

# IN MOROCCO

## BY EDITH WHARTON

[FOURTH PAPER]

### MARRAKECH

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

#### I THE WAY THERE



HERE are countless Arab tales of evil Djinns who take the form of sandstorms and hot winds to overwhelm exhausted travellers.

In spite of the new French road between Rabat and Marrakech the memory of such tales rises up insistently from the level red earth and the desolate stony stretches of the *bled*. As long as the road runs in sight of the Atlantic breakers they give the scene freshness and life; but when it bends inland and stretches away across the wilderness the sense of the immensity and immobility of Africa descends on one with an intolerable oppression.

The road traverses no villages, and not even a ring of nomad tents is visible in the distance on the wide stretches of arable land. At infrequent intervals our motor passed a train of laden mules, or a group of peasants about a well, and sometimes, far off, a fortified farm profiled its thick-set angle-towers against the sky, or a white *koubba* floated like a mirage above the brush; but these rare signs of life intensified the solitude of the long miles between.

At midday we were refreshed by the sight of the little oasis around the military-post of Settât. We lunched there with the commanding officer, in a cool Arab house about a flowery patio; but that brief interval over, the fiery plain began again. After Settât the road runs on for miles across the waste to the gorge of the Oued Ouem; and beyond the river it climbs to another plain so desperate in its calcined aridity that the prickly scrub of the wilderness we had left seemed like

the vegetation of an oasis. For fifty kilometres the earth under our wheels was made up of a kind of glistening red slag covered with pebbles and stones. Not the scantest and toughest of rock-growths thrust a leaf through its brassy surface; not a well-head or a darker depression of the rock gave sign of a trickle of water. Everything around us glittered with the same unmerciful dryness.

A long way ahead loomed the line of the Djebilets, the Djinn-haunted mountains guarding Marrakech on the north. When at last we reached them the wicked glister of their purple flanks seemed like a volcanic upheaval of the plain. For some time we had watched the clouds gathering over them, and as we got to the top of the defile rain was falling from a fringe of thunder to the south. Then the vapours lifted, and we saw below us another red plain with an island of palms in its centre. Mysteriously, from the heart of the palms, a tower shot up, as if alone in the wilderness; behind it stood the sun-streaked cliffs of the Atlas, with snow summits appearing and vanishing through the storm.

As we drove downward the rock gradually began to turn to red earth fissured by yellow streams, and stray knots of palms sprang up, lean and dishevelled, about well-heads where people were watering camels and donkeys. To the east, dominating the oasis, the twin peaked hills of the Ghilis, fortified to the crest, mounted guard over invisible Marrakech; but still, above the palms, we saw only that lonely and triumphant tower.

Presently we crossed the Oued Tensif on an old bridge built by Moroccan engineers. Beyond the river were more palms, then olive-orchards, then the vague sketch of the new European settle-

ment, with a few shops and cafés on avenues ending suddenly in clay pits; and at last Marrakech itself appeared to us, in the form of a red wall across a red wilderness.

We passed through a gate and were confronted by other ramparts. Then we entered an outskirt of dusty red lanes bordered by clay hovels with draped figures slinking by like ghosts. After that more walls, more gates, more endlessly winding lanes, more gates again, more turns, a dusty open space with donkeys and camels and negroes; a final wall with a great door under a lofty arch—and suddenly we were in the palace of the Bahia, among flowers and shadows and falling water.

## II

### THE BAHIA

WHOEVER would understand Marrakech must begin by mounting at sunset to the roof of the Bahia.

Outspread below lies the oasis-city of the south, flat and vast as the great nomad camp it really is, its low roofs extending on all sides to a belt of blue palms ringed with desert. Only two or three minarets and a few noblemen's houses among gardens break the general flatness; but they are hardly noticeable, so irresistibly is the eye drawn toward two dominant objects—the white wall of the Atlas and the red tower of the Koutoubya.

Foursquare, untapering, the great tower lifts its flanks of ruddy stone. Its large spaces of unornamented wall, its triple tier of clustered openings, lightening as they rise from the severe rectangular lights of the first stage to the graceful arcade below the parapet, have the stern harmony of the noblest architecture. The Koutoubya would be magnificent anywhere; in this flat desert it is grand enough to face the Atlas.

The Almohad conquerors who built the Koutoubya and embellished Marrakech dreamed a dream of beauty that extended from the Guadalquivir to the Sahara; and at its two extremes they placed their watch-towers. The Giralda watched over civilized enemies in a land of ancient Roman culture; the Koutoubya stood at the edge of the world, facing the hordes of the desert.

The Almoravid princes who founded Marrakech came from the black desert of Senegal; themselves were leaders of wild hordes. In the history of North Africa the same cycle has perpetually repeated itself. Generation after generation of chiefs have flowed in from the desert or the mountains, overthrown their predecessors, massacred, plundered, grown rich, built sudden palaces, encouraged their great servants to do the same; then fallen on them, and taken their wealth and their palaces. Usually some religious fury, some ascetic wrath against the self-indulgence of the cities, has been the motive of these attacks; but invariably the same results followed, as they followed when the Germanic barbarians descended on Italy. The conquerors, infected with luxury and mad with power, built vaster palaces, planned grander cities; but Sultans and Viziers camped in their golden houses as if on the march, and the mud huts of the tribesmen within their walls were but one degree removed from the mud-walled tents of the *bled*.

This was more especially the case with Marrakech, a city of Berbers and blacks, and the last outpost against the fierce black world beyond the Atlas from which its founders came. When one looks at its site, and considers its history, one can only marvel at the height of civilization it attained.

The Bahia itself, now the palace of the Resident General, though built less than a hundred years ago, is typical of the architectural megalomania of the great southern chiefs. It was built by Ba-Ahmed, the all-powerful black Vizier of the Sultan Moulay Hassan.\* Ba-Ahmed was evidently an artist and an archæologist. His ambition was to re-create a Palace of Beauty such as the Moors had built in the prime of Arab art, and he brought to Marrakech skilled artificers of Fez, the last surviving masters of the mystery of chiselled plaster and ceramic mosaics and honeycombing of gilded cedar. They came, they built the Bahia, and it remains the loveliest and most fantastic of Moroccan palaces.

Court within court, garden beyond garden, reception halls, private apartments, slaves' quarters, sunny prophets' chambers on the roofs and baths in

\* Moulay Hassan reigned from 1873 to 1894.

vaulted crypts, the labyrinth of passages and rooms stretches away over several acres of ground. A long court enclosed in pale-green trellis-work, where pigeons plume themselves about a great tank and the dripping tiles glitter with refracted sunlight, leads to the fresh gloom of a cypress garden, or under jasmine tunnels bordered with running water; and these again open on arcaded apartments faced with tiles and stucco-work, where, in a languid twilight, the hours drift by to the ceaseless music of the fountains.

