to see, the majority would be rather a disagreeable company.

In the evening, our precautions were redoubled. We halted at five o'clock to have a regular hunt. One of our Arabs marched right on a serpent, which he killed with a blow of his scimeter before the animal could use its fangs. The serpent was about as large round as the fist; but this thickness was disproportioned to its length, which did not exceed two feet. This, joined to its huge head, which

resembled that of a dog, gave it a most disagreeable aspect.

Anxiety about serpents and reptiles prevailed over all other considerations this evening. We scarcely touched the water and rice which Abdallah had prepared for us, such a powerful influence does any mental restlessness exercise over the wants of the body. I scarcely slept the whole night ; it seemed as if I continually felt one of these ignoble reptiles, round, and short, like gigantic snails, creeping under my carpet. In the middle of the night, I heard the same strange noise which had excited my attention at our former halting-place ; but this time it was impossible to attribute the howls and stifled groans to the wind moaning over the immensity of the Desert, for not a breath of air was stirring. I got up to interrogate one of the Arabs respecting this nocturnal phenomenon ; but all slept so soundly that I had not the courage to disturb them, and I threw myself again on the carpet. In a few minutes fatigue prevailed, and I slept till morning.

We set out before day-break. When the sun rose, we had quitted the plain of serpents, and had entered a *Wadi*, as the Arabs call the valleys that furrow the peninsula of Sinai ; but, as we advanced, the hills became higher. They were no longer volcanic elevations, like those we met before, but actual mountains calcined by fire. On the opposite side,

we sometimes saw immense beds of red and black lava; but we could not get sufficiently near to distinguish the cause of this difference of colour between substances that have been cooled for centuries. From this valley we passed into another, the opening of which is formed like a V, and looks as if it had been cut out of the mountain; the cliffs rise at each side like walls, "they stand aloof, the scars remaining," as if two gigantic blows of a hatchet had cut each at a single stroke. One of these cliffs is covered with characters deeply graven; it might be one of the inscriptions mentioned by Herodotus, which Sesostris caused to be cut, when he returned by way of Ophin from his expedition to the Erythrean sea. We questioned our Arabs, but they knew no more than ourselves of the victorious and powerful hand which had written, as it passed, some lines of its history, on this page of granite.

This time there was no chance of going astray; every rock was a landmark by which our guide could recognise the road. Taleb told us, about three o'clock, that we were approaching a well. In fact, our dromedaries, quite joyous, abandoning their careless air to assume an aspect of sensualism, lifted their heads from time to time, and seemed to scent the refreshing fluid at a distance. On turning a mountain they set off at full gallop, and after ten

minutes of immoderate speed, we reached an excavation, about a score of feet in diameter, towards which a slight declivity was worn by frequent passage. As we came near, a cloud of mosquitoes, so dense, that it resembled a column of smoke, fled away, leaving the well free. Immediately our *hag-hins*, losing their reputation for frugality, precipitated themselves, in spite of our efforts, into this water, which we, as bipeds, wished to reserve for our exclusive use; and washed off the dust, sweat, and sand, with which they were covered. When we wished to drink in our turn, the water was covered with hairs and specks like oil, and all the mud was stirred up from the bottom. We allowed it time to settle; but even this was vain, the water preserved the atrocious smell of the yellow beasts, that had rendered it undrinkable by all except their intimate friends. The Arabs felt no repugnance, but drank of it, as if nothing had sullied its purity.

It is seldom that some Bedouin family, or even an entire tribe, may not be found dwelling near this well; and this it is that renders robbery so convenient, and so little fatiguing to the Arab. The industrial classes of the Desert have only to form an ambush near wells or fountains, and they are very sure, that all the pilgrims who pass, will come to quench their thirst at the tank. With twigs so

strong, and so well-baited and limed, travellers may be caught like sparrows.

As Taleb had chosen this spot for our halting-place, and as he knew as well as anybody the dangers and advantages of such an encampment, he sent Bechara and Araballah on a tour of discovery. They returned in about half an hour, announcing that a tribe of Bedouin shepherds was encamped within half a league of us. Scarcely had they finished speaking, when an Arab appeared leading a sheep. Bechara advanced to him, and gave him the salute of the Desert. This salute is the same between two Arabs, whenever or wherever they meet. It was commenced by Bechara.

"Health be upon you."

"Health a hundredfold be upon you."

"Are you well?"

"I am well."

"And your wife?"

"Very well."

"And your household?"

"Very well."

"And your servants?"

"Very well."

"And your dromedary?"

"Very well."

"And your flocks?"

"Very well."

Bechara then gave his hand to the stranger; when their fingers touched, they exchanged some signs, constituting the free-masonry of the Desert. Immediately the stranger resumed the series of questions, and interrogated Bechara in his turn, who made exactly the same replies.

This protracted salute may appear a singular waste of language to the inhabitant of cities; but to the honour of oriental taciturnity, it must be said that, after this conversation is terminated, two true believers would make the tour of the world without exchanging another syllable.

I may cite a curious anecdote as an example of this discretion. A celebrated poet of Bagdad heard so high a character of one of the brotherhood at Damascus, that he resolved to undertake a journey, to judge for himself, if his rival merited such reputation. He set out, and reached his destination, after a journey of two months. When the usual salutations were over, he explained the purport of his visit. The citizen of Damascus then took the manuscript of a history which he was writing, and read some passages to his guest. The other listened in silence, and when he concluded, said, "You are the best writer in prose." He then rose up, and without further delay, mounted his dromedary and returned to Bagdad. The citizen of Damascus, after some time, resolved to return the visit. He set out,

and after the same lapse of time, reached the house of Aristarchus, who had eulogized his prose. The latter received him in silence, but as an old acquaintance; he made him sit down, and prepared to listen; for the new-comer, not to waste his host's time, drew from his pocket a manuscript of poetry, recently finished, of which he read some stanzas. The host listened as attentively as he had done at Damascus, and when the guest concluded, completed the phrase which he had left imperfect six months before, by simply adding, "and in verse." After this, they separated without another word.

The sheep was for sale; this was to us a real pleasure, for it was six or eight days since we had eaten fresh meat. We bargained for it; but the Arab would not give it for less than five francs. Bechara was forced to confess that it was very dear, and that his countryman took advantage of our position. This was very possible, still the bargain was concluded to the great satisfaction of both parties.

Immediately there was joy and merriment in the caravan, for the Arabs readily guessed that the animal was more than sufficient for us three. Each set himself to work, trusting that he would serve himself while serving us. Some went to the tribe to procure a reinforcement of wood, of which we were much in want; others cut the throat of the sheep,

and traced with his blood large crosses on the camel, in order to charm away the evil, and by this sign to do honour the next day to the generous chief of the caravan, before every tribe we should meet, for his generosity in providing such a feast. In the mean time, the woodmen returned laden with wood, and other matters which we wanted. An immense fire was kindled: after having seen this done, I returned to the sheep. Bechara had taken for the time Abdallah's office, and, armed with the cooking-knife, had opened the carcass, and stuffed it with dates, dried raisins, butter, marmalade of apricots, rice, and aromatic plants. Having finished the seasoning, he cleverly stripped off the skin; then removing the flaming pieces of wood, he placed the sheep in the centre of the hearth, and covered it with the burning embers and ashes, as we see sometimes done to chestnuts and potatoes. The fire was heaped around, so that the flaming circle enveloped the mass in the middle with its complement of heat. After a few minutes, the animal was taken out and turned. Finally, at the end of about an hour, the chief cook, believing it sufficiently dressed, took out the carcass and served it on an enormous wooden bowl.

We took our places around, and invited Taleb, Bechara, and Araballah to become our guests, and at the same time give us a lesson in the proper way of managing this Homeric repast. Taleb gravely

drew his dagger, opened the breast with a blow, thrust in his right hand, and drew out a handful of the seasoning, with which, to our great surprise, it had been stuffed. He then held it under our noses, that we might enjoy the odour before he raised it to his mouth. In the mean time, the opening in the sheep smoked like the crater of a volcano. I did not profit by this warning, but following Taleb's example, I thrust in my hand in my turn. Unluckily our skins were not of the same nature; no sooner did I grasp the stuffing than it burned me most dreadfully. I hastily raised my hand to my mouth, and swallowed without tasting, so that I at once burned hand, tongue, and stomach. I remained for a minute with my eyes closed, to let the pain subside. Finally, the internal fire abated, and I escaped with the burning of my hand and palate. My example had given warning to the rest, and by taking some precautions they escaped with a few blisters.

When I had acquired sufficient coolness to examine the conclusion of the operation, I saw Taleb preparing to pass from the attack of the inside to the outside. To my great astonishment, he restored his dagger to its scabbard, as an article no longer useful, and seizing with his fingers a strip of meat, as close as possible to the top of the vertebral column, he separated the flesh from the bone as neatly as the most skilful carver. Bechara followed, and tore off

the next strip with similar skill and delicacy; and then came Araballah, who proved that he was worthy of his predecessors. We made a trial in our turn, but saw at once that we must abandon this method if we wished to obtain our share; we had then recourse to our daggers, and made such good use of them, that we honourably held our equality to our guests. When we had eaten enough, we passed the bowl to Mohammed, Abdallah, and our Arabs, who threw themselves so eagerly on the carcass, that in about twenty minutes nothing remained but a white skeleton, clean and polished like ivory, perfectly worthy of being put into any museum of comparative anatomy.

The joy of our guests was immoderate. Bechara began to sing, to a slow and modulated air, some verses of an Arabian poet, called Bedr-Ebn-Din: it was a kind of address to night; one stanza will give some idea of the style of composition.

The night comes on, the varied night,
Shading at once the dark and bright;
To some it's fraught with added grief,
To others' woes it brings relief;
And thus with pains and pleasures rife
Night is the type of human life:
To those oppressed by woe and wrong
Short night or life appears too long;
To those whose joys and hopes are bright
Too short is longest life or night.

These couplets were accompanied by the gestures of the Arabs, who also sung the burden in chorus. At the last couplet, a new kind of accompaniment was heard. It was the distant sound which had attracted my notice on the two preceding nights; first like the distant whispering, but which, as it drew near, assumed a strange and melancholy character. It was like dull and distant groans, in the midst of which were soon distinguished mournful lamentations, interrupted by prolonged sighs and piercing howls. It reminded me of a passage in the *Lady of the Lake* :—

Then rose the cry of females shrill,
As goshawks whistle on the hill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
And wretchedness and woe.

One might have supposed that the noise was the shrieks of women and children on the point of being massacred. I confess that I was greatly alarmed. I thought that the neighbouring khan was attacked, and that I heard the shrieks of the dying. I called Bechara.

“Oh!” said he, “do not let these cries disturb you; they are a mere nothing. The wind has spread about the smell of your sheep, and the jackals and hyenas are come to ask for their share. Luckily, nothing is left but the bones. You will soon hear

them much better, and you will not only hear them, but if you throw some dry wood on the fire, you will see them prowling about.

I followed Bechara's advice for two reasons ; first, because I knew that fire frightens off wild-beasts ; secondly, because on the whole I was not sorry to make the acquaintance of the new personages with whom we had to deal. In fact, no sooner was the flame sufficiently bright to illuminate a circle of sixty paces, than we saw at the extremity of the radius, half in light and half in shade, appearing only to vanish, and vanishing only to re-appear, the musicians of the concert which had puzzled me for three successive nights. This time they prowled round us within gun-shot, howling in such a way, that they seemed stimulating each other to attack us, and advancing so far into the light, that we could not only distinguish jackals and hyenas, but even observe the hair bristling on the backs of the latter. We had only pistols and daggers, and I confess, that the notion of a close combat with such adversaries was far from pleasing. So I called my friend Bechara, and asked what it would be necessary to do in case of a siege. He answered that there was no danger, and that our enemies would keep at a respectful distance from the camp ; but, on the contrary, if there had been near us a carcass of a man or animal, nothing would check them, and

that what ought to be done in this case, would be to throw the body out of the enclosure, and abandon it to them, provided that they would leave us quiet. I thought of the unfortunate sheep which we had dissected, and I turned towards it. But I was reassured, on perceiving that it was no longer a carcass, but a skeleton. I had a notion of throwing it to them, such as it was, but I feared that they might regard such a measure as an impertinent joke, and come to demand satisfaction.

The Arabs looked upon the circumstance as a matter of perfect indifference. They made all their little preparations for the night, and then lay down fraternally side by side with their camels. One alone remained awake as sentinel, and he kept watch, I believe, far more on account of our two-footed neighbours, than our four-pawed marauders.

We retired to our tent and stretched ourselves on our carpet. We chatted for some time about the noise of this music; finally, fatigue prevailed over our anxiety. Our eyes closed in spite of ourselves, and we slept as sound as if we had been lulled by a sonata, or a symphony.

XIV. THE CONVENT OF MOUNT SINAI.

THE next day was one of the worst we had yet endured ; the road was covered with heaps of round stones, forming a slippery bed, over which our dromedaries stumbled at every step. We were entering the narrow passes close to Sinai, and the heat was greatly augmented by that reflected from the mountain, naked from base to peak, which we were passing. Never had a halt been so anxiously desired : scarcely had we come to a fit place, when we threw ourselves under our tent. For the first time, the Arabs, on their side, took off the covering from their dromedaries to form a screen, which they supported by their long lances. Our camels themselves, those indefatigable coursers of the Desert, appeared to feel the severe influence of this toilsome day. They languidly stretched out their long necks, and dug the sand with their long noses, to seek in a second stratum, the coolness which was wanting at the surface. Still, great as was our want of repose, the halt was brief. It was necessary to set out early, in order to choose a place of encampment before night. We were again entering upon the domain of serpents, lizards, and other reptiles.

