

### Strange Experiences of Travellers.

The ever bright sky of the Sahara is in strong contrast to our changeable weather. The atmospheric laws, which in our countries bring rain and wind at almost fixed periods, are not in force there. The only regular atmospheric variation is the equinoctial sirocco. The light which comes directly from southern Africa, where the hottest period prevails in October, is driven northward by the first rainfall, the latter generally coming about the close of that month. Heated under the tropic of Capricorn and dried through the deserts of Guinea and the immense sandy expanse of the Sahara, this impetuous wind stirs the whole surface, heaving up and driving along showers of sand and dust, which are perceived in their coming hundreds of miles away. It generally lasts from two to three weeks with more or less intensity, mild during daytime and increasing toward night, sometimes to the fury of a hurricane. There is no rainy season, and even in central, southern, and eastern Sahara, whole years sometimes pass without a drop of water falling. During the year of my sojourn in Wargala, the city was struck by rainstorms only three times. These were abundant in volume, but lasted only an hour or two. Only twice was the storm repeated during my journey through the desert. A sultry and vaporous atmosphere generally succeeded these storms. The nights were clear and nowhere have I seen the stars so radiant.

The weather is not taken into account in agricultural calculations, irrigation taking the place of rain, so that the failure of the crops is rarely due to drought.

On our journeying from Wargala to Golea we were struck by one of the storms alluded to above. We left that luxuriant group of oases, of which Wargala is the chief town, and resumed our way along the wild desert, following the dry bed of the Wad Mia. Though it was October, no rain had yet fallen, so that the earth still lacked her winter mantle of green. The conformation of the land during the first five days was a variety of firm, pebbly and sandy ground, while a mountain range leads directly to El Golea. In all parts the firm soil appeared to be excellent for culture if it could only be watered. Tracts of sand of the color of iron rust were to be noticed along the Wad Mia, denoting the existence of some ferruginous spring. The spot where we encamped in our sixth stage was a sea of sand interspersed with dunes rising from thirty to forty feet. One mound, seventy feet high, probably formed by a whirlwind, was noticeable above all at a certain distance from us. Several long and straight eminences four or five feet high, with a striking similarity to waves, were to be seen. Flamingos gazing at us from the tops of the dunes, were the only signs of life the region presented. This bird, the vulture, and raven are the only winged creatures seen in the Sahara outside of the oases. They fly in flocks in the wake of the caravans, in expectation of prey, and are often regaled by the death of camels or slaves, as the caravan owners never take the trouble to bury them.

During the preceding nights the sirocco had been blowing hard, without, however, causing much disturbance. But now an atmospheric revolution broke upon the camp. A fearful bluster aroused us from sleep and terrified the horses. Blast followed blast; our tents were terribly shaken, while the wind grew rapidly to the force of a cyclone. The horses were neighing and the camels groaning. Everybody was awakened, and all were obliged to take a frantic hold of the tents from the interior. Some tried to get out to pitch the tents more securely, but could not stand the whirl of sand. Showers of sand were beating upon our tents like a heavy rain. The more courageous men were swearing against the impertinent element which had interrupted their sleep and was blowing down their flimsy shelter. Others were terror stricken, fearing imminent destruction. All were clinging desperately to their tents to prevent them from being carried away, but in spite of their efforts all the tents, one after another, were blown down. Each man underneath grasped frantically at one side of his canvas house and rolled it around his face for protection against the sand. The camels, despite their groaning, were little injured by the gritty whirlwind, and seemed to be quite accustomed to it.

Their incomparable vital strength enables them to stand the sorest privations and the severest weather. They live, indeed, day and night in the open air, and are fed and watered only every three days, thus becoming inured to every hardship and stress of weather.

The horses felt the violent pelting of the sand quite differently. As they are standing up they offer more hold to the fierce wind, and can resist less than the camels, which always lie down at rest. They be-

came distracted and lunged frantically against their invisible provoker. The officers shouted to the horsemen to mind their horses but no one dared move. Finally several horses broke loose, and blinded by the sand, ran against the tents, tumbling against the men, and falling upon them. Screams and struggles ensued, increasing the disorder and confusion of the camp. Those who knew not the cause of these cries were prompted to go out and see what was happening. Finally, the horses got up unaided and were captured by some of the Arabs, who, better accustomed to this hurricane, were groping and crawling along with their faces covered with a drapery. The cadi commending the Arabs, seeing that we could not be qualified as "warriors of the desert," as we were unable to brave that unexpected enemy, ordered his men to look to the horses until the tempest ceased.

After two hours of struggle calm succeeded in the atmosphere and peace in our camp. I went out to see the effect of the storm. The dust-cloud space threw a gloomy light upon the camp, revealing the overturned tents with the human forms underneath like shrouds covering corpses. The sand was heaped up against their bodies, and had filled all the interspaces between the men lying under the same tent, almost levelling a surface smooth as a table at the height of their shoulders.

