



WARRIOR AT PRAYER.

Mahomedanism here prevalent. The more I see of the city, the more I see that French toleration, and its un-Puritanic ideas of social life, have not made much progress in the way of changing the distinctive civilization of North Africa. It is true the French hold this city, and the country as far as the Desert, by the aid of forts and soldiers; it is said, moreover, that there are more stores, cafés, music-places, tobacco shops, and other signs of French life, than in any town of the same size in France. But these are for the sixteen thousand French, who regard Algiers as a place of exile, and hope, when they realise sufficient means, to return to France. Even the peasants have an idea that their home is not permanent. The French adventurers on our boat said: '*Au revoir,*' to their friends. What with danger of outbreaks, and the roughest usage earthquakes can give (they have just experienced one in the province of Constantine), and the parching heat of summer, the prosperity of Algiers is likely to run hand in hand with military occupation and expenditure. The old elements—Arabic, Turkish, or Moorish, or, to comprehend all, Oriental—remain intact. True, in Algiers City property has advanced. The city, which used to be visited by pestilence, in the time of the pirates, is comparatively clean and salubrious. Business seems brisk on the quay. A railroad runs as far as Blidah, west, thirty miles. A theatre, quite elegant on the outside, is established. The city seems to be, and is, growing; but it is the hot-house growth of official and military occupation, rather than a healthy, steady, national growth. But is it the less interesting on that account?

I learned, when inquiring about the character and condition of the Hebrew population, that they were the most prosperous. In fact, they have, since the

French occupation, and since they have been permitted to hold property, acquired nearly all the estates of the city. Going into their Synagogue, we were received with the greatest courtesy. Dressed in the black turban, wound around a red fez cap, and in their dark cloak, gracefully thrown over the shoulder, and the inevitable loose pantaloons, they seem at once the best apparelled and most intelligent of the indigenous population. They have been almost as long here in North Africa as the Berbers. They number, in the city, over 6000. Their women dress in gaudy colours, with cinctures of gold, and embroidered ribbons, and invariably their black hair is hid under a black satin cover. Their children are beautiful; though that may be said of the Arab and Moorish children. I have been in several schools. I never saw more handsome little children than the Arab and Moorish. Their eyes are dark and vivaciously expressive. It is not a gloomy, dead black, but it has a daring glitter, that spoke of the grand and active race which brought civilization from the East to the now dominant Western races. I need only refer to Buckle's second volume, where justice is done to the tact, skill, learning, and intelligence of this remarkable race. They gave us arithmetic, algebra, astronomy, and chemistry. Their doctors in medicine and scholarship informed the world of mind during the darkest of the ages. As I looked on these sweet blossoms of the old magnificence of the Moorish tree, I recalled how the old stock had weathered the storms of centuries! How they fought the Spaniards on the soil of Andalusia, to hold their own, amidst the smiling lands, where every vale was a Tempe, and every Tempe a poem—where the Alhambra itself arose like a grand epic, through which resounded the clash of arms and the songs of maidens! I remembered how more

