

property. If you actually intend to travel through the district of his tribe, you had better obtain a passport from his sheikh; otherwise, when you get beyond that low ridge of land where old Mustapha's camp now is, you might find it difficult to keep all your baggage. Indeed, you might not find it easy to get on at all. The Bedouin reasons: "This land belongs to us; others have no business on it unless they have a passport. They are trespassing, and we will fine them for it."

Just now, old Mustapha is not aware that you are in the neighbourhood. While you are contemplating his late camp-fire, he is enjoying a meal. His living is apt to be rather scanty. At times a millet-cake, blackened, if not cooked, in the ashes, or broth made out of the seeds of the *samb*, must serve him in the place of bread; yet when he has the chance, he can stuff like an Eskimo. To-day, one of his sons killed two partridges, and others of the camp ran down three hares; and old Mustapha will doubtless improve his opportunity for an unusual bite, washing it all down with a bowl of coffee—a drink to which he does not always have access, though living in Coffee-land. Then he will probably pull out a vile tobacco-pipe of clay. Richer Arabs can sport the traditional long pipe, with big bowl, that we see in pictures, and probably the so-called water-pipe. The stem of the pipe will grow shorter and shorter as you get down where poor people are, like old Mustapha, until it will be no longer than the ugly stub we see before some people's faces in our land. But—

If there is not old Mustapha suddenly appearing above that ridge of land, decked in all his rusty, ragged armour! While we were dreaming by the side of this blackened fireplace, in the wild, sandy land, he was cutting short his meal, proposing an interview as soon as possible. Here he comes! We will leave, and take our baggage with us.

How Others See It.

The mounted police (who seem to do most of their travelling on foot) give amusement to the passengers by their searches through the train for violators of the prohibitory liquor law of the North-West Territory. They tramp up and down the long aisles of the coaches in their scarlet coats, boots and spurs. This liquor prohibition has been the good object in view of keeping whisky from the Indians. Before it was enforced, "whisky-traders," who came many miles across country from the States, sold "fire water" to the Indians in exchange for furs and made enormous profits, while the unfortunate red man was the sufferer. There are many thousands of Indians on reserves in this region, and the strict enforcement of this law does great good. But it is at the same time a general measure; the Dominion Parliament, holding that

what is good for the Indian must also be good for the white man; and these policemen are paid 2s. a day mainly to enforce this law. It is, however, a rather comical commentary on the prohibitory principle that on the railway the traveller can get all the fluids he wishes when in the "dining coach," but at the same time commits a deadly sin if he does his imbibing or carries a bottle on any other coach. The governor's "permits" are availed of in the former; the railway management having discovered that a great transcontinental tourist line cannot be successfully run on a prohibitory liquor basis in free America. Some of the seizures of spirits made by the police are very large, for the contraband trade is carried on extensively, most of the whisky coming from Montana, and being vile stuff, though often commanding 15s. or 20s. per bottle."

The Mails of the Olden Time.

In these days we are so accustomed to the almost hourly visits of the postman, and to the conveniences for correspondence which have well-nigh done away with separation between friends, that it may be well to "stir up our thankfulness" a little by reading the following extract from the *Youth's Companion*:—

"It has been declared that all romance passed out of the mail service with the old posting-days. This may be true; but it is also a fact that sufficient interest is to be found in the infancy of letter-writing for the satisfaction of the curious. The ancients had no convenient postal arrangements—a fact easily accounted for by the poverty of their writing materials, as neither the waxen tablets used by pupils under tuition, nor the leaden plates upon which the pilgrims wrote questions when they consulted the oracle of Dodona, were of a suitable shape for transportation. The first step toward portable writing materials lay in the adoption of the papyrus; but for a long time after that mankind seemed little inclined toward an interchange of written thought.

"The real origin of letter-writing was in Egypt, and the two forms of letters first in use were an open sheet and a closed roll. The two most progressive states of antiquity, however, the Persian and Roman empires, were the first to attempt systematizing the mail service. Rome, probably, followed the lead of Persia in the matter, and the origin of the *cursus publicus*, or public-post system, is traced back to the time of Augustus. According to this arrangement, a system of communication, which was rapid for those days, was effected between all parts of the empire. Between one *mansio*, or station, and another, was a day's journey, and at each of these points forty mules were at all times kept standing in readiness for travel. The 'mutations,' which were between the *mansiones*,

were intended simply for the exchange of horses, and not as shelter for travellers, and here also twenty animals were always waiting.

