Tangier from the Shore.

THE NEAREST AFRICAN HEALTH RESORT.

The Theory of a Winter Holiday.—From Tilbury to Gibraltar by P. and O.—The White Tangier.—“A Pearl Set in a Violet Girdle.”—Street Scenes from the “Arabian Nights.”—El Sokko.—Moorish Women, Water Sellers, and Snake Charmers.—The Tethered Camels.—Leared on Climate.—A Moorish Marriage.

To the professional man life in London is often compassed with conventionalities and ear-marked by etiquette; his customs are those of the code; to him the consulting room is a cage, and his daily round of duty is deadened by much monotony and often weighted with weariness, when not darkened by disaster. To him, therefore, among many others, escape for however short a holiday from the fogs, the darkness, the drizzle, and the various ferocities of a British winter is a welcome respite and refreshment, a recreation of the mind and a “renewal of life” to the body. The wholesome occasions and localities for a winter holiday have been not infrequently advocated and exemplified in these columns. It is happily becoming better known and more frequently enjoyed than heretofore by the busy practitioner. The foxhunter and the fowler beguile themselves with field sports; the idler and the man of fashion lose all the glories of an English autumn and summer, and betake themselves abroad at the season when the fields and fells, the gardens and the commons, the rivers and the hillsides of our own country are for the time radiant with the summer sun or reflect the cloud-flecked glories of an English sky in lake and river. Such are the follies of fashion; such the exigencies of a mechanical social convention, dictated originally by the conveniences and conventions of classes, which at one time so completely dominated custom and opinion that they were followed blindly by those who in no way benefited by them. Doctors now determine for themselves their own dates for holiday making. To my mind, and I believe to that of many others, there is no time so opportune as the dreary British winter time, and the months from January to March, when the recollections of the shining sun have almost faded from the memory, and the depressing influence of months of dull darkness needs

to be dispelled by a brief holiday beneath brighter and bluer skies. Brighton, Bournemouth and the South Coast towns, the Isle of Wight, Torquay, Ilfracombe, offer attractions to those whose tastes are wholly centred in English life and scenery or who are tied by the leg with short tether; but a far more complete change can be found farther afield, either at Cannes or other towns on the Riviera, at Teneriffe or at Madeira—all of them places of pleasant winter resort for those to whom a short sea journey has no terrors, and for whom the semi-tropical scenery of the feathery palm, the spiked aloe, and the quaint cactus have a charm—as well as for those who love to bask for a few winter weeks in floods of sunlight lasting from early dawn to late evening.

The nearest African health resort within reach of Londoners is one but little known, and visited by few. It is Tangier, the westernmost point of Africa, which offers to everyone who has a few weeks of winter or spring holiday at disposal one of the most strange and picturesque survivals of old Mohammedan life, with its brilliant artistic costume, and its strange, weird, and fantastic customs. For invalids, convalescents, health-seekers, and idlers alike, it has the charm of a climate of unsurpassed equality and moderation, equally delightful in summer as in winter, of a great wealth of sunlight, and of a picturesqueness to which the brush of artists, such as Regnault, Fortuny, and Constant, Moore, and Discars have done justice, but which words are impotent to paint. Dr. Leared, Dr. Rohlf, and Dr. Hooker, well-endowed medical travellers, have had much to say of its climatic merits, its natural beauties, its rich and varied fauna, and its strange survival of feudal Mohammedanism; but their works, I fancy, are not very widely read. The past deficiency of accommodation, recently much amended, has helped to divert the stream of travel to cities more conventional, but in some respects better equipped. What Cairo is to Cannes, Tangier is to Cairo. It is a city more full of Oriental surprises than the capital of Egypt, less crushed by the social conventions of Europe, richer in colour, more striking in scenery, more vivid and animated in its street life.