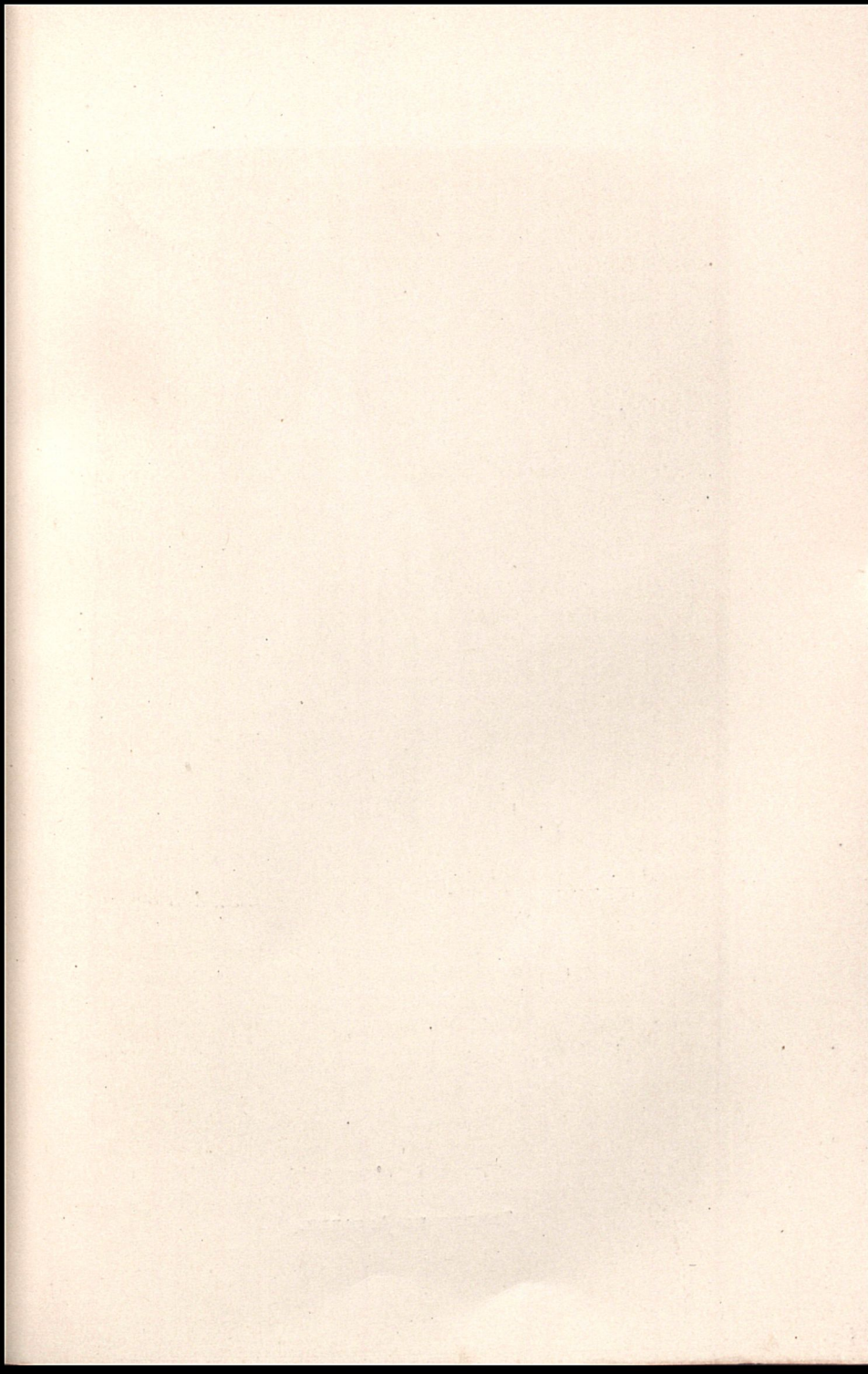
egotistic nations have themselves pirated on the weak—Britain in the Caribbean and in India, the Dutch among the spice lands of the Far East, the French in Cochin China—not to come nearer—and Spain herself, with her flag of red and gold—rivers of red between banks of gold—had pillaged and enslaved a hemisphere. I remembered all these things and, in the face of the sweet Moorish children, I forgot the Barbary Buccaneers, so vilipended by history, who scoured the seas from the Golden Horn to the Gates of Hercules; and for these recollections and in this spirit of charity, I confess to have heard, with compound interest, these children of the children of the Orient sing their alphabet from the tablets before them under the tutelage of an Abyssinian gray-beard, all black, save his turban of spotless white. I could see that the schoolmaster was ‘abroad’ as well as at home. When we went into Madame Luce’s house, in the crowded part of the city, to see her Oriental embroidery, what an interesting juvenile group we found! Some thirty beautiful Moorish girls, as fair as any such group in New York (save one of glossiest ebony), were all at work, sitting on the floor over their frames, and finishing the inwoven elegance of those fabrics which so astonish the Occidental lady by their perfection of needlework. I saw new meaning in Shakespeare’s lines:—

“The hand of *little* employment hath the daintier sense.”

These girls—nearly all—even the smallest, of four years, had the tiny nails of their pliant fingers stained dark with henna, and their hair coloured into a reddish wine-colour. This colour of the hair they retain till they marry. Then it is stained black. When the hair becomes grey, in their old age, they stain it red again. One of the children was tattooed over her

beautiful face. So modest, so pale, and so fair, it seemed cruel to pick into her pale cuticle the bluish tints, in shape of star and crescent, and other marks signifying, as our guide Hahmoud told us, the tribe to which she belonged. What a contrast to these little beauties is the shoeblack, whose portrait I give, and without comment!