The beauty of Moroccan palaces is made up of details of ornament and refinements of sensuous delight too numerous to record; but to get an idea of their general character it is worth while to cross the Court of Cypresses at the Bahia and follow a series of low-studded passages that turn on themselves till they reach the centre of the labyrinth. Here, passing by a low padlocked door leading to a crypt, and known as the "Door of the Vizier's Treasure-House," one comes on a painted portal that opens into a still more secret sanctuary: The apartment of the Grand Vizier's Favourite.

This lovely prison, from which all sight and sound of the outer world are excluded, is built about an atrium paved with disks of turquoise and black and white. Water trickles from a central *vasca* of alabaster into a hexagonal mosaic channel in the pavement. The walls, which are at least twenty-five feet high, are roofed with painted beams resting on panels of traceried stucco in which is set a clerestory of jewelled glass. On each side of the atrium are long recessed rooms closed by vermilion doors painted with gold arabesques and vases of spring flowers; and into these shadowy inner rooms, spread with rugs and divans and soft pillows, no light comes except when their doors are opened into the atrium. In his fabulous place it was my good luck to be lodged while I was at Marrakech.

In a climate where, after the winter snow has melted from the Atlas, every breath of air, for long months, is a flame of fire, these enclosed rooms in the middle of the palaces are the only places of refuge from the heat. Even in October the temperature of the favourite's apartment was deliciously reviving after a morning in the bazaars or the dusty streets, and I

never came back to its wet tiles and perpetual twilight without the sense of plunging into a deep sea-pool.

From far off, through circuitous corridors, came the scent of citron-blossom and jasmine, with sometimes a bird's song before dawn, sometimes a flute's wail at sunset, and always the call of the muezzin in the night; but no sunlight reached the apartment except in remote rays through the clerestory, and no air except through one or two broken panes.

Sometimes, lying on my divan, and looking out through the vermilion doors, I used to surprise a pair of swallows dropping down from their nest in the cedar-beams to preen themselves on the fountain's edge or in the channels of the pavement; for the roof was full of birds who came and went through the broken panes of the clerestory. Usually they were my only visitors; but one morning just at daylight I was waked by a soft tramp of bare feet, and saw, silhouetted against the cream-colored walls, a procession of eight tall negroes in linen tunics, who filed noiselessly across the atrium like a moving frieze of bronze. In that fantastic setting, and the hush of that twilight hour, the vision was so like the picture of a "Seraglio Tragedy," some fragment of a Delacroix or Decamps floating up into the drowsy brain, that I almost fancied I had seen the ghosts of Ba-Ahmed's executioners revisiting with dagger and bowstring the scene of an unavenged crime.

A cock crew, and they vanished . . . and when I made the mistake of asking what they had been doing in my room at that hour I was told (as though it were the most natural thing in the world) that they were the municipal lamp-lighters of Marrakech, whose duty it is to refill every morning the two hundred acetylene lamps lighting the palace of the Resident General. Such unforeseen aspects, in this mysterious city, do the most ordinary domestic functions wear.

### III

#### THE BAZAARS

PASSING out of the enchanted circle of the Bahia it is startling to plunge into the native life about its gates.

Marrakech is the great market of the south; and the south means not only the Atlas with its feudal chiefs and their wild clansmen, but all that lies beyond of heat and savagery: the Sahara of the veiled Touaregs, Dakka, Timbuctoo, Senegal and the Soudan. Here come the camel caravans from Demnat and Tameslout, from the Moulouya and the Souss, and those from the Atlantic ports and the confines of Algeria. The population of this old city of the southern march has always been even more mixed than that of the northerly Moroccan towns. It is made up of the descendants of all the peoples conquered by a long line of Sultans who brought their trains of captives across the sea from Moorish Spain and across the Sahara from Timbuctoo. Even in the highly cultivated region on the lower slopes of the Atlas there are groups of varied ethnic origin, the descendants of tribes transplanted by long-gone rulers and still preserving many of their original characteristics.

In the bazaars all these peoples meet and mingle: cattle-dealers, olive-growers, peasants from the Atlas, the Souss and the Draa, Blue Men of the Sahara, blacks from Senegal and the Soudan, coming in to trade with the wool-merchants, tanners, leather-merchants, silk-weavers, armourers and makers of agricultural implements.

Dark, fierce and fanatical are these narrow *souks* of Marrakech. They are mere mud lanes roofed with rushes, as in South Tunisia and Timbuctoo, and the crowds swarming in them are so dense that it is hardly possible, at certain hours, to approach the tiny raised kennels where the merchants sit like idols among their wares. One feels at once that something more than the thought of bargaining—dear as this is to the African heart—animates these incessantly moving throngs. The *souks* of Marrakech seem, more than any others, the central organ of a native life that extends far beyond the city walls into secret clefts of the mountains and far-off oases where plots are hatched and holy wars fomented—farther still, to yellow deserts whence negroes are secretly brought across the Atlas to that inmost recess of the bazaar where the ancient traffic in flesh and blood still surreptitiously goes on.

All these many threads of the native

life, woven of greed and lust, of fetishism and fear and blind hate of the stranger, form, in the *souks*, a thick network in which at times one's feet seem literally to stumble. Fanatics in sheepskins glowering from the guarded thresholds of the mosques, fierce tribesmen with inlaid arms in their belts and the fighters' tufts of wiry hair escaping from camel's-hair turbans, mad negroes standing stark naked in niches of the walls and pouring down Soudanese incantations upon the fascinated crowd, consumptive Jews with pathos and cunning in their large eyes and smiling lips, lusty slave-girls with earthen oil-jars resting against swaying hips, almond-eyed boys leading fat merchants by the hand, and bare-legged Berber women, tattooed and insolently gay, trading their striped blankets, or bags of dried roses and irises, for sugar, tea or Manchester cottons—from all these hundreds of unknown and unknowable people, bound together by secret affinities, or intriguing against each other with secret hate, there emanates an atmosphere of mystery and menace more stifling than the smell of camels and spices and black bodies and smoking fry which hangs like a fog under the close roofing of the *souks*.

