

XXVIII

GIBRALTAR

GUIDES TO THE ROCK — A VETERAN IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE — HOW TO REACH GIBRALTAR — THE TOWN — LANDING FROM THE SHIP — A WRECK — THE MARKETS — ALAMEDA GARDENS — APES OF TARSHISH — NEUTRAL GROUND AND SPANISH SOIL — THE ROCK AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS — IMPREGNABLE FORTIFICATIONS — SOLDIER'S LIFE — A SHAM FIGHT — THE BLACK WATCH — ENGLAND'S RIGHT TO GIBRALTAR

ANY one who wishes to see the famous "Rock" intelligently should read the book which Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field has written upon Gibraltar. It is a complete guide-book, an epitome of the history of the place and a charming narrative of travel and reminiscence. The author is still remembered with pleasure by those among whom he passed the days of his sojourn. The American consul at Gibraltar, Horatio J. Sprague, Esq., has passed his life upon the rock. His father was appointed by Andrew Jackson, and the son filled the father's place by appointment of President Polk. Universally popular and admirably adapted to the place, he has maintained the honor of the government and discharged the duties of his position through all political changes. During the war of the rebellion his duties

were especially trying, for the sympathies of England were with the Southern States, and Gibraltar was a place of resort for their privateers. But, by firmness mingled with courtesy, he was able to uphold the honor of our flag, without incurring the personal hostility of rebel sympathizers.

Gibraltar can be reached in several ways. The easiest, for those who like a voyage by sea, is to take the P. and O. steamer from England, which in five days brings one around Cape Vincent, the most western point of the European continent, and enters the Straits at Tarifa. Here stand the remains of the robber castles and forts which once guarded the passage and extorted dues from coasting vessels which passed to and from the Mediterranean. Our tariff gets its name from this place, and some of the nations are ready now to class the United States with the ancient robbers. Opposite Tarifa is Tangier, on the African coast; and in the distance, on Cape Spartel, the northwestern point of Africa, stands a lighthouse, maintained by the six great maritime powers of Europe and the United States, a happy union in the benevolent work of life-saving, where once the Barbary wreckers used, by false beacons, to lure mariners to destruction. The world moves, and even darkest Africa has some points of light. Tarifa is at the narrowest point of the "Straits," which are here about twelve miles in width. They extend, upon the African side, from Cape Spartel east to the promontory of Ceuta, where there is a Spanish convict settlement; and on the Spanish side, from the Cape of Trafalgar to Europa Point, the outlying end

of the "Rock," a distance of nearly forty miles. A constant current sets in from the Atlantic, running at the rate of two or three miles an hour; and when this current meets an easterly wind, the sea is very rough.

Another method of reaching Gibraltar is by the steamers of the French Transatlantic Company, which touch once a week at Malaga, and in a short night passage make the voyage between the two places. One drawback to the comfort of these trips is the embarking and landing. This must be done in open boats and often in a rough sea, and as the vessels usually lie at considerable distance from the shore, the transit is disagreeable and often dangerous. Travellers by sea are, however, accustomed to such experiences, and if they get soaked, or have a piece of luggage dropped into the sea, to be fished out somewhat the worse for the immersion, they do not think that "some strange thing has happened to them."

For good riders there is a third way of reaching Gibraltar. It is from Bobadilla, on the railway between Cordova and Malaga, and passes through Ronda. There is rail for a part of the distance, but the central portion must be travelled on horseback or in a jolting diligence over execrable roads. The scenery is grand and very wild, with sudden transitions to extreme beauty of cultivation and landscape. This route was until recently unsafe for travellers without an escort, as brigands abounded and robberies and murders were frequent. These things have mostly ceased, and we travelled with two well-known railway promoters, who were engaged in building

the line from Bobadilla through Ronda to Algeciras, a town on Gibraltar Bay. They kindly offered us the courtesies of the railroad company and a contractor's car over the portion of the railway yet unopened to the public; but we feared being stranded in the mountains without a guide or horses, and had, besides, planned our route by way of Malaga, and declined their polite invitation.