The Oriental glories of Cairo are quickly passing away. The Cairo of to-day is much duller and more commonplace than when I first knew it twenty years ago. Even its

Tangier from the Hill.

climate is becoming more cloudy and colder and more subject to rainfall since the opening of the Suez Canal. So largely has Europe imposed itself upon the Egyptian capital that Cairo is partly masked and marred by the colourless costume of the people and the stuccoed façades of French provincial architecture; and the senses are staled with Cockney costumes, and society slang in all its streets and sidelets. Eggs and bacon, beefsteaks and bitter beer rule in the restaurants. The old Mousky Street has lost its timber roofing, the native shops are superseded by French *boutiques*, with plate glass windows, filled with the goods of Manchester, Birmingham, Paris, and Vienna. Only some of the old bazaars, the dilapidated mosques, and caliphs' tombs remain to remind the thousand who resort there of the past glories of the city. Beyond the city, however, tower the eternal Pyramids. There are still the desert, the Serapeion of Thebes, Luxor and its temples, and the cataracts, unapproached among the delights of winter travel, although desecrated by tourists steamers and personally conducted parties. Harry and Harriet, however, have not yet invaded

Tandja-el-Taib, and the great white city of Tangier, with its Moorish quarters, its stretching plains and glittering hills beyond, and still more the lovely city of Tetouan, the sanctuary town of Wazan, Mogador, Marakesch, and the cities of Morocco and Fez afford to the holiday maker scenes which survive from the twelfth century; and which gather attraction from their age and novelty, from their unchanged aspect of old-world stability. From the medical point of view, the coast towns and many cities of the interior possess peculiar properties of climate, which all observers have declared to be unsurpassed. "The climate of Tangier," says Dr. Leared, "is so very equable and pleasant that I have formed a high opinion of its suitability for invalids suffering from chest affections. Its maritime position, and the protection of mountain ranges on the south secure it against the scorching heat to which the inland parts of Morocco are exposed. The desert winds, which are so objectionable in Algiers and other places on the Mediterranean littoral, are here almost unknown. The ordinary summer temperature ranges between 78° F. and 82° F., and the latter is rarely exceeded. The summer heat is main-

The Market Place, Tangier

tained until the autumnal rains are established. As an example of the steadiness of temperature it may be stated that of twenty-three observations made by myself at almost every hour of the day and night between September 15th and 23rd inclusive, the thermometer in my bedroom ranged between 72° F. and 78° F., while the mean was 74.2° F. During this time the weather had broken, and on one day there was a heavy rain. The mean temperature of winter is about 56° F., and fires are sometimes acceptable at night. Frost never occurs, and in addition to the indigenous palms and other trees and shrubs of warm climates, many tropical plants, such as the banana, flourish throughout the year in the open air."

As this accomplished physician spent a great deal of time in the country, and as his writings are marked by much clearness of statement and impartiality, his judgment is worth noting; and it was largely under the influence of his book and of the recent paper by Dr. Wood, of Tangier, published in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of January 13th that I determined to utilise the few weeks at my disposal in the middle of a winter of very hard work, to seek the sunshine scenery and surroundings of the East in "El-Moghreb-Al-Aksa," the far west of the Arabs, which they regard as the extremity of the African world, as we speak of Japan as the Far East, and the Americans of Texas as their Far West. I have by no means been disappointed.

Returning now, therefore, refreshed by a whiff of Mediterranean air and a brief glimpse of Eastern life and scenery, which have for me a personal charm, I think it opportune to offer a few notes—very hasty but carefully prepared—of a visit all too short, favoured by access to the

best sources of information and gladdened by the warm welcome of Europeans as of natives of the best classes, to whom my coming had been communicated.

First, I may be permitted to linger in the streets of Tangier, and endeavour by some sun pictures rather than by word pictures to give some idea of its unchanged Orientalism. It is characteristic of this comfortable climate that the success of my camera shots was often compromised by the difficulty of giving sufficiently short exposure in an atmosphere so transparent, and with light so all pervading.