And suddenly one leaves the crowd and the turbid air for one of those quiet corners that are like the back-waters of the bazaars: a small square where a vine stretches across a shop-front and hangs ripe clusters of grapes through the reeds. In the patterning of grape-shadows a very old donkey, tethered to a stone-post, dozes under a pack-saddle that is never taken off; and near by, in a matted niche, sits a very old man in white. This is the chief of the Guild of "morocco" workers of Marrakech, the most accomplished craftsman in Morocco in the preparing and using of the skins to which the city gives its name. Of these sleek morocos, cream-white or dyed with cochineal or pomegranate skins, are made the rich bags of the Chleuh dancing-boys, the embroidered slippers for the harem, the belts and harnesses that figure so largely in Moroccan trade—and of the finest, in old days, were made the pomegranate-red morocco bindings of European bibliophiles.

From this peaceful corner one passes



into the barbaric splendor of a *souk* hung with innumerable plummy bunches of floss silk—skeins of citron yellow, crimson, grasshopper green and pure purple. This is the silk-spinners' quarter, and next to it comes that of the dyers, with great seething vats into which the raw silk is plunged, and ropes overhead where the rainbow masses are hung out to dry.

Another turn leads into the street of the metal-workers and armourers, where the sunlight through the thatch flames on round flanks of beaten copper or picks out the silver bosses of ornate powder-flasks and pistols; and near by is the *souk* of the plough-shares, crowded with peasants in rough Chleuh cloaks who are waiting to have their archaic ploughs repaired, and that of the smiths, in an outer lane of mud huts where negroes squat in the dust and sinewy naked figures in tattered loin-cloths bend over blazing coals. And here ends the maze of the bazaars.

#### IV

##### ON THE ROOFS

"SHOULD you like to see the Chleuh boys dance?" some one asked.

"There they are," another of our companions added, pointing to a dense ring of spectators on one side of the immense dusty square at the entrance of the *souks*—the "Square of the Dead" as it is called, in memory of the executions that used to take place under one of its grimed gates.

It is the square of the living now, the entre of all the life, amusement and gossip of Marrakech, and the spectators are so thickly packed about the story-tellers, snake-charmers and dancers who frequent it that one can guess what is going on within each circle only by the vailing monologue or the persistent drum-beat that proceeds from it.

Ah, yes—we should indeed like to see the Chleuh boys dance; we who, since we had been in Morocco, had seen no dancing, heard no singing, caught no single glimpse of merry-making! But how were we to get within sight of them?

On one side of the Square of the Dead stands a large house, of European build, but modelled on Oriental lines: the office of the French municipal administration. The French Government no longer allows

its offices to be built within the walls of Moroccan towns, and this house goes back to the epic days of the Caïd Sir Harry Maclean, to whom it was presented by the fantastic Abd-el-Aziz when the Caïd was his favourite companion as well as his military adviser.

At the suggestion of the municipal officials we mounted the stairs and looked down on the packed square. There can be no more Oriental sight this side of the Atlas and the Sahara. The square is surrounded by low mud-houses, fondaks, cafés and the like. In one corner, near the archway leading into the *souks*, is the fruit-market, where the red-gold branches of unripe dates\* for animal fodder are piled up in great stacks, and dozens of donkeys are coming and going, their panniers laden with fruits and vegetables which are being heaped on the ground in gorgeous pyramids: purple egg-plants, melons, cucumbers, bright orange pumpkins, mauve and pink and violet onions, rusty crimson pomegranates and the gold grapes of Sefrou and Salé, all mingled with fresh green sheaves of mint and wormwood.

In the middle of the square sit the story-tellers' turbaned audiences. Beyond these are the humbler crowds about the wild-ringlested snake-charmers with their epileptic gestures and hissing incantations, and farther off, in the densest circle of all, we could just discern the shaved heads and waving surpliced arms of the dancing-boys. Under an archway near by an important personage in white muslin, mounted on a handsome mule and surrounded by his attendants, sat with motionless face and narrowed eyes gravely following the movements of the dancers.

Suddenly, as we stood watching the extraordinary animation of the scene, a reddish light overspread it, and one of our companions exclaimed: "Ah—a dust-storm!"

In that very moment it was upon us: a red cloud rushing across the square out of nowhere, whirling the date-branches over the heads of the squatting throngs, tumbling down the stacks of fruits and vegetables, rooting up the canvas awnings over the lemonade-sellers' stalls and before the café doors, huddling the blinded donkeys under the walls of the fondak,

\*Dates do not ripen in Morocco.

and stripping to the hips the black slave-girls scudding home from the *souks*.

Such a blast would instantly have scattered any western crowd, but "the patient East" remained undisturbed, rounding its shoulders before the storm and continuing to follow attentively the motions of the dancers and the turns of the story-tellers. By and bye, however, the gale grew too furious, and the spectators were so involved in collapsing tents, eddying date-branches and stampeding mules that the square began to clear, save for the listeners about the most popular story-teller, who continued to sit on unmoved. And then, at the height of the storm, they too were abruptly scattered by the rush of a cavalcade across the square. First came a handsomely dressed man, carrying before him on his peaked saddle a tiny boy in a gold-embroidered orange caftan, in front of whom he held an open book; and behind them a train of white-draped men on showily harnessed mules, followed by musicians in bright dresses. It was only a Circumcision procession on its way to the mosque; but the dust-enveloped rider in his rich dress, clutching the bewildered child to his breast, looked like some Oriental prince trying to escape with his son from the fiery embraces of desert Erl-maidens.

As swiftly as it rose the storm subsided, leaving the fruit-market in ruins under a sky as clear and innocent as an infant's eye. The Chleuh boys had vanished with the rest, like marionettes swept into a drawer by an impatient child; but presently, toward sunset, we were told that we were to see them after all, and our hosts led us up to the roof of the Caïd's house.

The city lay stretched before us like one immense terrace circumscribed by palms. The sky was pure blue, verging to turquoise green where the Atlas floated above mist; and facing the celestial snows stood the Koutoubya, red in the sunset.

People were beginning to come out on the roofs: it was the hour of peace, of ablutions, of family life on the house-tops. Groups of women in pale tints and floating veils spoke to each other from terrace to terrace, through the chatter of children and the guttural calls of bedizened negroes. And presently, on the roof adjoining ours, appeared the slim dancing-boys with white caftans and hennaed feet.

The three swarthy musicians who accompanied them crossed their lean legs on the tiles and set up their throb-throb and thrum-thrum, and on a narrow strip of terrace the youths began their measured steps.

It was a grave static dance, such as David may have performed before the Ark; untouched by mirth or folly, as be-seemed a dance in that sombre land, and borrowing its magic from its gravity. Even when the pace quickened with the stress of the music the gestures still continued to be restrained and hieratic; only when, one by one, the performers detached themselves from the round and knelt before us for the *peseta* it is customary to press on their foreheads, did one see, by the moisture which made the coin adhere, how quick and violent their movements had been.