Gibraltar is generally thought of simply as a fortified rock; but there is a town lying at the foot of the rock, which, although guarded by large batteries and deep moats and formidable gates and subterranean passages, and five thousand English soldiers, has yet a population of twenty thousand people, most of whom are Spanish. The main street, from the Waterport to the Alameda gardens, is a curious composition of English-looking shops with Spanish proprietors; and at any time one can see sailors of every nation, in their flat caps and blue shirts, mingling with red-coated British soldiers, tall and solemn-looking Moors, in turbans, yellow slippers, and long white burnouses, Jews from Morocco, with fur caps, Zouave jackets, and baggy trousers, and European travellers, in the monotonous costume of our modern civilization. The town climbs in terraces on the western side of the rock several hundred feet, and flows down to the bay, across which it looks to Algeciras and the Spanish Mountains. The houses are of stone, covered with white and yellow stucco, and the better class have small but beautiful gardens full of flowers and fruits. Many of the residents have also farms and villas in Spain, to which they

resort during the heat of the summer; for the town, so sheltered in winter as to be a delightful health resort, is a hot and trying place to live in during July and August.

It was early on a bright May morning that our large French steamer came to anchor off Gibraltar. We had watched the leonine rock as its proportions grew larger and larger, and appreciated its natural strength before we were shown what engineering and the art of war had done to make it stronger still. The appearance of the town from the sea is hardly picturesque, compared with other Mediterranean seaports. It lies low along the shore and the lower parts of the rock and consists almost entirely of huge barracks uniform in size and shape and white-washed in the most dazzling manner. Mingled with these barracks are gray and brown flat-roofed houses, built of bricks and wood and covered with stucco, to suit the ideas of the owner or the position of the building.

The landing is characteristic of the Mediterranean. As soon as the vessel casts anchor, dozens of sail-boats and row-boats put out from shore, and from each of these several men board the steamer. A scene of quarrelling, gesticulating, and noise takes place, until all the passengers have made their choice of watermen, when luggage and people are hustled into the boats in the most unceremonious style. If the sea is rough, as it usually is, the chances of getting wet and losing some parcels of luggage overboard are in favor of the sea and against the passenger. As we looked toward shore, we were confronted

with the melancholy sight of the masts and smoke-stack of the ill-fated *Utopia*, which ran upon the ram of the ship of war *Anson*, while rounding-to in the harbor, during a fearful gale last March. She sank in a few minutes, bearing to a watery grave nearly six hundred men, women, and children, who were emigrants from Italy to New York. Everything was done which brave English seamen from the ships of war, aided by a multitude of boats, and electric lights that swept the bay, could do to save the unfortunates; but the storm, and panic, and night and cold made the disaster the most dreadful which Gibraltar has ever seen in days of peace. Such scenes in time of war are a part of the glory of a victory; in time of peace, we estimate wreck and death, resulting even indirectly from the ram of a ship of war, more justly.

Upon the wharf you are assailed by the rudest and most clamorous style of your native tongue, though the figures about represent every nationality. There are groups of blue-shirted fishermen, with purple flannel caps, girded with red sashes; Moors in white turbans and yellow slippers, and in red fez caps, waiting for the steamer which will take them onward in their pilgrimage to Mecca, for it is the fast of the Ramadan, and they would fain reach the prophet's tomb in time for the Bairam feast; travellers from every part of Europe, who are changing steamers or have come to see the place; and a motley crowd of the curious race of sailors, who, made up from all lands, form a nationality of their own, and are rightly called "seamen."

Entering through the gates, after being recorded, one comes first to a square, full of British soldiers. From this barrack-square opens the main street, leading up from the Waterport. It is hardly wide enough for vehicles to pass and is lined with common shops full of English, Spanish, and Moorish goods, for sale at high prices. Light phaeton cabs, with brown linen covers and curtains, ply in the streets and lanes; and lines of mules draw huge narrow trucks loaded with wine casks, and hogsheads of tobacco, and naval stores. One misses the shrill cries of Spanish towns, but there are other noises enough of guns, and drums, and fifes, and the "tramp, tramp, tramp" of men to break the stillness of the fine clear air.