There was not a breath of air; the heat was stifling; the hours appeared endless; questions respecting the distance we had to travel, were answered by the eternal "There it is!" accompanied by the corresponding gesture. The tongue clung to the palate, and the scorching rays of the sun, right in our face, burned cheeks, lips, and eyes. Yet this was the moment Bechara chose to give his song a loudness and extent, which we had not previously known. It appears that this infernal temperature excited the Arabs to gaiety; for a general chorus followed his first couplet, and was religiously renewed after every other. I know nothing so fatiguing as even good music when a person is in a bad humour; it is therefore easy to guess how the *charivari* to which we were listening shattered our nerves. Let any one judge then what it was, perched fifteen feet high, on a wooden saddle, to hear Bechara's solo, and a chorus of Bedouins. Still, I was too polite to impose silence on the musical amateurs, who appeared to find their concert so delightful, that it would have been a sin to undeceive them.

I profited by a short pause to ask Bechara for a translation of the verses he was singing. I hoped, that while explaining the subject, he would forget the song. "Look," said he, describing with his arm a semicircle, which embraced all the landscape

before us, "there is our country; our tribe is there; we are going to revisit our family, our wives, and our brethren." He then resumed his song of salutation to his native land, and at each stanza, repeated by the Arabs, the dromedaries bounded with joy, as if they, too, had wives, brethren, and families.

This general delight was at last interrupted by the Arab who marched in front. He shouted aloud, and pointed his lance towards the horizon. Our eyes turned in the direction indicated, and we perceived a black spot at the other extremity of the valley. Taleb gave a signal, and Araballah started at full gallop; his dromedary carried him with such wondrous rapidity, that in ten minutes he was diminished to a second point, of the same dimensions as that which he had gone to examine. We soon saw both becoming large on their return. As we continued to advance on our side, we soon met. The new-comer was an Arab of their tribe, who, coming from Obeid in Kordofan, had skirted the White River, which is believed to be one of the sources of the Nile, traversed Nubia, followed the course of the Red Sea, and before going to Cairo on an errand, which would have done honour to a European philanthropist, had turned aside to visit his family, from which he had been separated eighteen months. He had left Taleb's camp on the preceding evening,

and in the morning, had halted on the spot where we were to spend the night. Having mastered all these details, I thought that I could not do better than apply to the traveller for the information I wanted, and which he could give me better than anybody; consequently, I approached him, and calling to my aid my whole Arabic vocabulary, which began to be pretty extensive, I asked, "Is it far from this to the halting-place?"

"God knows," was the reply. I saw that I had to deal with a fatalist, and I resolved to attain my object by crafty circumlocution.

"How long did it take you to come hither?"—"Just so long as God pleased."

I did not yet abandon the struggle. "Shall we reach it before night?"—"If God permits it."

At last I shouted, "Shall we get there in an hour?" This time a smile of astonishment forced itself on his countenance, as if I had mentioned something monstrous and impracticable. But soon reproaching himself for an emotion of doubt, injurious to the omnipotence of Allah, he replied with an expression of profound faith, "God is great!"

"And who, in the name of mercy, can venture to doubt it?" I exclaimed; "but give me your attention for a moment; I want to know if our place of encampment is far off or not?" He extended his right arm in the direction we were

advancing, and made the eternal reply, "There it is!"

"I now perceived that I was moving in a vicious circle, and I resolved not to enlarge it by new questions. The Arab was so delighted at meeting his old companions, that he returned with us; deferring the continuation of his journey until the next day. We reached our halting-place about three hours after.

The first view of the localities promised us a soft bed; the sand, of a reddish colour, was extremely fine and clean; not a single pebble or shell broke the uniformity of its surface. Unluckily these remarkable qualities had been appreciated by guests with whom we were by no means anxious to share our bed; it was impossible to stir a step without meeting traces of lizards and serpents, and these tracks had such numerous intersections, that the plain looked as if it had been covered with a net of irregular meshes. Night came on before we could discover a clear spot; we were therefore compelled to select at random, and trust in Providence. Our Arabs pitched our tent; we lay down on our carpets at the risk of covering the burrow of some lizard or serpent, which is the most dangerous chance, for the animal, when quitting or entering its den, attacks the obstacle, whatever it may be, that closes the orifice.

Our supper was sorrowful enough ; the day, as I have already said, was one of the most severe we had yet endured. I had no great confidence in my night's repose, and in order that I should have nothing to reproach myself with, I resolved to patrol round the tent ; I was thus occupied, my body bent, and my eyes fixed on the sand, when Bechara, who saw me wandering up and down like a troubled ghost, thought it his duty to relieve my anxiety, and volunteered his company. I asked him if we were to judge of this country, which he had saluted with such melodious songs, by the prospectus of the first night. Bechara replied, that I could appreciate the merit of his country the next morning ; he then asked, in his turn, if France were equal to the peninsula of Sinai ? I then called to my aid all my recollections of France ; every part of which presented itself to my memory, invested with a poetry which I had not noticed when in the places themselves, but which presented itself to my memory, now that I was at a distance. I told him of Normandy, its steep shores, its immense stormy ocean, and its Gothic cathedrals ;—of Brittany, the ancient country of the Druids, with its forests of oak, its boulders of granite, and its popular ballads ;—of the South, which the Romans had made their favourite province, deeming it worthy to rival Italy, and where they had left gigantic monuments, rivalling those of

Rome;—finally, I spoke of Dauphiné, its Alpine mountains, its emerald valleys, the poetical tradition of its seven wonders, the glorious rainbows formed by its cataracts and cascades, whose harmonious murmur, and delicious coolness, I had never more regretted than at this moment. Bechara listened to my recital with an air of doubt, continually increasing; finally, he could not contain his astonishment, and I saw he was convinced, that in my capacity of painter, I had given way to the caprices of imagination. I asked him what he found marvellous or incredible in my narrative; he paused for a moment to recollect himself, and then replied, “Listen to me.”

“Allah created the earth square, and covered it with stones. When this labour was completed, he came down with his angels, and stood upon the peak of Sinai, which, as you know, is the centre of the world. He then traced an immense circle, whose circumference touched the four corners of the square, and ordered his angels to throw the stones into the four corners, which correspond with the four cardinal points. The angels obeyed, and when the circle was cleared, he gave it to the Arabs, who are his favourite children, and he named the four corners, France, Italy, England, and Russia. So you see that France cannot be such a country as you describe.”

I respected the sentiment which dictated Becha-

ra's reply, unfavourable as it was to me, and I made no answer. Still it seemed to me rather extraordinary that Arabia the Stony should be the precise spot for such a tradition. Bechara believed me vanquished, and, like a generous enemy, did not push his advantages further.

We then joined the circle of Arabs, for I had no wish to sleep. The new-comer whom we had met on our journey, was the orator of the evening; and Bechara, among other rights of hospitality, had ceded to him the privilege of having all the talk to himself. He recounted a long story, of which I understood nothing at the time, but which Bechara subsequently related and explained.

Malek, that was the Arab's name, happened to be at Cairo when an English traveller was looking for a guide who could lead him up the Nile to the banks of the White River. Malek offered his services, though he knew no more of the road than the person whom he undertook to guide. But an Arab never hesitates, for at the end of human knowledge he always places his faith in the Divine Omnipotence. In fact, when they reached Ethiopia, he frankly told the traveller, that it would be prudent for him to take into his service some natives of the country. The Englishman at once saw that Malek had presumed too much on his geographical acquirements; but as during the entire journey he had been a com-

plaisant guide, and a faithful servant, he kept him to serve as an interpreter to his new companions. Malek consequently accompanied the European to the Mountains of the Moon. There the traveller desired to continue his journey across Abyssinia; but Malek had only bargained to lead him to the banks of the Bahr-al-Abiad, or the White River, and he told the Englishman that he wished to return to his tribe. The matter was too just to admit of dispute. The traveller paid double what he had promised, and dismissed Malek, who purchased a camel, and returned in the Arab manner; following no regular road, but steering by the stars of heaven. He thus reached Kordofan, which he traversed through its entire length, sometimes bivouacking with his dromedary, and like his beast destitute of food and water; sometimes asking hospitality at the wretched hut of some negro. In these huts, to his great surprise, there generally remained only old men on the verge of the grave, or children just emerged from the cradle. On the northern frontiers of this state, and within two days' journey of Obeid, its capital, (if a mass of wretched hovels deserves such a name,) he was hospitably entertained in a hut inhabited as usual by an old negro and a child. The child and the old man wept; one demanding his mother, and the other his daughter. The old negro then recognised Malek as an Arab of

Lower Egypt, and related his history. From the recital may be gleaned some curious and interesting particulars respecting the population of the interior of Africa, unknown before our age.

Every year the Nile overflows and fertilizes Egypt, and though God works this miracle for an entire nation, the Pacha alone derives profit from it. The harvests of the fertilized banks, from Damietta to Elephantina, belong to him. But beyond Elephantina are nomade and independent tribes, all whose wealth, like that of the ancient shepherd kings, consists in their flocks. The tribes nearest Egypt are those of the negroes of Darfúr and Kordofan; and the Pacha casting his eyes on them, has several times thought of proving to their perfect conviction, if not satisfaction, that they belonged to his empire, by levying human contributions instead of the produce and money which he receives from his subjects in the Delta and Lower Egypt. When he adopts such a resolution, which he does every three or four years, he sends a regiment of cavalry, and some companies of infantry to Kordofan; and then a hunting match commences, similar to the chace of elephants, lions, and tigers, by the Rajahs of Hindustan. A great circle is formed, gradually contracting, the centre of which is previously determined by some fixed point, generally a mountain. Men, women, children, and cattle, old and young, recoil

before the mortal circle which surrounds them ; finally, like the wild beasts of Cabúl or the Deccan, which find themselves crowded together, spite of the difference of race, in some forest, or driven in heaps against some river, all these different populations are hurled upon the base, sides, and peak of the mountain, which they cover as with a moving speckled carpet, and which they make resound with lamentations uttered in twenty different dialects. Then commences one of those scenes of desolation, of which we can have no idea in Modern Europe, but of which we find an example in the Bible, when Nebuzaradan, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, sent the Hebrews captive to Babylon. Each individual of the crowd acts according to his natural character. Those who deem that they can defend their lives, fight desperately till they fall ; those who despair, hurl themselves from a precipice into some abyss ; those who are weak of body and feeble of heart, hide themselves like reptiles in the recesses of caverns, whence they will soon be smoked out. Then every person or thing fit for sale ; every individual that can be made a soldier or a servant, a slave or a mistress, is taken, fettered, and harnessed like a beast of burden ; the captives are then driven in herds to the banks of the Nile, and go to supply the bazaars of Cairo, Suez, or Alexandria, or to augment the armies of the viceroy. Nothing is left but the aged,

who are good for nothing, and the very young, who in five years more will be good for something. The whole intermediate population is swept off in a single day.

Now, the man and child, with whom Malek had lodged, were, a father, who in the last campaign had lost a daughter, and a son who had lost a mother. The husband had defended his family to the last extremity, and finding that he could not save it, had cast himself from a precipice; the wife had been carried into slavery; the old man and child were left as useless booty.

The old man then quitted his habitation; he skirted the chain of mountains which extends from Darfúr to the Red Sea, crossed the Bahr-al-Abiad, and reached Sennaar on the banks of the Blue River. There, bent every day over the verge of the river, he had for six months collected the grains of gold-dust with which its sand is mingled; he had then exchanged a portion of it for ostrich feathers, and had returned to Kordofan, sufficiently rich to redeem his daughter. But his strength, broken down by his toilsome travels to Sennaar, sufficed not for a second journey to Cairo, and he remained in his hut, weeping over his useless riches, when Malek appeared to claim his hospitality. The old man then related his misfortunes, and Malek replied, "My tribe inhabits the peninsula of Sinai; Mount Sinai is within eight

day's journey of Cairo ; give me the ostrich feathers and the gold-dust, and I will go to Cairo to redeem your daughter.

And Malek was fulfilling, when we met him, the sacred engagement he had contracted, in return for the hospitality he received.

The caravan of slaves thus taken from Kordofan and Darfúr follows the course of the river until it falls into the Nile: when they reach the junction, as the river in its northern course makes a circuit of one hundred and fifty leagues, the cruel drivers of this human herd deem it unnecessary to follow the stream. The entire troop, cavalry, infantry, and prisoners, prepares to traverse the seventy leagues of desert which extend from Halfay, where the caravan leaves the Nile, to Korti, where it rejoins the river. They provide food for eight days, fill their water-bags, and rush into this sea of sand scorched by a tropical sun.

