

THE ARABS OF NORTH AFRICA.

The London Times Algerian correspondent thus describes the domestic life of the Arabs:

"An Arab who has no wives is like an Englishman who has no baker, or cook, or tailor, or upholsterer.—They are to an Arab gentleman what his slaves were to a patrician Roman. They grind the corn, prepare the couscous-sou, make the honey cakes, work the haiks and burnouses, and spin that tissue of wool and of the dwarf palm whereof the tents are made."

He describes a courtship. The candidate for matrimony makes inquiries for a woman having the particular talent in which his household is wanting. The father is then bargained with to part with his daughter for so much:

"On the morrow Fatima is conducted to her happy home, with shouts and frequent discharges of firearms. Then she cooks, and spins, and fetches water from the distant well, fights with her sister wives, and, when her lord and master is disturbed in his sublime contemplations by the distant sounds of strife, receives her share of the heavy thrashing which he distributes all around."

The Arab remains as of old: "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against his."

"Give an Arab a pound of English powder, and he will thank you more than if you gave him a mountain of sugar; and he likes sugar. Show him a fine weapon, and his eye kindles; he snatches it out of your hand, turns it about, glazes over it, runs up and down with it, and returns it with a reluctance that he does not dissemble." If I wanted to give myself great importance in a dinner, I produced my revolver and fired six shots into a bank of a hovel at a hundred yards distance. As each shot made the dust fly, a shout arose from the whole assembled tribe. They fought and crushed about me to see me reload, and at last a cry would be raised just as our hats off! and the whole population squatted on the ground that all might see."

The traditions of the Arabs are remarkable:—

"He is not more certain that Mohammed is the Prophet of God than he is that the Moule-Saa shall come, in a moment which none can foretell, and change all things. Every Arab, whatever his position or his degree of intelligence, is in constant expectation of this Moule-Saa, or Lord of the Hour. A Christian will recognise in this tradition only one of those false suns which have in all ages dazzled the East—vain images of those sacred prophecies which have already had their fulfilment—but a Mohammedan believes that his Messiah will come as firmly as the Christian knows that he has come. The Moule-Saa is to have power over the teachings of Mohammed and the words of the Koran. His coming is the theme of received prophecies which every Thaleb reads, which every Medbakh recites, and which every Arab knows vaguely and believes implicitly. Some of their prophecies are very curious."

"Sid-il-Boukari is the most ancient of these prophets. He only says, 'A man shall come after me whose name shall be like unto the name of my father, and the name of his mother shall be like unto the name of my mother. He shall resemble me in character, but not in person. He shall fill the earth with justice.'"

This is the most convenient picture for an unknown adventurer. Of course, every candidate for the office of regenerator begins by dropping his own pedigree and assuming the name of Mohammed-Ben-Ald-Alla. Benel Bonna el Tlemcen is more explicit than his predecessor; he says:—

"In the seventieth year of the thirteenth century, a man named Mohammed-Ben-Ald-Alla shall come from the country of Son-el-Akri. There will be with him sixteen hundred tents. He shall enter the city of Maroc and proceed thence to Fez. He shall advance thence to Tlemcen, and go thence to Oran, which he shall destroy. Thence he shall march upon Algiers. He shall encamp in the Metidja, and shall remain there four months. He shall destroy Algiers and go on to Tunis, where he shall remain for forty years, and shall then die."

No one can sneer at this prophecy on the ground of ambiguity. El Bonna commits himself boldly to time and place, and even proceeds to describe the lineaments of the 'coming man.' Unfortunately the time is already past, for the seventieth year of the thirteenth century was 1854. But the Arabs say this is a mistake of the transcribers.

The third prophecy is that of Sidi Aissael Lagrouni.

It is as follows: "Cry aloud, O erier! Publish to the people what I have seen, being in a vision."