The performance, like all things Oriental, like the life, the patterns, the stories, seemed to have no beginning and no end: it just went monotonously and indefatigably on till fate snipped its thread by calling us away to dinner. So at last we went down into the dust of the streets refreshed by that vision of white youths dancing on the house-tops against the gold of a sunset that made them look—in spite of ankle-bracelets and painted eyes—almost as guileless and happy as the round of angels on the roof of Fra Angelico's Nativity.

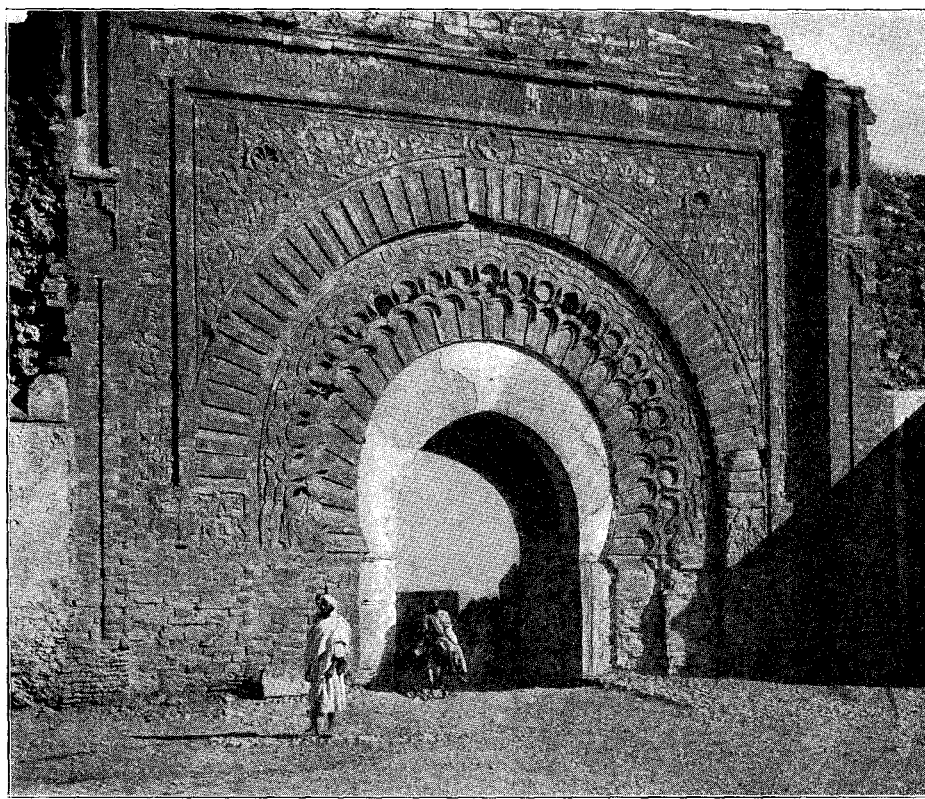
## V

### THE AGDAL

ONE of the Almohad Sultans who, during their hundred years of empire, scattered such great monuments from Seville to the Atlas, felt the need of coolness about his southern capital, and laid out the olive-yards of the Agdal.

To the south of Marrakech the Agdal extends for many acres between the outer walls of the city and the edge of the palm oasis—a continuous belt of silver foliage traversed by deep red lanes, and enclosing a wide-spreading summer palace and two immense reservoirs walled with masonry; and the vision of these serene sheets of water, in which the olives and palms are motionlessly reflected, is one of the most poetic impressions in that city of inveterate poetry romance.

On the edge of one of the reservoirs :



*From a photograph from the Service des Beaux-Arts au Maroc.*

The gate of the Portuguese.

sentimental Sultan built in the last century a little pleasure-house called the Menara. It is composed of a few rooms with a two-storied loggia looking across the water to the palm-groves, and surrounded by a garden of cypresses and orange-trees. The Menara, long since abandoned, is usually uninhabited; but on the day when we drove through the Agdal we noticed, at the gate, a group of well-dressed servants holding mules with embroidered saddle-clothes.

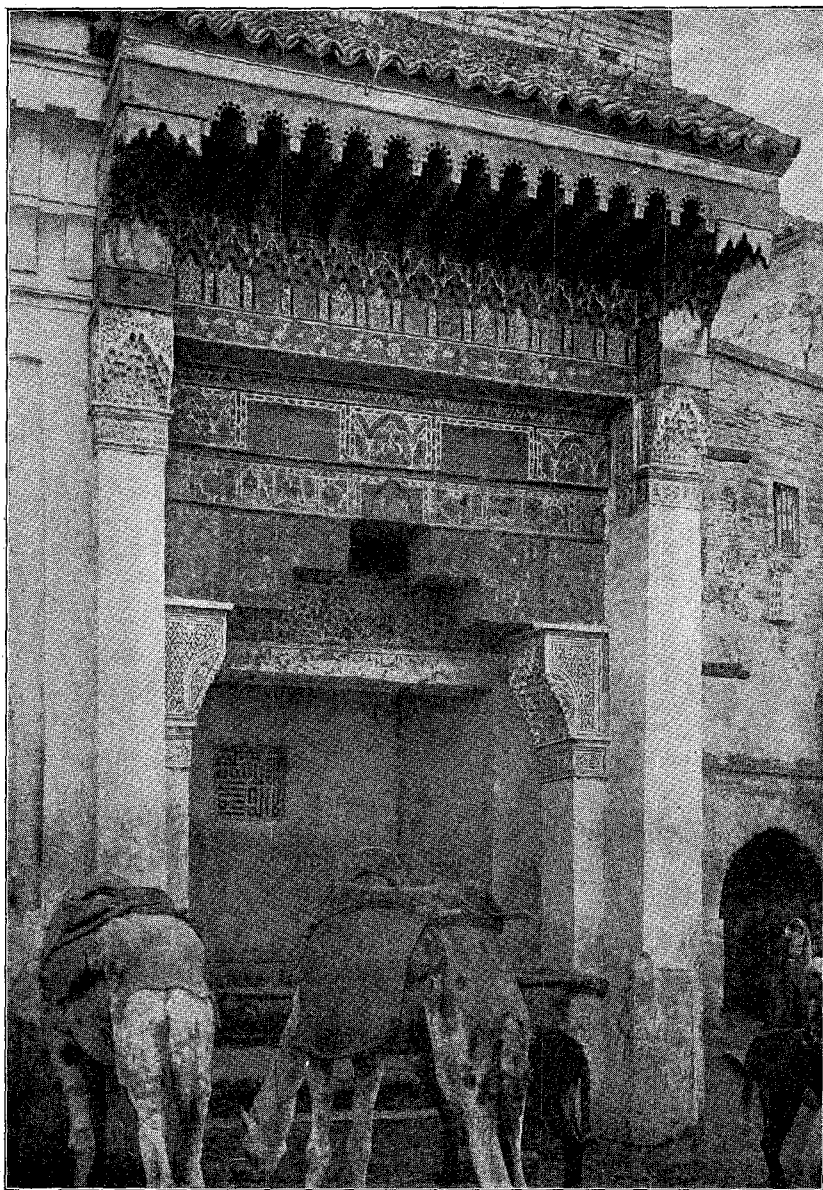
The French officer who was with us asked the porter what was going on, and he replied that the Chief of the Guild of Wool-Merchants had hired the pavilion for a week and invited a few friends to visit him. They were now, the porter added, taking tea in the loggia above the lake; and the host, being informed of our presence, begged that we should do him and his friends the honour of visiting the pavilion.

