

cases, topped with elaborate silver and golden clusters of small bells. With these they make seven slow circuits of the synagogue, during which they perform several ceremonies and stand each time before the Ark. At their first entry the minister chants: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! thy tabernacles, O Israel! In the greatness of Thy mercy will I enter Thy house. . . ." The choir answers: "Blessed be he who cometh in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord. God is Lord, and He giveth us light; bring hither the sacrifice bound with myrtles, even to the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, etc." At this point the procession gather before the Ark, and the oldest member of the congregation advances from among them and mounting the marble steps applies a light to the Perpetual Lamp, which hangs before the sanctuary. During other circuits the doors of the Ark are opened, and all the Scrolls of the Law deposited. Afterwards the Reverend Meldola De Sola preaches the dedicatory sermon; the Queen, Royal Family, and Governor General are prayed for, and there follows a prayer for the congregation: "May He who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless this congregation. . . bless and purify you. . . break the yoke of the nations from off your neck, and fulfil in you the sentence which is written: 'The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times as many as ye are, and bless you as He hath promised you.'"

The entire inauguration was a scene filling one's imagination with the hoariest visions of history. It was easy to forget the modern element of the surroundings, and one was led insensibly back on the wings of the ancient music to Tyre and Carthage, to Baalbec and to the tabernacle of the desert of Sinai. Of this, too, I am sure, that Montreal has in the Shearith Synagogue, though not altogether perfect, for the plans of Mr. De Sola were not entirely adopted, more particularly as to the exterior side walls and roof, and also as regards the upper portion of the front elevation which he had designed to be in terraced Egyptian form, but for which a pediment was substituted by the committee, a sight well worth seeing, as a work of architectural interest to the intelligent.

ALCHEMIST.

TREASURE HUNTING.

THESE two words generally conjure up visions of gaunt Australian or Californian miners, of secret expeditions along the desolate Atlantic coast, in search of Captain Kidd's hidden stores, of divers' perilous descents through that weird watery under-world to some old Spanish treasure ship, but can any of these expeditions equal in eagerness and perseverance that of a woman traveller in her search for *bric-à-brac*?

I have just unpacked my box of Algerian odds and ends, and what reminiscences each object awakes! How the combat raged all one morning at the hotel in Algiers, with the Moorish pedlar, over that brass incense-burner, necessitating many retreats, on my part, from the verandah where he displayed his wares, and an hour's waiting while I was at luncheon, before his spirit was subdued to taking the twelve francs that I had offered. What anguish of spirit I suffered all one Sunday because I had come away from the old Jew's shop in the Rue de la Lyre, without coming to an agreement as to the price of that square of dull blue Persian embroidery, with the wonderful border of trees and tents. And how many times during the service I found myself thinking with dread of the rich-looking American whom I had left in the shop, and wondering how I could go back on Monday without letting the wily old Jew guess that I had come resolved to have that one coveted bit. But Algiers' shops and pedlars were common-place and dull, compared with the happy hunting grounds of Biskra-Biskra; beloved little oasis of dark palms, and soft brown walls, with the great desert plains stretching away to the south until they met the sky line against which sometimes a faint mirage of water or trees throbbed, with its ashy grey mountains to the northward, flushing pink and crimson, morning and evening, with its striped Arab tents, and its long caravans crawling in along that straight road that led away southwards into the realms of fancy.

What joy it was to awake there into the friendly sunshine, and the dry desert wind, and to sally forth like Haron al Raschid in search of adventures and treasures. There is a great charm in the unexpected, and perhaps our choicest pleasures during our fortnight in that enchanted oasis were found, not in prearranged expeditions, but in those strolls in search of the unknown. We soon found that the unknown was likely to prove both cheaper and more amusing without a guide than with one.

All we had to do was to wend our way to the market-place and there await what offers should be made. And that market-place—what endless amusement was to be found in strolls from stall to stall. Day after day it was always thronged with the same white-robed crowd; day by day the rival bread merchants hoarsely shouted their wares. First came the fruit stalls, brilliant enough, though their ware was little more than strings of red pepper pods, heaps of a poor kind of oranges, and masses of brown dates in any quantity, for dates are the one stand-by both for food and for commerce, of all these islands of the desert. Next to the fruit come the butchers' stalls, where we never linger, and then the water vendors, with their great skins of water propped on a kind of tripod, like a gypsy kettle.