The hotel is poor and dear, its rooms are small and dirty, and there is nothing royal about it but its name. In the Commercial building opposite, a pleasant library and reading-room are maintained by the residents, to which strangers are politely invited. Behind this building an open-air market is held, where Jews and Greeks and Turks and English privates and Spanish smugglers, with a sprinkling of horrid old crones, may be seen every morning bargaining for old bedsteads, and rickety tables and chairs, dilapidated bird-cages, and second-hand clothes, while an English auctioneer sells hogsheads and boxes of tobacco to the highest bidder. My high silk hat proclaiming me an American, in the latter crowd, my advice as to the quality and year of a lot of Virginia leaf was eagerly sought by some of the buyers, and I hope they had no occasion to repent of

their purchases. The fruit and fish markets of the town are excellent, the former being supplied with delicious fruit from Spain and Morocco. At the time of our visit, the fish-market was deserted for a ghastly but suitable reason,—the great number of unrecovered bodies from the wreck of the *Utopia*!

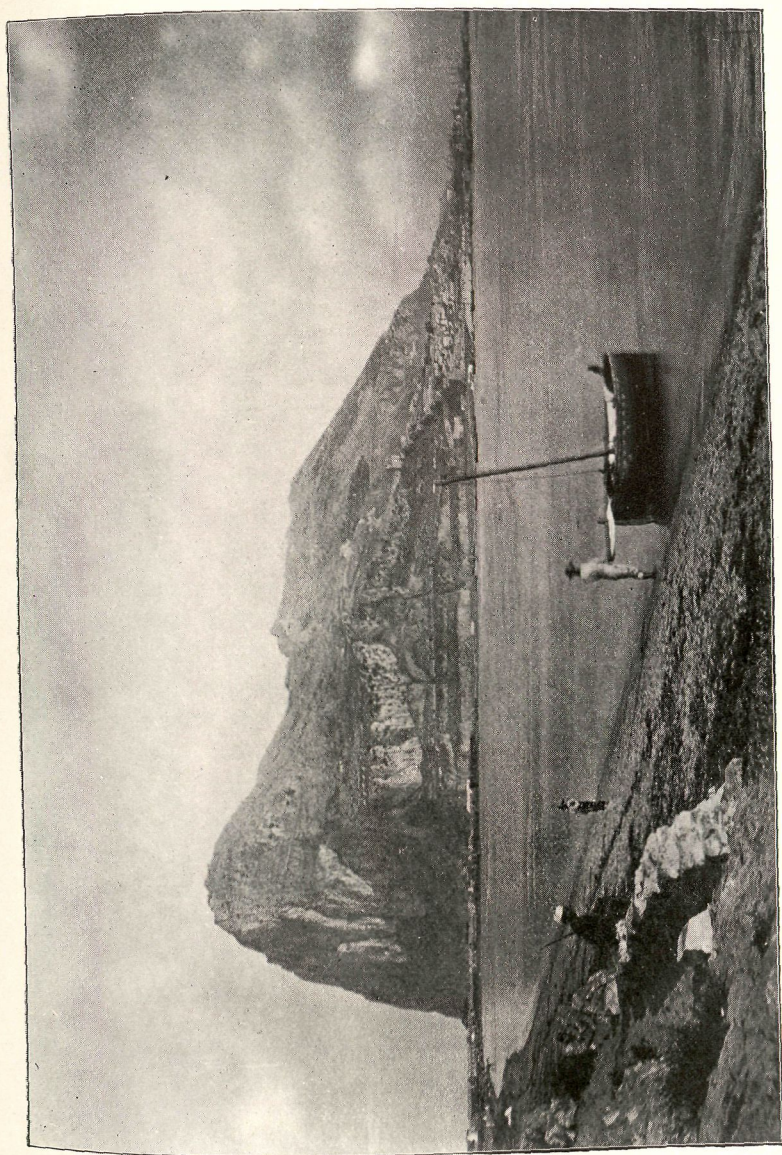
The approach to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean Sea is decidedly the best point for a first impression. The fortress and the town do not at first sight seem to have any connection with each other. The fortress is a lofty promontory of rock, called Calpe by the ancients. It projects into the sea southerly from the mainland a distance of about three miles, being less than a mile in width. The isthmus which joins it to the mainland is so low and destitute of trees or buildings that at first one thinks Gibraltar to be an island. It might easily be made one by cutting through this isthmus, which is called the "Neutral Ground," and on the British side of this neutral territory abundant provision has been made for flooding the ground and blowing up all the roadways.