"The wo which is coming is a wo which shall sur-

pass all former woes. Eyes have not seen what is like unto it. A man shall abandon his offspring (figuratively, for a ruler shall betray his people.) A Boy shall come who shall be submissive to the Christians. His heart shall be hard. He shall rise up against my master, (that is the Moule Saa), whose lineage is noble, whose heart is tender, who is beautiful and wise, and whose commandment is just.

"Crier, cry again. Be not afraid. He who has come has dispersed the infidels. They are fled beyond the Salt Lake, they have climbed to the heights of Kahar. The Christians have abandoned Oran."

"The Sultan shall be just and equitable. He shall govern the Arabs, and shall be the destruction of traitors. To them he shall be an exterminating sword."

The prophecies may be very like a mad rhapsody, but they have a marvellous tendency to fulfil themselves. That of Sidi Aissa was half fulfilled by Bou Maza. Every one believes in them. Even those few Arab chiefs whose fortunes are bound up with those of the French, grow pale at the mention of the Moule Saa. If a whisper vibrates through the tribes that a prophet has appeared, the most lax Mohammedan sums up his acts of subserviency to the French as acts of treachery to his religion and his race, and he thinks with terror of the 'exterminating sword.'

PARENTAL VANITY.—Another cause of the growing disobedience and want of filial reverence in the midst of us, is parental vanity. I mean that feeling which prompts parents to make a display of their children, to show off their dawning intelligence, or wit, or excellence, by saying things to draw them out, or by repeating in their presence what they may have said. All this is in itself very trivial; it is but the natural innocent outflow of affection, you may say, and yet nevertheless it has a powerful effect in moulding the temper and bearing and the character of children. It tends almost inevitably to make them flippant, and conceited, and arrogant, and self-willed. And parents who have found great amusement in these displays do discover when it is too late, that they have erred, they find that the children take advantage of their accredited cleverness; they become impertinent, and how can they be checked at fourteen or fifteen for what was thought very interesting when they were four or five? Many persons, you know, say that it is the misery of man to learn only when it is too late to profit by it, that the lessons of experience are really understood only when experience is at an end. And, indeed, this would seem to be true of the great practical theme now in hand. When our children are grown, then seeing the mistakes we have made, either on the one hand or the other, either in exacting too much or too little, either by making our children pert by admiring them too much, or hurting their feelings by taking scarcely any notice of them at all—seeing this, we think we should act differently could we live again through the years which are gone.—Perhaps we might. We might indeed avoid some particular mistakes, and above all, this one of showing off the cleverness of our children. We do it thoughtlessly; to please our friends, perhaps, and to amuse ourselves, forgetting that the pleasures we derive are really serving to make our children disobedient and irreverent, to make them self-willed and impertinent.—"Causes of Filial Impiety," a Sermon by Rev. D. Harwood.

NEVER DESPAIR.—Returning from Philadelphia, after an absence of several months, absorbed in the newly found delights of home, Audubon failed to inquire the fate of a certain wicker box, which, before his departure, he had entrusted to the care of a relative, with the strictest injunctions as to its safety. At last, on interrogation, this treasure was produced, the dearly prized deposit of all his drawings, more cherished than a casket of rarest jewels! It was opened, and what was Audubon's dismay to perceive the misfortune which had befallen it. A pair of Norway rats having taken possession and appropriated it, had reared there a whole party. A few gnawed bits of paper were the only remains of what a few months before had been a thousand marvellous representations of the curious inhabitants of the air! The shock of such a calamity was too much even for the fortitude of Audubon. Like an electric stroke it thrilled his whole nervous system, and for some time caused the entire prostration of his physical powers. A burning heat rushed through his brain on the discovery—the discovery of the entire wreck of the result of all his efforts and his patience! For nights he could not sleep, and days were passed with listless apathy, till at length invigoration of mind and frame gradually, under kindly influences, returned. He once again took up his pencils, his note-book, and his gun, and went forth to the woods. Then consoling himself with the reflection that he could make much better drawings than before, he persevered untiringly for three whole years, until his portfolio was replenished!

