

AN OASIS REPUBLIC.

A VISIT TO FIGUIG, IN THE WILDS OF THE WESTERN SAHARA.

(Copyright, 1907, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

BENI OUNIF, Algeria.—I have just returned from the great oases of Figuig, on the boundary between Algeria and Morocco. It lies here in the heart of the Sahara Desert, 400 miles south of the Mediterranean and 1,100 miles from Timbuktu, in the French Sudan. If I should go westward through Morocco about as far as from New York to Pittsburg, I would

half an hour later by the thick sky which has ended tonight in the sirocco, or windstorm, of the desert. We rode along single file. Each of the soldiers sat on a red Arab saddle, with a high pommel and back, and their horses were good. Mr. Pascalet rode a white Morocco mare, which he said had cost him a thousand dollars and upon which he had recently ridden 75 miles in one day. Jack and myself were mounted with English saddles on two pure Arabian three-year-olds which belied the gentle nature commonly attributed to their breeding. They buck-

It Has Seven Mud Villages with Streets Like Catacombs—One Million Date Palms Watered by Hot Springs—A Vast System of Irrigation by Underground Pipes—Taking Tea With the Moors—Frank G. Carpenter Makes a Trip Across the Desert From Algeria into Morocco on a Bucking Arabian Colt—His Guard of Soldiers Furnished By the French.



UNIQUE WATCH TOWER.

Built Against Date Trees and Photographed for the Saturday News by Frank G. Carpenter.

strike the port of Mogador, on the Atlantic ocean, and if I took camels and traveled to the east I should have to go through the Sahara for a distance as great as from Philadelphia to Salt Lake City before I found anything green and came to the valley of the Nile.

A CARAVAN CENTER.

Figuig has long been a caravan center, and today the freight from a large number of oases is shipped here on camels. This is so of Tafillet, in Morocco, from where the best dates come, and of Tawt, a large collection of oases in the Algerian Sahara, now controlled by the French, three or four hundred miles to the south of us. Some of this freight still goes to Figuig, but a large part of it has been diverted to Colomb Bechar and Beni Ounif, to be sent northward by the new railroad.

This point is about as far north as camels can come without danger of catching cold. If they go farther they get sick and die. For this reason the goods from the oases were once brought here and then sent to the Mediterranean on donkeys or mules. The exchanges were made at Figuig and this caused it to become a commercial center. Its merchants were noted as some of the shrewdest of the Sahara, and they sent regular caravans to Timen and to Mellila, in Spanish Africa, on the Mediterranean sea. About three years ago the French completed their railroad to this point and Figuig is rapidly losing its trade.

THE HEART OF THE DESERT.

I wish I could take you across the desert as I saw it today. My surroundings here are so different from anything we have in America that I almost despair of making my picture a live one. You must first imagine the bluest of blue skies, out of which shines a dazzling white sun, whose heat is tempered by the strong winds which blow over the desert almost as regularly as over the sea. The air is so clear that we can see for miles; and upon all sides there are ragged brown mountains in view. Here and there among them are patches of stony white sand, some as bare as the seashore and others showing little patches of thorny green bushes. We start out from Beni Ounif, a fortified town with many French soldiers and crowds of Moors, Arabs and Berbers. Camel troops are making their way through the streets, officers in uniform dash here and there on Arabian horses, and companies of soldiers, in bright reds and blues, are marching this way and that. This is one of the wildest parts of the Sahara and its people are only held in check by the military rule and a few years ago the Algerian desert conditions were safer, but here, on the edge of Morocco, no one dares to go about without arms, and just over those mountains the lone traveler would almost surely be killed.

ACROSS THE DESERT GUARDED BY SOLDIERS.

Indeed, it is impossible to visit the oases of Figuig without an armed escort. Foreigners have been badly treated here in the past, and the Christian who ventured there a few years ago took his life in his hands. The French government will not permit travelers from here to go alone into Morocco, and it was only upon my showing Capt. Farfel, the chief of the Arabian bureau, a letter which I have from our secretary of war to the governor general of Algeria that two Arab soldiers were detailed to accompany us.

These men were armed with repeating rifles. They rode Arabian horses and kept right in front or close behind us during our journey. In addition to them I had with me my son Jack and Mr. Pascalet, the proprietor of the Hotel du Sahara and one of the leading merchants of this part of the world. Mr. Pascalet speaks Arabic as well as French and English, and he acted as our guide and interpreter during the day. He has a branch store in one of the largest of the Figuig villages and has many friends among the people.