Having once started, nothing stops the caravan; necessity drives it forward, launching after it the two demons of the Desert, hunger and thirst; it hurries on while day lasts, like a wave before the tempest. The sick and weak fall; no one stops to raise them; mothers, who have no longer strength to carry their children, lie down near them and remain there. Hyenas and jackals follow the caravan, as wolves of old followed the army of Attila: every

evening they halt at an old station, easily recognised by its bones and skeletons, and every morning, at starting, they leave behind them some corpses to augment the charnel-house. Finally, after eight days' journey, or rather race, the troop arrives, wearied, panting, exhausted, diminished by one-third, and sometimes by one-half, at Korti or Dongolah, where it rejoins the Nile, which it follows without interruption to Cairo. Sometimes the simoom rises like a giant and hovers over the caravan on its wings of flame, and masters and slaves disappear in the Nubian sands, as the army of Cambyses in the Ammonian Deserts. The Pacha then waits for soldiers or prisoners; time passes, he makes inquiry, but every sound is hushed, and every trace effaced; they have disappeared as a single individual whom the earth has suddenly opened and swallowed*.

* The catastrophe to which Dumas alludes is thus described by Darwin:—

Now o'er their heads the whizzing whirlwinds breathe,
And the lone Desert pants and heaves beneath;
Tinged by the crimson sun, vast columns rise
Of eddy sand, and soar amid the skies
In red arcades, the billowy plain surround,
And whirling turrets stalk along the ground.
Long ranks in vain their shining blades extend,
To demon gods their knees unhallowed bend,

I know not what effect these recitals may produce on the citizen who listens to them by his chimney corner; but I know that in the Desert, when a person has suffered all day from heat, thirst, and hunger, when he sees rising over the horizon those waves of sand which the breath of the Kramsin may whirl over him, when he hears all round the savage concert of hyenas and jackals, these narratives have a surprising and solemn effect. For my part, their influence, joined to the fear of reptiles, procured me one of the most sleepless and medita-

Wheel in wide circles, form in hollow square,
And now they fly, and now they front the war,
Pierce the deaf tempest with lamenting cries,
Press their parched lips, and close their bloodshot eyes.

Gnomes o'er the waste you led your myriad powers,
Climbed on the whirls, and aimed the flinty showers!
Onward resistless rolls the infuriate surge;
Clouds follow clouds, and mountains mountains urge;
Wave over wave the driving desert swims,
Bursts o'er their head, inhumes their struggling limbs;
Man mounts on man; on camels camels rush;
Hosts march o'er hosts, and nations nations crush.
Wheeling in air the winged islands fall,
And one great earthly ocean covers all.

Then ceased the storm. Night bowed her Ethiop brow
To earth, and listened to the groans below;
Grim Horror shook;—awhile the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes, and all was still.

tive nights I ever spent. Luckily we were to reach Sinai next day, and this hope was a balm for every fatigue, a relief for every pain.

We saluted, when we awoke, a splendid sun which promised us a fine but a hot day. We continued our road in the middle of the sandy plain; we then entered one of those stony valleys with volcanic mountains and granite walls, down which the solar light streamed like cascades of fire. We were shuddering at the anticipation of having our noontide halt in such a furnace, when, at one of the windings of the valley, we stopped short in surprise and admiration. Mountains, the most magnificent in character and form, painted themselves in severe nudity on a sky of heavenly blue. It was the theatre of the miraculous events related in the Book of Exodus. These gigantic masses of granite were well worthy of being God's throne, and there is not, I believe, in the world a spot more majestic and solemn, where the voice of Jehovah could deliver to Moses the laws which were to govern the chosen people. In the presence of Nature, mute, naked, and desolate, the Israelites could comprehend that they had no succour but from Heaven, and no aid but from God.

It was in the midst of this primitive landscape that our Arabs, like all savage people, admirers of the grand spectacles of nature, had chosen their country. The horizon unfolded before our eyes was

that which they hailed at every rising and setting of the sun. Thus, inspired like us at the sight of this splendid panorama, and furthermore affected by their return to their country, they abstained from all sound and conversation; and the caravan, after a moment's pause produced by surprise, resumed its mute, meditative route,—whilst our dromedaries, setting out at a more rapid rate, indicated that they were not less insensible than their owners to the love of home. After five hours' march through this splendid Desert, we saw at the opposite side of a ravine the encampment of Waleb-Saïde.

The tents were numerous, and formed a large circle. Some more elevated, and belonged to sheikhs; all were joined, and a single passage, formed by a space between two, formed the entrance into the camp. These tents were not formed like ours; they were composed of long pieces of cloth, woven from wool and camels' hair, arranged in white and brown stripes, thrown over osiers, supported transversely by wooden props. The ends of the pieces, after having formed a kind of square dome, fell down on each side to the ground, where they were kept steady by large stones. The tents of the shiekhs, which, as I have said, were larger than the rest, were raised after the same model; but, instead of the transverse prop, they were crossed by a curtain, which, hanging down to the ground, divided

the tent into two apartments. So soon as we were discovered, we saw agitated figures issue from every tent: soon all the inmates of the camp appeared, and having recognised the return of their brethren, they hurried towards us with cries of joy and cluckings, such as those we had heard at the nuptial procession in Cairo. The women were in front with their children, and we were rejoicing in the hope of examining them closer, when suddenly they all took to flight. They had recognised Nazarenes in the caravan. On their side, our guards made no effort to detain them, so that in a minute we saw them rush pell-mell into the camp, and disappear under their respective tents like bees returning to a hive. The old men, the warriors, and the children alone remained. We joined them in a few minutes, and when we came up, our dromedaries knelt down of their own accord, without waiting for Taleb's signal.

We were presented to the elders of the tribe, who led us into the best-looking tent, which was that of Taleb. Our chief gracefully did the honours, making us sit down, and then taking his place near us with the most considerable of his companions. Some moments passed in the enjoyment of the coolness and shade, when they brought a wooden bowl full of cream of such dazzling whiteness, that the very sight of it was refreshing. I turned to Abdallah, and pointed out this wondrous bowl; but he

replied to my glance with a gesture of disdain, which I attributed to the disdain that the culinary science he had studied in the capital inspired for the rustic preparations of the tribe of Waleb Saïd. After some ceremonies, which appeared very tedious, so anxious was I to taste the cream, Baron Taylor plunged his hand into the bowl, took a portion of the cream, and raised it to his mouth. To my great surprise, I did not see him, after he had tasted it, manifest any signs of satisfaction; nevertheless, he finished the portion of the fluid he held in his hand, with a physiognomy calm in appearance, but in which I seemed to recognise rather the power of a man able to control his feelings, than the happiness of an exhausted guest who at length obtains refreshment. Profiting by the sage slowness of the Arabs, which on solemn occasions places an interval of several seconds between every phrase, motion, or action, I asked Baron Taylor how he liked the pastoral beverage that had been just brought in. "Oh!" said he, with philosophic coolness, "it resembles nothing with which you are acquainted; taste it, you will find it a novelty." This reply occasioned some distrust; but encouraged by the charming appearance of this unlucky cream, I plunged in my hand, raised it to my mouth, and swallowed, in one sup, all that it contained. The surprise was horrible, and being a worse diplomatist

than my friend, I could not conceal it. I betrayed it, not only by my looks, but by words. I shouted lustily for water: a full goblet was brought, which I swallowed, but could not get rid of the taste left by the abominable mixture. I made a sign for a second, half of which I drank, and rinsed my mouth with the remainder. During this operation, I chanced to look at Abdallah; he was watching me with the air of a person who had clearly foreseen what would happen, but did not wish to deprive himself of the agreeable spectacle.

This dish, as I subsequently learned, was composed of cheese made from the milk of camels, oil, and chopped onions; the whole is then pounded; other ingredients of the same nature are added, and the filthy mixture forms the poison with which we were treated. Our repugnance, to all appearance, was European; for scarcely had Mayer repeated my experiment with the same result, when the Arabs seized on the bowl, and swallowed with ecstasy a compound which gave me a dislike to milk for the rest of the journey.

Whilst they were clearing away this first course, I carefully examined the interior of the tents, which have not undergone any alteration since the days of Abraham, and the tradition of which was brought by Ishmael from the land of Canaan to Arabia Petræa. I followed with my eyes one of the dark

stripes made from the wool of black sheep, when I saw the blade of a dagger suddenly strike through the cloth. It gleamed as it cut a slit of about two inches, and then disappeared. Two tapering fingers, with nails painted red, succeeded, and separated the lips of the cut; a black and brilliant eye next glittered between the fingers: the Arab women were anxious to see the Nazarenes without being seen themselves, and had no better means of at once gratifying their curiosity and observing the law, than by making this aperture, to which a new eye succeeded every five minutes, so long as we remained in Taleb's tent.

Whilst the ladies examined us at leisure, their husbands devoured the bowl of cream which had been first offered us. An enormous platter of rice succeeded; but this time, warned by experience, I did not taste it without the necessary precautions. The new dish had no taste, good or bad; the rice was simply boiled in water, and if it did not tickle the palate, at least it did not turn the stomach.

When the repast was finished, we thought of repaying the hospitality we had received, by some presents. We had brought with us some handkerchiefs of gaudy and varied patterns, which we distributed to the little Arabs. They were all naked, and wore round their necks a little bell suspended

by a tress of hair. I inquired the use of the bell, and learned that every evening, when the tribe prepares for repose, they drive into the enclosure the dromedaries first, then the sheep, and lastly the children. Every flock is counted in the order of its importance, and if any child is absent, the parents go in quest of it, shouting and listening. The noise of the bell guides the seekers; the wandering or truant child is found or retaken, and brought back to the camp, which is not closed until it has been ascertained that no one is absent.

Young as these children were, they displayed marvellous dexterity in making draperies and dresses of the handkerchiefs we had given them. They rolled them as turbans round their heads, formed them into scarfs, or let them flow like mantles, and almost all these *ex tempore* dresses were very tasteful. I sketched several of the urchins, who were too occupied by their joy to perceive that I was taking their portraits, which probably, under other circumstances, they would not have permitted.

Our guides, in order to remunerate our kindness, and perhaps also to protract for some hours our halt in their tribe, wished to add to the milk and rice some *harúf machí*, or mutton broiled on the coals. We stoically refused: although this, beyond contradiction, is the best dish of Arabian cookery. We

were within a few hours of Sinai, and as we were anxious to reach it before night, we had no time to lose.

Adieus were made with Arabic dignity; but this time the separation was not to be long. Our escort could not enter the convent, and would, therefore, return at night. We mounted our dromedaries, and in about half an hour we entered the Oasis of St. Catherine, which leads to the foot of Sinai. The road is steep, difficult, and precipitous; but we were approaching the end of our journey, and this notion smoothed the road, embellished the landscape, and levelled the acclivities. The sun itself, though scorching, seemed milder and more easy to endure than on the preceding evening. Still this rough road lasted two hours, and in spite of our moral courage, we were beginning to feel physical fatigue; when, on turning an enormous rock, which hid the horizon, we found ourselves at the foot of the mountain of St. Catherine, rising like a queen above its neighbours. To the left, rose the magnificent peak of Sinai; and on its eastern slope, at about a third of the height, appeared the convent, a strong fortress, built in the shape of an irregular quadrangle; whilst, on the north side, an immense garden goes down the last hill which joins the mountain to the valley: it is surrounded by walls, not so lofty as those of the convent, but still sufficient to resist a sudden attack.

Its graceful trees have a refreshing aspect to eyes unaccustomed to verdure.

Sinai is the culminating point of the chain of mountains which runs like the dorsal spine through the peninsula, and descends capriciously and irregularly to the Red Sea, where its last granite prominences are lost in the yellow sand.

Just as we reached the walls of the convent, an Arab, richly dressed, passed close to us, and gave a salute, which we returned; he went up to Taleb, and, after exchanging a few words, continued his journey. We skirted the interminable walls of the convent, meeting at every step wretched Bedouins, ragged and naked, attracted by the neighbouring monastery, and living on the charity of the monks, as the poor at the gates of churches in Catholic countries live on the alms of the congregations.

At length, the walls of the convent succeeded those of the garden; after incredible fatigue, we were attaining the haven which Christian devotion has preserved for those who travel over this ocean of sand, and amid its rocks of granite. It was our Promised Land, and I doubt if the Israelites were more anxious about their's.

Nevertheless, a single glance convinced me that we had not yet reached the end of our journey. We saw a wall very clearly, but in this wall we could discover no gate. Still about the middle of the

eastern front, Taleb, to our great surprise, gave the signal for a halt by clucking to the camels. They knelt down as they were accustomed, seeking the shade which the lofty walls projected over them. Although we did not perfectly comprehend the cause of the halt, we nevertheless submitted. At the same instant, a window which had been closed with a shutter was opened; and a Greek monk, clothed in black, wearing a red hat without a brim, cautiously put out his head, to discover with what kind of persons he had to deal. We then separated ourselves from our Arabs, and approaching the window, which was about thirty feet above the ground, we addressed the monk, telling him that we were French travellers, who had come from Cairo to visit the convent. He inquired if we had letters from the suffragan convent. We showed him those which we had received from the two monks we met in the desert. Immediately a rope descended; it was the porter of the convent. We fastened our despatches to the rope, which was drawn up; the monk took the letters, and disappeared with them.

