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*Some Further Notes on North Morocco.**

By WALTER B. HARRIS.

FINDING myself in Fez for the second time this year, I determined to return to Wazan, where I had taken up my headquarters for the summer, via a route very little travelled over.

I therefore left Fez one day early in August, and passing through the quarter known as M'msoda, leaving the handsome tomb of Sidi Ali bu Rhaleb on my right, left the city. A ride of about an hour, for the first part through cemeteries, wooded with olive trees and rendered most picturesque on account of the domed tombs on the steep hill-sides, and afterwards through cultivated country, brought me to the famous bridge over the Sebou—a really fine structure.

The Sebou is at this spot about a hundred and twenty yards wide, but very shallow, being easily fordable and split up into numerous stony islets. The water here is perfectly clear and transparent in summer—the time of my visit was July—and it is not for some little way down, in fact until it reaches the clay soil, that it becomes thick and muddy, as most travellers see it between Hurbasseh and Chrarda, on their way to Fez from Tangier. On the further, or eastern, side of the bridge three roads diverge, one ascending a steep barren hill straight in front leading to Oujda and Tlemçen, the southern one to the Berber tribes of Ait Youssi, while the third, keeping to the bank of the river, is not the highway to any particular place, but connects the many villages on the banks of the Sebou and also leads to some of the mountain tribes-lands.

The centre road, leading toward Algeria, passes through Oulad al Hadj, a tolerably large province, thence through Hyaina to Tezah, where roads branch off to the mountain tribe of Ghietta, and the Arab tribe of Hawara, whose country borders on the Sahara. This tribe have a division of their people to the south of the Haha, and in the Sus, in Southern Morocco, being moved from their original country in the north by one of the Sultans to populate a rebellious district which he had devastated.

Taking the third path, the one on the river-bank, I travelled for two hours, when finding the road on the east bank became impassable for baggage animals on account of the steepness of the hill-sides, in which the track was cut, I had to retrace my steps and ford the river at a village of Oulad al Hadj, and pitch my camp just before sunset.

From the bridge to this spot, a distance of really only a few miles, perhaps ten, the river makes no less than six bends, in spite of its course being a valley with steep hills on either side. The general direction of the river is north-east.

* Vide 'Proceedings R.G.S.,' vol. xi. p. 487.

The following morning I made an early start, and keeping to the west bank of the Sebou, lengthened my road very considerably, as there is a more direct way taking short cuts, instead of following, as I did, every turn of the river.

The scenery here is very charming, the river winding through its flat rich valley, while the high hills on either side take fantastic shapes. The valley is richly cultivated, figs, olives, melons, and vines growing in great profusion, while the remainder of the land is used for grain. The general course of the river, difficult to determine on account of its most eccentric bends and deviations, is north-east and south-west. I pitched my camp at a village high on the mountain side overlooking the group of olive-trees where the Sôk al Tnain, or Monday market, is held, about 24 miles from my last camp. The only remarkable landmark passed was about two hours after leaving my camp that morning, a curious pile of rocks known as the Haj'ra al Chrifâ, not unlike, but scarcely as large as, the Haj'ra al Ouerkof of the Wergha.

The following morning being market day I visited the Sôk, where the presence of a European created no little stir, though the people were quite nice. Great quantities of melons and grapes were exposed for sale, the former wonderfully cheap. Jews there were too in plenty, trading from the towns with cotton goods, sugar, tea, &c.

Leaving the Sôk one enters on a fertile plain, or rather a widening of the Sebou valley, which here is some two to three miles across, nor do the hills close nearer again until some six miles further down. The fertility of this spot is extraordinary, and the villages wear a much more flourishing appearance than I have seen elsewhere in Morocco, with the exception of some of the Tchars, or villages, of some of the independent mountain tribes. One of these villages contains the tomb of a saint, by name Sidi Osman, a large domed marabout, whitewashed and in good repair. The end of this plain is caused by a precipice which appears to bar the course of the river, to which it is at right angles, but the river takes a sharp turn, and flows a short distance almost due west, its previous course being north-east. Here my road left the river's bank, and ascended the hills, passing numerous well-to-do little villages. From the summit of these hills one obtained a fine view of the Sebou, which is seen only to pursue its western course for a short distance, then flowing north-west, a course it pursues in general to within thirty miles of its mouth at Mehediah, when again it flows south-west to the sea. The road crossed on the summit of these hills for an hour or two without offering any attractions to the sportsman or the lover of scenery, beyond the one peep at the river valley. Water is plentiful, one well, shaded by palm-trees, being exceedingly good.

As this was the spot where I left the Sebou, I may perhaps interrupt my account with a few remarks on that river.