Striking contrasts await the traveller, who, after four days' lounging on the luxurious quarterdeck of one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's superb steamers, enjoying all the comforts of an incomparable floating hotel, reaches Gibraltar before much more than half a week is over, and finds himself translated from the Thames to Tangier. Crossing the Straits in a well-appointed steamer bearing the old Moorish name of Gibraltar, *Gebel-et-Tarik*, the rock of the great Moorish conqueror Tarik, and passing in view of the promontories of Trafalgar, and between the pillars of Hercules, one comes quickly into view of the roadstead of this outpost and last stronghold of Islam. The stretching sandy bay and glittering city of Tangier with its tiers of flat roofs and its pierced minarets are reached in less than three hours.

The old English mole of this city, which, like Bombay, was a dowry city of the wife of Charles II., was blown up when, under the cowardly counsels of the Duke of York, it was abandoned by the English, so that it shows only above the water as a dangerous reef, and one lands in

boats amidst the Babel of an Oriental seaport, on a small quay. Here are seated cross-legged on their cushions three stately Moors, one of them of singularly handsome presence, draped in snowy robes and blue *jellab* and white turban wound round a scarlet fez. After a polite pretence at the examination of luggage, you pass to the hotel, threading in single file the steep and sinuous streets, built to keep out the sun, in the shadow of lofty whitewashed walls of houses, which seem made to hide rather than to house their residents. Here two loaded donkeys are scarcely able to pass abreast.

At every step figures flit by which seem to come out of the pages of the *Arabian Nights*. Here is our old friend the water seller, picturesque but insanitary, with his goat-skin bag. Wandering presently in the market place, it is found to be covered with a moving multitude of motley Moorish, Arab, Negro, and Jewish type and garb; here is the Eastern story-teller with his circle of excited and deeply interesting auditors; here are the veiled women, the strings of camels, and the patient donkeys of Eastern life.

The sunshine is everywhere, making the darkest corners radiant with luminant shadow, and clothing in glory the sandy beach, the rugged market ground, the torn rags of the beggar, and the gorgeous robes of the wealthy merchant. In a few minutes one is translated from the comforts of a well-appointed European hotel (for Ansaldo's Continental Hotel at Tangier is one of the best in southern Europe) into the very heart and centre of a Mahomedan fanaticism, the home of the Moorish saints and sinners who resist all European encroachment, spit at the passing Christian, and curse his shadow as he goes. The contrast is in itself a mental refreshment, and the novelty and brilliance of the street scenes are at once recreative and invigorating to the mind, as is the sunshine and soft sea breeze to the body.

No better epitome of the climate of Tangier and of its social surroundings at its best and at its worst, nor any better index of its amenities, could perhaps be given than by reference to the climatic conditions and the amusements of

the two days which have just passed. Yesterday, February 20th, there blew a heavy gale from the Straits; the sea ran high, swelling breakers boiling into surf broke upon the shore; the boats were all beached; the Gibraltar steamer stood out, and ran under shelter, and passengers could be landed only with difficulty. We were reminded, as invalids need to be, that the season is that of winter, although the sun is that of an English summer. The skies were grey with heavy cloud masses, and twice during the day there was torrential rain. In the intervals, however, it was possible

and pleasant to make excursions through the town, and in the evening I went out amid a mild rain to be present at the coming home of a bride to the house of her betrothed, as a preliminary to the next day's marriage ceremony. The temperature was never below 60°, and during the day ranged from 65° to 67°. As I went to the marriage ceremony I must have cut a quaint figure, mounted on a donkey picking its way through the narrow, dark, and slippery streets, with a hooded Moor wrapped in his brown monkish cloak (*elhab*), and preceded by a like hooded figure carrying a large lantern, with which he lighted the footway. I could but contrast this strange "going to the wedding" with the light and warm London brougham, with its foot-warmer and electric lamp; for I was in full evening dress, on ass back, covered by a light frieze ulster. On entering the covered *patio* of the house to which we were bound, we found there, standing about the tiled courtyard and beneath its arched and fretted colon-