We did not know what these letters contained, for they were written in modern Greek; besides, we were ignorant of the rank of those who had given them to us, and could not tell whether their recommendation would be sufficiently powerful to open the gates of the sacred fortress. It is easy to guess

how long the quarter of an hour appeared, which elapsed before the monk, who had taken our letters of recommendation, appeared again. What were we to do if these letters were insufficient, and an entrance refused? To return to Cairo after having travelled a hundred leagues across the Desert, merely to see the walls of a convent, was a mortifying perspective. We therefore looked at each other with mournful aspect, when the window opened again, and the monks came to survey us, one after another. We strove to give our countenances the most winning air possible. It seems that we succeeded in inspiring them with perfect confidence; for after a short conference between the two fathers who seemed the most influential in the convent, the rope came down again, but this time it was furnished with a basket. Our Arabs immediately unloaded the camels. The rope came down for our baggage; our trunks, without the slightest notice of us, began their ascent, and disappeared successively within this mouth opened in the face of the wall. We asked Bechara for an explanation of this strange proceeding; but he told us, that it was the way the monks managed to prevent a surprise; but that after the ascent of our baggage, our turn would come immediately. In fact, after the last trunk went up, the rope remained for a moment invisible, and then re-appeared with a stick

fastened crossways at its end. This was to be our seat.

Bechara then explained to us a matter of which we were completely ignorant; there are no gates to the convent of Sinai. The monks have deemed it necessary to use this precaution in order to avert the danger of surprise. We were then to take the same road as our trunks; it was that which the fathers used themselves, and which we should adopt unless the monks made a breach for us in their walls, as the Trojans did for the wooden horse, a matter by no means probable. Our escort could not accompany us within the walls of the convent, and should return to its tribe. We took leave of Taleb, Bechara, and all the troop, after having agreed that on the morning of the eighth day they should come according to our bargain, to bring us back to Cairo. Whilst I was making these new arrangements with our guides, Baron Taylor asked, and obtained, admittance into the convent for Mohammed and Abdallah.

Still, either through interest or curiosity, the Arabs did not wish to leave us until the ascent was made. Mayer, as a naval officer, showed us the way. He mounted the stick, like the house-painters in Paris, who balance themselves over the heads of passengers, and then gave the signal for the ceremony to begin; he rose majestically in the air, and

when he reached the window, a vigorous monk drew him in as he had drawn in the trunks, and deposited him in a place of safety. We followed his example, not I confess without some repugnance on my part, and we attained the haven in safety; Mohammed and Abdallah followed us.

As soon as Taleb saw the last of us enter, he gave the signal for departure in his turn; and all the troop having saluted us with hand and voice, set off as fast as the dromedaries could gallop.

XV. MOUNT HOREB.

WE were most hospitably received by the holy fathers. One of the two monks whom we met at the fountains of Moses, the very one who had given us the letters, was the superior of the convent, and his recommendation was pressing.

They led us to three contiguous cells, very clean, and furnished with divans, over which were spread carpets of an exquisite pattern; we were allowed time to change our dress, and while thus engaged, water and coffee were brought; then in a few minutes, they told us that a collation was prepared. We went into a room, where we found a table laid, and covered with rice boiled in milk, eggs, almonds, pastry, camel-cheese, and date-brandy, distilled in the convent, which, mixed with water, makes an exquisite beverage. But the luxury which most charmed us in this sumptuous repast was fresh bread, real bread, such as we had not tasted for the last fortnight.

At the end of the repast, the entire community came into our refectory. The good fathers were anxious to felicitate us on our arrival, and to place themselves completely at our disposal. We asked to see the convent, though we were dreadfully

fatigued, but our impatience prevailed over our weariness. One of the fathers went before us, and we immediately commenced our inspection.

The convent, which is dedicated to St. Catherine, resembles a little fortified city of the Middle Ages; it contains about sixty monks, and three hundred domestics, employed in all the labours of the house, and the far more considerable labours of the garden. Each has his fixed business in this little republic; so that a visitor traversing the streets of the convent, is immediately struck with the extreme order and neatness that reign there. Water, the great requisite of those who dwell in Arabia, springs up, pure and refreshing in every direction, and vines are trained over the white surfaces of the walls, which delight the eye by their verdant drapery.

The church is of Roman construction; it dates at the epoch of transitions from Byzantium to Gothic. It is a basilica, terminated by a sanctuary of a more recent date than the rest of the edifice; the walls of which are covered by Mosaics, in the taste of those that adorn the cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and Mount Neal in Sicily. A double range of marble columns, heavy in their forms, and whimsical in their ornamentation, support semicircular arches, above which small windows open a little below the roof; the ceiling is of carved cedar, enriched with gold mouldings. The ornaments

of the altar, exceedingly rich and numerous, are nearly all of Russian origin and form. The lower walls are covered with marble, which the monks assured us came from St. Sophia. The lobby, which divides the church into two portions, is of red marble; its most remarkable feature is a Christ of colossal dimensions: and what is strange, this rage for ornament, which is the principal character of the Byzantium art, is extended even to the cross on which Our Saviour is nailed. The cross is richly gilt, and adorned with minute and capricious sculptures.

The Mosaics, in the sanctuary, represent Moses striking the rock to procure water, and Moses before the burning bush. The sanctuary is built on a holy place, and the altar, according to tradition, stands on the very spot where the wondrous scene, so powerfully described in the following words by the inspired historian, actually occurred.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Having examined the sanctuary in all its details, we went to the sacristies and side chapels. The walls are everywhere hung with pictures of the Lower Empire, surprisingly strange, but full of grandeur and sublimity.

As we went out from the church we stopped to

admire the gates. They are divided into square compartments, each pannel of which contains an enamel in the most beautiful preservation, and of the most perfect design. The monks then led us to the mosque, for the Greek convent in token of servitude has been compelled to erect a Turkish edifice within its sacred precincts. It is the seal of the firman which permits them to practise Christian rites in this Mohammedan land. The fathers made us remark, that it was mouldering and deserted, but such as it is, it suffices for Mohammedan pride, and grieves and humiliates the poor monks beyond all expression.

The library, to which they next conducted us, contains a vast number of manuscripts, which the monks never open, and of which the value and importance will not be known, until some young and enterprising scholar from Europe will shut himself up for a year or two in the midst of these dusty volumes. Some of these are bound in wood, decorated with arabesques of silver. They showed us a New Testament, which, if we may believe tradition, was entirely written by the emperor Theodosius. It is adorned with figures of the four Evangelists, a portrait of our Saviour, and some paintings representing the principal scenes of the Gospel.

We then visited in succession twenty-five small chapels, which are in the different courts of the

convent. They are all remarkable for the richness of their ornaments, and the Byzantine character of the pictures with which they are decorated. Our guide then led us by a gentle descent into a subterraneous vault ; when we reached the end, he opened an iron gate, and we entered the garden.

This garden is a marvel of patience and labour. It was necessary to bring a vegetable soil on the backs of dromedaries all the way from Egypt, from the banks of the Nile, and spread it on the granite side of the mountains sufficiently deep for the largest trees to strike their roots into it ; then, directing the course of the upper waters, it was necessary to form a system of irrigation, which could resist the scorching influence of the sun ; finally, it was necessary to devote every day, hour, and minute, to labour, in order to raise and preserve delicate plants in this fiery climate, where the sky resembles a red-hot sheet of iron. The finest trees, and the best fruits I have ever seen, are the reward of this labour ; the grapes, especially, reminded me of those clusters, which the spies, sent to survey the Promised Land, cut down at the brook of Eshcol.

We continued our walk under fragrant orange-trees, whose perfume and shade seemed to us still more agreeable, after the burning halts and scorching journeys of the preceding days ; through their branches, which formed a delicious dome of verdure

for travellers, who had so long no other shelter than the arid canvass of a tent, we saw a clear sky, tinged near the horizon, by the crimson rays of the setting sun; near us, we heard with strange emotions, as if we dreaded some deception, the murmur of a fountain, which was gushing from some rock. A man must have lived in the Desert to comprehend the delight which the eye and ear receive, from seeing trees and hearing the murmur of water; aspects and sounds so common in Europe, that persons, who have only inhabited that quarter of the globe, cannot understand how such ordinary enjoyments can gladden the heart.

At the extremity of this Eden, we found Mohammed and Abdallah in animated conversation with the gardener. Scarcely had the latter perceived us, when he came up and saluted us in our own language, with "Good day, comrades!" This French phrase sounded in our ears like a sweet and distant echo of our country. We eagerly replied in the same language, but, alas! the gardener's knowledge was limited to these few words. He was a Cossac, who had assisted at the capture of Paris in 1814, and who, during the occupation had learned some French phrases, all of which he had since forgotten, except the form of salute. On his return to Russian-Tartary, his master, a very zealous Greek Christian, had sent him to the convent of

Sinai, where he had been now about a dozen years.

In the mean time, night rapidly descended; we came back through the iron-gate which protects the convent on this side against the attacks of the Arabs, and for the first time we enjoyed a comfortable sleep, undisturbed by the fear of serpents, or the ferocious concerts of jackals and hyenas.

The next day we rose with the sun; during this day we had engaged to ascend Sinai, and visit all the places consecrated by Moses. We began our journey, accompanied by one of the good fathers, who served us as guide, and made our exit, not through the gate, but the window. We mounted our stick as we had done on the preceding evening, the windlass slowly unwound, and in about five minutes, the four of us were at the foot of the wall. The rope was then drawn up, the window closed, and all communication between the Desert and the convent again broken.

Mount Horeb is one of the paps of Sinai, whose peak it conceals, so that it cannot be seen from the plain. Our road lay through a kind of ravine, which the monks had paved with flag-stones; formerly, these stones made a very convenient staircase, by the help of which pilgrims ascended to the summit of the holy mountain. At present, these stones are disjointed by the torrents of rain which

fall during storms, and broken by the masses of rock which occasionally fall from the mountain into the valley. At about a third of the road, towards the middle of the stairs, at the moment when travellers are about to leave Horeb for Sinai, there is a gate in an arch-way, that rises against the sky; and to the key-stone of the arch a cross is affixed, the subject of a tradition in great credit with the monks. According to them, a Jew who had set out from the convent to ascend Sinai, had been stopped at this spot by an iron cross, which obstinately barred his passage, presenting itself to him at every side by which he tried to advance. Affrighted by this prodigy, the Jew fell upon his knees, and requested baptism from the monk who accompanied him. The sacred ceremony was performed on the very spot, with water obtained from the ravine. This miracle had originated a custom now fallen into disuse. Formerly, one of the monks of the convent always stood in prayer near this gate; and the pilgrims before going further, and daring to tread the mountain which Moses only ventured to approach with naked feet, made a general confession of their sins, and received absolution.

Along the entire road we saw serpents, who, at our approach, sought shelter in the clefts of the rocks, and enormous green lizards, which raised themselves on their claws, propped by their tails,

and looked at us as we passed, showing rather a desire to attack us than any inclination for flight. These animals are marvellously hideous; their body has the transparency of glass, and paps like those of the sphinx hang down from their breasts. They might be mistaken for some of those fabulous animals whose race has disappeared in our days. We had been warned at the convent to arm ourselves with clubs, and we had taken the advice, for the bites of these animals are always painful, and sometimes dangerous.

We soon reached a chapel, erected on the rock where the prophet Elijah had abode forty days. It is a building of the Greek form, with a square altar in the centre of the sanctuary. A raised step surrounds the altar. Two or three paintings adorn this little station. Within about a hundred and fifty paces a magnificent cypress rises; it is the only tree of its kind which has resisted the scorching climate. Three olive-trees which formerly grew near it, are dead, and have not been replaced. From this platform, destined by nature for a halting-place, the summit of Sinai may be distinguished, together with the chapel and mosque by which it is crowned.

We resumed our ascent of the mountain, which grew more difficult as we advanced; and we soon attained the rock where Moses, surveying the plains of Rephidim, extended his hands to heaven, during

the battle which Joshua fought with the children of Amalek. The localities throw so much light on the sacred narrative, that I shall quote the passage.

Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek : to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek : and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill.

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed : and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

But Moses' hands were heavy ; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon ; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua : for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi.

For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Finally, after five hours of laborious climbing, we reached the summit of Sinai, and remained for a moment motionless, overwhelmed by the magnificent panorama which was unfolded before our eyes, entirely peopled with Scriptural recollections, still so full, after a lapse of three thousand years, of awful majesty and poetic sublimity.

The pure and limpid air allowed us to see objects at an immense distance. At the south right before us, was the point of the peninsula, terminating in the promontory of Raz-Mohammed, which loses itself in the sea ; beyond, appeared the pirate-isles, white and pale, like mists floating on the water ; to the right, were the mountains of Africa ; to the left, the plains of desert Arabia ; and underneath us were the plains of Rephidim. All around was a chaos of mountains heaped round the base of the giant which overtops them, seeming at a distance like a sea of granite with motionless waves.

When we had taken in the entire prospect, we began to examine the details, and compare them with the narrative of Scripture. It was on this peak that Moses received from God the laws which were to govern the chosen people, and came down with the divine radiance round his head, and the tables of stone graven by the finger of God in his hand. Again we found the localities an admirable commentary on the sacred text.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount: and Moses went up.

* * * * *

And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.

And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest

with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken : for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live.

And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock :

And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by :

And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts : but my face shall not be seen.

* * * * *

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him.

And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him : and Moses talked with them.

And afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh : and

he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

We read these solemn passages in the very cave where Moses stood when Jehovah manifested his Omnipotence.

The monks have a tradition, that the prophet was so terrified, that the shaking of his head left an impression on the rock, which our guide pointed out. The Mohammedans, jealous of this tradition, absurd as it is, have been pleased to oppose recollection to recollection, and miracle to miracle. Within twenty feet of the cave of Moses, the rock of Mohammed is shown. The prophet having come to visit the holy mountain, his camel at the moment of descent left the print of his foot in a slab of granite.