BUCKING ARABIAN COLTS.

We started at daybreak. The sun was just rising as we left Beni Ounif. It came up a red copper ball out of the eastern horizon, and in a few moments took on a white heat, only to be lost

ed, trotted and galloped, and at irregular intervals came worse than the average western broncho when ridden by a tenderfoot. We managed to keep our seats, however, notwithstanding the stony desert and the winding walls of the oases inclosures. It took us about an hour to reach the Moroccan frontier. We crossed it from Algeria between two high brown rocky mountains, and at once entered a beautiful valley filled with thousands of date palms.

THE OASIS OF FIGUIG.

This was the oasis of Figuig. It consists of this valley and has great date plantations. Standing at the entrance, between Mount Tafillet and Mount Zennaga, each a barren rocky brown mass about 5,000 feet high, we could see a forest of green-leaved palms, ranging in width from two to three miles and extending up a ravine for a distance of seven miles or more. On both sides and beyond were nothing but sand, rocks and mountains, perfectly bare, thirsty and dry. The palms formed a great green sheet in this setting, with round brown watch towers made of sun-dried brick and the yellow minarets of the village mosques rising above them. On a hill in the center we could see the mud houses of the village Zennaga, but the other towns of the oasis were hidden in the forest of palms.

This oasis has, I am told, about the largest number of palms in one solid block of any in the Sahara. Mr. Pascalet thinks there are more than a million trees, and I am sure I saw two or three hundred thousand lying in front of the town of Beni Ounif, one of the highest parts of the oasis.

FED BY HOT SPRINGS.

Many of the oases of the Sahara lie along dried-up water courses, which are flooded during a part of the year. Figuig is fed by hot springs, which rise and are conducted by underground drains about a foot square, made of stones and cement, through the 15,000 or 20,000 acres which are covered by date trees. Some of these springs are lukewarm, and others have a temperature of about 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

There are seven villages in the oasis, and the largest of these springs are found in the date plantations on the highlands of the town of El Abid, in front of the center of the oasis. Who first constructed these underground drains which carry the water from level to level no one seems to know. Mr. Pascalet has asked many of the Arabs, but their only reply was: "We do not know when they were built, but it was many, many years ago." It may have been two centuries ago and it may have been longer, but how long no one knows.

These drains are kept in order today and new ones are constructed from time to time. There must be hundreds of miles of them for the reason that every part of the oasis, being connected in each of the village plantations by great reservoirs where the water is stored when not needed for irrigation. Each tree, I am told, gets a good drink at least twice a week.

During my stay I visited El Abid and these springs. The palms grow all about them. In some places they are only two or three feet apart, and the branches meet overhead shutting out the sun. Some of the springs are in great vats, some are in hollows or tanks, and others in wells or square tanks. During our visit the Arabs were bathing in one of the springs, and crowds of white-gowned men with rags about their heads looked out at me over their long beards as I took these notes. At one place Jack attempted to take a photograph of them, but the Arabs protested and looked angry. Only to smile again when Mr. Pascalet told them that we were taking pictures of the palms and springs, only; and that we were very good-looking men in France and America and hence did not need to take home pictures of the natives of Figuig.

AMONG THE DATE PLANTATIONS.

Fifteen thousand acres is a pretty big farm, and as I estimated it, that is just about the extent of these oases. This Figuig farm, however, is like nothing you can imagine. It is divided up into little pens or gardens, each of which is a date plantation. Many of the holdings are not more than a quarter of an acre in size and each is surrounded by walls from eight to twelve feet in height. The walls are of sun-dried brick, plastered with mud; and they usually face upon the roads, so narrow that as I rode on my horse through them I could easily touch the mud bricks on both sides. Here and there, a wall was broken at the top and I could look over and see the date trees and the gardens within.

Many of the date palms reach high above the wall, but others are not

they bear dates. The trees are about eight inches in diameter, and they seem to carry an even thickness from the ground upward. The highest were, I judge, not over 20 feet tall. At the top they branch out in great fan-like green leaves, and from the roots of the leaves hang the clusters of red and yellow dates. The fruit is long, flat and smooth, and of much the same shape as a butter nut with a short stem. I saw many clusters, any one of which, I am sure, held a half bushel of dates, and not a few trees bore a half dozen clusters or more. Some of the dates are now ripe and we ate them fresh from the trees. They are as sweet as honey and their flavor cannot be imagined by those who have only tasted the mushy black dates of our grocery stores.

