

town affords, to threaten instant communication with the capital as to the way you are received. Talk of this kind will produce astonishing changes, and the Kaid who only a short time before was confronting you with scowls and impertinences, will humble himself in the dust before such a great and powerful personage, will smilingly order you to be conducted to the best chamber, and will send you a dinner whose quantity would be stupefying if you were not nearly exhausted with hunger.

Mr. Joseph Thomson, who has recently travelled through Morocco and penetrated further into the Atlas mountains than any European had done previously, tells some amusing stories of the dinners he had in the course of his wanderings. Here is one of them. The company consisted of himself and his European companion, an assemblage not likely to consume a particularly large quantity of viands. The feast was prefaced by twelve negroes bringing in each a legless table bearing a great cone that almost hid the bearer. After a brief interval the Kaid arrived, though he simply assisted by his presence. The Moor uses his right hand only in eating, and the meal began with the customary ablutions. The nearest table was placed before the guests and the cover removed, revealing a large dish half filled with melted butter, on which floated four roasted chickens. Four loaves were laid on the table as accompaniments. With the usual *Bismillah* ("in the name of God") the feast began in earnest. With no forks or knives, and practically only one hand—the use of the left being too ill-bred to be thought of for a moment—this was easier said than done. It was next to impossible to detach any of the meat from the chickens without taking the whole bird. One of the attendants came to the rescue, and separated the choicest bits with his own fingers, placing them beside the guests, or, as a special mark of esteem, popping them into their mouths. At the conclusion of this exercise all hands sucked their fingers in order to have them clean for the next course. A rapid succession of six similar dishes, fowls, and stews of beef and mutton came next, followed by a half of a baked sheep, all exuding the most appetising odours, and all more or less soaked in butter or oil. Rice succeeded, to have its place taken by *kuskussi*, the Moorish national dish. This is granulated wheaten flour steamed over a stewpan in which meat is cooking. It is eaten in the form of little balls, made by a peculiar motion of the half-closed hand, and propelled into the mouth from the edge of the fist by the thumb. It is an operation that requires much practice and our travellers made a sad failure of it. Fortunately the gentleman who had so kindly assisted at the meat courses was equal to the emergency, and with his own greasy fingers made the balls, and at the signal *kul* dexterously shot them into their open mouths. This marked the conclusion of the feast proper, though there was still an imposing succession of dishes of tea, cake and fruit. The banquet came to an end by a drenching of the clothes and person with rose-water, and a final perfuming with the smoke of odoriferous aloes wood, benzoin and ambergris.

As can readily be imagined the Moors are not the most cleanly people, and the vermin are one of the greatest annoyances the traveller has to contend with. Mr. Thomson relates some surprising experiences on this point. Owing to local disturbances the Kaid would not permit him to remain outside the city, and a room was procured within the walls. It was alive with insects, and he made what preparations he could to resist their attacks. He thoroughly sprinkled his bed and sleeping-suit with insect powder, and placed himself in a large cotton bag carried for such purposes, completely enveloping his body and tied at the neck. Thus fortified he laid down and closed his eyes, alas, not to sleep. The heat generated by the airtight bag was intense, while mosquitoes buzzed about his face and were more than usually vicious as he was powerless to kill them or protect himself in any way. A rat or two took a tour of investigation across the bag, until, unable to resist the torture longer, he broke it open and sought relief by striking out into the darkness. This, however, was but the signal for renewed hostilities, as a myriad of fleas availed themselves of the opening of the bag to precipitate themselves within it, and peace was at an end for that night.

Travelling in Morocco would be impossible without the native horses and mules. These little beasts are much surer footed than their European relations, and climb paths that would be impossible to a civilized animal. The mountain paths are of the worst possible description, and there are seasons when progress seems out of the question. The native mule, however, is never at a loss to proceed, though his driver is frequently compelled to hang on his tail in order to follow him. So often is this necessary that at times it seems that these very essential appendages must come out, so long continued is the unnatural strain they are subjected to. A considerate nature has, however, implanted them firmly, and the records of Moorish travel reveal no mention of tailless horses and mules. The greatest annoyance from passing through the narrow passes, comes from people going in the opposite direction. In a path that is scarce wide enough for two, constant disputes are arising, and it not unfrequently happens that a whole valley will be thrown into a turmoil and all progress stopped for a considerable time, while one party is disputing with the other its rights to a path which has no sides and is all centre.

