

IN ARABIA.

Having at Kosseir (Egypt) been freely cross-questioned and subjected to some trivial indignities by the Pasha, and all for money, I abandoned bad Arabic and looked up my French, of which he knew but little. This worked like a charm. We were now on an equal footing, for although I was no Pasha, I spoke French, and that gave him a chance to pose as a scholar before his jannisaries and minions, while the difference of color made up any lacking balance. I was soon invited to dine that p.m. There were nine courses of fine food and sweets. We (i.e., the chief men of the town and myself) stowed the dainties away *a la Turque*, using neither spoon, knife nor fork. Next the dancers and singing men, musicians, etc., entered, as the Pasha said, to cheer our soul and rest our spirits. The following day the Pasha called the passport clerk, captain of the ship and myself into his mansion, and to undo any evil he might have made at first, he majestically waved his hand to the clerk, saying: "Abdallah, see thou to it that this my Nazarene friend receiveth proper papers, and part not thy lips about money. And (to the other one) thou, O captain, care for him as for thy soul, and should any evil befall him among pirates, show thy face no more. If thou carriest him safely to Jedda, thy money awaits thee in my safe. Go ye in peace." When the wind was auspicious we sailed out.

It had blown hard and the sea rolled high. "The sail is ripping!" shouted a seaman, and the others took up his cry. "Let her rip," said the skipper, thinking it would be all right. A tremendous crash was heard and the whole canvass was rent from end to end. When the sail was mended the yard broke! When that was botched together the sixteen sailors shouted, clapped their hands fiercely, gut out base and kettle-drums, tambourines and a lyre and sang with such fantastic glee, and danced with such grotesque frenzy, that I should be safe in saying that the readers of the News have never seen the like, even among Indians.

After a while we reached Yambo, the port of Mellan, where no Christian is allowed to go. Yambo would never have existed except for Medina, for it has neither water nor food of its own, all comes from elsewhere. Here we secured soldiers, but could not start until we had, for further safety, obtained the services of the son of a chief pirate. He took charge of all valuables, and upon his neck made himself responsible for them, the cargo and me! One afternoon pirates were sighted. Oh! what a flurry on board, while the ropes were loosened, fastened or changed about and the sail turned. We fled, using oars, for our skiff was only a small thing (100 tons). At sunset a cry of "Thank God!" went up, for we had struck a coral reef, and after a little manœuvring we were in the midst of a haven surrounded on all sides by dangerous

banks of coral, the entrances to which the pirates could not find without daylight. Meanwhile our guard or escort ship had sailed off either to ward off the robbers or parley with them. We anchored. Amid shouts of "hoot, hoot" (sharks), I jumped overboard, making for the bank, bound to see a coral reef. Ah, what an enchantment! What a fairy garden in the sea! Few, I think, could behold this for the first time without having a wave of holy awe creep over them, and a wondering, "Is it possible that any but divine art and wisdom could have conceived such a charming *variante* or transcript of the vegetable kingdom?"

Many have scorned the prophecy which relates to God having decreed the utter destruction of the arm of the Red Sea. Any infidel who would consider the vast extent of the reefs in the Red Sea, the industry of the Zoophytes who constantly build them up toward the surface, and who have elsewhere built islands and portions of continents, could soon accept that prophecy and see that ultimately the arm of this sea will be destroyed, and of the present sea there will some day remain only salt lakes. In many parts, because of the lack of rivers or rain, there will remain after evaporation only lakes or beds of salt.

The native ships of small ports—such a one as I am upon—can aptly be compared to the illustrations often seen of Columbus vessels or the *Mayflower* of yore; but there is something more primitive about the Arab boats. In detail the ships are like vast row boats, almost entirely open. Fore is a small deck upon which lies a crazy assortment of heavy, one yard long, five pointed grappling hooks, for sandy bottoms and simple hooks like a bent crowbar to anchor in the reefs with. Then one notices rocks, old bombs and an old-time small cannon, all used as anchors. Aft is a tower-like crenelated double deck. A 100-ton vessel carries sixteen seamen, all told. As one sail is made to pull the whole load, the yard is exceedingly heavy, and longer than the vessel itself from head to stern, this being managed by simple and defective pulleys. The sail having no reefs, the work of raising the sail demands fourteen of the sixteen hands. When that is done and the ship has been pumped through, the sailors hand one another up from below leather bags with straw handles full of the leakage water. They have no work to do, hardly a rope to splice in a week; so a fire is built in a big frame full of sand (this is really the only kitchen or stove on board), and the skins on the drums and tambourines are dried until drawn tight. Dancers and singers clap their hands in rhythm, the players all sing, and we now have the lusty, hoarse-voiced shouts of twelve or thirteen sea wolves and reformed pirates. This is indulged in twice daily and once in the night. It is a national custom among Oriental sailors.

The gate or port of Mecca was next reached. After painfully

struggling through the quarantine, customs and passport bureaux, amid pilgrims from China, Siam, India, Persia, Belorichistan, Turkestan, Tartary, Seutlmania, Turkey, South Russia, Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, Zanzibar, etc., I sought lodgings in vain. I hired a man to find me a room. At last, when I presented myself, some spat on the ground saying: "*Ptoof* a Nazarene—take him hence." The only Christian place here is a billiard hall, etc. They have beds, for which they ask preposterous sums; so at last I went to the inn of the Grand Cheriff of Mecca, the janitor of which was an Egyptian. Egyptians are seldom fanatics. He informed me that all rooms were full of pilgrims, and the court of the house too, but said he would furnish me a bench upon which I could sleep in the street. That is where I now spend my nights, and by day I put in my time looking for a shady spot. He also informed me that the Cheriff's inn was 7000 years old, and that Abuna (our father, Adam) was buried in that big grave there."

Except three or four paltry gardens of rich Pashas there is not a tree or green blade in Jedda. There is a fountain near the town. All green garden goods come from Mecca; all cereals except rice from Egypt. All around is a wilderness; only here and there is a dwarfed tree seen in the landscape. Mecca is one and a half days' journey from here. From it come all manner of sweet, rich and penetrating perfumes, frankincense, gums, barks and balsams, which all kinds of merchants here at Jedda burn in their shops to attract trade. Arabians are not to be confounded with Arabs. The latter are merely sons or mixed descendants of the former in other Mahomedan lands. The true Arab or Arabian is muscular and beautiful as to physique. The physiognomy is regular, the features classical, the beard handsome, though not very heavy. The face seems intelligent; but he is not in reality intellectual. He is bold, and will rob a rich pilgrim with as good grace and as politely as he will lodge a poor one. The Koran has something to do with this. An Arabian traveling through this desert, mountainous country, if possessing only a dollar, will not start out until provided with a big cutlass and sword or spear (two white arms), and one fire arm at least, either of which—pistol or ancient Moorish gun—is fired by a flint stone. Confidence in each other is scarce, though they permanently address each other as "Brother", and "O! friend." Men and women dress as much as possible in gauze, lawn and thin muslin. The heat requires it. Men wear sandals instead of slippers or shoes. The upper straps of these sandals are of multicolor leather, often embroidered with gold and silver. Ladies' street shoes resemble a stocking made of yellow kid, without heel or undersole. Boys go around naked very often, and little girls wear a primitive though beautiful belt or girdle from which hang several hundred straps like shoe latches,