Under these palms, apricots, peaches, pears, pomegranates and other such fruits were growing, and below them in some places, were vegetables, three crops being produced on the same soil at the same time.

THE LUMBER OF THE OASIS.

As we went on with our journey, we could see how important the date palm is to these people of the desert. It is their bread, and there are no other streets and in such cases there were bridges of palm wood. I observed the date palms which go into the walls of the date gardens. Each house has but one and that not higher than my waist. Indeed, some doors are so low that the common razor-back hog would lose his bristles if he should try to go through them. These gates were made of palm planks; they are sawed out by hand and pegged rudely together. The date trees form the pillars which uphold the house roofs. In some cases the beams and rafters and it is made into ladders for the watch towers. These towers are of mud brick, but there is more or less palm wood in them, and the platforms, on which the men sit at time of date harvest to guard the crop against thieves, are of the same material.

I was much interested in the palm trees. They look ragged and rough. On the taller trees there are no leaves except at the top, and I am told that each ring of bark represents a year's growth. If this is true many of the palms must be a century old. They begin to bear at 10 or 12 years and yield crops thereafter every two years. The date trees are not so good as those of some other parts of the Sahara, but are better ones in Tafillet, in Touggurt and in Biskra. I shall learn more about them as I go on with my travels.

VILLAGE REPUBLIC OF FIGUIG.

Stranger even than the palm trees are the people of this out-of-the-way land. Each of these oases has its own little village, and every little village is a community of its own kind. The villages of Figuig are seven. The first and largest contains more than 5,000 people. It is known as Zennaga. The next largest is El Oudaghir, and the third is El Abid, which I have described as having the hot springs and as furnishing water for the greater part of the Figuig plantations. In addition to these villages there are four others. They are named El Matz Foukani, El Matz Tahtani, El Hamman Foukani and El Hamman Tahtani.

These seven Figuig villages have altogether about 15,000 inhabitants. They are separate towns, but together constitute a little United States of their own, with a congress but no president. Each village governs itself and the common council of the combined villages governs the oasis. The village governments each consist of a council of 17 members, five of whom are land owners and 12 of whom are laborers. They are all elected by the people of the village. Three members of each council are elected to a general council of 21, which passes only upon matters which relate to the whole of the oasis of Figuig. The village councils regulate all things affecting their respective villages. They appoint the local judges of peace and war, and in addition to these villages there are four others. They are named El Matz Foukani, El Matz Tahtani, El Hamman Foukani and El Hamman Tahtani.

IN EL ABID.

But come with me and look at one of these oasis communities. We shall go through the town of El Abid, observing in the way the life of the oasis. The municipality contains about 2,000 souls, but it is nothing like any town of that size in our country. In the first place I doubt whether it covers more than 20 or 30 acres, and as I look at it through the palm trees, he sees only the mud walls which inclose it, with the flat-roofed, windowless mud buildings rising here and there above them.

We enter the town by a gate in the wall. It is not over 10 feet high and above five feet in width, and it is shut

If Women Only Knew.

What a Heap of Happiness it Would Bring to Salt Lake City Homes.

Hard to do housework with an aching back.

Brings you hours of misery at leisure or at work.

If women only knew the cause—that Backache pains come from sick kidneys.

'Twould save much needless woe.

Doan's Kidney Pills cure sick kidneys.

Salt Lake City people endorse this: Mrs. H. H. Balmforth, living at 835 State St., Salt Lake City, Utah, says:

"None of the remedy I tried did me any good until I began using Doan's Kidney Pills. I suffered all the annoyances and inconveniences that come from kidney complaint for years.

Learning of Doan's Kidney Pills I decided to use them and they quickly stopped the headache and dizziness at once and in every way proved to be just the remedy I needed. They do all, and I think more, than is claimed for them."

For sale by all dealers. Price 50 cents. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y., sole agents for the United States.

Remember the name—Doan's—and

at night by rough doors of palm wood hung on rude wooden hinges. There are two gates to the town, and outside one of them some camels have a caravan which has just come from the desert, are now lying on the ground chewing their cud while their Arab driver is meditating among his freight, which he has unloaded for the time. As we go in through the gate we pass donkeys loaded with grain and sugar, and turning this way and that, wind ourselves in dark covered streets, in which we might lose our way had we not our soldiers and Mr. Pascalet to guide us.

The town of El Abid reminds one of the catacombs. There are houses built over the streets with only here and there a hole for the light. Outside is the fierce glare of the African sun; here, in the main streets of El Abid, it is almost as dark as in some subterranean cavern or in the tomb of Tli, above Cairo, in the valley of the Nile.

