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ishes wherever planted. But the Mussulmans of Tunis pride themselves on a close observance of the precepts of the Koran.

From forests of olives we passed again into vast, treeless, shrubless plains. It was here we saw a sight disturbing to our instinct of harmony. An automobile stage sped past, crowded inside and out with Arabs, the peaked hoods of their white burnouses drawn well over their heads, their dark eyes peering out at us with a kind of somber gleefulness of expression. We felt that cherished traditions had somehow been frivolously violated, though our own automobile had never disturbed our sense of the congruous. "A foolish consistency," as Emerson observes, "is the hobgoblin of little minds."

Suddenly we discerned half a mile away, in the midst of a vast, empty plain, an amphitheater of magnificent proportions. It was El Djem, the grandest Roman monument in Tunis, and perhaps the best preserved amphitheater in the world. Now in the midst of desolation, it was once part of a flourishing Roman city.

The walled town of Sfax is noted for its gardens and for the cultivation of the olive. When the French took possession, they quickly discovered that in the matter of arboriculture they had much to learn. Large sponge-fisheries employ over a thousand boats manned by Sicilians, Greeks, and Arabs, who give to the harbor a very animated appearance.

In Sfax many of the inhabitants wear the green turban indicative of a hypothetical descent from the prophet. It was here that we were privileged to enter as guests the house of a wealthy Arab, the vice-consul of Tripoli. With outstretched hands he met us in the courtyard of his house. Two serious young men were introduced as his sons; they could speak a little French. While the men were conducted by one of the sons to a different part of the house, we women were led to a room where we were received by the wives of the vice-consul, two young women gorgeously gowned who had a certain nobleness of carriage. The younger, perhaps eighteen, who looked very sad, wore a pink-silk, embroidered gown which reached to her well-turned ankles and just showed the wide, white silk trousers beneath. Her slender feet were bare. Great gold loops hung from her ears; a gold necklace encircled her throat, and fell almost to her waist. A head-dress fitted the head closely, and was heavily embroidered with gold, and long tabs touched her shoulders. Her eyebrows were finely penciled, and the pallor of her cheeks was hidden behind a coating of rouge not very artistically applied. She was altogether a pathetic, pretty creature. Her companion, robed in the same fashion, with the exception that her tunic was blue and her feet incased in sandals, was plump and merry-looking, though her grayish-blue



THE SOUTH GATE OF SFAX

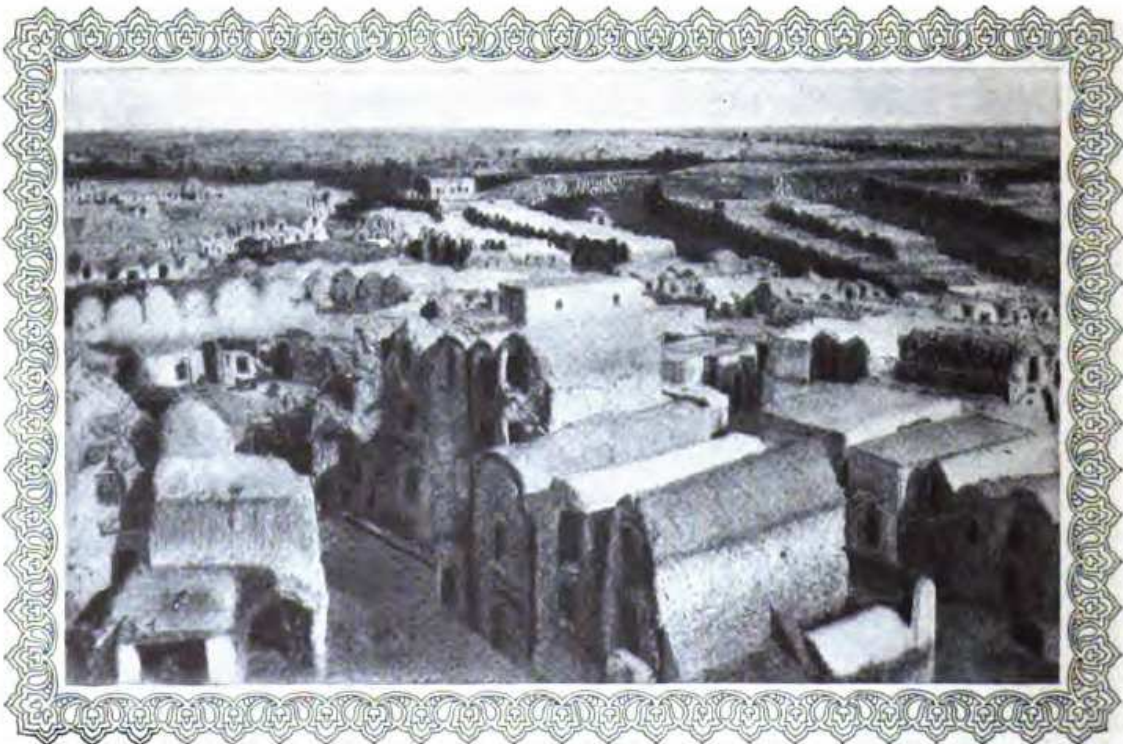


REMAINS OF THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATER AT EL DJEM

