

The Hadj, with a grave face replied, that we were *Jins*, or evil spirits, which he had caught and was conducting to Larache, to be shipped for the land of the Nazarene. Upon which the lad fled howling to his hut."

In Western Barbary, as in all Mahomedan countries, a madman or idiot is looked upon as a personage peculiarly favoured by Allah, who, they believe, retains their reason in heaven, while he permits their bodies to walk the earth. They are therefore not only secured from the injury and insult which too often attend a similar class in more civilized countries, but are regarded with superstitious reverence, and allowed to roam unchecked through the country. In the year 1840, Mr. Hay narrowly escaped with life from the attack of one of these sainted maniacs—an attack only dictated by insane caprice, but which would never have been noticed by the authorities, had it been made on any one of less rank than the son of the English Consul General.

"I happened to be walking on the sea-shore with my sister, immediately below the walls of the town of Tangier, when I espied above us a wild-looking fellow about seventy or eighty yards off, with a clotted head of hair that bespoke a sainted madman, aiming at me with his long gun, which he had rested on the wall. We were near a rock at the time, behind which we took refuge, and waited there a good while, in the hope that the madman's patience would be worn out; but he did not stir, and the passers-by, whom I appealed to for their interference, shook their heads, muttered something about Seedy Tayeb, which proved to be the name of the saint, and went their way. In the meantime the tide was rising rapidly, and we had the unpleasant choice of being drowned or shot. We agreed it was better to risk the latter; so telling my sister to run off in another direction, I stepped forward and gave him the preference of a standing shot. The maniac took aim and fired; and I heard the ball whiz into the water behind me. I was proceeding to run up to him by a path which led to that part of the town wall where he was standing, when I observed that he was coolly reloading his gun; and as the next shot at close quarters might have proved more effective, I thought the best thing I could do was to follow my sister; so I fairly took to my heels.

"Having reached home, and described to our guard the appearance of the man, we were sallying out to seize him, when the maniac himself, Seedy Tayeb, rushed into our court-yard, laughing heartily, and presented me with a basket of melons. The poor fellow was a most confirmed madman, and consequently a very great saint; and as I had not the heart to proceed formally against him, I only required that he should be imprisoned until he could be sent to the interior, whence the governor of Tangier promised he should not return."

A very peculiar mode of courtship prevails among some of the Berber tribes, which is resort-

ed to as an evasion of the precepts of the Koran, which forbid all courtship before marriage. In the district of Benin Soar, an annual fair is held which is attended by all bachelors, maids, widows and widowers in the neighbourhood, who are in search of mates.

"In fact, the whole affair resolves itself into the women selling themselves; but to escape the ignominy of such a procedure, the traffic is carried on in the following manner:—

"Each lady desiring to enter into wedlock dresses herself in her best and most becoming attire, and taking with her a piece of cloth of her own weaving, sits down unveiled in the market-place. The men both young and old, who are candidates for matrimony, parade about the market examining the texture of the cloth displayed by the ladies, and scrutinizing at the same time their looks and behaviour. Should the customer be pleased with the maiden, he inquires the price of the cloth: she replies by naming what she would expect as a dowry, and the amount of this she raises or depresses according as the candidate for her heart may please her, resorting to the demand of an exorbitant sum should she be averse to the purchaser. During this barter the enamoured swain is able, in some degree, to judge of her temper and character. If they come to an agreement, the parents of the girl are appealed to; and they have the right to assent or not, as they please. Should they assent, the parties adjourn to a public notary, the contract is made, and the purchased bride is carried off to her new home."

We fear much that if the bridegroom be previously possessed of a fine horse, his spouse, even when newly wedded, will only reign over a divided heart. The affection of the Arab for his steed has become proverbial; and in many cases even money, the all-powerful, cannot separate them. A striking instance of this occurred in Mr. Hay's experience, as he accompanied the traveller Davidson, on his last fatal journey to the interior.

"As we were proceeding between Mehedeen and Rabat we were joined by a troop of mounted Arabs, one of whom was riding a mottled grey, the handsomest barb I ever saw. Riding up to the man, I entered into conversation with him, and having put him in good humour by praising his steed, I told him I would make him rich if he would sell me the mottled grey.

"What is your price?" said the Arab.

"I offered a hundred and fifty *mitschel*, about twenty pounds sterling, a large sum in the interior.

"It is a good price," said the Arab; "but look," said he, and he brought his horse on the other side,—"look at this side of him,—you must offer more."

"Well, come," I said, "you are a poor man and fond of your horse; we won't dispute about the matter; so, give me your hand." What say you? two hundred?"

"That is a large price truly," said the Arab.

* The Moorish manner of striking a bargain.