But Moorish travel is not all hardship and discomfort. The traveller meets with many interesting phases of human nature; he sees a strange and curious people, and while their customs are generally the same in all parts of

the country, they are never without variety. The towns are, on the whole, devoid of interest, and one serves very well as a sample for them all; but what is wanting in them is more than made up, in Southern Morocco, by the natural scenery. The Atlas mountains afford some unsurpassed bits of nature, and many of the views are of surpassing grandeur and loveliness. It seems, indeed, a strange contradiction that these smiling valleys, these restful mountain glens, these solemn towering heights should be the home of the most wildly fanatical people on earth, a people who in religious frenzy would not hesitate, were they able, to put to the sword all who did not like them, nor hold to the faith of Allah and Mahomet his prophet.

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PARIS LETTER.

NO one but admires Jeanne d'Arc, the Warwicks not excepted. Tons of literature have been dedicated to her legend, therein including the treatise of the German professor to demonstrate that Joan never existed. In her history no question of religion was at stake, for the English and French armies were alike Catholic, and Luther did not commence his work till nearly a century later. The remnant army of France, over which Charles VII. ruled, viewed Jeanne as inspired, one sent from heaven to save France and piece her fragmented territory into unity. The English and their French allies, the Burgundians, viewed the maid as witch. The latter were the stronger of the two armies, but were not the less defeated, partly due to Providence not being then on the side of the large battalions and not a little owing to the Burgundians at the psychological moment retiring, like Achilles, under their tents.

Jeanne was betrayed by the jealousy of her own countrymen and her own soldiers at Compiègne, sold to the English, who were glad to possess the "influence" that forced them to raise the siege of Orleans, defeated them at Patay, and undid the Conquest of Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt. French ecclesiastics tried and condemned Joan for sorcery, and the English being the secular power in Normandy were invited to burn the maid as they would one of their own Lancashire witches. She was not saved from the stake, as was Daniel in the lions' den, or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace.

Such is the canvas on which song and story have embroidered all that can evoke our admiration for innocence, purity of patriotism, and unalloyed disinterestedness. Joan claimed for her work what Peter the Hermit claimed for his—though of different aim and magnitude—*Dieu le veut*. The nineteenth century unanimously deplores the martyrdom of Schiller's virgin soldier; even Protestants are ready to sign a petition to the Sacred College not to any longer circumscribe about bestowing on her memory the recompense of canonization. Chance made the English instead of the Burgundians, that is, the French, charged to execute the sentence of the French ecclesiastics. It is only to be regretted fate did not reserve for them the work of erecting a second stake to incinerate Charles VII., to whom Joan presented a united kingdom, and who expressed his gratitude by not making an effort to save her, for the conquered are always ready to accede to the wishes of the victors. The man who looked on unmoved at the assassination of Jean sans peur could well forget Rouen and Joan for Chinon and Agnes Sorrel.

M. Jules Barbier has revised at the Porte St. Martin theatre his "Jeanne d'Arc," that was first represented at the Gaité in 1873 with a *succès d'estime*. But the nation was then in mourning, and it was felt that Bismarck and de Moltke would be too much, even for a Joan. The role of the Maid of Orleans was then interpreted by Lea Felix, sister of the great Rachel, as it is on the present occasion by Sarah Bernhardt—oddly enough, two Jewesses. M. Gounod has intercalated the play with very appropriate music, suited to his mystical temperament. But the piece in three acts and six scenes is neither a lyrical drama nor an opera. It is a passion play of mystery, weighted with all the gorgeous accessories of 1890 scenery, costumes and upholstery, all of which serve as a frame, in which Sarah Bernhardt recites a monologue. A "Hamlet," all Hamlet. But she displays such a profuseness of varied and incomparable talent that we forget Joan for Sarah. The play should be seen—it will be included in Madame Bernhardt's next year's cosmopolitan and final tour—by those who like good scenery, graceful and melodious rather than brilliant music, but above all, unrivalled declamation. The stake scene alone is as emotional as three suttees or a dozen cremations. The crowning of Charles at Rheims will make Frenchmen ashamed of President Carnot's simplicity. The English are the Turk's Head in the piece; it will be a safety-valve to blow off steam till the British evacuate Egypt and make lobster and cod-fishing pleasant for the French at Newfoundland.

The influenza-plague is going slowly away from Paris—into the provinces. At Amiens the horses contracted the disease before the inhabitants. A sharp eye is kept on the bills of health issued respecting the Czar. He commenced the epidemic, and seems to be continuing it. The death rate in Paris is 300 per cent. over normal rates. The deceased do not represent fresh cases, but old sufferers with a longer flicker than others. The epidemic would appear to be specially sent to weed out graduates for centennialism, or the rickety who cannot make up their

minds either to live or die. For ordinary healtharians, they have nothing to fear, if they avoid exposure. As much as possible live in the old arm-chair near the chimney, till the pestilential wave shall have swept past. All the doctors prescribe when called in is, keep warm, avoid draughts, live well, but not highly.