I went up to the animals and found the horses sniffling and sneezing while the camels, a little further on, were lying partly covered with sand in perfect quiet. They seemed to have bravely borne the brunt of the storm. Enveloped in their drapery the Arabs were sitting on the ground, with legs drawn up and their bodies leaning upon the backs of their camels as upon a pillow. One of them hearing me, raised his head, and unrolling his drapery, gave me a look. "Have you not been frightened?" I said to him. "At what?" he answered, as if astonished at my question.

"At what?" I repeated, amazed. "At what has just happened, of course."

"And what has happened?" asked he indifferently.

"Did you sleep so deeply that this fierce tempest could not awaken you?"

"Is this peculiar weather for you?" rejoined he.

"Is it peculiar weather for you?" I demanded. "Must heaven itself fall upon your head to surprise you?"

"The roar of the ghabili (sirocco) and the groan of the camel are two sounds familiar to us since birth," he answered.

Dumbfounded by such stoicism, I returned to my tent, wondering what such a people would not be able to endure. They are truly hardened and toughened in every respect; deaf to the sufferings of others, dumb to their own, inured to fatigue, and insensible to hardship. The awakening call was not sounded that morning the Colonel wishing to know before starting how much damage had been done and whether the men were fit to march.

When I arose at daylight and looked around, I could scarcely realize that I was awake. The plain wore quite a different aspect. These large waves of sand that I had noticed the previous day had disappeared. A dune, fifteen feet high had also been removed, and several of the eminences had been reformed a few miles further on.

Many tents had been torn and the sand had penetrated through every fissure and hole in the knapsack, and even into the gun barrels. The pack saddles and loads of provisions had disappeared almost entirely beneath the sand. Several boxes weighing eighty pounds had been rolled a distance of 200 feet and partly broken. However, aside from the three men who had been stumbled over by horses and wounded no one felt any serious consequence from the tempest. Two horses were found to have lost an eye from being struck by coarse grains of sand. The day was spent in making repairs, but for fear of a new hurricane on the following night, we moved toward evening ten miles further along, where we encamped on firm ground.

The grip of an ant's jaw is retained even after the body has been severed from the head. According to the Medical Record, this knowledge is possessed by a certain tribe of Indians in Brazil, who put the ants to a very peculiar use. When an Indian gets a gash cut in his hand, instead of having his hand sewed together, as physicians do in this country, he procures five or six black ants, and, holding their heads near the gash, they bring their jaws together in biting the flesh, and thus pull the two sides of the gash together. Then the Indian pinches off the bodies of the ants, and leaves their heads clinging to the gash, which is held together until perfectly healed.

### The Sun Their Towel.

At eating the negro, having always first washed his hands and rinsed his mouth, sits upon the ground, holds the larger pieces between his teeth while he cuts off a bite with his knife, but does not use both hands to hold food, except in gnawing bones.

With the usual dishes he lays his right arm over his knees, and, reaching into the pot, moulds the thick mess into lumps about the size of a walnut, which he throws into his mouth with a jerk without scattering any of the food. To take out vegetables or soup he presses a hollow into the lump and dips with it. Politeness is shown to the host or the housewife after eating by smacking loudly enough to be heard.

While the negro is capable of eating meat in an unpleasant state of decomposition he is very sensitive against some tastes, and will make evident manifestations of his dislike of them. He is careful about the outer matters in drinking. He will always rinse his mouth first, even when he is intensely thirsty. If the cup is not too small he takes it in both hands, and he likes to sit down with it. If the vessel is large and open he draws in the water from the surface with his lips without bringing them in contact with the dish. Sometimes negroes pour water into their mouths. When drinking at ponds and rivers the water is carried to the mouth with the hand. For some mystic reason it is considered bad to lie flat down when drinking from rivers. The fear of being snapped up by a crocodile may have something to do with the matter.

Great attention is given in most of the tribes to the care of the body. The teeth are cleaned with a stick which has been chewed into a kind of brush. The hands are washed frequently, not by turning and twisting and rubbing them together one within the other, as with us, but by a straight up-and-down rubbing, such as is given to the other limbs. This manner of washing is so characteristic that an African might be distinguished by it from a European without reference to the color. The sun is their only towel.

### Things Worth Knowing.

To make white soap, take a pound box of concentrated lye, knock off the lid carefully, and throw box and all into one gallon of boiling water. Next morning add two gallons of water more, and when the whole is boiling, throw into it four and a half pounds of clean fat. Boil gently for two hours and a quarter, sprinkle into it half a pint of salt and boil for thirty-five minutes longer. Add one-half gallon of hot water, and boil again for ten minutes; then pour into a wet box. The next morning turn the soap out, and cut into cakes with a twine. The quality of this soap will be greatly improved if a quarter of a pound of powdered borax be added to it. The soap should be allowed to harden before using. Turn the cakes over and so expose them to the air, keeping them in a breezy place.