In reply to this amiable invitation we crossed an empty saloon surrounded with divans and passed out onto the loggia

where the wool-merchant and his guests were seated. They were evidently persons of consequence: large bulky men wrapped in fresh muslins and reclining side by side on muslin-covered divans and cushions. Black slaves had placed before them brass trays with pots of mint-tea, glasses in filigree stands, and dishes of gazelles' horns and sugar-plums; and they sat serenely absorbing these refreshments and gazing with large calm eyes upon the motionless water and the reflected trees.

So, we were told, they would probably spend the greater part of their holiday. The merchant's cooks had taken possession of the kitchens, and toward sunset a sumptuous repast of many courses would be carried into the saloon on covered trays, and the guests would squat about it on rugs of Rabat, tearing with their fingers the tender chicken wings and small artichokes cooked in oil, plunging their fat white hands to the wrist into huge mounds of saffron and rice, and washing





*From a photograph from the Service des Beaux-Arts au Maroc.*

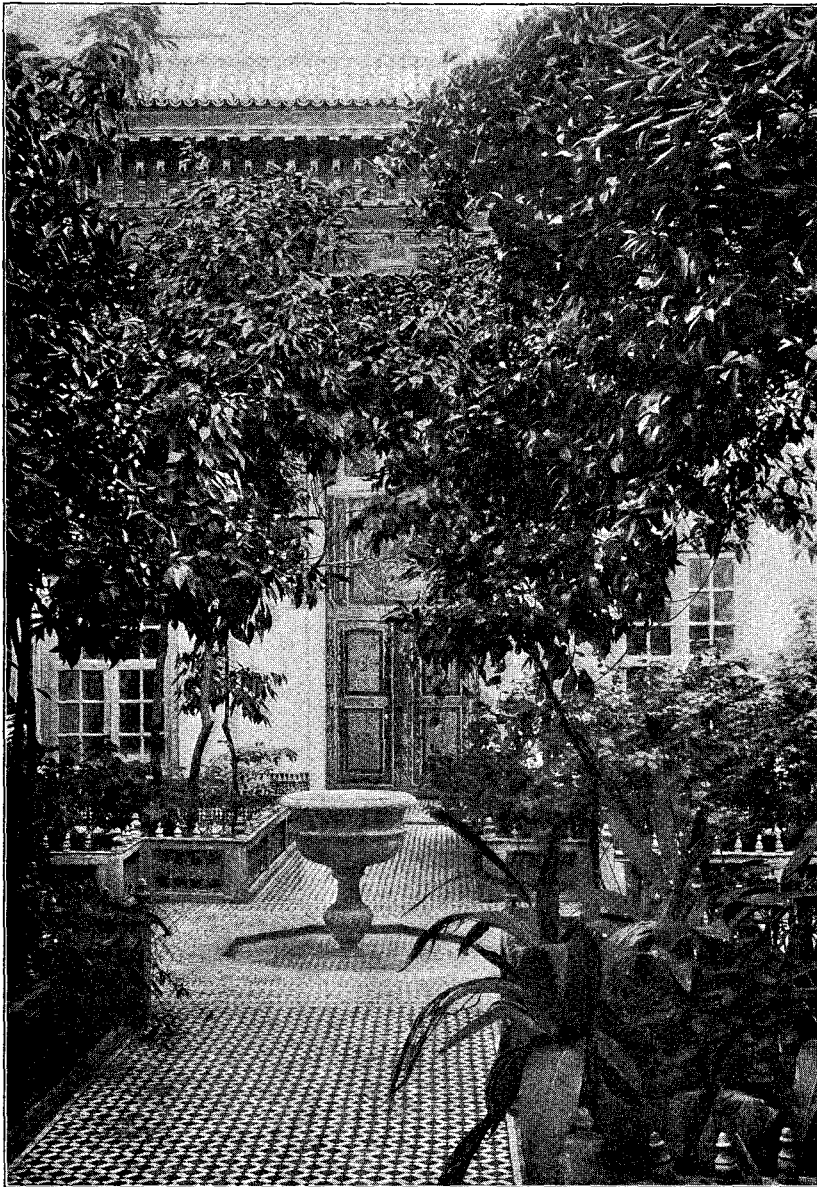
A street fountain.

off the traces of each course in the brass basin of perfumed water carried about by a young black slave-girl with hoop-earrings and a green-and-gold scarf about her hips.

Then the singing-girls would come out from Marrakech, squat, round-faced young women heavily hennaed and bejewelled, accompanied by gaunt musicians in bright caftans; and for hours they would sing sentimental or obscene ballads to the persistent maddening twang of

violin and flute and drum. Meanwhile fiery brandy or sweet champagne would probably be passed around between the steaming glasses of mint-tea which the slaves perpetually refilled; or perhaps the sultry air, the heavy meal, the scent of the garden and the vertiginous repetition of the music would suffice to plunge these sedentary worthies into the delicious coma in which every festive evening in Morocco ends.





*From a photograph from the Service des Beaux-Arts au Maroc.*

The palace of the Bahia.

The "Little Garden" (with painted doors in background).

The next day would be spent in the same manner, except that probably the Chleuh boys with sidelong eyes and clean caftans would come instead of the singing girls, and weave the arabesque of their dance in place of the runic pattern of the singing. But the result would always be the same: a prolonged state of obese ecstasy culminating in the collapse of huge heaps of snoring muslin on the

divans against the wall. Finally at the week's end the wool-merchant and his friends would all ride back with dignity to the bazaar.