If, at the outset, the "pan"-demic was not viewed as serious, now that its ravages are seen, there is no reason to become pessimist—the worst condition to be in at any time. The doctors are working up to give the invader a name; "polymorphous influenza" is not bad. It is highly contagious, its virus-force being very great. It is illusory to imagine it can be cozened by medicaments. The post-offices are the hotbeds of the disease: afflicted clerks sell postage stamps to the public, and the latter wet the stamp with their tongue and put it on a letter. The malady has been at last classified: with infants and grown-up children it presents a scarlatine eruption on the face, intense fever and a lingering convalescence. With adults, after a short duration of the malady in its acute form, accompanied by muscular pains, headache and fever, convalescence is very long, next to interminable, and subject to sudden and serious relapses. With the aged the malady is almost certain to induce pulmonic complications that assume the character of typhoid infections. One peculiarity about the pest is, that no one has ventured to accuse it of a slums origin. The Pasteur Institute has all hands at the pumps endeavouring to discover the microbe of the malady; but Sister Anne sees nothing coming.

Up to the present the French have been attributing the sickly situation of their commerce to the Frankfort Treaty of May, 1871, by which Germany inundated France with her cheap goods, due to the operation of the most favoured nation clause. It was only a patriotic inexactitude. Roughly speaking, Germany took as much French goods in return for her sales to the Gauls. Now the cry is to uphold the favoured nation clause, pin the Teuton down to it, and when France before 1892 recasts her import tariffs, not in the protectionist, but in the prohibitive sense, she can avail herself of the lower German products. The French appear to believe they can play ducks and drakes with the laws of commercial economy; and deal with exchanges as did the famous Papal Bull, dividing the undiscovered parts of the world between Spain and Portugal. Said J. S. Mill: "Things are what they are, and the consequences shall be what they shall be."

M. d'Estrey draws attention to the insufficiency of doctors in France, and alludes to the superiority of Japan in this respect. He has been answered, that the more the doctors augment in France, the more the deaths increase. The population in Japan is not much below that of France, yet she has 70,000 practitioners, while France has only 18,000. In Japan every doctor compounds his own prescriptions; there are no apothecaries, but a special class of shops sell the raw materials of medicine. As in the case of their art—line delimitation or curves in motion—the practice of medicine is hereditary in families. Twenty years ago a Japanese seigneur had in his retinue no less than a staff of forty-five physicians, from the professional of all work down to a bone-setter. In the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese discovered Japan, the Pinto family became the most important among the European settlers. As the Major Pinto of to-day is fond of making discoveries, with or without Gatling guns, might he not take up the unfinished expedition of the Chinese emperor Shi-Houang-Ti (B. C. 219), he who commenced the Great Wall; he who sent his doctor, Zjo-Fouk, with one thousand young men and a thousand young girls to Japan to discover the "plant Immortality?"

France does not appear to be eager to nibble at the olive branch—abolition of differential duties—held out to her by Italy. She will never forgive the latter for joining the Triple Alliance, and the mother of the Latin nations will never pardon France for absorbing Tunisia, *plus* her meddling with the Italian peninsula, from Marignano down to September, 1870. It is Russia, not France, that intends to dispute the Italian protectorate over Abyssinia, and so prevent Italy from having a command of the Red Sea and thus cut off France from her Eastern possessions. The *Soleil* begs arm-chair politicians to remember that England is pledged not to allow the Italian navy to be destroyed, and so upset the balance of power in the Mediterranean; and as for the command of the Red Sea, England possessing Perim and Aden can put the keys of the Suez Canal in her pocket when it pleases her. A more serious matter for France is that, industrially and commercially, she is being rapidly replaced in Italy by Germany and England.

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WE are not wont to hear Thackeray spoken of as a realist, yet where do we meet finer cut pictures of life than those of Lady Kew, the brilliant, wicked Becky, Beatrix Esmond in youth and in old age, and British Barnes Newcomb? Nor are these personalities less life-like because the effect is heightened by exquisite humour and tender pathos; or because the cynical, calculating and dastardly characters are balanced by such fine drawings as those of lovely Lady Castlewood, generous Harry Warrington, and the chivalrous, reverent figure of the Colonel, bearing everything from the Campaigner because she happened to be a woman, and devoutly saying "Adsum" at the close of his life's sad day. None the less life-like are these, we say, if high aims and hopes and noble loves and sacrifices belong to life, as much as coldness and cruelty and baseness and despair.