We visited another group of children, in the crowded part of the city. We trudged through streets five feet wide, up and down, and with barely light from the sky above to find our path, sometimes going under dark archways, to find the home, where children are kept for mothers who go out for the day to their work. At length we found it. The mothers pay only two sous (two cents) a day. The institution is economically and neatly managed, under the direction of the ever-blessed Sisters of Charity. They showed us over the establishment, from their eating saloon and dormitories to the topmost story. The topmost story had in it some twenty girls, of larger growth, making artificial flowers. They all rose and saluted us as we entered. In this company were French and Moor. On our descent, we crossed the court—for all these institutions are located in a Moorish house; it is so convenient. We were ushered into a neat apartment, where were some thirty or more little cradles, with white coverlets, and ready to rock at the first infantile whisper. Over them, upon the wall, were written the names of the kind ladies who 'founded' the cradle. These are for the abandoned children, born out of wedlock. There is no exclusion on account of race or blood. Behind a sheet-iron door in the wall, with an opening in it for ventilation, is a bed, into which, from the street, the mother or other 'party' places the child. The moment the child touches the couch, the bell rings. Under the bell





STREET IN ALGIERS.

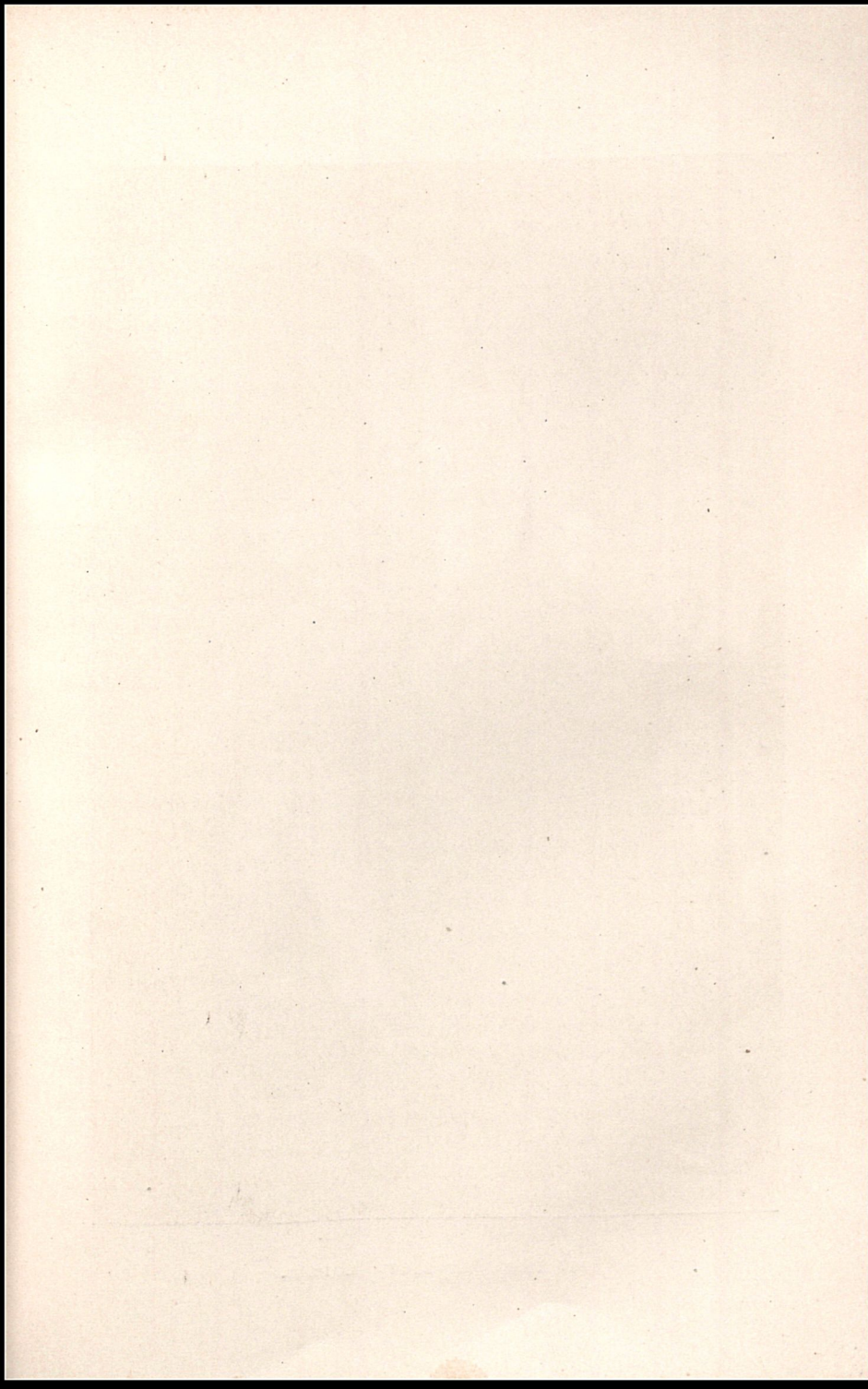


there sleeps a Sister of Charity. She receives the little one before the tintinnabulation ceases. On the outside, in the street, locked by day, open by night, is a window-shutter, and over it a sign, '*Pour les enfants abandonnés.*' So you see Algiers has one of the requirements of French civilization which London and New York have not adopted.