The streets cut the town at all sorts of angles. Some are too narrow for horses and men to go down the street through them on foot. The houses have no windows facing the street and they are entered only by low doors of palm wood. In some of the wider streets ledges have been built along the walls, and upon these shrouded figures lie and sleep or sit cross-legged and chat. Here and there men squat on the ground, hugging the walls while working away at their trades. I noticed several tailors making gowns, a cobbler or so sewing on yellow slippers, and also one or two peddlers. There were many little boys with sore heads closely shaven, and some eyes with flies playing about them. They stopped and stared at us, and as we passed many Arabs with beards scowled at us and the camera. There were no women to be seen, although I now and then caught a glimpse of sheeted figures which ran out of our way. In the Jewish quarter I saw some bare-faced girls with earrings as big as the bottom of a pint cup. The Jewish men were dressed like the Arabs.

WITH THE MOORS AT HOME.

The town of Zennaga, which we next visited, was of about the same character as El Abid, save that its streets were a little wider and it had a business section. This ran about a square which could not have covered more than a quarter of an acre. I have seen many a stable yard quite as large. Around this was a number of each ring of bark represents a year's growth. If this is true many of the palms must be a century old. They begin to bear at 10 or 12 years and yield crops thereafter every two years. The date trees are not so good as those of some other parts of the Sahara, but are better ones in Tafillet, in Touggurt and in Biskra. I shall learn more about them as I go on with my travels.

Here we left our horses in charge of the soldiers; and at the suggestion of Mr. Pascalet, visited one of the principal citizens, a merchant of the oasis. He was probably worth \$500. We met our host in the square and he just referred to, and went with him to his house. We were told to wait a

short time in the street outside that he might go in and tell his women to go to their own quarters as strange men were coming.

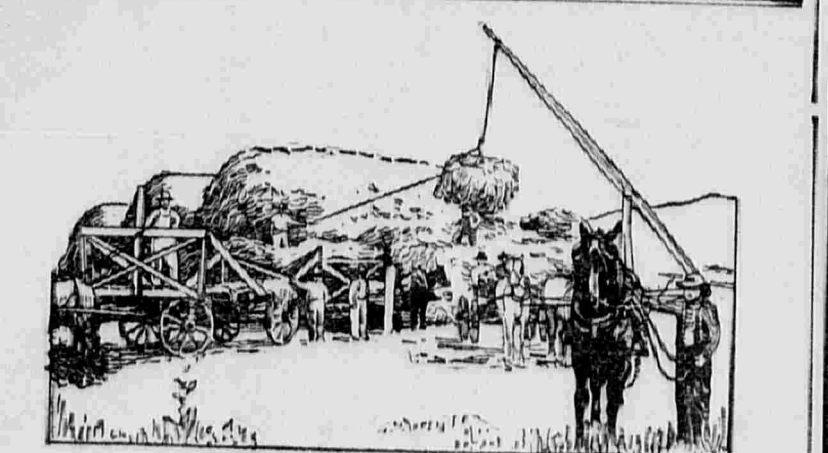
A moment later the door was opened. We first entered a courtyard roofed by the sky and surrounded by stables. In one stall there was a room at which a woman had been weaving a blanket and near another a boy was cutting up palm roots for firewood.

This court was surrounded by mud buildings about 40 feet high. They were of two stories with a gallery running around the second floor. Those buildings were the living rooms of the family, all of which were faced on the gallery. Such rooms are used chiefly for sitting or loafing, the sleeping places being on the roof. Exile of the family is had all night when the weather is bad, as a blanket with only the sky for a cover, and the whole population thus practices the open air cure.

TEA A LA FIGUIG.

Nevertheless our host seemed to think his house very fine, and I doubt not that the rug was better than those of many other homes in the town. He motioned us to sit down upon it, and then fearing that we might not be comfortable with our legs under us, he brought several soap boxes brought in and asked us to sit upon them. We preferred the rug. After we had taken our seats about a half dozen dark faced, bearded men, relatives and friends of our host, came in and were introduced to us. They were all Arabs, and we sat together cross-legged upon the rug.