Our ascent had given us a greater appetite than we had felt for some time. The temperature of Provence had succeeded the stifling heat of the plains as we ascended, and finally, the cool atmosphere of our northern climates. Luckily the worthy

monk who accompanied us, had foreseen this pleasant re-action, and had brought refreshments, which were quickly spread, and still more quickly consumed. As I got up, I perceived that the stone on which I had been resting bore the name of Miss Bennet, cut very deep with a knife. Miss Bennet is probably the first and only European lady who has visited and ascended Sinai.

So soon as we returned into warm regions, we again found lizards and serpents placed at both sides of our road, lifting their huge heads in astonishment to stare at the impertinent strangers who came to trouble their solitude and repose. We advanced with extreme precaution, for the road was in some places very difficult, and the herbage rose above our knees. Before taking a step, we sounded the ground with our sticks to dislodge the filthy tenants who had taken up their abode in this tangled jungle. This anxious labour did not prevent Baron Taylor from herborizing to form a collection of rare plants, which he subsequently gave to the botanic garden of Montpellier.

At the foot of Sinai, in the valley which separates it from the mountain of St. Catherine, we found the rock from which Moses made the water flow. Here, again, I must quote the sacred narrative.

All the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according

to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim : and there was no water for the people to drink.

Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me ? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord ?

And the people thirsted there for water ; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst ?

And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people ? they be almost ready to stone me.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel ; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb ; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not ?

The rock which Moses struck with his rod, and from the sides of which the miraculous waters flowed, is a granite block about twelve feet high, in the form of a pentagonal prism overturned and lying on its side. Large traces, which seem hollowed by the flowing of the water, form a kind of perpendicular canals, whilst five holes, placed in a horizontal

direction one above the other, mark the miraculous mouths by which God responded to his people.

The rock of Horeb, for that was the name given to it by Jehovah, appears to have been detached by some volcanic shock from the base which it occupied, and it would doubtless have fallen to the bottom of the valley, if the platform on which it reposes had not arrested its course. As it is completely isolated, it is easy to make its circuit, for it is only attached to the ground by its base.

Within a few paces of the rock a chapel has been built, and a garden planted, to which they bring the superfluous earth from the garden of the convent. At a certain season of the year, a monk and some domestics come hither to enjoy the pleasures of country life.

The chapel is poor, and drought has cleft its walls; the interior partitions are covered with small modern Greek paintings; a few more ancient go back to the beginning of the sixteenth century: all have a great character of simplicity, and present to our view that beauteous type which the painters and mosaists of Byzantium have given to the face of Christ.

Having left the chapel, we described a semicircle at the foot of the mountain to regain its eastern declivity. The monk showed us the spot where the Israelites adored the golden calf, and where Moses,

as he went down from the mountain, broke the tables of the law.

Never had I remarked the power of traditions more than in this journey. Who could have the courage to endure this burning sun, to climb these rugged peaks, to penetrate those arid valleys through which light and heat roll like the refreshing waters of torrents in other vales, if it were not to meditate on the spots where the greatest events in the history of humanity have occurred? The new world, a gilded novelty, without ancestors or recollections, belongs to commerce; the old world, with its granite hieroglyphics and Biblical recollections, is consecrated to poetry.

We came back to the convent after a toilsome day, and found with the good fathers a continuation of their previous care, kindness, and hospitality. After supper they brought us the album in which every visitant inscribes his name. The two last Frenchmen who had received hospitality at the convent, were Count Alexander de Laborde and his son, the Viscount Leon de Laborde. It was curious to examine the proportion of travellers who passed Sinai, coming from different quarters of the globe. There were amongst the names of visitors inscribed, one solitary American, twenty-two Frenchmen, three or four thousand Englishmen, and, as I have already mentioned, one English woman.

The next day we were told that one of our Arabs wanted to speak to us. I ran to the window, and recognised my friend Bechara; he came to take our orders respecting our return. We fixed it at the end of four days, and this arrangement having been completed, Bechara returned to his tribe.

These four days were spent in sketching, examining, and conversing; all the interior of the convent, all its environs, all its legends, were either sketched or noted in my travelling album. I verily believe that these four days were the most perfectly happy and completely busy of my life. A person must have had experience of contemplative life in oriental countries, to comprehend the species of moral vertigo which drives man to precipitate himself from society into solitude. Whoever visits Arabia or the Thebaid, will find the fathers of the Desert anything but surprising in their asceticism.

The evening before our departure was employed by the worthy monks in making preparations for our journey. Each wished to add some delicacy to our solid provisions; one brought us oranges, another raisins, a third date-brandy; in exchange for this we gave them the sugar which we had purchased for the purpose in Cairo, and we saw with pleasure that this present was, as we had been told, the most acceptable we could offer. This stock of fresh gifts in some degree consoled Mohammed and Abdallah

for setting out so soon. They had admirably accustomed themselves to the vegetative life of the cloister, and would have remained there perfectly satisfied, if the monks wished to keep them; the domestics of the convent had treated them most hospitably, and, in spite of the difference of religion, they were the best friends in the world.

The next day, at five o'clock in the morning, we were roused by the cries of the Arabs. We could not comprehend this excess of punctuality in our escort, for we had appointed noon for the time of starting. We ran to the window, and our astonishment redoubled. The Arabs were, it is true, equal in number, but I saw neither the chief Taleb, nor the warrior Araballah, nor the story-telling Bechara; the last I particularly missed, and consequently felt anxious to learn the cause of his absence. We called Mohammed to inquire the cause of the change of hour and escort. The new chief then replied, that our Arabs, long absent from their tribe, and fatigued by their last journey, had been detained at home by their wives. They had consequently sent to the neighbouring tribe to propose an arrangement, which had been at once debated and accepted. It was in consequence of this convention that our escort arrived composed of new figures. The sheikh, besides, assured us that we should find in him and his companions the same courage, complaisance, and

zeal which had been displayed by Taleb's party, and that there would be no change in the price. We should pay the stipulated sum when we reached Cairo, and on their return to Sinai, the two tribes, daughters of the same Desert, would share like sisters.

Our amazement was great when Mohammed translated this discourse; besides the grief of being so soon forgotten by our old friends, there was the humiliation of being trucked like merchandise. What particularly astonished us was, that not a single deputy had come with the new escort to tell us of the arrangement. To this objection, the sheikh replied, that each in his turn had refused this mission, in spite of the solicitations he had made, as he was anxious to place his good faith above all suspicion; but the tribe of Waleb-Saïde, which was a warlike tribe, had felt a species of shame in yielding to the solicitations of females. To this sentiment a double fear was added; it was that either they could not resist our urgency, or that if they firmly resisted, they would appear ungrateful for our kindness and good treatment. This sentiment, added the orator, was so deep and real with them, that they had even quitted the encampment where we had halted, for fear that one of us would go and make an appeal to their heart and loyalty, which they had neither the courage nor the right to resist.

All this story was told us with such an air of truth and good faith, that though rather improbable, it seemed to us quite possible. The doubt depicted on this occasion upon our countenances was remarked by the sheikh, who, without appearing to press us further, observed to us, that as we were ready to set out, it would be better for us to profit by the coolness of the morning. Besides, in this way, he assured us that we might halt near a spring, while if, as we proposed, we should not start until noon, we should have no water but that which we brought from the convent. This was taking us by our weak side. We therefore bade farewell to our kind monks, descended with our baggage, and followed our new escort, half persuaded and half suspicious. Mohammed and Abdallah showed a perfect indifference on the question.

Our first glance, either from prejudice or justice, was unfavourable to the new tribe. The sheikh did not seem to exercise over his men that command at once absolute and paternal which Taleb possessed over his followers. We did not find among the new-comers the honest and firm figure of Araballah, nor the joyous physiognomy of our story-teller of the Desert. The dromedaries also were smaller and leaner. In spite of these remarks, felt rather than expressed, it was necessary to proceed. We mounted our animals, and our new conductor, Mohammed-Abú-

Mansúr, called also Mohammed the Father of Victory, at once gave the signal for departure, by setting off at a gallop. Our dromedaries followed him. We had scarcely time to turn round and make a sign of farewell to the monks, who continued to salute us by gestures long after we were beyond the reach of their voices.

Instead of resuming the road which we had taken to reach Sinai, we went down westwards towards Thor: a magnificent valley was opened suddenly under our feet, and we hurried down it with the rapidity of rolling stones. On leaving the monastery, we had commenced a gallop of astounding swiftness; but difficulties augmented as we advanced, and, in spite of the repugnance of the sheikh, we insisted on going at a more reasonable rate; but he did not obey until our repeated remonstrances were changed into an absolute command. We then travelled at a more rational pace, but still one which seemed to promise that we should clear three miles an hour. About the middle of the day we reached the summit of a mountain from which we could have the last view of the convent. We saw it then at an immense distance from us, detaching itself, thanks to its walls and gardens, in green and white from the dark side of the mountain. During this brief halt, which I had great difficulty in obtaining from the sheikh, I thought that I saw at the other extremity

of the road we had travelled, certain black moving points. I showed them to Abú-Mansúr, who cried out, that these points were men, and that these men belonged to a hostile tribe. At these words he again started his dromedaries at a gallop, and ours, faithful to the signal given by our guide, at once followed him, and passively took the same gait. Immediately on quitting the valley, Abú-Mansúr entered the bed of a torrent, which we descended with the rapidity of an avalanche.

This cruel race lasted seven hours, and nothing in our escort indicated the least disposition to halt, when suddenly we heard a shout from our rear-guard. We turned round and saw Araballah, covered with dust, his turban half unfolded, hurrying forward at the utmost speed of his dromedary on the road we were pursuing. At sight of him, Abú-Mansúr wished to redouble his speed; but we declared that we would not imitate him without an explanation, and that if our camels, instigated by his, refused to halt, we should shoot them through the head with our pistols. The sheikh was forced to stop. Five minutes afterwards, Araballah upsetting everything that opposed him was close to us. His first movement was to express by gestures his joy at seeing us again; he then sprung over to Abú-Mansúr, who kept himself apart, and in a severe sharp voice, with kindling eyes, addressed to him

some words which we did not understand, but which we guessed to be bitter reproaches. The sheikh made no reply, but once more gave the signal for departure. Araballah then seized him by the arm, but the sheikh shook him off, and gave the order to renew the gallop. Araballah instantly rushed to the front of the caravan and barred the way with his dromedary; the sheikh made a motion as if to lift his gun, and his Arabs brandished their lances; when seeing that the time for our interference was come, we drew our pistols and came to the aid of our old friend, threatening to fire unless they instantly desisted. Abú-Mansúr seeing that we were only four against himself and his fourteen Arabs, seemed uncertain what to do, but new cries were heard behind us; they came from Bechara and Taleb, who descended the ravine in their turns, as if their dromedaries had wings. This reinforcement gave fresh energy to our resistance, and seemed to complete the overthrow of our adversaries' resolution. Besides, behind them, and on the summit of the mountain, the complete escort began to appear, so that we, in our turn, besides the consciousness of a good cause, were about to have the superiority of number. Bechara and Taleb, hurried forwards by the gallop of their dromedaries, and enveloped in their white burnouses, flitted by us like ghosts, shouting a passing salute, and then rushed

on Abú-Mansúr. The Arabs on their side hastened to the defence of their chief. In the mean time the rest of the escort arrived vociferating and menacing; each waved his lance or gun; we saw that a battle was inevitable if we did not prevent it; and we threw ourselves into the midst, attempting to drown their noise by our voices. At first we only succeeded in augmenting the confusion and redoubling the tumult; at length Baron Taylor's commands began to be heard, and his authority to be recognised. He separated our old friends from our new guides, ordering one party to keep on our right, and the other on our left, deferring until the evening-halt every explanation, and promising to render justice according to the rights of the case. Taleb then demanded that we should dismount from our dromedaries and take our former steeds; but, Baron Taylor thought that this proceeding, besides the delay it would occasion, would be like setting fire to powder. One blow given, or one drop of blood spilled in the exasperated state of the adverse parties, would have rendered reconciliation impossible. He replied that we would dismount at the halting-place, and then with a firm voice renewed the order to advance. Friends and enemies obeyed him; the two troops arranged at our left and right, marched in silence, under a fierce sun, but proceeding at the ordinary pace. The two sheikhs led the ca-

ravan, advancing with the same haughtiness ; Abú-Mansúr's air was at once confused and menacing, Taleb's looks were joyous and proud. Bechara took his old place by my side, and according to custom, speaking a jargon, half French and half Arabic, told me how the matter occurred.

At the stipulated time, that is to say, about eleven o'clock, Taleb with our escort reached the convent and claimed his travellers; the monks then told him that we had quitted the monastery in the morning, with the sheikh Abú-Mansúr, and had taken the road to Thor. Immediately, without losing a moment, the whole troop darted on our track with all the speed of its dromedaries; the most rapid taking the lead, but all sustaining their reputation for unwearied speed. It was thus that we saw them arrive one after the other, Araballah, Taleb, and Bechara, separated like the Curatii. The brave fellow told us all this with an eagerness and joy which it was delightful to witness. I promised to take him again as my comrade, to resume my former *kaghin* next morning; it was led behind us by an Arab; for I must say, and this is the time to make the confession, that my new dromedary had proved to me that when I complained of the other, I acted with precipitation: under these circumstances, I made an apology to Bechara, and begged him to transmit it to the proper quarter.

