

CROSSING THE DESERT.

ONE might imagine that the arid Sahara had been the bed of some great sea, and that wearying of its burden of waters had refused to hold them, and been doomed for its rebellion never more to know the blessing of its cooling and life-preserving presence.

It is said that entire caravans have sometimes perished in these sand-storms, and it was one of them that buried the army of Cambyses when it was traversing the desert.

The oases vary in size from such as are just large enough to afford a halting place for a small caravan, to those which are really kingdoms. Of the latter, Fezzan is one of the largest and most noted.

The most interesting of the oases which border on Egypt is that of Siwah, the ancient Ammonium, made famous in history by the visits of Cambyses and Alexander the Great.

Although there is so much that is disagreeable in a journey across the desert, there are some sights of beauty which can never be seen elsewhere.

The general ignorance concerning the whole continent of Africa, and especially the desert portion of it, has afforded a strong temptation to such as have penetrated into its secrets to exaggerate them, and as we are becoming better informed, some of the traditions of the past are losing their terror.

Monsieur Pouchet graphically describes his approach to one of the deserts of upper Egypt:

"The eye only sees an unbroken sheet of burning sand. And yet upon its borders I found, having the heat of the sun, and never refreshed by a single drop of rain, numerous tufts of an asclepiad, the large, moist, velvety leaves of which glistened with freshness. It was an inexplicable problem. But this last effort of life soon disappears, and we see before us only an ocean of sand and a horizon of death."

"Instead of the rolling waves and the cool breezes of the sea, this funeral region only gives out burning gusts and scorching blasts which seem to issue from the gates of hell; these are the simooms or poison wind, as the word signifies in Arabic. The camel driver knows this formidable enemy, and as soon as he sees it looming in the horizon, he raises his hands to heaven and implores Allah; the camels themselves seem terrified at its approach. A veil of reddish black invades the gleaming sky, and very soon a terrible and burning wind rises, bearing clouds of fine impalpable sand, which severely irritates the eyes, and makes its way into the respiratory organs."

"I would say to all young men, marry your second wife first, and keep out of debt by all means, even if you have to borrow the money to do it."

ENIGMA DEPARTMENT.

A Problem. A. Bought of B. \$3.00 worth of sugar and handed in payment a \$10.00 bill, which B. took into C's store to be changed, and for which he received a 5, a 3, and a 2 dollar bill.

Here is a singular combination of letters: "Sator arepo tenet opera rotas." 1. This spells backward and forward all the same.

One of Ward's Jokes.

"Fat Contributor," in some recollections of "Artemus Ward," tells the following good story:

In the spring of 1859 I accepted a proffered editorial position on the Cleveland National Democrat, and renewed my acquaintance with "Artemus."

On the first evening of my arrival he volunteered to show me around—a very desirable achievement, as I was to fill the position of city editor. He "showed me around" so successfully that about 2 o'clock in the morning, I began to feel almost as much at home in Cleveland as though I had lived there all my days.

His remarks were interrupted by the opening of the door, and I could just discover the dim outline of a shirted form shivering in the doorway.

"Excuse me for disturbing you, Professor," said Artemus, in his blindest manner, "but I am anxious to introduce my friend here, the new 'local' of the Democrat. He has heard much of you, and declares positive he can't go to bed until he hears you elocute."

"Not at all necessary. Elocution, my dear boy, is not dependent on gas. Here," (straightening up a chair he had just stumbled over), "get right up in this chair and give us," The boy stood on the burning deck," adding, in a side whisper in my ear, "The burning deck will warm him up!"

Gently, yet firmly, did Artemus boost the reluctant professor upon the chair, protesting that no apologies were necessary for his appearance, and assuring him that "clothes didn't make the man," although the shivering disciple of Demosthenes and Cicero probably thought clothes would make a man more comfortable on such a night as that.

He gave us "Casabianca," with a good many quavers of the voice, as he stood quaking in a single shot white garment; and then followed: "On Linden, when the Sun was Low," "Sword of Bunker Hill," etc., "by particular request of our friend," as Artemus Ward said, although I was too near suffocated with suppressed laughter to make even a last dying request had it been necessary. It was too ludicrous to depict—the professor, an indistinct white object, standing on the chair "elocuting," as Ward had it, and we sitting on the floor, holding our sides, while Artemus

Ward would faintly whisper between his pangs of mirth, "Just hear him." It wasn't in Ward's heart to have his fun at the expense of another without recompense; so, next day, I remember, he published a lengthy and entirely serious account of our visit to the professor's "room," spoke of his wonderful powers as an elocutionist, and expressed the satisfaction and delight with which we listened to his "unequalled recitations." The professor was overjoyed, and probably is ignorant to this day that Artemus was "playing it on him."

How They Got Married.

CLERGYMAN who has had considerable experience in splicing couples, thus tells how some of them acted on that solemn occasion: "Many years ago, as I sat in my study one Saturday evening, a gentleman of some two score years entered my room, and after a very brief conversation, informed me that he wished to be married to the lady who had accompanied him to my house, and that he was somewhat in a hurry, as he had several miles to ride that evening before reaching home."

When I notified them that I was ready to "proceed to business," the gentleman remarked that he wished to see me in private a moment. We returned to the hall, where it was quite certain that no one could hear our conversation. After some hesitation, he said, "Sir, will you please tell me which side to stand on? I never was married?"

On a pleasant Sunday in June I was absent from home most of the day. On arriving at four o'clock, I was requested not to unharsh my horse, but to hurry to the house, for a couple had been waiting for more than an hour for me to return, that I might marry them.

As I entered where the patient waiters were, the bridegroom's friend handed me the "necessary documents," preparatory to a marriage ceremony. I asked the bridegroom if I should take his hat, as I was ready to tie the nuptial knot. "No, I thank you," said Jonathan, "I can't stop."

The ceremony over, the first question asked was, "What is your bill?" When I told him to give me what he pleased, Jonathan remarked that "he thought one dollar was enough for such a job as that." I remarked, partly in earnest, and partly in sport, that, if he had no objections, he might pay me the legal fee, one dollar and twenty-five cents. He did so, after some hesitation, and immediately left the room, without further ceremony.

The man insisted that I go into the street and perform the ceremony while they were sitting in the wagon. I objected, for many reasons; and after some debate the woman made her appearance. In a few minutes they were off again, having been married "according to law."

The following week the bride's sister called on me to inquire if Mr. B. and her sister were married; and when asked why she wished to be informed on that point, she replied that, "if her sister was married, it was all right, but if she was not married some of her conduct was highly improper." I finally assured her that they were legally married, and "had rights that others were bound to respect."

In December, a gentleman—widower—some fifty years old, called at my house in the evening, bringing with him a woman some thirty years old. They were strangers. I did not inquire into their business. The man was very talkative, and for three hours he ceased not to grumble about taxation and troublesome neighbors. He was determined to make himself agreeable whether I liked it or not.

I guessed the object of his visit, and patiently waited to have him introduce his own business; but when the clock struck ten I had become impatient, and told him that if he had any business with me, I was ready to attend to it. He seemed to have forgotten what he came for until his attention was called to the subject.

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