

vary in height from four hundred to seven hundred feet, and frequently, without absolutely meeting, they overhang to such a degree that the sky is shut out from the sight for a hundred yards at a stretch.

We scraped away the *débris* to the depth of nearly two feet, and reached the antique pavement. It was found deeply furrowed by the tires of the chariot-wheels which once coursed along this cavernous highway—as deeply cut as some of the lava pavements of resurrected Pompeii.

At every turn we saw evidences of indefatigable effort, and of how lavishly labour was expended by the people who lived in Petra in its days of power. All seemed the work of some giant magician's wand. The defile, indeed, is called Wady Mousa by the Arabs, because they believe that the Patriarch Moses, by one stroke of his staff, caused the mountains to separate and to form this tremendous fissure in order to enable him to pass on to Mount Hor, accompanying Aaron, to help him die and lay him at rest. For nearly two miles we followed this semi-subterranean passage. The pathway now descended; the water grew deeper, the opposing thicket more impassable, the scene more grand. A sudden turn in the gorge was passed; and, as I looked skyward, through the rocky vista, I caught the first glimpse of that remarkable creation, the Khuzneh! Only partly seen at first, beyond the tall, narrow opening, carved in stone of a pale rose colour, were columns, capitals, and cornices, as new-looking as if of yesterday. With what subtle judgment was the site chosen! But when and by whom, no one knows—mysteriously history conceals.

Scarcely had I chosen for myself a comfortable seat among the rocks, when I heard a great crashing noise in the gorge beyond, as though an earthquake had sent great masses of stone down to prevent our exit. The

sound came nearer and nearer, booming and bounding through the gorge. The Bedouins were upon us!

I scrambled down to the mouth of the gorge, arriving just in time to see rush furiously towards me six mounted Arabs of wily mien, with long-reaching lances on their shoulders. I stood to await their arrival. They were as surprised to see me as I was to see them, and now they halted. I cried out "Sahib," and offered my hand. To my surprise it was taken good-naturedly by all of the party, and a declaration of friendliness passed between us. We were in their city, and now they were bound to protect us (and rob us!) they declared. We were led triumphantly into Petra by the very men who would have prevented our entrance amid exactions and bluster, had they caught us.

Then another scheme had to be perfected. As a rule, when travellers get into Petra at all, they are hurried out again as rapidly as possible, seldom remaining a full day. I wanted to stay long enough to get at least a tolerable photographic record of the ruins. I objected to take my departure. The chief then attempted to levy on my purse. I discussed the subject with him, agreed to some of his propositions, paid on account, and asked until next day to consider the rest. Thus I prolonged my visit. But for four days only. I began to realize then that if we remained there any longer we should be literally cleaned out, and perhaps killed by the Bedouins.

News spreads like wild-fire in modern Edom; and before we first saw the sunset beyond Mount Hor, some sixty of Esau's descendants had followed us and had opened offices in these excavations. Never was so savage a haunt for banditti conceived by Salvador Rosa. The trouble then began. Each individual Arab claimed the privilege of showing the city to the stranger. From their bluster I made up my