I have said that all the houses of the old town, and even those occupied by the Government, have the open court inside and the verandahs around the court, story above story. The engraving will illustrate this better than the text. The most superb building of the old regime—the residence of the Deys, in the town—is built in this way. It has frescoed walls and mosaic pavement. The doorways are of marble, yellow with years. The crescent still gleams here and there. Upon the third or fourth story is the seraglio, with barred windows, against which the doves of the Dey used to flutter and break their tender wings. This last remark is more serious than was intended; for it had for Algiers—where for centuries the white Christian captive maiden was coerced into both slave and wife—a sad significance.

No one, from description, can have an idea of the tortuous, narrow, and dirty streets which one has to traverse in order to go through the old city. The engraving presents but a small section, and that faintly. The lower part of the city is Frenchified. Arcades are built, like those of Paris. But above the first few streets, parallel with the Rue de l'Impératrice, upon the shore, are all the vicissitudes, the ups and downs, twists and turns, of Oriental thoroughfares. It would puzzle New York or London street superintendents, with their thousand miles of streetage under their daily eye, to rectify this Algerine system. But there are two reasons why the streets here are

thus: First, they were made narrow—the houses opposite actually impinging upon each other at the top—to obtain shade in the hot summers of the south; and, secondly, they were made compact, and on a hill side, for defensive purposes. All the Oriental towns, like the towns in Italy and in Corsica which I have described, have these characteristics, especially on the seaboard. We ascended through these defiles to the summit of the town, and came out to the sky and air, and had at once a sea view. It was a positive relief to nose, lung, and eye. We came out at the top of the town. Here was the fort captured in 1830 by the French, after their landing and fighting west of the city, and which was the most substantial evidence furnished to mankind, that the Algerine piracy or polity was deceased, and that France had its grip on this coast. Here were the old walls—twenty feet thick—here the old gates of the city and fort, the chains still hanging as they did when the Deys here held court. We were shown within the fort. It is an Oriental establishment, with French improvements—a large courtyard, and some four or five stories of porches, arched and pillared after the twisted, spiral, Byzantine order, surrounding it. The seraglio is at the top! Within the court, as we were told, wrestlers and gladiators displayed their strength and skill, for the houri who peeped above between the iron bars, and for the Dey and his eunuchs, who smoked their chibouques and drank their mocha from the verandahs. There, too, in a box of a house, about as big as, and not unlike, a locomotive photographic shop which you see on wheels, is the room occupied by the last Dey—Hussein. It was in this he was wont to receive his visitors and to do business. It is built out, as it were, from the verandah. It overlooks the court, and is on the third story. It is now closed. The soldier who





HOW THE DEY LOST ALGIERS.