Seen from the Mediterranean, the rocky mountain which forms the fortress looks like a colossal sphinx or a lion couchant, the head turned towards Africa, and the shoulders and body falling off with undulating outlines towards Spain. The resemblance is not imaginary, but real, and most appropriate to the character of the place. The highest part of the rock is one thousand four hundred and thirty feet, and it seems bare of vegetation. This is not the fact, however, for every cleft and ledge where a morsel of soil can lodge is clothed with vegetation, and often the

openings which have been pierced for cannon are hung with screens of wild flowers or fringed with geranium and heliotrope bushes. The precipitous sides of the gray limestone rock were verdant at the time of our visit, in the spring of the year; the palmettos were green, and the prickly-pear trees were just putting forth yellow flowers around their clumsy lobes. A few months later the heat will make everything brown and sere.

The rock is almost perpendicular on the eastern and southern sides, and the northern side, which fronts the narrow and low isthmus connecting it with the mainland, is very precipitous. All of these sides are strongly fortified; in addition to the defences which nature has given, there are tunnels and galleries pierced for cannon, and every nook and corner is guarded against surprise. The British government is not content with the present defences, but is even now constructing new galleries and placing new batteries. Through the courtesy of our consul, Mr. Sprague, we were furnished with permits from Governor-General Nicholson, who has only just now been appointed to the place, to visit the fortress. A master gunner conducted us by narrow paths up the steep ascent and into the galleries which have been cut through the solid rock. An old Moorish castle stands near the entrance. It is one of the oldest in Spain, and bears over the gate an inscription, stating that it was built in 725 by Abu Abul Hajez.

The rock excavations, in which immense guns are mounted, are all dry and well ventilated and look out in every direction. They are hung with chain



THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR.



curtains as a defence against shot and shell. Large magazines of powder and shot and shells are at hand within the rock. Looking out from these lofty windows of death, it seems as if it would be impossible for any enemy to capture a garrison shut up in Gibraltar, so long as there was a supply of food; and the result of the last great siege, so graphically described by Colonel Drinkwater in 1783, and by Dr. Field a hundred years later, confirms this opinion. The rock has been held in turn by the Moors, the Spaniards, and since 1704 by England. In that year, during the war of the succession, Sir George Rooke surprised the garrison, of only eighty men, and obtained possession of it. England has never had any better title to the rock than this capture. No treaty nor purchase, no protectorate of a weak nation nor alliance against a strong one, gives her this fortress. She took it by force and without provocation, as she has taken most of the places which form the British empire; and she holds it firmly, as she has held everything except the territory of the United States of America. Though it involves a garrison of five thousand soldiers, who are utterly useless and inactive, and an expenditure of nearly a million of dollars annually, this price is cheerfully paid by the nation for the pride of seeing the red cross of England waving from Europa Point and from the signal station on the height.