When this explanation was concluded, Bechara, who seemed to have a holy horror of silence, passed to a subject quite pastoral; he recited to me the happy days he had spent with his tribe and near his family. All the Arabs have young hearts, widely open to emotions of this nature. Once launched on the sea of sentiment, he recounted to me the whole history of his amours. Incidents are rare in the tents, and not much varied since the time of Jacob and Rachel. The young Arab who loves must signalize his courage and address, in some expedition against a neighbouring native tribe, according as nature has endowed him with the strength of the lion or craft of the serpent. Bechara possessed the latter quality; he was better to plan than to execute an enterprise. But if the brute strength of Araballah prevailed over his intelligence in time of war, the sweets of peace, and the leisure of pastoral life, were far more favourable to him than to his companion; it was by eloquence and poetry that he had found the way to the heart of his Rachel. He drew a portrait of his Arabian wife, and was just comparing her eyes to those of the gazelle, and her graceful form to that of the palm-tree, when my dromedary, without any preparatory warning, or a motion which could give notice of his intentions, put his head between his legs, and began to prance and cut capers like a child. I threw myself off on one side, the two pom-

mels of the saddle came down upon the sand, and my stupid began to roll about voluptuously, luckily taking a different direction from that in which my body was extended. But for this circumstance, I should have been subjected to the experiment of a rolling-mill with a living cylinder.

It is but fair to render every one his due; Bechara was on the ground as soon as myself; I had just raised myself, so that he found me safe and sound, but looking a little surprised, as a man does to whom such an accident happens for the first time. I then learned that the kind of amusement to which my dromedary continued to give himself up, was one of the amusements of his race; in fact, his mode of laughing. Bechara assured me that my fall had been quite scientific. I had thrown myself off like a real Arab, and he who boasted of his skill in riding, could not have done better. Whilst I was receiving Bechara's congratulations, Taleb came up; he had seen my forced descent, and profiting by the circumstance to return to his favourite notion, he proposed that I should again take my old *haghin*, which being better trained, was incapable of a similar fault. I followed his advice and mounted my old steed, and at the first step I recognised my old saddle, so well stuffed on the side next the animal.

Finally, we reached the foot of the mountains, our halting-place for the night. Each of the two

chiefs checked his dromedaries, which sharing the enmities of their masters, knelt down without joining. Still our Arabs united to prepare the tent, neither party wishing to cede its supposed rights. Thus the tent was ready in an instant. Abdallah immediately entering on his functions, devoted his attention to the important care of supper, and we formed a court of justice to take cognizance of the adventure of the morning.

Taleb, as plaintiff, spoke first; he explained, that on the evening of the day before our departure, he had received a message from the Father of Victory, informing him that we would not set out for three or four days, because, that we had met matters of sufficient interest in the convent to induce us to prolong our stay. This fable, though well constructed, was on one side exposed to suspicion; instead of a domestic of the convent, the natural messenger under such circumstances, it was an Arab, of a tribe infamous for its habitual disregard of truth, who brought the message, and thus the envoy had inspired Taleb with suspicion. The result was, that Taleb resolved at all hazards to pay us a visit the next day; the reader has seen how we, less cunning than Taleb, had allowed ourselves to be taken off like three bales of goods. Already forewarned before reaching the convent, when they found that we were gone, their astonishment gave place to the de-

sire of recovering us ; they put their dromedaries to a full gallop, and as these were superior to ours in strength and speed, we were soon overtaken.

The accused rose in his turn, sufficiently embarrassed with his position, in spite of Arabian cunning and skill ; his plea was tainted by the unlucky position he occupied.

“I wished,” said he, “to use stratagem and I was wrong, for right was on my side ; the traveller does not belong to such or such a tribe, and as all the tribes are at peace, they ought to enjoy the same advantages ; if one tribe had the monopoly of guiding travellers, the rest would die of hunger. Since Taleb brought you here, it was my right to bring you back ; I tried to do so by craft, though I could have accomplished it by force ; my warriors are numerous and brave ; my courage is undisputed, and from Suez to Raz Mohammed, my name has an echo in every valley, and there is not a tribe unacquainted with Mohammed Abú-Mansúr.”

It seems that these reasons, however unsatisfactory to Europeans, were not bad for Arabs ; it was Bechara who replied to the Father of Victory. His reply was so rapid, it entered into so many digressions, and so completely embroiled the discussion, that Baron Taylor foreseeing that the scene of the morning would be renewed, rose in his turn, imposed silence, and declared that he recognised no

guide but Taleb and his Arabs. The hostages which waited our return and answered for our safety, head for head, belonged to the tribe of Waleb-Saïde. It was consequently just, that this tribe, having run the risk, should profit by the result. Consequently he would have nothing to say to Mohammed Abú-Mansúr, although he was the Father of Victory, and he added, that we were all indignant at the trickery by which the sheikh had endeavoured to procure travellers.

Our interpreter translated the sentence, which both parties heard with patience and submission; but no sooner was the translation finished, than Bechara, to our great astonishment, took the Father of Victory aside; they returned in a short time as excellent friends; they informed us, that all difficulties had been removed, that the two tribes would accompany us as a double escort, were not too much for persons of our importance, and that Abú-Mansúr and his Arabs would act as our guard of honour.

After this, each supped and prepared to take his rest; we all had need of it: especially we Europeans, whom our residence at the monastery had unfitted for riding on dromedaries, and who had fallen from Scylla to Charybdis, with the *haghins* of the Father of Victory.

XVI. A STORM IN THE DESERT.

WE continued our course the next day, advancing in the same direction; that is to say, descending towards the sea. For a long time we clearly distinguished Thor on our left hand, but as we drew near, the city seemed to dwindle in importance, and at length we agreed that it was not worth while to go out of the way to visit it. We consequently turned off at a sharp angle to the right, and after marching for an hour or two over the soft sand which borders the Red Sea, we again entered the mountains, and towards evening we descended into a delicious *Wadi*, called the Valley of Gardens.

Palm-trees with branches like fluttering plumes, sycamores with dark foliage, covered under their shade a spring of pure fresh water. This oasis commanded a halt, and we arranged our tent under a clump of palm-trees.

The night was delightful: we possessed water and shade, the two great requisites of which the Desert is so sparing. After a night of sweet repose, we awoke, fresh and vigorous, and commenced our journey in the highest spirits. At the moment of starting, our Arabs showed each other some red lines that streaked the eastern horizon; nevertheless, they

did not seem to take further heed of them, and we had already forgotten these disquieting symptoms, which, however, had not escaped our notice, when, on entering the *Wadi Pharan*, we felt passing round us some of those fierce blasts of wind, the feverish pantings of the Desert. The heat soon became insupportable; the sand raised by an imperceptible breeze, which seemed an exhalation from the earth, enveloped us in a cloud which burned our eyes, and every respiration choked our mouths and noses. Our Arabs, on their part, contrary to their habit, seemed to suffer from these inconveniences as well as ourselves, though it might be supposed that they were used to such attacks. They exchanged brief and hurried phrases with each other, and by degrees the remains of the hostility of the preceding evening were extinguished in a common anxiety. The two tribes closed and mingled together; the very dromedaries seemed anxious to seek each other, galloping with great agitation, never relaxing their pace, and stretching out their long necks, so that their lower lips brushed the ground. From time to time they gave irregular and sudden starts, as if the ground burned their feet. Taleb then called out, "Have a care." And after him the Arabs repeated this warning, which I heard without being able to comprehend by what danger we were menaced. I approached Bechara to ask him the cause of the

uneasiness which pervaded us all, men and beasts. His only answer was to take the skirt of his long robe and fling it over his shoulder, enveloping himself so as to cover his nose and mouth. I did the same, and on turning round, I perceived that our example had been followed by the Arabs, of whom nothing was seen but their black and brilliant eyes, which seemed still more black and brilliant, peeping out of their bournouses and abbayes. Finally, at the end of a quarter of an hour, there was no further necessity for asking any questions; we all, Franks and Arabs, knew equally well what was coming. The Desert forewarned us by all its signs, and spoke by all its voices; it was the *Khamsin*.

Our course was very irregular, for the sand rose like a wall between us and the horizon. At every moment, the Arabs, whose eyes could not penetrate this curtain of flame, shaded them with their hands to aid their sight, while their faces displayed anxiety and irresolution. In the mean time, the tempest continually augmented; the Desert became more and more billowy; we entered deep furrows of sand, agitated like the billows of the ocean, and crossed the burning crests of these hillocks as a skilful swimmer cleaves the wave. In spite of the precaution we had taken to cover our mouths with our mantles, we breathed as much sand as air; our tongues clove to the roofs of our mouths, our eyes became haggard

and bloodshot, our respiration rattling in our throats revealed our sufferings without the use of words. I have often been exposed to danger and peril, but I never felt such an impression as that which I then experienced; it was nearly similar to that of a shipwrecked mariner exposed on a plank in the midst of a tempestuous ocean. We advanced almost senseless, without knowing whither, always more rapidly and obscurely, for the cloud of dust which surrounded us became every moment more dense and burning. Finally, Taleb gave a very shrill shout; it was an order to halt.

The two chiefs, Bechara, Araballah, and the Arab who on this day had the guidance of the caravan, held a council of war; they were the most experienced pilots of this changing ocean in which we had gone astray. The opinions were given in turn, and in spite of our situation, or rather perhaps from the very necessity of our situation, they were given with a sage moderation and slow solemnity.

During this time the sandy billows continued to rise higher. Finally, Taleb summed up all opinions, extended his arm to the south-west, gave the signal to proceed, and immediately the headlong race recommenced; but this time without any hesitation or deviation, in the track of the two sheikhs, who, under such perilous circumstances, took the guidance of the caravan upon themselves. We were ad-

vancing towards some object, but we had not time to ask what it was; we only knew that if we missed it, we were lost.

The Desert was imposing and melancholy; it seemed to pant and heave beneath us, and to force up a burning breath from its inmost depths. The transition had been rapid and singular; it was no longer the oasis of the preceding evening, the repose at the foot of the palm-trees, the refreshing sleep, lulled by the murmuring sounds of the fountain; it was the burning sand, the terrible shock of the dromedary; the devouring thirst, fierce, terrible, and maddening; the thirst which makes the blood boil, fascinates the eyes, and displays to the wretch that it scorches lakes, islands, trees, fountains, shade, and water. I know not whether the rest felt like me, but I was really a prey to temporary insanity, to a reverie, to an endless delirium, which extended itself through all the vagaries of imagination. From time to time our dromedaries sank down, digging the scorching soil with their heads to find some semblance of coolness beneath the surface; they then rose feverish and panting like ourselves, and resumed their fantastic course. I do not know how often these falls were renewed; I cannot tell how we were so lucky as to escape from being crushed under our *haghins*, or buried beneath the sand; but I do remember that scarcely had we fallen, when Taleb,

Bechara, and Araballah were close to us, prompt and ready to give assistance, but mute as spectres; they raised up the men and camels, and then resumed their course, silent and folded in their mantles. An hour longer of this tempest, and I am convinced that it would have buried us all. Suddenly a blast of wind passed, illuminating the horizon, as when the curtain is raised at a theatre. "The Mokatteb!" cried Taleb. "The Mokatteb!" repeated all the Arabs. Then the sand rose again between us and the mountain; but Providence, as if to restore our strength, had shown us the desired haven. "The Mokatteb! The Mokatteb!" we repeated, without knowing what the Mokatteb was; but guessing that it was our haven, safety, and life. Five minutes after, we glided like serpents into a deep cavern: the narrow entrance of the cave allowed very little light to come in: our exhausted dromedaries knelt down with their heads extended to the rock, and remained so motionless, that their skins, covered with sand, gave them the appearance of camels in stone. On our side, without thinking of tent, carpet, or food, we lay down as best we could, a prey at once to a numbness and a delirium which held the midway between sleep and violent fever; then, without speaking, sleeping, or stirring, we remained there until the next morning, extended on our faces, like statues hurled from their base.

The tempest still continued, and we heard it howling outside; still, by slow degrees, its bellowing abated. Towards the middle of the day, it had nearly lost all its strength; it was sinking in its turn, and approaching its last agony. Thirty hours had elapsed since we had eaten a morsel; we felt ourselves restored to life by the sensations of hunger: thirst had never quitted us. Abdallah rose and made preparations for breakfast. During this time the Arabs vainly searched for a spring in every corner of the cave: we were forced to be contented with the poisoned water of our bags. Sadly and slovenly we made a meagre meal on our rice and dates, when Mohammed came in, with the piteous air which was familiar to him when he had some request to make. The Arabs, according to their laudable custom, had brought nothing with them, and the escort was doubled. We shared among thirty the breakfast which Abdallah was supposed to have prepared for three, but which, probably foreseeing the affair, he had a little prolonged. Each Arab received a handful of rice, and a single date; but we ourselves did not eat more.

The third day the wind changed; and in spite of the threatening aspect of the sky, we quitted the cavern of Mokatteb, for we felt, that with the increase of mouths, our provisions would not allow us to delay on the road. When we once more appeared

in the light, we looked at each other with mutual horror, so much did we resemble spectres. The trial of these three days was deeply written on our countenances; we had the eye sunk and glassy, the skin dry, the respiration panting, and the body completely bent. We soon perceived the sea; and as our road led us for a short time along its shores, our Arabs ran to fill their mouths with water, and returned to blow it up the nostrils of the dromedaries, which immediately restored to them all their vigour. I had a great wish to bathe; but I was afraid to venture, for fear that I should not be able to resist the desire of drinking. Briny as the water of the sea would have been, it would certainly not have appeared more fetid and undrinkable than that of our water-bags.