## VI

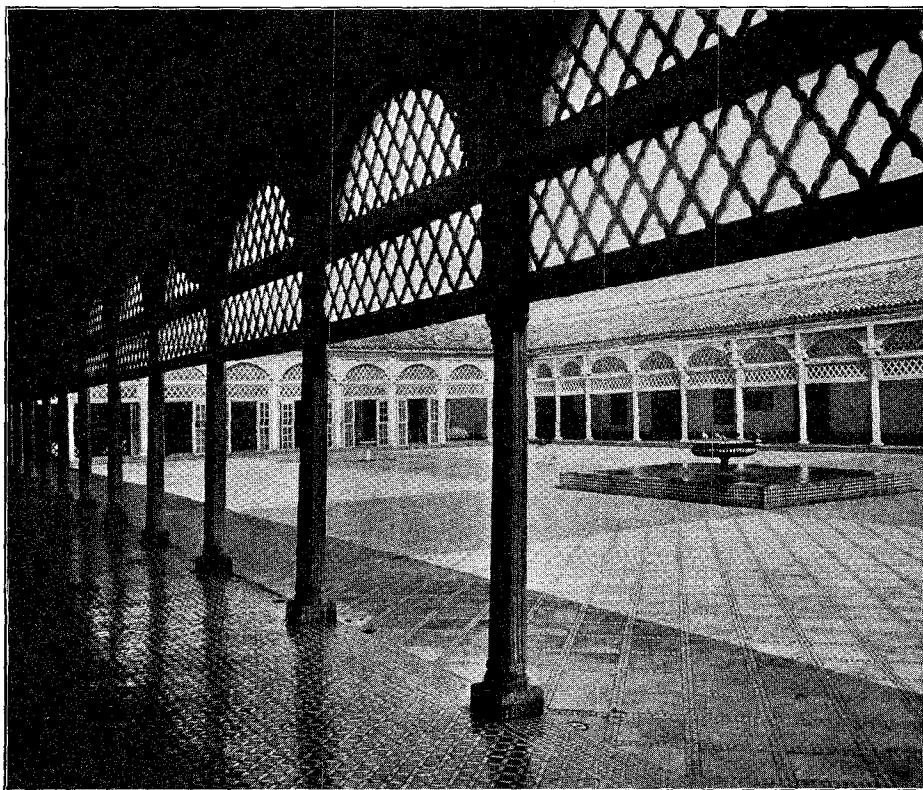
### THE SAADIAN TOMBS

ON one of the last days of our stay in Marrakech we were told, almost mys-

teriously, that permission was to be given us to visit the tombs of the Saadian Sultans.

Though Marrakech has been in the hands of the French since 1912, the very existence of these tombs was unknown to the authorities till 1917. Then the Sultan's government privately informed the Resident General that an unsuspected

at Marrakech, an hour was fixed for our visit, and we drove through long lanes of mud-huts to a lost quarter near the walls. At last we came to a deserted square on one side of which stands the long low mosque of Mansourah with a turquoise-green minaret embroidered with traceries of sculptured terracotta. Opposite the



*From a photograph by Félix-Marrakech.*

The great court, palace of the Bahia.

treasure of Moroccan art was falling into ruin, and after some hesitation it was agreed that General Lyautey and the Director of Fine Arts should be admitted to the mosque containing the tombs, on the express condition that the French Government undertook to repair them. While we were at Rabat General Lyautey had described his visit to us, and it was at his request that the Sultan authorized us to see the mosque, to which no travelers had as yet been admitted.

With a good deal of ceremony, and after the customary *pourparlers* with the great Pasha who controls native affairs

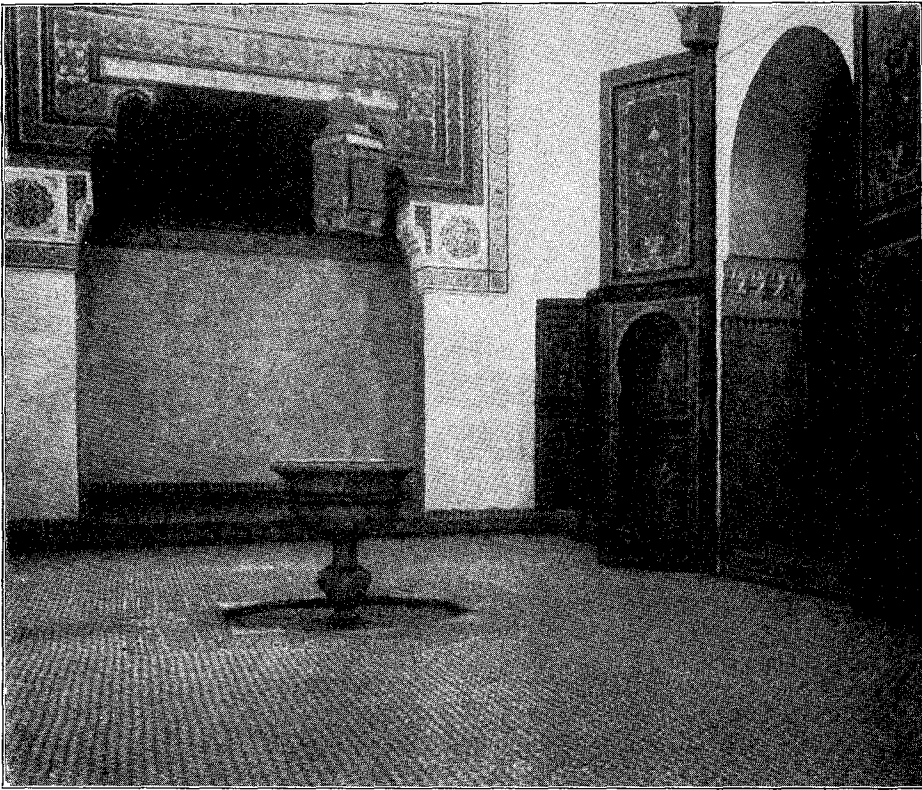
mosque is a gate in a crumbling wall; and at this gate the Pasha's Cadi was to meet us with the keys of the mausoleum. But we waited in vain. Oriental dilatoriness, or a last secret reluctance to admit unbelievers to a holy place, had caused the Cadi to forget his appointment; and we drove away disappointed.

The delay drove us to wondering about these mysterious Saadian Sultans, who, though coming so late in the annals of Morocco, had left at least one monument said to be worthy of the Merenid tradition. And the tale of the Saadians is worth telling.