The following is an excellent method for salting hams: For three hams mix together half a peck of salt, half an ounce of sal prunella, three ounces of salt petre and four pounds of coarse salt. Rub the hams well with this, and lay what is to spare over them. Let them lie three days, then hang them up. Take the pickle in which the hams were, add to it more common salt and water enough to cover the hams when placed in it, making it strong enough of the salt to bear up an egg. Boil and skim it well, put in the salting tub and next morning put in the hams. Keep them under with weights. In a fortnight take them out of the liquor, rub them well with brine and hang them up to dry.

To make compound glue, take very fine flour, mix it with white of eggs, isinglass and a little yeast. Mingle the materials. Beat them well together. Spread them—the batter being made thin with gum water—on even tin plates, and dry them in a stove, then cut them out for use. To color them, tinge the paste with vermilion, indigo for blue, saffron for yellow, etc., etc.

### For Cleaning Your Dress.

There are very few women who understand how to use soap-bark. It is the very best cleaning material in use. Nothing else cleans a black silk or black woollen dress so satisfactorily. Five cents will clean an entire dress. It may be purchased at any druggists in the city or country, being commonly used by all tailors in cleaning gentlemen's clothes. It may be used to clean almost any dark cloth, but it possesses color enough in itself to stain a delicate color. The *New York Tribune* tells how to prepare soap-bark for cleaning. Pour about a

quart of boiling water over five cents' worth of the bark. Let it boil gently for two hours, and at the end of this time, strain it through a piece of cheese cloth. Put the liquor in a clean pail. Have ready a smooth board of suitable size, and have the dress to be cleaned all ready, ripped shaken and brushed free from dust. Lay each piece of cloth one after another on the board, and sponge it thoroughly on both sides, rubbing carefully any especially soiled spots. After all the cloth is sponged fill a large tub full of cold water, and rinse each piece of the goods up and down in it, one at a time, so as to remove thoroughly the soap-bark. Wring the pieces through the wringer, lay them in a heavy, clean clothes-basket, and when all are rinsed and wrung out begin pressing the first that were rolled up. Iron them on the wrong side, if woollen cloth, till they are dry or nearly so; then hang them on a clothes-horse to air for at least twelve hours. The cloth should hang in a place free from dust, and when it is put away it will look like new. If the dress to be cleaned is silk, after thoroughly sponging it in the soap-bark lay it on a clean board and sponge it off with clear cold water on both sides. Wipe off all the excess of moisture you can. Pin the smaller pieces of the silk on a sheet and hang the sheet outdoors in a shady place where no sun can reach it, or throw the sheet over the clothes-horse. Silk prepared in this way looks very nice. It will need a slight pressing on the wrong side when it is made up to make it perfectly smooth.

### Strawberry Rash.

"Strawberry Rash" is the name given to an epidemic which has appeared this season to an unusual extent, says the *Philadelphia Record*. Physicians claim that while the disease, which takes the form of a rash, has in previous years made its appearance at this season, never before has it been so prevalent. The rash attacks the skin, which breaks out in large red blotches similar in color to the berry from which it takes its name. It is no respecter of age, attacking young and old alike.

"There is no known cause for the ailment," said Dr. J. C. Wilson, when approached upon the subject. "I, myself, am subject to it, and in consequence am obliged to refrain from eating strawberries. I don't know why some people are subject to it and others are not, any more than why some people are liable to catch rheumatism or any other disease, while other people, under the same circumstances, are exempt. I only know that the rash exists, but I don't know why."

All over the city people are suffering from the effects of the luscious berry. In several cases whole families have it. While not interfering with the general health it is accompanied with an itching sensation that renders it annoying in the extreme. Many people are ignorant of the cause of the suffering. Others, having heard of the existence of strawberry rash, have tabooed the berry, and find themselves benefited by abstaining from it.

Physicians unite in saying that the rash has never before appeared to such an alarming extent. Nearly all the doctors in the city have several cases on their hands, and there are many instances which have failed to come under their notice. In every instance where the patient has stopped eating strawberries the rash has greatly diminished or disappeared entirely. Whether there is any germ of the diseases in the berries which have come to this market is a matter of conjecture.

Did you ever actually see things grow? In these spring and summer days you often see a tree with buds just ready to explode like popcorn, and, like corn, change suddenly to masses of fluffy white. You walk by it and it is still corn. When you return it has popped. But did you actually ever see the explosion, or better yet, see the growth when there was no alarm to call your attention to the change? asks the *New York Tribune*. Well, lie down some day beside a gladiolus bed after recent rain and sunshine have made a thin crust over the earth, and when the green spears are just beginning to push through it. You will see some cracks in the crust, and by and by a little trapdoor will begin to lift, as though some small Titan were struggling underneath. Look sharply now, for if you do not you may turn your wandering eyes back to find the green laborer pushing at the door without your having seen him come. Soon he will throw back the cover on its hinges and stand there for the first time in the sunlight an inch above the ground. All this done may be even in an hour. Few things grow faster than the gladiolus.