Towards evening, our Arabs at last found a tank. Still fearing that our avidity to drink this icy water after so long a fast and such violent heat, might have injured our health, they pitched our tent at some distance from the spring, and in a few minutes Bechara came with goblets full of pure water; this was a real luxury, and it rendered us eager for supper. It seems that the water had not a less appetizing effect on the Arabs, for during the night they devoured all our sugar, and the remainder of the *mich-mich* to increase their rations. We had eaten the last of the dates in the cavern of Mokatteb.

We were made aware of this abstraction the next morning at breakfast; and in place of the stolen provisions, Abdallah served us his infamous crumpets, which we never touched, dried raisins and coffee. We asked for something else, and he then told us the truth. The happiness arising from past danger, and the certainty that the necessity must have been very pressing before such men would have been guilty of pilfering, rendered us ready to pardon. Our indulgence produced its fruits. That night, after having eaten with us the remainder of the rice, which was not very considerable, they finished the coffee and raisins.

The next morning we mounted, under favourable auspices. Taleb gave the signal of starting, by putting his dromedary to the gallop. We followed his example, and went for six hours at the top of the dromedaries' speed, without being able to conjecture the cause of such haste. At length, about the middle of the day, we perceived the fountains of Moses, where we had halted when coming; our dromedaries redoubled their rapidity, scenting the cool smell at more than a league's distance. When they reached the springs, they knelt down of their own accord. The Arabs prepared our tent with an eagerness and speed such as we had not yet witnessed. Five minutes afterwards, their promptitude and complaisance were explained; we had absolutely nothing

to eat ; they had devoured everything, dates, sugar, *michmich*, raisins, and coffee. We resolved to have recourse to the unfortunate crumpets, which we had rejected the evening before ; but, our dislike of them had not escaped the notice of our guides, and the last grain of our flour was consumed. Luckily we had water in abundance ; we each drank a full goblet, and then immediately resumed our journey ; whatever was our wish or need of repose, the urgency of our position restored our strength. It was necessary to reach the ford through the Red Sea at a proper hour, under pain of fasting all day and all night. Our dromedaries bore the fatigue as if they were made of steel, and seemed to acquire strength from motion. We had travelled twelve or fifteen leagues in the morning, and had to make half as much more between two and five in the afternoon.

At last, we reached the ford, panting and exhausted ; it was too late, the tide had risen.

Our situation was far from agreeable ; we had no water : in the hope of arriving in time, and after the assurances of success given us by the Arabs, we had not thought of bringing water from the fountain, so that we were literally sinking under thirst and hunger. If the sun had shone in its full strength, we should have gone mad all at once. At last, Bechara seeing our distress, told us that there was sometimes a ferryman with a boat at the other side ;

by firing a pistol in the air, which was the signal, it was probable that he would come and take us over. He had scarcely finished, when I fired; we waited anxiously for ten minutes, and saw with pain that we had not been heard. Baron Taylor ordered us to fire a volley. This time the manoeuvre was crowned with success; we saw the leaky boat quit the shore, and float over the waves. A quarter of an hour after, she reached the shore where we were waiting. We instantly sprung on board the bark, making a sign to Abdallah and Mohammed to follow. Our Arabs remained to guard the baggage; but our first care was to send back Mohammed with provisions; in the mean time, we hurried on to Suez with all the strength that our stomachs had left in our limbs. At last, after a smart run, we reached M. Comanously's house: he received us with open arms, and gave us Buonaparte's apartment. I must confess, to our shame, that we entered them with thoughts very different from those which occupied our minds when we crossed the threshold the first time. We had more need of food than of recollections, however glorious they might be. M. Comanously had the goodness to surpass our desires; though I believe that we went half way; he got up a hasty supper, for which he made excuses, and for which we returned thanks.

When the repast was finished, we went to the

window; it opened on the port of Suez, and we enjoyed with delight the coolness of the sea. Our watch was prolonged to a very late hour of the night, for whatever physical need we had of repose, the emotions we had experienced, and the dangers we had escaped, kept us awake. There our halts every evening, with their varied incidents, were presented to our minds; the Desert with its concerts of hyenas and jackals, its traces of lizards and serpents, its scorching sun, and its mortal *khamzin*, was no more than a recollection; but it was a living recollection, one which, though I may say, could be touched with the finger, yet near as we were to it, already offered to our minds all its poetry and magnificence. Time and distance have only increased the grandeur of these recollections; even now, all the pleasing and terrible emotions of this wondrous pilgrimage, remain palpitating in my heart; and I would not hesitate, if an opportunity of returning presented itself, to purchase them again at the price of the same fatigues and the same dangers.

XVII. THE GOVERNOR OF SUEZ.

THE next morning our first visit was paid to the governor of Suez; it would seem that we had been strongly recommended to him, or that our amiability had left an agreeable impression, for his reception of us was quite fraternal. Scarcely had we entered, when we were served with goblets of that delicious water which I had so often regretted during the past three weeks, spent in a hopeless search for a similar cooling beverage. After the water came pipes and coffee; and after pipes and coffee the history of our adventures. I told and Mohammed repeated the events of our journey, and it was gratifying to observe the impressions they produced on the grave and benevolent countenance of the Pacha. The trick played by the Father of Victory seemed to rejoice him exceedingly; but what astonished me most was, the species of pleasure with which he heard my very innocent and disinterested denunciation of the little robbery of our provisions by the Arabs; when I came to this part of my narrative, he made me repeat twice the episode of the *mich-mich*, sugar and coffee; he then asked for the conclusion of the tale with so radiant a countenance, that it was manifest he took the greatest pleasure in

the translation of my prose. This gave me a high idea of his taste, and very sincere regret that he could not appreciate the original text. When I had concluded the recital of our *Odyssey*, the governor ordered water to be brought a second time, and invited us to dine with him. We had no motive for refusing this invitation; we therefore accepted it, stipulating only for a convenient time. We went to make a tour of the city, and then returned at the appointed time.

As we crossed the lower court of the Pacha's palace, we remarked that in order to do us honour, he had made a kind of military display. Every body was engaged in the palace; servants, slaves, and eunuchs. We were introduced into a large square saloon, where he was waiting for us squatted in a corner of the divan. After the usual salutations, which our faithful interpreter Mohammed translated so far as words were concerned,—for we began to manage the gestures easily enough,—the servants brought in a large silver tray which they placed on the ground. We immediately rose and proceeded to squat ourselves around. A servant then came in with silver ewers and basins, and poured out water to wash our hands. The Pacha asked for water twice; we had never seen a Turk push cleanliness so far.

The tray supported four silver plates with covers

of the same metal, clumsily but richly ornamented. One contained the true eastern pilau with its chicken in the middle; the second a curry, whose composition I could not guess; the third a quarter of lamb; and the fourth a fish. We boldly put our hands into the dish, observing, however, a certain subordination, even amongst ourselves, and we commenced by dividing the chicken. For the liquid part of the repast we had next each of us a goblet of our favourite water, and I know not of any wine that I would have preferred at that moment.

From the chicken we passed to the curry. Here the helping became still more easy, for the meat, or what appeared meat, had been chopped beforehand. Every morsel served as a spoon to take up a certain part of the seasoning with it. But we soon discovered that what we had taken for meat was some kind of leguminous vegetable. On the whole our fare would have appeared very meagre to Parisians; but to us, who had become true children of Ishmael, everything was the best possible.

After the curry came the quarter of lamb. We remarked from the demonstrations with which the governor received this dish that he belonged to the same school of carving as Taleb and Bechara. He extended his arms; held the meat fast with one hand, and with the forefinger and thumb of the other he pinched the flesh, which he detached from

the bone with a facility which seemed like enchantment. This time we did not attempt to follow his example, certain that we should fail to our shame. We asked the governor permission to use our blades, that he might not be alarmed by an unexpected gesture; and when this permission was granted, we cut the animal to pieces with our daggers.

Last came the fish, and with it one of the severest trials we had experienced in our lives. The fish, whose name I do not know, was the most bony I ever met, so that at the first mouthful, we found it necessary to use extraordinary precautions to avoid choking. We therefore diligently investigated every single morsel before us, to extract these dangerous substances; the governor who had swallowed his portion without troubling himself about the fish-bones, seeing what we were at, made the servant bring him a portion of the fish on a silver plate; he tore off a piece of it with his right hand, which he placed in the hollow of his left, and commenced operations by extracting every bone, small and great; to this first preparation he added about an equal quantity of crumbled bread, and then some spices; he rolled the whole together so as to make a ball about the size of an egg, placed the ball on a silver salver, made a sign to a slave to take it to Baron Taylor, and immediately commenced a second edition of the same work. The notion that this labour was

for me stopped me short, and I felt that I could with difficulty finish what I had on my plate. The governor saw me leave off; he thought that I was waiting for my turn, and made the more haste, without, I must in justice say, bestowing less minute care. His task executed, he sent me the fruit of his labour: it was a very pretty ball about the size of an apricot. I took it with a low bow, and as if anxious to admire the perfection of its workmanship, I examined it until the governor's eyes were turned another way, recalling, during the interval, all my notions of jugglery, that I might swallow it as a mountebank swallows knives. My trick succeeded. The governor unwearied in his courtesy, immediately began to prepare a ball for Mayer, and whilst absorbed in this operation, which he performed like a real artist, he did not see that mine, instead of entering my mouth, passed up my sleeve and was transferred from my sleeve to my pocket. It was impossible for me to tell what became of Baron Taylor's ball, but I have always suspected that he politely swallowed it.

Mayer's position was clearly fixed. There was no one to serve after him, and consequently at him all eyes were aimed. He acted his part bravely; and faithfully swallowed the ball with one gulp, at the risk of choking himself. This raised his consequence in the eyes of the Pacha, who mistook for

eagerness his anxiety to be done with this singular pastry as soon as possible.

The second service was composed of cakes, sweetmeats, and sherberts, prepared by the wives of the governor, the whole of very pleasing aspect, but not of the most agreeable taste, thanks to the extraordinary mixtures which form the basis of Turkish cookery.

The Pacha, who had been in a charming humour during dinner, was more pleasant than ever during the dessert. He again spoke of our journey, again asked the details of our being carried off by the Father of Victory, from the tribe of Waleb-Saïde, and made us relate a second time how the robbers and robbed had united to eat our sugar and drink our coffee. "Now," said he, "let us get up, and see the heads struck off these robbers."

We thought that we must have misunderstood him, and made Mohammed repeat his words; but from the stupefaction of our interpreter, and the stammering manner in which he repeated the governor's proposition, we saw that our host had taken up the matter far too seriously. Baron Taylor, as chief of the caravan, rose and entreated the Pacha who had already made some steps towards the window, to listen. The governor turned round and replied that he would hear what we had to say presently, and that, when the execution was over, he

would be at our service. Baron Taylor replied, that it was precisely respecting the execution that he had some scruples of conscience to submit to his consideration. The governor made a gracious sign and prepared to listen, not without casting a glance to the window, as if to hint to the orator, "Make haste; for we are delaying the show."

Baron Taylor then, to the great surprise of the governor, began to plead the cause of our escort; he explained to the Pacha that the poor wretches were dying of hunger, and consequently might be excused for pilfering our provisions. Besides, this little infidelity had no other result than to make us fast for twenty-four hours, whilst, if they had not committed the theft they would assuredly have died of hunger. With respect to the trick played by the Father of Victory, it was so clearly characteristic of Arabic habits, that we were to blame for letting ourselves be caught. Besides, its only result was to give us a more numerous and consequently a safer escort. He therefore urgently begged the Pacha not to insist upon the punishment.

The governor replied that Baron Taylor's remarks on Arabic manners were perfectly true, and proved that he had studied the country as a philosophic observer; the same trick, indeed, as he was forced to confess, had been played several times, but upon ordinary travellers, miserable painters or poor scho-

lars, people into the mode of whose treatment it was not worth the Pacha's while to make any inquiry. But with us it was quite a different matter; we were the accredited ambassadors of the French government to the viceroy of Egypt, and specially recommended to all provincial governors by Ibrahim Pacha. Full and complete justice was due to us, and he again invited us to go and see the heads struck off the guilty. So saying, he made a step towards the window.

We then saw that he was so resolved to give us a proof of his consideration, that we began to tremble for the poor companions of our journey. We all rose together, and joined our remonstrances to those of Baron Taylor. The governor then appeared to repress his feelings, and made us a sign to take courage. He then ordered the guilty to be brought in, and invited us to sit down by his side. Five minutes afterwards our brave friends appeared; Taleb and Abú Mansúr at their head, then Bechara, Araballah, and the herd of martyrs, escorted by thirty or forty soldiers with naked sabres.

Taleb and Bechara, as they entered, cast upon us a manifest look of reproach, which went to our hearts. We made them a sign to take courage; they had great need of it, for they trembled in every limb, and were as pale as their tawny complexions allowed. The fact is, that during the three hours

which had elapsed since their being arrested, without our knowing anything of the matter, they had learned from their guards the fate that awaited them ; so that, acknowledging in their hearts that they were in the wrong, and perfectly acquainted with the expeditious and merciless procedure of Turkish justice, they had looked upon themselves as already beheaded ; and this with the more reason as, believing that the accusation came from us, they had no reason to hope for our intercession. Our friendly glance, however encouraging, was, therefore, far from being intelligible.