They came from Arabia to the Draa (the fruitful country south of the Great Atlas) early in the fifteenth century, when the Merenid empire was already near disintegration. Like all previous invaders they preached the doctrine of a pure Islamism to the polytheistic and indifferent Berbers, and found a ready hear-

The history of the Saadians is a fore-shortened record of that of all their predecessors. They overthrew the artistic and luxurious Merenids, and in their turn became artistic and luxurious. Their greatest Sultan, Abbou-el-Abbas, surnamed the Golden, after defeating the Merenids and putting an end to Christian



*From a photograph by Mme. la Marquise de Segonzac.*

Apartment of the Grand Vizier's favorite, palace of the Bahia.

ing because they denounced the evils of a divided empire, and also because the whole of Morocco was in revolt against the Christian colonies of Spain and Portugal, which had encircled the coast from Ceuta to Agadir with a chain of fortified counting-houses. To *bouter dehors* the money-making unbeliever was an object that found adherents from the Rif to the Sahara, and the Saadian cherifs soon rallied a mighty following to their standard. Islam, though it never really gave a creed to the Berbers, supplied them with a war-cry as potent to-day as when it first rang across Barbary.

rule in Morocco by the crushing victory of El Ksar (1578), bethought him in his turn of enriching himself and beautifying his capital, and with this object in view turned his attention to the black kingdoms of the south.

Senegal and the Soudan, which had been Mohammedan since the eleventh century, had attained in the sixteenth century a high degree of commercial wealth and artistic civilization. The Sultanate of Timbuctoo seems in reality to have been a thriving empire, and if Timbuctoo was not the Claude-like vision of Carthaginian palaces which it became in



the tales of imaginative travellers, it apparently had something of the magnificence of Fez and Marrakech.

The Saadian army, after a march of four and a half months across the Sahara, conquered the whole black south. Senegal, the Soudan and Bornou submitted to Abbou-el-Abbas, the Sultan of Timbuctoo was dethroned, and the celebrated negro jurist Ahmed-Baba was brought a prisoner to Marrakech, where his chief sorrow appears to have been for the loss of his library of 1,600 volumes—though he declared that, of all the numerous members of his family, it was he who possessed the smallest number of books.

Besides this learned bibliophile, the Sultan Abbou-el-Abbas brought back with him an immense booty, principally of ingots of gold, from which he took his surname of "The Golden"; and as the result of the expedition Marrakech was embellished with mosques and palaces for which the Sultan brought marble from Carrara, paying for it with loaves of sugar from the sugar-cane that the Saadians grew in the Souss.

In spite of these brilliant beginnings the rule of the dynasty was short and without subsequent interest. Based on a fanatical antagonism against the foreigner, and fed by the ever-wakeful hatred of the Moors for their Spanish conquerors, it raised ever higher the Chinese walls of exclusiveness which the more enlightened Almohads and Merenids had sought to overthrow. Henceforward less and less daylight and fresh air were to penetrate into the *souks* of Morocco.

The day after our unsuccessful attempt to see the tombs of these ephemeral rulers we received another message, naming an hour for our visit; and this time the Pasha's representative was waiting in the archway. We followed his lead, under the openly mistrustful glances of the Arabs who hung about the square, and after picking our way through a twisting lane between walls we came out into a filthy nettle-grown space against the ramparts. At intervals of about thirty feet splendid square towers rose from the walls, and facing one of them lay a group of crumbling buildings masked behind other ruins.

We were led first into a narrow mosque

or praying-chapel, like those of the medersas, with a coffered cedar ceiling resting on four marble columns, and traceried walls of unusually beautiful design. From this chapel we passed into the hall of the tombs, a cube about forty feet square. Fourteen columns of colored marble sustain a domed ceiling of gilded cedar, with an exterior deambulatory under a tunnel-vaulting also roofed with cedar. The walls are, as usual, of chiselled stucco, above revêtements of ceramic mosaic, and between the columns lie the white marble cenotaphs of the Saadian Sultans, covered with Arabic inscriptions in the most delicate low-relief. Beyond this central mausoleum, and balancing the praying-chapel, lies another long narrow chamber, gold-ceilinged also, and containing a few tombs.

It is difficult, in describing the architecture of Morocco, to avoid producing an impression of monotony. The ground-plan of mosques and medersas is always practically the same; and the same elements, few in number and endlessly repeated, make up the materials and the form of the ornament. The effect upon the eye is not monotonous, for a patient art has infinitely varied the combinations of pattern and the juxtapositions of color, while the depth of undercutting of the stucco, and the treatment of the bronze doors and of the carved cedar corbels, necessarily varies with the periods which produced them.

But in the Saadian mausoleum a new element has been introduced which makes this little monument a thing apart. The marble columns supporting the roof appear to be unique in Moroccan architecture, and they lend themselves to a new roof-plan which relates the building rather to the tradition of Venice or Byzantine by way of Kairouan and Cordova.

The late date of the monument precludes any idea of a direct artistic tradition. The most probable explanation seems to be that the architect of the mausoleum was familiar with European Renaissance architecture, and saw the beauty to be derived from using precious marbles not merely as ornament but, in the Roman and Italian way, as a structural element. Panels and fountain-basins are ornament, and ornament changes

nothing essential in architecture; but when, for instance, heavy square piers are replaced by detached columns, a new style results.

It is not only the novelty of its plan that makes the Saadian mausoleum sin-

color gives to the dim rich chapel an air of dream-like unreality.

And how can it seem other than a dream? Who can have conceived, in the heart of a savage Saharan camp, the serenity and balance of this hidden place?