The panorama from this station, called also El Hacho, is superb. To the east stretches the blue Mediterranean, dotted with sails and steamers; across the Straits are the rugged hills of Africa,

beyond which the snow-clad peaks of the Atlas Mountains shine dimly on the horizon. There lie the rich towns of Morocco and the routes to a part of the world which has fresh fields for the tourist; westward are Tarifa and the coast-line of the Atlantic, and to the north lie the mountains and valleys of Spain, to whom Gibraltar naturally belongs. In the distance the range of the Sierra de Ronda, and on the northeastern horizon, the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada are seen. Below lies the town of Gibraltar, like a toy village; and the vessels at anchor in the bay, though some of them are formidable ships of war, seem only miniature ships from this height. O'Shea, whose excellent guide-book sometimes "drops into poetry," waxes eloquent and prophetic over this prospect as he writes: "To the right stretches glorious Spain, asleep yet, and a *Past* that must come back again; to our left, Africa, a virgin land, or, rather, an emaciated giant, whose veins the fresh blood of Europe must and will quicken to new life, and there lies, veiled, the *Future*; and on old Calpe here we stand, the stronghold and throne of the power and trade of England, and we feel and grasp the mighty *Present*." The water-batteries and bastions on the lower portion of the rock and around the town are numerous, and interesting to military men. As a man of peace, I could only look with open-mouthed wonder at a gun of three hundred tons that carries a ball a distance of fifteen miles, and is worked by a special steam engine large enough to drive a vessel and hidden deep in granite cellars. These batteries have the pleasing names of Devil's

Tongue, Ragged Staff, and Jumper's, and frown defiance to all hostile approaches.

Soldiers are to be seen everywhere, in squads marching through the town, in regiments making earthworks and practising engineering, at drill in companies and battalions, and as solitary sentinels at many points upon the rock. One afternoon, as we were driving on one of the higher roads, we saw the flashing bayonets of a regimental drill, and driving down to the parade ground watched for an hour the superb manœuvres of the famous Black Watch regiment. Their band is the finest in Gibraltar, and has four Highland pipes, besides the complement of brass instruments. After the regular drill they went through a series of athletic exercises for half an hour, with the precision and regularity of mechanism, and then marched to quarters with stirring strains of martial music. A finer body of men is not to be seen anywhere, and it seemed a pity that such splendid specimens of mankind should only be trained for the destruction of their fellow-creatures. Their last fighting had been done in Egypt, and now they are resting till the next summons for conflict. One morning word was given that the fortress was to be attacked by the whole force, a sham battle upon a large scale; guns were fired from a dozen different points, and red coats swarmed like insects over the crags and heights, and the whole region resounded with the thunder of the artillery. This is as near to a battle as I ever care to come, and if the noise and smoke and excitement of a sham fight are so terrible, what must the real thing be? The whole place is

under the military rule of the governor, who is appointed by the British government. Though there are twenty thousand Spaniards, and natives of Gibraltar, who are called by the obnoxious name of "rock-scorpions," living under this rule, good order and apparent good feeling prevail. The evening gun is fired shortly after sunset, and then the gates are closed until the morning gun at sunrise permits them to be opened again. During these hours no person is allowed to enter or leave the place without a special permit, which it is not easy to procure. Every person entering must declare at the gate his nationality, and the landing is made under a rigid inspection. The governor has one house in the town itself, and a summer residence beyond Europa Point, the western extremity of the rock, where there is some shelter from the heat of summer and more favoring breezes than in the hot and sheltered town. Life must be monotonous and limited here, especially for those who have lived in the free and exciting atmosphere of England and her colonies; but a soldier's life admits of little choice, and those who serve the British flag must go where duty calls and the orders of the War Office send them.

Just outside of the principal town is the Alameda, an artificial garden and promenade. The drilling ground is at the entrance, where bands play in the evening. This contains monuments to the Duke of Wellington and to General Eliot, the heroic defender of the rock at its last siege. Here shady paths wind through labyrinths of flowering shrubs, and the terraces are covered with masses of large and