TEACHING THE EYE.—The great majority of mankind do not and cannot see one fraction of what they

might see. "None are so blind as those that will not see," is as true of physical as of moral vision. By neglect and carelessness we have made ourselves unable to discern hundreds of things which are before us to be seen. Thomas Carlyle has summed this up in one pregnant sentence, "The eye sees what it brings the power to see." How true is this! The sailor on the look out can see a ship where the landsman can see nothing; the Esquimaux can distinguish a white fox amidst the white snow: the American backwoodsman will fire a rifle ball so as to strike a nut out of the mouth of a squirrel without hurting it; the red Indian boys hold their hands up as marks to each other, certain that the unerring arrow will be shot between the spread out fingers; the astronomer can see a star in the sky, when to others the blue expanse is unbroken; the shepherd can distinguish the face of every sheep in his flock; the mosaic worker can detect distinctions of color where others see none; and multitudes of additional examples might be given of what education does for the eye.

THE ATLANTIC CABLE.—Kuper & Co., of London, are to make one-half of the Atlantic Cable; and Mr. Newell, of Gateshead, the other. It may assist the reader to a fair conception of the immensity of the task (says the *Gateshead Observer*) if we may state that our ingenious neighbour will have to twist strands of wire, as an outer protection of the electric line itself, 25,000 miles in length—or long enough to go round the whole earth, and leave a sufficient length of wire for Archimedes to swing it round his head with, if he had but that standing-point which he coveted for his experiments!—*London Atlas*.

Mr. J. Murray, of the Gretna toll bar, performed his last splicing operation at the close of December and he presented the "happy couple" with an eight day clock, a cheese and a bottle of whiskey, for, having made his fortune, he was in a good humour. He is about to turn to agriculture. Mr. Douglas being an athletic man, and formerly a husbandman, is going to handle the spade and dig. Mr. Simon Laing having left the loom to take upon himself his now defunct office, is about to resume the shuttle.—*Carlisle Patriot*.

DIPLOMATIC ETIQUETTE.—At the recent Tailor's ball, the Emperor caused it to be notified to her Majesty's Ambassador, that it would be agreeable to him if Lord Cowley would waive his right of precedence in favor of Prince Frederic William of Prussia. His Lordship replied that, however desirous to please the Emperor, and show every respect to Prince Frederic William, it was not in his power to accede, as he was bound not only to his Sovereign, whom he represented, but to the position he held, not to waive a rule of social etiquette, and thereby establish a new precedent, which might serve as such whenever a foreign prince, not sovereign, or even direct heir to a sovereignty, might arrive at Paris. This being done, Lord Cowley retired before supper, and left M. de Kisseleff and Baron Hubner free to waive their privilege as they might think fit. The diplomatic corps all agree that Lord Cowley acted in strict conformity with the laws regulating these matters.

CROMWELL AND THE KNIGHT.—During the Protectorate, a certain knight, in the county of Surrey, had a lawsuit with the minister of his parish, and, whilst the dispute was pending, Sir John imagined that the sermons which were delivered at church were preached at him. He therefore complained against the minister to Oliver Cromwell, who inquired of the minister concerning it; and having found that he merely reproved common sins, he dismissed the complaining knight, saying, "Go home, Sir John, and hereafter live in good fellowship with your minister; the word of the Lord is a searching word, and it seems as if it had found you out."

SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH TO AMERICA.—General Waid has laid before the Portuguese Administration his plans for touching at the Azores and another point of the Portuguese possessions, with the projected line of Submarine telegraph to America. No obstacles were offered by the Portuguese Government.

THE GREAT LAKES.—The Five Great Lakes of North America have recently been surveyed, and it is found that they cover an area of 90,000 square miles. The total length of the five lakes is 1,534 miles. Lake Superior, at its greatest length, is 355 miles; its greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 988 feet; elevation above the sea 627 feet; area, 32,000 square miles. Lake Michigan is 360 miles long; its greatest breadth is 108 miles; its mean depth is 900 feet; elevation, 687 feet; area,