"During the Middle Ages, no general postal communication was preserved, as letter-writing had quite fallen into disuse. Only the monks still practised it, and the monasteries and universities became the only postal stations of the time.

"Of course no convenient postal arrangement could exist without reference to some central department, or office; and, consequently, none was successfully attempted as long as the empires of the Middle Ages consisted merely of independent states held together by a loose feudal system.

"France first attempted a uniform postal system, which, under Louis XV., reached quite a respectable condition. Still, the postage was extravagantly high, and the secrecy of a correspondence was so little respected, that people did not take the trouble to seal their letters, but merely fastened them together with needles. Richelieu's maxim was well known, and also the coolness with which he acted upon it: 'Sire, if one wishes to know what there is in a letter, *eh bien!* one must open it and read!'

"In modern times, all the appliances of sciences have been pressed into the service of expediting the mails. There are still peculiar methods of transit. In British India, the velocipede is the vehicle of the carrier; the camel bears the mail through the desert; and the reindeer effects communication among the frozen regions of the north."

The Mountain Flower.

In Ross-shire, Scotland, there is an immense mountain gorge. The rocks have been rent in twain, and set apart twenty feet, forming two perpendicular walls two hundred feet in height. On either side of these natural walls, in crevices where earth has collected, grow wild flowers of rare quality and beauty. A company of tourists visiting that part of the country were desirous to possess themselves of specimens of these beautiful mountain flowers; but how to obtain them they knew not. At length they thought they might be gathered by suspending a person over the cliff by a rope. They offered a Highland boy, who was near by, a handsome sum of money to undertake the difficult and dangerous task. The boy looked down into the awful abyss that yawned below, and shrank from the undertaking; but the money was tempting. Could he confide in the strangers? Could he venture his life in their hands? He felt that he could not, but he thought of his father, and, looking once more at the cliff, and then at the proffered reward, his eyes brightened, and he exclaimed: "I'll go if my father holds the rope." Beautiful illustration of the nature of faith. If the Highland

boy could only place the strong hand and loving heart of his father to the other end of the rope, he would descend the precipice with a fearless mind. Love and power would keep him from falling, and bring him up again with his floral prize, a trophy of the father's affection and his own faith.

The Empty Hands.

O, OVERTWORKED, weary mothers,
Worn out with the day-long toil,
With nerves that tingle and stitch,
At the children's wild turmoil,
See, where one mother, weeping,
By an empty cradle stands;
No burden you bear is harder
Than her burden of empty hands.

For her is no hurry and bustle,
Favored days after wakeful nights;
No brushing and mending and stitching,
And "setting the room to rights."
Nay, but for her no kisses,
No clasping of baby arms,
No smoothing of golden tresses,
No fondling of dimpled charms.

Think of the dreary silence,
When the children's tones are stilled,
And the lagging hours of the long, long days
By taking tasks unfilled;
Then love up the duties gladly
That the busiest day demands,
O happy mothers, who know not
The burden of empty hands!

—*Christian Register.*

Lapwings, or Pewits.

The lapwing is about the size of a pigeon. It has a beautiful crest of black feathers upon its head. Its belly is white, and its back a pale brown, with a metallic lustre.

These birds feed on earth-worms, insects, and grubs, and they are very useful on account of the number of these which they destroy. They make use of rather an ingenious way of getting the worms. They pick down the worm-hill with their bills, and then walk around it; or they strike the ground with their feet, and when the worm comes out to see what is the matter, it is instantly seized and eaten.

The nest is slightly built of a few stems put together in a hollow place, and because of the colour of the eggs it is seldom seen; but, should your foot turn in that direction, the mother-bird will spy you out—even at a great distance. She will rise up and approach you, flying about in a state of excitement, and trying to lead you from the nest; and the lapwings in the neighbourhood, as if quite understanding the matter, will come and join her, and fly and flap, and "Pee-wit!" or "Pee-we!" over your head, with great energy.

All at once, however, it appears as if the mother-lapwing had suddenly become lame. She runs limping along, and it seems the easiest thing on earth to catch her. She will allow you to come very near indeed, and entice you to a great distance; then, when all danger is over, she will spring up, as if laughing in your face, and fly off.