Beyond them is a very tempting corner, a favourite haunt of ours; for there are the stalls of the leather

workers, stalls gay with red morocco, and gold and silver embroidery. From here, after many bargainings carried on by finger counting and head shaking, we carried off these little round mirrors, framed in embroidered morocco, that every Arab woman wears hanging at her waist. These quaint two-necked little bottles, with the looking glass set in them, and the bone pencil at the side, are used by the women for the henna that darkens their eyes. And these red sheathed knives hang from every man's girdle. Here, too, are rows of the pretty lizard of the desert, from every shade of grey to creamy white, stuffed, and either ornamented with gay tufts of silk sewn all over them, or else with gilt embroidered leather collar, and shining gilt eyes. We are well known in that corner of the market and there are fierce shouts competing for our notice when we appear, and perhaps one energetic tradesman slips out in the swift silent Arab fashion and taking one of us by the arm tries to draw us towards his own booth. Whether we buy here or not, we pass on afterwards towards the third side of the market square, where men's rough white haiks, and boys' striped black and white tunics, and rugs of the crudest colours are heaped around merchants of a more stately and impassive cast. Here it was that I bought a brown and white camel's hair fodder bag, from whose rough texture I have never been able to get the loose seeds of grain, nor the close camel smell. Taking it home we found in its depths a mixed deposit of rubbish, among which was a Mahommedan rosary which was received with great joy by its owner, when we returned it the next day. By this time we are sure to have a following, besides the usual beggars, of two or three red-fezzed, half-grown boys, who carry our purchases, and take upon themselves uninvited the office of interpreter at our bargainings. Then there slips out from the crowd some grave, bearded individual who, from the more or less dirty folds of his haik, produces, wrapped in a rag, some article of jewellery, heavy silver bracelets, perhaps, studded with coral knobs with which the women give each other cruel wounds in their combats, or a necklace of brown, sweet-smelling seeds, mixed with lumps of coral, and with the mystic symbol of the prophet's hand, roughly worked in silver, hanging pendant from it.

If the thing is what we happen to want, there ensues an animated argument over the price, all the bystanders forming an interested group around us, and one of our boy followers fighting our battles for us. If it is not what we want, and we ask instead for the silver pins that fasten the women's dresses, some boy volunteers to take us where we can get what we want, and we leave the market in his wake.

Often they have taken us on a false scent, perhaps only to the curiosity shop that we have already thoroughly explored, or, what we dislike most of all, they lead us to the street where the Oulad Nayal, the dancing women live. In this street there are gay patches of colour formed by the silks and gauze of the women, sitting at their doors with bare faces, in all their eastern finery. We explore all the rest of Biskra in feminine independence, but I think that even our strong-minded artist is glad to hurry through this street where the women call out harshly and laugh jeeringly as we pass. They have faces that are almost beautiful, some of these women, with clear yellow skins, great heavy-lidded eyes, and a pure oval outline. Their movements are slow, graceful, and assured, as of those who are used to have all eyes fixed on them. The barbaric style of their beauty is enhanced by the masses of gold and silver with which they are decked.

The heaviest and handsomest of silver pins fasten their dresses at the shoulders; their arms are masses of bracelets, and strings of gold coins are hung on their heads and necks. These are the dowries with which they return to their native oasis, and having retired from their profession, marry, and enter upon a respectable old age.

But in spite of their tempting array, we have never made any purchases from them. They will take off their ornaments and show them to us in a careless contemptuous fashion, but when we make an offer for them they laugh and jeer, and even though we see some rare old pin which we are longing to add to our collection we must go away unsatisfied. No, it is to the old and poor women who are done with the varieties of life, that we must go. These, if their husbands are out of the way, are only too glad to replace their shoulder-pins with bits of twine and grasp our five franc pieces instead; gold they are rather suspicious of. The negro village on the suburbs of the town is one of our especial happy hunting grounds. A dusty, shadeless road leads out towards the ford over the dry, rocky river-bed, and just before it is reached are the brown mud walls of the negro village, while over beyond it one sees the long stretch of the desert, towards the northern mountains. What a soft harmony of colour it all is, not a touch of green to be seen anywhere, only the browns and greys of houses and desert, the vivid red and the deep dark blue of the dresses of the children that sally out in swarms at our approach, and the intense blue of the sky over all. There are few white dresses worn here; the women's are nearly all of the dark blue, the half-grown girls of the vivid red, while all have their faces unveiled, as the negro women even in Algiers nearly always do.