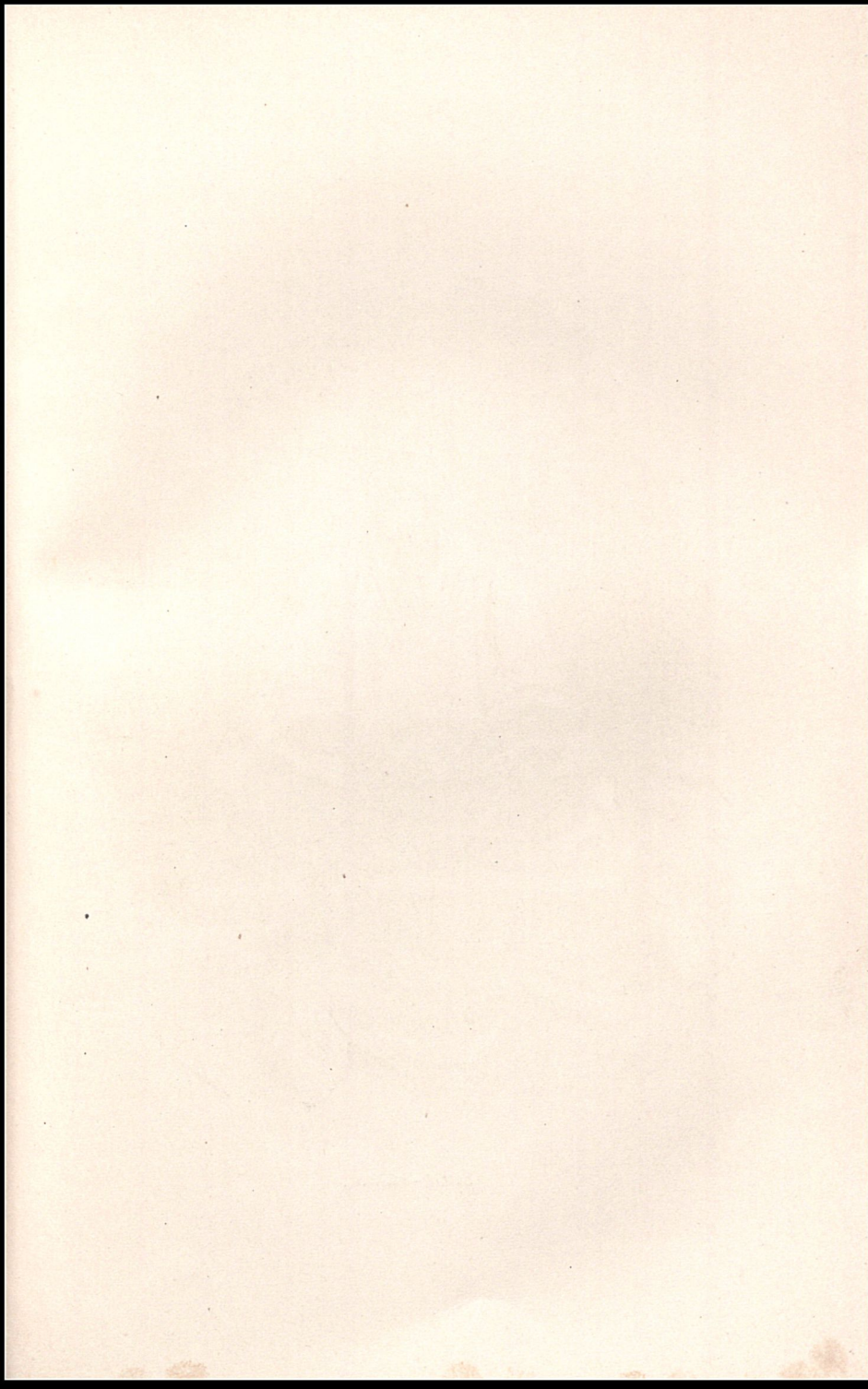
conducted us said, that if all who wanted to see its inside were permitted, it would not last a month. We glanced into its window. It is after the Oriental style. Its ceiling is arabesque. Here the Dey received the French Consul, who came, in full uniform, to remonstrate against the non-payment of a debt to French *protégés*. The old Dey lost his temper, and slapped the Consul in the face with his fan. It was 'all Dey' with him then. The consul retired without saying 'good Dey,' and (if I may be again permitted) the prospects of that Dey were not afterwards so brilliant. In fact, they were clouded. The French went after him, and got him. As this is a pivot in history, as so many terrible battles resulted from it—I have indulged a little freely in some artistic touches to represent the scene to my reader. If I have not done justice to the Dey in the sketch, history has, and the French have also. I have seen the splendid pictures of Horace Vernet representing the wars of Algiers, especially that grand tableau at Versailles, where Abd-el-Kader is represented as taken; but I confess that they were not the originals of my idea and picture.

The grand house where the Dey lived with his hundred wives, and where he is supposed to have revelled, and which he ordered to be blown up in 1830—to save it, is held by the French artillery. The very mosque in the fort is used as a barrack. Around its porphyry columns and under its ample dome, the French soldier sleeps in his iron bedstead, and may be seen—as we saw him—sitting about the holy places cleaning his uniform, without seeming to care whether he looked towards Mecca or Paris. The crescent pales before the cannon of modern civilization.