eyes had that about them which made one think they could snap angrily when displeased. She took precedence in all things over the wife in pink. Conversation was carried on through the medium of the vice-consul's son, who, by the way, must have

been five or six years the senior of his two pretty stepmothers. An elaborately dressed infant, the son of the wife in pink, was presented by the vice-consul as his youngest child.

We were then interrogated as to the



THE TROGLODYTE VILLAGE OF MÉDENINE

number of our sons. One was listened to with approval so marked that the other hoped to escape interrogation, for gray hair and single-blessedness are invariably regarded with amazement by the Arabs. She retained a vivid remembrance of the Arab guide who, hearing her referred to as "Mademoiselle," stared at her, and exclaimed in loud surprise, "I never saw a mademoiselle with white hair before!" When our host had extracted the truth, his profound astonishment was shared in full measure by his wives. A few quickly spoken words of command from the vice-consul caused one of the Arab ladies—she of the sad eyes—to unlock a cabinet drawer and produce a necklace of gold spangles, which was clasped around the throat of that husbandless guest. Bracelets were slipped upon her arms, her hat was removed, and a barbarously splendid head-dress, studded with handsome stones, was substituted. To complete the picture, a pink-silk tunic, gold embroidered, was cast over her shoulders. She stood arrayed a veritable Oriental of high degree. The old man chuckled and rubbed his hands, the merry wife clapped her little henna-stained palms together, but the sad-eyed one gazed with an expression that was inscrutable. Then the vice-consul gracefully extended a dinner-invitation for the morrow to our entire party; but we had to decline, as we meant to continue our tour early in the morning. Still, in the outskirts of Sfax we visited his villa and gardens, inclosed by high earth walls topped by a great growth of prickly-pear bushes. We walked long lengths of plowed ground between lines of orange-, lemon-, pomegranate-, and almond-trees, the ripening fruit imparting a faintly spiced perfume to the air. From an ornamental point of view the gardens were disappointing. There was an absence of flowers, of grass, of pretty paths—an absence which disqualified them forever for pleasant loitering-places on beautiful summer days, despite the cool, velvety brown of the upturned earth. Indeed, the impression would have been disturbing had we not known that the gardens of Sfax are mainly utilitarian. The white villa of Arab architecture was surrounded by tall palm-trees, and formed a finished little picture. Coffee was served, and we drank it standing in the shadow of the trees, for the time of our

departure was pressing close upon us. Later our guide informed us that the son who had acted as interpreter had refused to marry an Arab wife, boldly proclaiming his preference for a European woman.

Taking the route southward, we motored through miles of green-gray olive-groves, then struck out across the desert with a sense of adventure, of subtle joy, which the breath of the desert brings to those who enter it. In the attesting presence of the Kabyles, the glamour of the desert came to us even before we entered the sun-steeped, broad expanse with the yellow-white distances in it. They are wonderfully handsome, these children of the sun, and here in southern Tunis are more smiling, more friendly in aspect, than those we encountered in Algeria, and the tattoo-marks on the faces of the women are more exaggerated.

Before the end of that day's ride we met our first mishap since leaving the capital of Algeria—a punctured tire, which delayed us half an hour under a blazing sun. Large herds of camels browsed in the luminous distance. The animals were watched by a group of Bedouins gathered about an artesian well. In splendid efforts to reclaim the Sahara, French engineers have sunk many of these wells, tapping underground streams and springs, and have restored the old Arab wells, which had silted up.

After sundown we came to a region of magnificent date-palms bordering the sea, which we followed to the sleepy little oasis town of Gabes. Our sudden appearance brought consternation to the landlord of the inn. He was a Frenchman, rubicund of hue, with a countenance of bucolic aspect, and a broad, round anatomy which somehow made one think of the full moon on stilts. His long, brown hair hung low on his neck, and his brown mustache curled prettily. We had failed to notify him of our intended arrival; his accommodations were limited; another motor-car was expected. All this we gathered between his voluble assurances that we must on no account descend from our car. When we protested, he raised his shoulders and spread out his chubby hands pathetically, apologetically, till we saw visions of a night spent in the desert in the tents of Bedouins or under the myriad shining stars, and one of the party with a zest for