After a short time a slave appeared with a muskmelon and a bowl of ripe dates, fresh from the trees. We ate them with our fingers as we watched the man of the house make the tea. He did this in an odd way. He first put a handful of green tea in the pot, and then a bunch of green mint leaves on top. He now filled the pot with lumps of sugar which he broke with a tack hammer from a broken sugar loaf as hard as rock candy. He then poured on boiling water from a silver pitcher, and a slave and left the liquor to steep. As the sugar melted he added more from the loaf, and now and then put in more mint leaves. He now poured the time until he had it just right. He then poured it carefully out into little wine glasses, seeing that each guest's glass was filled just the same height. When all were even he hand-



This cut, made for Young & Winger, shows the Rigby Bros. putting up alfalfa on their farm, on the bench just outside of Teton canyon. There are three stacks finished, with a fourth well under way. These stacks are taken from 45 acres of ground, and in the fourth stack was finished, they measured, after setting 60 days, 112 tons from one cutting. This yield is a fair average of bench land production or two-thirds as much as the first crop. The soil of these bench lands is usually of a heavy black loam, gently sloping towards the center of the valley. The pure, fresh mountain water that flows out over these benches would be an inspiring sight to the drought-stricken regions of southern Utah. Alfalfa is unknown, and crop failures are absolutely unnecessary, after setting 60 days, 112 tons from one cutting. The second crop, if properly handled, yields about half as much as the first.

Besides large yields of hay and grain we raise apples, plums and cherries. Small fruit and vegetables are an assured success. We quote from an editorial in the Desert News:

The soil of these bench lands is usually of a heavy black loam, gently sloping towards the center of the valley. The pure, fresh mountain water that flows out over these benches would be an inspiring sight to the drought-stricken regions of southern Utah. Alfalfa is unknown, and crop failures are absolutely unnecessary, after setting 60 days, 112 tons from one cutting. The second crop, if properly handled, yields about half as much as the first.

Also we have the best range left in the United States and always will have, protected as it is by the Government—in the interest of Bonville settlers. Our flock-masters are getting rich without taking chances of anxious loss, for these reasons: They live near the range, feed good hay in the winter seasons, cattle and sheep grow larger, sheep clip nearly enough wool extra to pay for the hay they eat.

Altogether conditions are most favorable to the stock grower. Any young man who is willing to work may, by the investment of a small amount of money, become independent in a few years. Land and water sells from \$10 to \$25 per acre.

For information address

YOUNG & WINGER, Driggs, Ida.

Saponifier Lye

The Kind Your Grandmother Always Used.

Pennsylvania Saponifier is the original and old reliable concentrated Lye for family soap making and general household uses. Has many imitations but no equal. The genuine has 'Pennsylvania Salt Works' Co. Phla., stamped on the lid.

Ask your grocer for it. Take no other.

Our Prices Are Under Market Value

Our new stock of celebrated Gendron Go-Carts and Baby Carriages have arrived and are now ready for your inspection—prices from \$2.50 up. We are also exclusive agents for the world renowned Garland Stoves and Ranges—the world's best—and we carry a full line of any kind, and many other exclusive up-to-date lines of Furniture, etc. Trade with your friends.

NEBRASKA FURNITURE CO.
62 East 2nd South St. Both 'Phones No. 4370.

A--Pays E--Don't Pay

M. P. A. Rating Book is being prepared. What will your rating be?

MERCHANTS' PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Scientific Collectors of Honest Debts.
Fifth Floor Commercial Bldg., Salt Lake City, Utah.
Francis G. Luke, General Mgr. "Some People Don't Like Us."

Pure, raw linseed oil costs less than "ready-mixed" paint, but when mixed with thick

Kinloch
READY TO MIX, NOT READY MIXED

pigment, gallon for gallon, it makes the best paint for the least money.

MONARCH HARDWARE CO.,
SALT LAKE CITY.

Over Twenty Million Dollars

Paid San Francisco claimants by the following companies represented in our office.

Hartford Fire of Hartford
North British & Mercantile of London
London Assurance of London
Phoenix of Brooklyn
Hamburg-Bremen of Germany
Teutonia of New Orleans
Agricultural of Watertown, and
Seattle Fire & Marine of Washington.

Still on Jan. 1st, 1907, they had assets of over

One Hundred Thirty-Five Million Dollars

In addition to fire we also write plate glass, boiler, burglary and accident insurance, and issue contract, judicial and fidelity bonds.

HEBER J. GRANT & CO., Salt Lake City, Utah.
234 South Main St.
"WE CAN WRITE YOUR INSURANCE."

WALL PAPER SALE!

Largest Stock and Lowest Prices. Special sale this month. Remnants and small lots, 10c to 15c bolt.

Rivers Bros

140 Main Street.

CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

Bears the Signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher*