

The Kabyles of the Djurdjura. In the South Kensington Museum there is a little case of pottery, of which the history from first to last is interesting enough...

Who are the Kabyles and what is the country of Great Kabylia, about which the French writers on Algeria prophesy such great things? If we may give credit to the speculations of these philo-Kabyles, a great and glorious future is in store for the French kingdom...

A few months back I was traveling through this lovely land, and it is from cherished experiences chiefly, and only here and there from books, that the materials of this little paper are gleaned. Lying within two days' journey from the city of Algiers, and easily accessible by carriage-road or bridle-tracks, Kabylia is yet but seldom visited by those hosts of human beings who flow southward...

Kabylia, the Mons Ferratas of the Romans, and the stronghold of Berber liberty and nationality through the successive periods of Roman, Vandal, Turkish, Arab and French invasion, lies to the east of Algiers, and the journey thither is full of variety and interest.

We had sent on relays of horses the day before, and not afraid of tiring our animals, drove through the plain of Mitidja at a rattling pace. The weather was bright and warm, but no sooner had we entered Kabyle territory, than the way was one continued ascent, and the air brisk and bracing. We now saw no more wretched Arab villages built of sticks and straw or mud, and no more wretched Arab crops, planted patch-work-fashion among the clumps of palmetto and brushwood, but on every side cropped up evidence of an industrial and agricultural people.

The country was fertile and very fair to the eye. In the distance rose the snow-tipped peaks of the Djurdjura, while around extended chain of lesser magnitude, but not of lesser beauty. The fat-of-Djurdjura looked as if cut out of pure amygdal stone, and the olive trees, and the hills about us were feathered to peak with olive and Aleppo pine, and inclosed well cultivated valleys, all sunshine and verdure.

The chief peculiarity of the Kabyle landscape is the position of the villages. Each cluster of houses is perched on the summit of a hill, and nothing is so pretty or so picturesque than the aspect of these compact little settlements and the green ramparts surrounding them. The Kabyle has no taste for architecture, but likes comfort after his own acceptance of the word, and his house is solid, weather-tight, and decently built of stone and tiles.

Our good little horses trotted up hill very cheerily, and at noon of the second day we dashed through the gateway of Fort Napoleon, the chief military station of the French in Great Kabylia. Fort Napoleon stands upon a considerable elevation above the level of the sea, and nothing less so much impressed us as the walls and towers of such achievements as the erection of so inaccessible a place. Every inch of Kabyle territory through which we had come could tell its own story of blood and turmoil. Till very lately the road to Fort Napoleon indeed was considered by the government as unsafe for travelers; but now all is peace and friendliness, and the beautiful scenery is now open to the ingenious people are rarely used even against each other.

At Fort Napoleon we found very poor accommodation in the matter of inns, but inexhaustible subjects of interest and distraction. Indeed, I can fancy nothing more pleasant than a sojourn in some of the hotels of Kabylia. The scenery is superb, the few French residents scattered here and there are pleasant and intelligent—the natives are well studied; in fine, there is food for the artist, the historian, the botanist and the sportsman.

We made the best use of our stay at Fort Napoleon, and saw some very curious and rather handsome Kabyles. The men are strange-looking but harmless creatures, with close-cropped hair, woolen shirts and leather aprons. They do not wear the flat slippers or babouches of the Arabs, but tie up their feet in linen with twisted camel's hair. The women wear a dress of almost classic simplicity and grace, but very different from what we supposed that all Kabyle women are, quite as handsome as one whom I saw, as she lay side by side with her pair of goats, taking her midday siesta in her house. But taking the Kabyles as a race, I should call them good-looking. The type of face is in no degree Arab; the forehead is broad, the face square; the complexion inclined to fairness, the hair and beard brown, the eyes gray.

The women have a great love of jewels, and wear necklaces, earrings, anklets, brooches, and armlets, of infinite variety and taste. The metal is a kind of oxidized silver, and into it are worked coral, palm-seeds, scarlet berries, and beads of a pretty blue stone like turquoise. The coveted adornment of all is a circular brooch or fibula, worn on the forehead by her who has become the mother of a male child.

Travelers carry on a thriving trade in Kabylia. If any one wants a bracelet he goes to an artist of taste, lays upon his work-table so many pieces of money, and gives his order. The jeweler melts down the money, works the metal, and returns his bracelet, which must not miss a scruple of the original weight, and is then paid according to the laboriousness of his work.

We went into some of the houses, which have an enticing appearance from the mountain-path below, standing as they do amid orchards of almond and olive; but when reached they are not quite so pretty. Truth to say, the Kabyles have not yet mastered the rudiments of hygiene, and are sadly negligent of cleanliness. Heaps of refuse are allowed to accumulate, children wallow in the mud with the goats, and not all the sweet moun-

tain air of the Djurdjura can prove a sufficient counteraction against unwelcome odors. The houses are built on a plan simple enough, and generally contain two compartments, in one of which sleep the parents, and the other the children. Their beds are merely mats, laid upon raised stone benches, and the family mule, ass and cow share the same shelter as their masters. A loft overhead contains corn and forage for the animals, and large earthen vessels for the provisions of the family make up the rest of the furniture. In some houses a little more luxury is to be found, such as carpets, ornamental pottery, arms; but as a rule the Kabyles are children of nature, content with necessities only. It is only in the matter of their women that they manifest such a love of ornament, and they have no craving after foreign finery. You will never see a Kabyle, however poor, clothe himself in east-of-European or Moorish habiliments. If poor, he wears his woolen tunic or shirt till it falls to pieces with age; if rich, he equally scorns alike the Moorish culotte and the Arab vest; seldom seen with the burnous, and seems as little inclined to indulge in purple and fine linen as his fierce ancestors who defied Rome.

It must be admitted that a Kabyle village is a pleasant contrast to the wretched hovels of the Arabs and the half-cultivated wastes they pretend to cultivate. Kabylia is a fertile country, and the Kabyles are laborious though somewhat primitive farmers. They make rich harvests of figs and olives, and are apt at capriciousness and grafting. Of lesser stature but better knit than the Arabs, they make admirable farm laborers, and are not afraid of work. They are to be depended upon, too, and have a moral character that will better bear inspection than that of the handsome and dissipated Arab. What a Kabyle undertakes to do he will do faithfully, he borrows he will pay; what he claims is true to the best of his knowledge.

Though a Mussulman, he marries—but one wife, and treats her as his equal; and though a fierce soldier and an indomitable patriot, he makes a faithful ally. The women go unveiled, and with their husbands, take an active part in the business of social life, and both sexes mix freely at all feasts and ceremonies. If all that is said of Kabyle thrift and trustworthiness be true, what a blessing it would prove to London ladies if a tide of female immigration set in from Kabylia! Cooks and housemaids would then learn to know their places, and how every happy mistress of a household would be enabled by her friends and neighbors! I saw many and many an intelligent girl in these villages I would fain have carried home with me to England. But I much fear whether any amount of comfort or civilization would have compensated for the loss of life and sweet moments in her native Switzerland. The Kabyle woman is, moreover, too valuable to be lightly parted with. She it is who fashions and colors that pretty pottery I have before mentioned; and so highly is the artistic faculty valued that a clever artificer in clay is sought after beyond all the best of the village, and the value of his art is not less than that of the most valuable of his tools. There are lamps, stands for fruit, saucers, wine-cups and vases without end; but you may hunt all through Great Kabylia and never match a favorite piece.

The Kabyles are a grave but sociable people, and in the summer evenings it is customary for neighbors to meet upon the edge of the field or garden. The men play on their little home-made flutes, the young people dance, all is sociability and content. I was sorry not to witness some of these little gatherings, but the Kabyles are naturally reserved, and only a long residence among them enables one to bring out the shyness that is half pride and half horror of intrusion.

Sorry enough were we to turn our faces towards Algiers, and leave behind us—no doubt forever—the lovely snow-peaks, the teeming valleys, the happy villages and fruitful gardens of the Djurdjura. Whether the Kabyle mountaineers will realize the high expectations entertained of them, it remains to be seen; but it is quite certain that all the elements of well-being lie within their reach. A fruitful soil, an admirable climate, a friendly and protective government, a hardy physique, a liberal turn of mind, the Kabyles possessing all these things may well create admirable soldiers. It is not perhaps generally known that the Zouaves are named from a Kabyle tribe, the Zouaoua. The Spaniards are recruited from the pure-blooded Arab families of Algeria; but the best Algerian soldiers, so say competent authorities, are the Kabyle infantry, misnamed Turcos, who fought so well in the Crimea, in Senegal, and in Mexico.