beautiful plants. Our common house plants grow to a gigantic size, and walls of rock are covered with geraniums and heliotropes trained as vines. Castor oil plants and daturas and daphnes grow to the size of trees and "never say die." To these gardens, when the figs begin to ripen, descend a curious colony of apes, which have been "preserved" upon the rock of Gibraltar. They are respected and protected. Their increase is slow and they do not number half a hundred. Now and then one may be seen, chewing a fruit and nervously moving his round restless eyes, but in general they "keep dark" and confine themselves to their own society. East of the rock is the Jewish cemetery, with closely placed stones inscribed in Hebrew; another graveyard is near at hand, and then the desolate strip called "*neutral ground*" dividing the English and Spanish lines. We drove to San Roque one afternoon. The change from the clean, spruce, well-paved, and strictly governed Gibraltar, with its tall, straight, well-dressed soldiers, to the Spanish camp, dirty, ill-paved, swarming with beggars, and patrolled by lean, stooping, and brigandish Spaniards in shabby uniforms, was a comment upon the two nations which it is needless to enlarge. The track (it cannot be called a road) to San Roque lies along a beach of deep sand and then over stones and ruts which render anything on wheels an instrument of torture. The animals that carry people on their backs are at a premium in the Spanish peninsula. The horse, the mule, and the much abused, but most useful and comfortable ass, are easier than any vehicle, including many of the

railway carriages of the country. One drive from Gibraltar to the Spanish environs will be enough for a lifetime.

After seeing the fortifications, the gardens, and friends in Gibraltar, there is little to detain the tourist. There are no artistic buildings, no classic ruins. There are churches and synagogues which are no better than one can see in any good-sized town; life goes on here with military precision and monotony; religion and commerce are free; the blessings usually enjoyed under the English flag exist here, but even those blessings become wearisome when they have to be taken, like medicine, at set times and under military inspection; and so, after a few days, we had a desire to depart from the Rock.

It was not moonlight, there was no evening gun, but broad, high noon when we and our belongings were taken on board the dirty little tugboat *Hercules*, which was to convey us across the Straits to the land of the Moor.

XXIX

THE STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR

ROUGH WATER — THE TUG HERCULES — VIEWS OF SPAIN
AND AFRICA — THE BAY OF TANGIER AND CAPE SPAR-
TEL — LANDING IN AFRICA

WHEN the traveller has come to the southern end of Europe, he must either retrace his steps or “carry the war into Africa.” We had finished our visit in Gibraltar, and the summer weather had not yet come upon us. There was still time for a short excursion to Tangier, and so we went to see the Moors.

In a clear day one can see across the Straits of Gibraltar without glasses, but, in spite of what the guide-books say, the crossing under the existing conditions takes from four to five hours. One writer says, “The passage from Gibraltar is pleasant.” Perhaps he would say the same of the English Channel. Some of the passengers who crossed the Straits in the tug *Hercules* would not be of this mind. The tide was flowing in from the Atlantic at seven miles an hour; the powerful under-current from the Mediterranean was pushing out its mass of waters; there was a strong wind blowing against the tide, and the Straits were white with wave crests. The dirty old cattle-boat wheezed and groaned and belied its name “Hercules,” for once or twice it nearly turned around

in mid-channel. At this the captain, who was born in Boston, though he looked like an Arab and talked a dozen tongues, said, "She's blamed hard to steer, but we'll get her through this time"; and so we did, but we had been on board exactly five hours. There was no cabin, and no comfortable seat; and one of the ladies who gratefully accepted the captain's bunk, so that she might lie down, repented afterwards in haircloth and Persian powder. If any of my readers intend to go to Tangier, let them choose a big French steamer or a smooth day, unless they are good sailors and superior to trifling annoyances. To such the crossing gives a fine chance to see the Spanish and African coast. Algeciras, with its white houses and groves of aloes and prickly-pear, backed by wild moors and rugged mountains, and Tarifa, sleeping amidst orange groves, faded gradually from sight. As we turned southward, in the distance we could see the snow-covered peaks of the Atlas Mountains and the nearer heights of Capes Malabette and Spartel. The latter forms the western extremity of the African continent and rises, a projecting mass of stone, a thousand feet more or less into the air. A lighthouse is maintained here by the mutual aid of Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, each nation paying one-fourth of the cost. This union to protect the commerce of the world from disaster, and save the lives of sailors, is far better, in my opinion, than combinations among civilized nations to despoil the heathen and divide their lands among Christians. As we slowly worked our way across the Straits, we saw many steam-