The children are screaming around us, and stealing up close to stroke our gloves, which are always a great charm to them. The women who have mostly been crouching by the outspread street where they sift piles of grain through big sieves, gather around, and when our boy escort announces our wants, there is great calling to women within doors, and great running to distant houses. Sometimes we begin matters ourselves by going up to some portly matron and

pointing to the heavy pins that hold the loose drapery together on her shoulders. These pins are made in the pattern universal with the primitive people, like the Etruscan fibulae or the Celtic brooches, and they are perhaps the thing that arouses our deepest cupidity. They are a critical point though in these ladies' toilettes, for that day that we bought that swarthy old lady's set, two small boys had to be secured to hold the folds together, while the bargain was concluded, until string could be procured to take their place. Even with the pins in their place, her brown sides showed bare from her arms down, but with the pins gone there would have been no drapery down to her waist. Prices fluctuated among these dames; one day they would demand a fancy price, another would take what we offered, while if a husband unexpectedly appeared upon the scene the bargain was invariably off, their stores of jewellery were huddled off into the dirty old rags from which they had been drawn, and the group around us swiftly dispersed to their tasks.

One disastrous day the whole village triumphed over me. Every woman that I had attempted to bargain with had held out for a higher price than I cared to give. We were turning away disconsolate when I spied some quaint copper bangles that shone very brightly on the little brown sticks of arms of a six-year-old mite. I would take them for my little niece, I thought, but of the value of these copper things I knew nothing, and the question was what to offer for them. We pondered, and hesitated, then I made the offer of three francs. With radiant grins the whole circle rushed at the child and tore off her ornaments with such promptness that she raised a frightened shout, and when the money was paid, our treacherous escort informed me that these same bangles had cost only two francs and a half in the bazaar. Sold as I felt, it was impossible to help laughing. But, if the treasures that I turn over now bring back reminiscences, what wistful ones are given to those that were not secured. How utterly desirable do they seem to my memory now. I still see a little silver box that tempted me in the bazaar at Constantine, and that I was hurried away from when a sudden downpour drove us under shelter. And that old rug of such soft deep reds and blues, that lay heaped up before the owner's booth, in the dirty, dusty market place of the oasis of Sidi Okbah, and the battered Thoran at a neighbouring stall. How sure I felt that they were greater treasures than anything that I then did possess.

ALICE JONES.

A MODERN MYSTIC.—XI.

THE next day we went and picnicked at "the old crossing"—the point on the Wascana where the voyageurs, the red Indian, the half-breed, the hunter, the trader used to cross. On a height to the west there used to be a vast pile of Buffalo bones raised during centuries by Indian superstition. Hence the little spring-fed stream was called Pile-o-Bones. If that name has disappeared from the map, and, save the derisive, from the lips of English-speaking men, I am, in part, responsible. Sir John Macdonald believes there is something in a name. Soon after I had established myself at Regina I had an interview with him in his study and I called his attention to the fact that the Indian word for pile of bones, like most Indian words, was euphonious, and expressed my regret that the Indian name was not given the creek on the maps. He said he would have it done in future, and asked me how it was spelled; and I (up to that time my Cree education had been neglected) said "Wascana." But the word is properly Uskinok. The pile of bones has disappeared; they have gone to New York, and, for aught I know, now make part of the "limbs" of the younger members of the Broadway aristocracy.

In the early days of Regina, "Pile-o-Bones" was a name of contempt hurled at her infant head, and a friend of mine one day, when a freight train with some ten cars laden with bones crossed ours, got off the joke: "Look! they are carrying your town east." But though the blanching osseous pile be gone nature is still here; still the stream is clear and sweet; still the maples and poplars flourish in this beautiful valley, and form a grateful shade against the heat and brightness of our western sun.

We had nearly all our Ottawa friends, with a few from Regina; and a North-West appetite having done full justice to the lunch—in our own classic Canadian phrase, having had "a square meal"—we seated ourselves in the shade. The gentlemen lit their cigars; some of the ladies pulled out fancy work of one kind or another; and Helpsam said: "We have had a few meetings at Ottawa just before coming up, but it seems to me Plato has been shoved aside by modern topics. Here, in this uncontaminated spot of the New World, let us hear something from Mr. McKnom of the teaching of the greatest thinker of ancient times," whereat there was a clapping of hands as though a hundred wood-peckers were working hard in the trees around.

McKnom (who was sitting near Gwendolen, on whose left was seated George Rectus, M.P.) began: "This morning, after breakfast, I was reading in the *Toronto Globe* the views of certain gentlemen respecting criminals, and one laid down that the day would come when only thoroughly healthy men and women would be allowed to marry; and, in fact, the whole matter would be taken in hand by the State, which would look to the production of the finest, ablest, cleverest, most moral offspring."

"On ranching principles?" enquired someone.

McKnom (without noticing the interruption): "For nothing has Plato been more condemned than because he