No wonder that Kabylia, having been so hardy gained, is strongly kept, and that whilst every effort is made to conciliate and civilize the tribes around Fort Napoleon, a goodly show of guns is seldom of never absent from its walls.—Greenock Work.

Chic! The Times correspondent is at some pains to rescue his countrymen, especially the artists who may reasonably be expected to be settled at some of the hotels of Kabylia. The scenery is superb, the few French residents scattered here and there are pleasant and intelligent—the natives are well studied; in fine, there is food for the artist, the historian, the botanist and the sportsman.

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live our blunders, it is true; but surely we cannot claim much precision or spirit. In the Exposition itself England bears her part, but it is not the foremost part she once bore. She will however cheerfully deny her share of the whistle playing such a very pretty tune at Paris; if the amount does not eventually reach and even exceed a quarter of a million of pounds sterling, we shall be very much surprised. A very ragged show of English pictures and a motley assembly of provincial papers is surely no great claim to the possession of the coveted quality. We ought to have known what we are about, and to have excelled in other things than Minton's china and the cut glass which Mr. Dobson exhibits. Certainly we have a curious collection of all the silver race-cups won since 1864, huge files of inimitable metal with "Chic" about them, and we have certain engines and machines which the French equal and the Belgians surpass. We are doing too a great trade in sewing-machines, bought eagerly by the French modistes and Parisian tailors, but these claim an American origin; our very best work is in the Government, and certainly very ambitious nation the best and shortest method of battering our sea and land defences to pieces. No other nation has such an exhibit, and careful observers may remark how very attentive French artillerymen are to these grand machines of war, which, on their side, they show us a rival one's hand at cards.

As regards art, the want of this quality is terribly apparent in the British section. The pictures are, in the first place, no very fair example of our schools; in the second, when the awards were made, they were so long that many of them were "shelved" each other, and they have had to be rearranged in many instances. Our great painters, if any can be called great, and our lively neighbors seem to think that we have none—were so badly represented, that Landseer was only known by a picture of one of our demi-monde, lying down in a stable, and comfortably receiving on her knees, while Millais astonished the Parisians by the ugliest, most out-of-picture of a lady in a flood of green moonlight, doing one of the most awkward things a woman can do, namely, unlacing her stays, with a shapless mass of drapery about her knees. Mr. Millais calls this an illustration of Keats's "Vale of St. Agnes," and the Parisians were as much astonished at the apparition as John Ruskin would have been. No wonder that the French artists laughed and cried out about the want of Chic. In good French pictures there is compact thought, power, good execution, and everything that culture and learning can do. The French painter knows his alphabet of his art, and he writes it in a way that is only for the artist. But almost every English painter exhibits a waste of genius for want of thorough art-teaching. One shows us a number of people, cut into bits by the frame, crawling down the side of a ship; another, huge figures covering the whole canvas in nutty light, and the artist is only for the artist. Our judges, accustomed to clean, careful, elegant work, overlooked the eccentricities of pre-Raphaelite genius, and gave the gold medal to a young artist of the Langham school, whose works the Academy would but reluctantly hang. If we want to know why they did so, and disregard, as gentlemen, the stupid criticisms of the press, we may as well look at the "Chic" of Gerome and Meissonier, and the want of all this in all of our artists except a few. Let us look too, for instance, at our pre-Raphaelite art in woodcuts, which invades even our caricatures, our tall figures, bewhiskered and listless swells, and our pictures, the ragged work, black patches, pen-and-ink skies, woolly trees, rude and German-like cross-hatchings, and the utter want of finish, let alone prettiness, which is observable in every illustrated book which we now see. Compare the old landscapes of Dirck Post, who has abandoned the subject of his art, and the illustrations of John Leech and John Gilbert, with our present woodcuts.

"True art is nature to advantage dressed," is an uncontroversial maxim, and yet we dress our figures to such a degree that a servant, not with the notion of a man, not with the character of an individual, but with an unmistakable velvet jacket or a pair of cork-top trousers in which you can count the very lines. Moreover, ugly as this exaggeration is, it is not more ugly than his high figures, and his tall, thin, and yet our thoughtful artists, because they see grain in the wood of a door seven feet high, run a false imitation of it over its similitude which is only two inches. The same blundering attempt to do something without the requisite thought of how it should be metted at some of the hotels of Kabylia. The scenery is superb, the few French residents scattered here and there are pleasant and intelligent—the natives are well studied; in fine, there is food for the artist, the historian, the botanist and the sportsman.

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