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AN ARAB SHEIK.

Here we have an Arab chieftain, or Sheik. He is the head of his tribe, and, as his name denotes, a man of authority.

But the Arabs are a very independent race, principally living in tents, and moving about from place to place with their flocks and horses, having no fixed abode, and acknowledging no sovereignty and the right of no man to control them; so that whatever power a Sheik may have, is rather from his personal influence than from any clearly defined legal authority. The government of a tribe is hereditary in the family of each Sheik, but elective as to the particular individual appointed; but the allegiance of the tribe consists more in following his example as a leader than in obeying his commands, and if dissatisfied with his government they will depose or abandon him.

Among the Arabs the Sheik, or "elder," is always to be found; every village, however small, every separate quarter of a town, has a Sheik, in whom is lodged the executive power of government—a power of more or less extent, according to the personal influence or wealth of the individual who wields it.

A village Sheik is a sort of head magistrate and chief of police, or like a sheriff of old times. But the Sheik has no fixed income, nor does he often derive any material profit from his position. He is usually a landed proprietor, sometimes a merchant, but always a person of distinction, as his dress, arms, and bearing denote.

In the war in the Soudan the Sheiks have played a very important part, some of them having been staunch friends to the English, and others—followers of the Mahdi, or False Prophet—having been some of our most stubborn foes.

In person an Arab Sheik is usually a remarkably handsome man, being a fine specimen of his race—tall, lithe, well-formed, dark-eyed and dark-haired, scrupulously clean in person, and with an air of nobility and conscious dignity about him which none can fail to be impressed by.—*Sunday Reading.*

THE TRAVELLER'S TREE.

A European traveller, on his way from the coast of Madagascar to the capital, Tananarivo, in the interior, had emptied his water-flask, and was suffering from thirst. He

asked one of the natives of his party when he should be able to obtain water. "Any time you like," said the native, smiling. The European saw no sign of springs or water; but the natives conducted him to a group of tall, palm-like trees standing in a cluster on the edge of the forest, with straight trunks and bright green, broad leaves, growing from the opposite sides of the stalk, and making the tree appear like a great fan. The white man gazed admir-

ingly at the tree. "You think it is a fine tree," said the native, "but I will show you what it is good for."

He pierced the root of one of the leaf-stems, at the point where it joined the tree, with his spear, whereupon a stream of clear water spurted out, which the European caught in his water-can, and found cool, fresh, and excellent to drink.

The party having satisfied their thirst and taken a supply, the native who had spoken

went on: "This tree, which is good for us in more ways than one, we call the traveller's tree."

"But where does the water come from that the tree contains?" asked the white man. "Is it taken up from the soil?"

"Oh, no," said the native. "The leaves drink in the rain that falls on them, and when it has passed all through them, it becomes very pure and sweet."

"And are there many of these trees on the island?"

"There are so many that sometimes one sees no other trees for a mile; and very often we take no provision of water when we travel, because we know that we shall find the traveller's tree."

"And you say there are other things that they are good for?"

The native answered by asking another question.

"Do you remember," he said, "the village that we passed through this morning, with its wooden huts roofed over with leaves? Those huts were made of nothing but the traveller's tree. The wood splits easily, but makes tough planks for floors, and the walls of the houses are made of the bark."

"With the branches we make the rafters, and the leaves cover the roof. But this is not all that the good tree does. We are coming soon to a village whose people I know, and I will show you more."

The native was eager in his haste to show to the traveller what the tree still had in store for him, and the European, for his part, felt no little curiosity. They arrived soon at the village, and the guide conducted the traveller to the hut of a friend, who received them very hospitably, and soon spread a meal for them.

First he placed upon a sort of table a spread made of some vegetable substance, very light and pretty; then he set before his guests two drinking vessels of a material which the white man did not recognize; and then he gave them two utensils, which, although rude in shape, served in the stead of knife and fork.

In the midst of the table he placed a large bowl, filled with cream of very appetizing appearance. In another vessel there was a quantity of oil, with almonds floating upon it.

"Before we begin," said the guide, "I must tell you what I promised. Everything that there



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