

496 French Possessions in North Africa

silk. Behind the Arab is a Kabyle in a carpet-like dressing-gown, and he is followed by a Jew in a *kaftan*, who in turn is succeeded by a Turk in wide, baggy trousers, a gold-embroidered vest, jacket, and turban. Amidst these the active Frenchman goes bustling in and out, in quaint contrast with the stately deportment of the Arabs.

Now let us enter the old town. The streets descend steeply from the palace of the dey to the shore, and are so narrow



IN THE NATIVE TOWN.

that we can almost touch the walls on either side.

The cream-white houses thrust out their upper storeys, and almost roof in the narrow, dark, dirty alleys which climb upward between mysterious walls, broken only by heavy, brass-bound doors and barred and grated windows. The native town is a maze of tunnels, a human ant-heap. One meets all the characters of the *Arabian Nights* in the course of half an hour's walk. Here is Sindbad, who has retired into dignified ease after his adventurous voyages, and now squats on the

mat in front of yonder coffee-house, puffing his little pipe and drinking his tiny cup of coffee. Here is Aladdin romping with his mischievous companions, and there is Ali Baba with his string of little donkeys. The native shops are simply open stalls. In them sit the cross-legged shopkeepers, gravely smoking, and waiting with a world of patience for custom. Here are shoemakers, weavers, and tailors all at work in full sight of the passers-by. Here is the barber shaving the head