A street in Tangier: Moors going to the Mosque

nade, a parti-coloured press of people, assembled in the true instinct of Oriental fellowship, rich and poor alike. A party of Moorish musicians were seated in the corner, cross-legged on their mats. They were chanting love songs and praises of the beauty of the bride; to the wild music of the tum-tum, the two-stringed guitar, *gimbri*, the mandolin, and the tambourine; sipping frequently cups of syrupy green tea, flavoured with spearmint and perfumed with verberna.

The text of the songs was but slightly intelligible to me or

to any around me. Such little Arabic as I possess is of the classic school, and hardly enables me to comprehend the mongrel dialect of the Moorish singers. In the gallery above the scene was much more brilliant. The wedding was with a great Jewish family, long resident among the Moors, and there were the matrons of the party richly dressed in silks and satins, with embroidered vests and the head completely covered with brilliant kerchiefs knotted over the forehead and fastened with filigree gold ornaments, in which were set large emeralds, a favourite stone for nuptial and auspicious festivities.

The canopy was ready. It was of crimson velvet heavily embroidered with gold thread, after the manner of the Turkish and Fez embroideries. Over the canopy hung a bright silk scarf, *talet*. It is the custom for the bride to be brought to the house of the betrothed on the night previous to marriage

A Water-seller.

with great ceremony: and there, surrounded by her family, she sleeps in the bridal chamber, and the wedding ceremony is performed on the next day. Her appearance is striking. She arrives at the door carried in a close box—perhaps, to the bridegroom, a box of Pandora—and her bearers chanted Moorish hymns as they came. As they entered the courtyard a loud shrill cry was uttered by the women—a quavering screech, long continued and piercing, resembling no other sound I have ever heard, and known here as the “*Taghareet*.” It is the Moorish cry of welcome, and is as much a speciality as the wail of the Irish mourners. As she passed into the courtyard, preceded by her escort, she was a striking figure. Tall, handsome, dressed in a red crimson velvet robe, of which the skirt was heavily embroidered in semi-circular lines of goldwork in the front, and the bodice was covered with gold tracery, her

eyes were closed, and the eyebrows and eyelashes were darkened with kohl; on her head was a high tiara studded with jewels, from which hung a long veil closely covering the face and falling nearly to the ground.

The family were under German protection, and, as the leading guests, the German Ambassador was invited to take her by the right hand and I with the left, and slowly lead her with the eyes closed, motionless, and the face set to a fixed expression like a mask, her head steadied by relatives from the back till we reached the canopy. On this she was seated, still with closed eyes and looking, as etiquette demands, like an inanimate statue than a living woman. She sat motionless, whilst the friends gathered around to offer felicitations to the parents. We were shown the bridal chamber, which was decked with flowers and laden with the trousseau and with the presents of friends, and so, as Pepys says, home.

This morning all is changed. At 6 o'clock the sun is rising, and quickly, with windows thrown wide open, I begin at 7 o'clock to make these scattered notes. The balmy breezes of the morning sweep into the room, and bring with them

A Moorish Lady.

something of the saltiness of the sea, something of the perfume of the mountains which lie in front shimmering with the opal sheen of the early morning sun, dissipating the vapours of the valley, which rise along the hillside. The distant sand dunes glisten, the wind has abated, and the sea reflects the glories of a blue sky flecked with gilded clouds. I can with difficulty persuade myself that it is still full winter, and that yesterday the heavens were lowering and the breakers impassable to boats.

At the wedding of which I speak, the contrast was great between the dignified bearing of the father, with grizzled beard and turbaned head, and flowing robes of richly coloured stuffs, with some of the younger members of the family dressed in ill-made gowns of European muslins and silks.

ERNEST HART.

(To be continued.)