*From a photograph from "France-Maroc."*

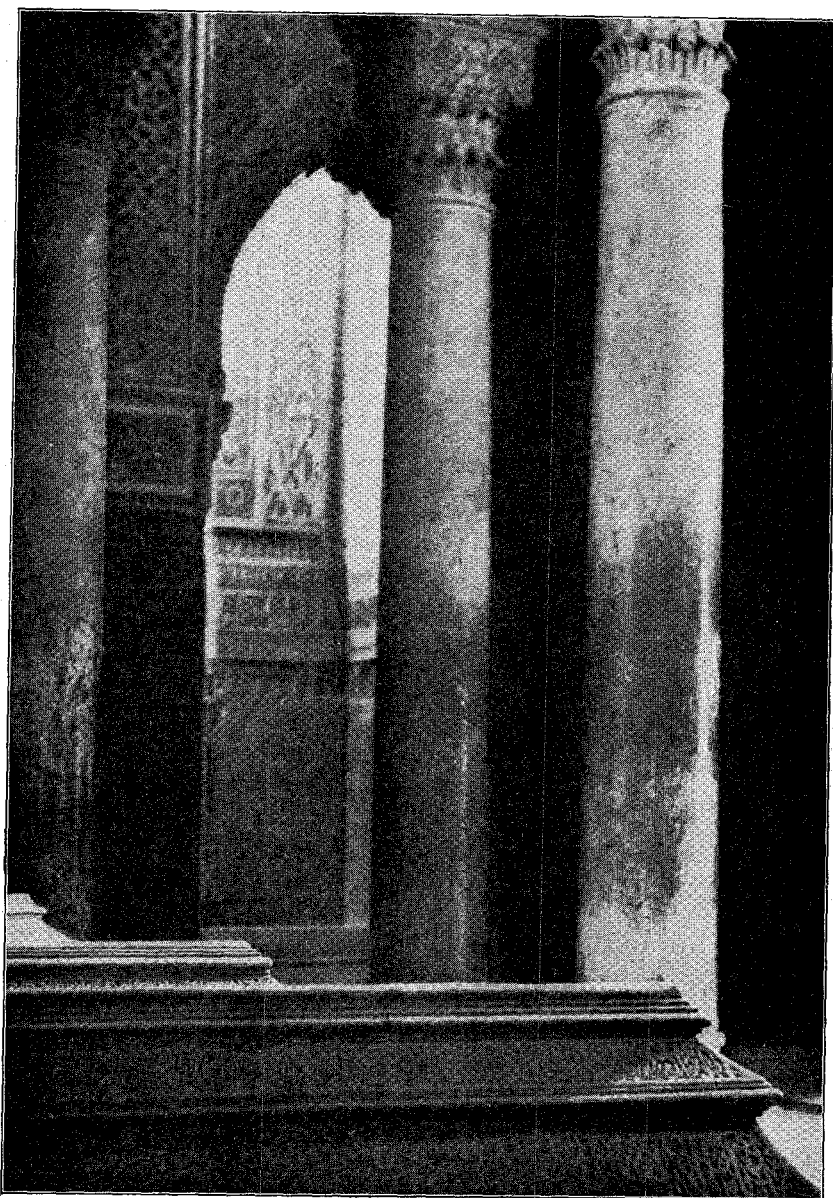
A Fondak, Marrakech.

gular among Moroccan monuments. The details of its ornament are of the most intricate refinement: it seems as though the last graces of the expiring Merenid art had been gathered up into this rare blossom. And the slant of sunlight on lustrous columns, the depths of fretted gold, the dusky ivory of the walls and the pure white of the cenotaphs, so classic in sparseness of ornament and simplicity of design—this subtle harmony of form and

And how came such fragile loveliness to survive, preserving, behind a screen of tumbling walls, of nettles and offal and dead beasts, every curve of its traceries and every cell of its honeycombing?

Such questions inevitably bring one back to the central riddle of the mysterious North African civilization: the perpetual flux and the immovable stability, the barbarous customs and sensuous refinements, the absence of artistic orig-





*From a photograph by M. André Chevrillon.*

Mausoleum of the Saadian Sultans (16th century) showing the tombs.

inality and the gift for regrouping borrowed motives, the patient and exquisite workmanship and the immediate neglect and degradation of the thing once made.

Revering the dead and camping on their graves, elaborating exquisite monuments only to abandon and defile them, venerating scholarship and wisdom and living in ignorance and grossness, these gifted races, perpetually struggling to reach some higher level of culture from

which they have always been swept down by a fresh wave of barbarism, are still only a people in the making.

It may be that the political stability which France is helping them to acquire will at last give their higher qualities time for fruition; and when one looks at the mausoleum of Marrakech and the medersas of Fez one feels that, were the experiment made on artistic grounds alone, it would yet be well worth making.



# THE ROMANCE OF A PRACTISING PH.D.

By Robert Rudd Whiting

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE VAN WERVEKE



MOIRA O'NEIL was Dr. Jason Bright's very first patient. This is how it came about.

Moira was the painter girl who occupied the top floor of the old house in which Bright had just taken rooms on the ground floor. Red-headed girls are just as difficult to make well as is mayonnaise dressing. You know how it is with mayonnaise dressing: if you stir the wrong way, or add just the least little drop of something just the fraction of a moment too soon, then it makes no difference how long or how hard you stir—it can never be anything more than an untempting mess of disintegrated ingredients.

It's the same way with red-headed girls. If the confecting angels make the least little slip the whole thing is spoiled. The hair becomes carrotty, the eyes become a pale, watery blue with red rims, the cream of the complexion curdles, and the slender hands shrivel up and become bony and clawlike.

But when, once in a great while, everything goes right and the confecting angels turn out a really successful red-headed girl—jade-green eyes, black lashes, ivory skin—then, look out, Earth! The only way you can tell that they're really merely mortal is that every once in a while one of them has a headache, just like ordinary girls.

Moira O'Neil had a headache. She had complained of it to Mrs. Keppel, the landlady, when Mrs. Keppel had dropped in to see whether something or other was some place or other or not.

"My head's simply splitting, and I've got to have this cover finished by tomorrow."

Moira stood gazing resentfully at the pastel on the easel before her. "I thought I had it finished yesterday, but now they want the color scheme changed so they can put orange lettering across

the top." She clutched her aching forehead.

"You ought to see a doctor," decided Mrs. Keppel with a sudden inspiration. "The gentleman who moved in on the ground floor is a doctor."

"What kind of a doctor is he?" asked Moira, hesitating. "I don't feel well enough to have an osteopath."

"That I don't know. I only know that he came to me with a letter of introduction from Prof. Jones, of Columbia, who had the rooms two years ago. 'My good friend Dr. Jason Bright,' the professor called him. And any doctor that Prof. Jones calls his good friend is all right. The professor was a fine gentleman, if he did forget and leave the hot water running sometimes. But come, you poor child. Slip off your overall"—evidently the artist's smock that Moira wore. "We'll go down and the doctor will fix you up in a jiffy. And he's such a nice young man."

"But—but perhaps he isn't ready to practise yet," Moira feebly protested. "He hasn't got any sign in the window or anything." However, she was already following Mrs. Keppel down the stairs.

"Come in," called a boyish voice in response to Mrs. Keppel's knock. She opened the door, ushering Moira in ahead of her. A grave-faced, slender young man arose to his feet and seemed searching for some place to knock out his pipe.

"This is Miss O'Neil, Dr. Bright. She's got a headache." With which explanation Mrs. Keppel withdrew, closing the door behind her.

"Won't you sit down?" invited Dr. Bright, indicating the chair that a man would consider the most comfortable.

"Thank you," said Moira, selecting the chair that a woman would prefer.

There followed an awkward pause. Moira made her host feel that something was expected of him.