As I have taken the liberty to illustrate how Algiers

lost the Dey by a blow from that personage, with his *chasse mouche*, upon the infidel head of the French Consul, it would be more complete to append a brief history of that event. The citadel, or Casbah, is already before the reader's eye in another engraving. It is some 464 feet above the sea, and overlooks the splendid mosque of Djama, and the port and city. Here the Deys lived in perfect security from popular violence, under the guard of Janissaries; here were prisons and beheadings. In the interest of civilization, and for some good purpose, Hassan was moved to cuff the Consul. Before this scene transpired, France had the Algerine coral franchise and paid a fixed sum for it to the Dey. 'Without consideration,'—he enhanced the sum. When the French paid the extra 3000 francs, he perfidiously allowed others to poach on the coral manor. When the Consul protested, that officer was fined 100,000 francs. An 'unpleasantness' arose. In 1827, the Consul, M. Duval, still feeling unpleasantly, assumed to protect two Algerine Jews from the rapacity of the Dey. Seven million of francs was the sum which the Dey desired to confiscate, and which was due to the Jews. An interview, a quarrel, hot blood, and a blow! When France desired reparation, and sent a minister with the demand, it was denied. The ship of the minister was fired on as it left the harbour; hence a hostile French fleet from Toulon, and hence battles innumerable and sanguinary, from Constantine to Oran, and from the white marble gates of the Casbah to the mountainous portals of the Desert.

We dread going through the old city again on our downward tramp to our hotel. Our guide, Hahmoud, takes us to the top of the hill overlooking the west side of the city. Here is to be seen, across the valley, the cathedral, called Notre Dame d'Afrique. It looks





SHOE-BLACK.



like a mosque, and is exquisitely proportioned and elegant in its airy architecture. It has been built since the occupation. Indeed, all the churches and the synagogue, even, have the Byzantine style. They look like mosques outside and inside, except this: that, whereas the mosques have no paintings—nothing but the carpets and matting on the floor, and a few mottoes from the Koran on their walls—the French churches are richly decorated. One of the latter in the city has an attractive picture of the transfiguration.

We visited three mosques. One of them was most interesting. It was built by the Turks 500 years ago, and has in it a splendid copy of the Koran, the gift of the Sultan. It is called *Pêcherie*. It is in form like the Greek cross. We take off our shoes and boots, and slide around over the matting in a comical way. I have on some red slippers, which Hahmoud provided; but one of them is so irreverently large and clumsily Christian as to lose itself. Its brother slipper is proceeding regularly and reverently when arrested by Hahmoud, for Hahmoud is particular here. He is half Turk and half Arab. Fountains are in the mosque, where the bare-legged faithful lave their legs before they cross them in prayer, or lie down to sleep. We see ungainly human bundles lying in corners of the mosque, looking like sacks of grain, so motionless is their slumber under their rude burnous. I said to Hahmoud, 'Is there no rule to prohibit these lazzaroni from sleeping in your sacred temples?' I said this with something between the sacerdotal and police tone. I think Hahmoud conceals much waggery under his turban and beneath his long red silk sash and broided jacket, for he said demurely: 'My honourable friend'—he calls me that, inasmuch as I told him that we were in America, all sovereigns, wearing crowns and bearing sceptres—(this metaphor is one of my weak-

nesses)—“my honourable friend asks me, why these faithful unfortunates sleep in the mosque? I ask him, “do the faithful never sleep in the churches of the Christian?”” Finding his honourable friend mute, he added, ‘Our mosques are ever open for prayer. We know not whether our serene brethren (meaning the snoring Zanies) may not be overcome with prayer, nay, actually in prayer. Allah is great, and Mahomet is his prophet!’

The doors of this mosque open into court gardens, where are tropical trees. Starlings fly in and out of them, and sing as they fly, and fly even into and through the mosque, and among the Byzantine columns and arches. Their cheerful treble brings sunshine to the gloomy dome, and accords somehow with the hoarse undertone of the Huck Hassab, or teacher of the Koran, who sits cross-legged in one angle of the mosque teaching in low monotonous a company of youths preparing for the gospel, according to Mahomet. One of the youths is his own son. Hahmoud says that he knows the Koran already by heart. As the questions are asked, now and then the youths bow and handle their beads. They are receiving instruction in the ritual. Occasionally the teacher smiles, and once he laughed—gravely. He stops his laugh suddenly, as well as seriously. The Arabic humour has been accounted rather stern and moral. I seldom see much hilarity among the Moors or Arabs. The Kabyles are rather jocund. This Moorish priest and teacher shut down the breaks on his jocoseness, either because we Giaours were glancing at him, or because, having lost one of my shoes, I was like a chicken in the rain—*stans in uno pede*; or, what is likely, because with the twitter of the birds among the pillars and in the dome, there is heard, in strange discord, rattling into the mosque, the rat-a-tat