When they were ranged round us in a circle, the governor looked at them for a moment in silence, and with so terrible a glance that the wretches lost the feeble hope we had given them ; at length, when he saw them sufficiently terrified and repentant, he began—" Wretched children of the Prophet, you who have violated trust towards those confided to your care : my first intention was to behead you all for your atrocious crime ; but moved by the urgent entreaties of the ambassadors from the Sultan of the Franks, and the honourable Europeans who accompany him, I pardon you the capital part of the sentence. You shall escape with only a bastinado of fifty blows on the soles of your feet. Away with you."

This was not exactly what the Arabs wanted ;

they would have preferred the bastinado to beheading, but it was very evident that they would prefer a full pardon to the bastinado ; luckily for them, we were completely of the same opinion. Baron Taylor made a sign that they should wait a moment, and turning to the governor, who was astounded at our obstinacy, he expressed in our name and his own, all his gratitude for the friendly and hospitable entertainment we had received. He added, that this gratitude was so great that we had no need of an additional favour at the expense of the feet of the Arabs. He consequently besought him to pardon them altogether, considering that if these men pressed by hunger had departed from the strict line of duty, they had on a thousand other occasions gone beyond their agreement by the care, foresight, and attachment they had manifested towards us ; that besides, after the services they had rendered us, we no longer regarded them as hired guides, but as friends who had a right to share with us. Knowing our sentiments, they had acted upon them in consequence ; their only error was, that they had taken their share so very negligently that they had left nothing for us ; but this was a mistake, and not a robbery. Now, as every man who makes a mistake and acknowledges his mistake ought to be pardoned, he requested that the amnesty should be granted without restriction, and that after having saved

their heads, they should obtain further grace for their feet. Baron Taylor added, that this was not only his desire but that of the two other Europeans who accompanied him, as the governor might be convinced if he permitted us to join in his supplications. The governor turned towards us with a look of doubt; he saw by our suppliant looks far more than by our words, the truth of what Baron Taylor had told him, and remained a moment without reply, undecided and meditative, as if engaged in the solution of an inexplicable problem. During this time the Arabs had followed the translation of our friend's discourse with the most lively gratitude, accompanying every merciful phrase with appropriate gestures; so that when they saw us join their advocate, they thought that the decisive moment was come, and in consequence they knelt down, extended their arms towards the governor, and commenced a chorus of supplications and prayers. At length the governor looked at us for the last time, as if to ask whether we were decidedly for the full and entire pardon of our culpable escort, and finding in our voice, looks, and gestures the same expression he had read there already, he turned to his soldiers, and with a sigh gave them the signal to withdraw; the soldiers obeyed. The governor then gave Taleb and the Father of Victory, in their quality of sheikhs, a long admonition, of which we could only

understand so much as that they were very lucky to have to deal with such indulgent masters as we were. This lecture having been finished, with all suitable dignity, our Arabs retired in silence and without asking for the continuation.

We very warmly thanked the governor for all his kindness, and assured him that if ever we again visited Suez our first visit should be paid to him. He thanked us in turn for our favourable opinions, and made us promise that on reaching Cairo, we should write a letter to tell him how our escort had behaved on the journey. This double agreement having been made, we took our leave.

Within ten minutes walk of the palace, and at the first turning of a street, we found our Arabs in waiting. The instant they saw us, they threw themselves on our hands, which they kissed with an eagerness that left no room to doubt their gratitude. These demonstrations were besides accompanied with promises of inviolable attachment, which no circumstances could alter. What particularly touched their hearts was not so much our having interceded for their heads as our having resisted the pleasure of seeing a bastinado given, which, according to them, was one of the most interesting and curious sights in the world. Nevertheless, after the first effusion of thanks, they proposed to us to depart without delay. The clemency of the governor ap-

peared to them so very unnatural that they could not trust to it perfectly. We were then told where we were to rejoin our camels. They were saddled, laden, and waiting for us on the road to Cairo. Scarcely had the Arabs quitted the palace, when four of them set out to make everything ready, so that we could start at the instant. We understood the eagerness of our Arabs, and followed them laughing. In fact, at the western gate of the city we found our dromedaries; in an instant we were in our saddles, as if by enchantment. Our Arabs, on their side, did not give their animals time to kneel. They caught them as they were running from behind, just as I had seen Bechara do when we were leaving Cairo. Once mounted, Taleb and Abú Mansúr fraternally united for the future by the common danger they had encountered, took the head of the column, and started it at so hard a gallop, that in less than two hours we had placed half a score of leagues between us and the governor of Suez, from whom they seemed to think that they could never get fast or far enough.

Nevertheless, as night came on while we were traversing the last two leagues, it was necessary to halt. Our tent was arranged in a moment. Never had we seen our Arabs so lively and active. Bechara especially displayed a merriment that seemed like madness; he ran about and gambolled, without



any purpose, as if to assure himself that his legs had suffered no misfortune; and long after we had retired to our tent, we heard him speaking, with a voice which showed the feverish emotion produced by the exciting events of the day.

The next morning we were on the road at dawn; we followed the line of bones and skeletons, as we had done when coming from Cairo. A carcass of a dromedary, on which some fragments of flesh still remained, and from which two or three jackals fled at our approach, proved to us that a caravan had passed since, and paid its tribute to the disastrous road. We passed without halting, under the tree of the Desert; we planted the pegs of our tent on the site of the petrified forest; the terror of the preceding evening had overthrown the topographical habits of our Arabs. Besides, our day's journey had been severe. We had travelled at least a score of leagues, without resting more than an hour.

We were engaged in winding up the sinuous and difficult pass of the Mokattan, before the sun rose; it appeared above the horizon just as we attained the summit of the mountain, and the light of its first rays was reflected from the gilded domes of Cairo. We saluted the populous city, bristling with minarets, crowned with cupolas, and encircled by an immense horizon, with all the joy of returning travellers. We halted for ten minutes at the highest point of the

mountain-pass, to take in all the details of this wondrous prospect, more splendid at sun-rise than at any other hour of the day. As if our *haghins* had guessed our wishes, they no sooner reached the western declivity of the Mokattan, than they started at the top of their speed, and soon cleared the space which separated us from the city of the Khaliphs. Thence to Cairo is only a step. This time we entered the city triumphantly, without fearing that our *haghins* would play us any unlucky trick. We had become perfect riders, and with our Arabian costumes, and faces browned by the sun, it would have been really difficult to recognise us as Christians. At ten o'clock, we were in the house of M. Dantan, vice-consul of France, who appeared delighted to see us safe and sound. He immediately sent notice to the hostages of Waleb-Saïde, who, though less exuberant in their delight, seemed well satisfied to see our troop complete, and in good health. The reader will remember that their heads were responsible for ours.

Immediately after the first moments given to the pleasure of seeing our countrymen again, and finding ourselves, if I may say so, once more in France, it was necessary to think of business. The amicable arrangement made between Taleb and the Father of Victory at the foot of Sinai was, that they should share between them the price of our return. In order that our faithful friends should not be deprived of the

reward they had so loyally gained, we resolved that we would take this additional expense upon ourselves. Besides, we gave each of our guests as large a present as the state of our finances would admit; so that when we separated, they promised to hold us in eternal remembrance; and we promised to return some future day. I know not whether I shall be able to keep my engagement with them; but of this I am sure, that they have kept their engagement with us; and that more than once, on the *haghin* in rapid gallop, round the fire kindled in the Desert, or under the nomade tents of the tribe of Waleb-Saïde, our names have been repeated by Bechara and by Taleb, as those of loyal friends and brave companions.

XVIII. CONCLUSION.

M. DE LINANT, the young artist who had introduced us to the tribe of Waleb-Saïde, having heard of our return, hastened to the Frank hotel, insisted that on this occasion we should use no residence but his, and took us to his house. At the first mention of our purpose to visit Jerusalem and Damascus, he offered to become our companion, and the proposal was accepted with acclamation. M. de Linant having already traversed Syria two or three times, was the best guide that we could possibly have. It was resolved that we should rest ourselves while going down the Nile to Damietta, and that having reached this city, fresh and ready for a second journey, we should make a second engagement with Taleb and his dromedaries, to take us by the road of Al Arish to Al Kods (the Holy City), as the Arabs term Jerusalem.

We commenced our preparations for departure that very day. Nothing easier seizes hold of man, nor quits him more reluctantly, than a passion for travelling; when once it has taken possession of the mind, it urges the individual forward; he must be always in motion. The wandering Jew is a mere

symbol of an enthusiastic tourist in search of the picturesque.

We started on a lovely evening, having the wind against us, but the current and fourteen stout Nubian rowers in our favour. During the night, which fell fast, we cleared all that part of the Nile with which we were already acquainted, extending from Boulacq to the corner of the Delta. When day dawned, we began to struggle through the eastern branch, which is more beautiful and majestic than that of Rosetta. The fertility of its banks struck us the more forcibly as we had just emerged from the Desert.

Towards evening, we saw about a score of women come down from the village to enjoy the luxury of bathing. They plunged into the stream without any covering and swam towards our bark, which they followed for some time, doubtless attracted by the songs of our Nubian boatmen.

The next morning we anchored at Mansurah.

This name, like that of the Pyramids, recalls one of those national reminiscences to which a Frenchman never is indifferent. It is for ever memorable from its connexion with the crusade of St. Louis, the last of those religious wars for the possession of the Holy Land which had so long engaged the attention of Christian Europe.

The house of Fakr-ed-din-Ebn-Lokman, which served as a prison to St. Louis, still stands, shaded

by palm-trees, whose age is counted by centuries, on the left bank of the Nile, which it majestically commands. Three immense windows, having Venetian blinds instead of glass, overlook a circularly-arched gate; the arch is ornamented by white and red stones, placed alternately. The left of the house is flanked by a low mean building, pierced with a single opening, which does not deserve the name of window; it is the modest chapel in which the pious king performed his devotions. The Emír, Fakr-ed-din, yielding to the pious scruples of his prisoner, caused it to be built, that Louis might be able to perform his devotions in a place where he could not be interrupted by Mussulmans.

We halted for a moment before the consecrated mansion; our rowers then carelessly resumed their songs of the evening before; our *jerm* bounded over the waters, urged forward by the double impetus of the oars and the stream. Night overtook, but did not stop us. When we awoke in the morning, the bed of the river was visibly enlarged, and the white walls of Damietta were revealed to us through the curtain of foliage which borders the Nile. This city, situated two leagues higher than the ancient city to which it has succeeded, has an Italian appearance; the houses are large and handsome; those which border the quays have all terraces surrounded with green trellises, which produce a most delightful effect.

We had scarcely reached the house of the vice-consul of France, when we met Taleb, Bechara, and all our faithful Arabs, expecting our arrival. They came to receive our orders for guiding us through Al Arish, and the Desert, to Jerusalem; but our recent experience of travelling by water had so charmed us,—this means of transport seemed to us so preferable to that which the Arabs offered,—and our opinions on the subject were so completely adopted by M. Linant and the vice-consul, that it was finally resolved we should go by sea to Jaffa.

We quitted our Arabs as old and true friends; and it was not without some sorrow of heart, that we cast a last glance on the dromedaries, which, kneeling and motionless, with their gazelle-like eyes fixed upon us, seemed to protest against our objections to the unpleasantness of their motions. They soon, however, proved to us that they had lost none of their agreeable habits; they rose up in two motions, according to the classic custom of the Desert, and carried off their cavaliers in a round trot, that would unseat a cuirassier.

The preparations for our little voyage were soon complete; the *jerm* which we had hired was about twenty feet long, and was manned by three Turkish sailors, that is to say, three grave personages exclusively occupied in smoking from long pipes the best tobacco of Latakia.

In order to profit by the morning breeze in clearing the Boghaz, (mouth of the Nile,) we left Damietta at six o'clock.

Just as we were pushing off, a Turk came up to Baron Taylor, and besought him for the hospitality of a passage to Jaffa. The joy of the suppliant was extreme, when told that his request was granted. He entered the bark, and hastened to supply his pipe with the tobacco belonging to our sailors. He then joined the group, and soon raised a column of smoke, which might have induced those who saw our progress, without perceiving anybody working the ship, to suppose that we were propelled by some novel kind of steam machinery.

The banks of the Nile near its mouth, are very productive, and are laid out in rice-fields; trees became more rare as we advanced; but the figure of the banks did not change, they were sloped by an imperceptible declivity to the sea. In some places the river was three quarters of a league wide; in others it narrowed to a quarter; the breadth at the mouth, as well as I could judge, was about a league and a-half.

The currents are rapid; and the bed, filled with rocks rising to the level of the water, presents considerable difficulties to the navigator. The owner of the *jerm*, carelessly stretched at his full length upon the deck, gave his orders to the two sailors; he

twice threw us into the breakers; and I must do him the justice to say, that he did not appear in the least excited by the danger we encountered. At nine o'clock, we were in the open sea, gliding over its level surface, propelled by a fresh breeze, blowing right off the land.

It was the last adieu of the empire of the Pharaohs; the last sight of the mysterious land of Egypt, which soon only rose above the sea as a narrow band of verdure like a sea-serpent, and which, when evening came, disappeared in a sky of purple and gold. Our eyes were turned to this glittering point, until it was veiled by night, which curtained the entire horizon with a uniform shade. A prospect was no longer in view, but still we did not close our eyes; expectation kept us awake; for at day-light we hoped to salute the Holy Land.

THE END.

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