I have often heard it said that the Sebou would be navigable to small draught steam lighters from its mouth to Fez. Such an assumption took my breath away on my journey down the river from Fez to Chraga. In many places the river was so shallow that in no spot was there six inches of water, while the swiftness of the current alone would prevent navigation in flooded times. Changes in weather prevented my being able to judge of the fall of the river-bed by my aneroid, but I should say that in places the bed sloped several feet in a few hundred yards, forming a shallow rapid. Whether damming and locks would be practicable is for an engineer to say, but I should think the expense would be enormous, and the result poor. So swift is the current that all along the river-banks are water-wheels, from twenty to forty-five feet in diameter, which, turned by the current, raise a great quantity of water in jars to the level of the banks for irrigating purposes, a method much simpler and more profitable than the shadouf of the Nile, where of course the water-wheel is impracticable.

I pitched my camp at the residence of Bu Mahammed, the Governor of Chraga, where I was very kindly received, as on all the road, and hospitably entertained.

Near Dar al Bu Mahammed is held the Tuesday market, or Sôk al Tletta, an enormous weekly gathering. Here the following morning I was mobbed by an inquisitive but comparatively friendly crowd. From the Kaid's village one can see the great rocky mountain of Mulai Buchtah, with its two attendant peaks near it. On the summit of Mulai Buchtar is a grassy plain with a village, but only accessible by one path. There are two mountains by name Mulai Buchtah, not far apart, this being one, while the second is situated about a day's journey beyond in the Beni M'Sgilda, where the great and popular saint, from which the two gather their name, is buried.

The mountain visible from Chraga is a huge solitary limestone block, almost flat at the top, and apparently about 2500 feet above the river Wergha. Beyond this mountain lie the tribes of Beni M'Sgilda and Beni Zarul, called in my map of the North Moroccan mountain tribes, through an inadvertence on my part, Beni Zarun.* The country of the latter is rich in timber, and contains several fine forests. They are hospitable people, and, though never visited by Europeans, any one speaking their language and with proper recommendations from other tribes, or any great religious Moor, can travel with tolerable safety amongst them.

Leaving Chraga I approached Mulai Buchtah, but on account of its sanctity was not allowed to ascend it, or even to go very near. Turning away, I followed the path over the mountains, emerging on the slopes of the hills overlooking the valley of the Wergha, near the tomb and

* See map, Local Distribution of the Tribes inhabiting the Mountains of North-west Morocco, by W. B. Harris, in the 'Proceedings,' vol. xi. p. 524.

small country market of Sidi Abdul Wahad. Nothing more wild than this scene can be imagined in an inhabited district of North Morocco. The river Wergha winds and twists through a wide valley almost devoid of cultivation and covered with dense undergrowth of arbutus and other bush. The reason that this land is uncultivated is that the place swarms with wild boar and sparrows, one of which uproots the grain, while the second destroy the ripening ear and leave not a particle.

To the south of the path is a saint's tomb, or marabout, situated on the very summit of a mountain by name Sidi Abdul Nor—a very good landmark, as it is visible from a great distance.

I camped at the joint village of Oulad Osman and Beni M'kir, and was very hospitably entertained. The people—Arabs—complain of the outrages of the mountaineers, but never seem to make any resistance, though infinitely more powerful. These villages are situated in the Arab tribe of Oulad Aissa, whose frontier is close to the village of the Governor of Chraga.

There is one distinctive point about the houses in this part. Mud is laid on thickly *over* the thatch, and is said to be impervious to rain. I have seen this nowhere else in Morocco.

The province of Hyaina, which I mentioned as being traversed between Fez and Algeria, extends as far as Chraga and Oulad Aissa, the former being its western boundary after Oulad al Hadj, and the latter its northern boundary, while a succession of mountain tribes join it on the east. It is very curious how this triangle of Arabs has been able to exist among the mountaineers, their deadliest enemies.

Leaving Oulad Osman the following day, I crossed the Wergha at an exceedingly shallow ford (in August), and passing close under a conspicuous wooded mound by name Sidi Abdullah, entered the hills. The road continues to run along the base of a high jagged range of mountains known as Settah. On the summit of one rocky peak is the tomb of Sidi Meimun. The undulating plain is fertile, but not to any great extent cultivated, owing to its being the border-land of the Arabs and mountaineers, and therefore liable to be attacked by the latter.

I camped at a village of the Beni M'Sara, on the slopes of the mountains of Settah, much to the people's surprise, who never imagined a European would have the cheek to visit their country. However, after some angry and threatening words, they saw that I did not intend to go away, and equally meant them no harm, so gave me a hearty welcome, and we spent the night with music and singing and tea-drinking. Every man was armed with a long native gun and sword, while their clothes were richly embroidered in silk. As I have described this tribe elsewhere, there is no need to do so again now.*

I left the following morning before daylight, keeping along the base

* See paper on Mountain Tribes of North-west Morocco, 'Proc. R.G.S.,' 1889, p. 487.

of Settah Mountains, which run nearly north and south, losing their distinct character in the hills surrounding Arba al Ouf, a large village on the Wad Ardat, a tributary of the Wergha. I reached Wazan that day, passing Arba al Ouf and crossing the Wad Ardat, then following the borders of the Beni M'Sara country to Sidi Rahou-Rahou, where I witnessed earlier in the year an attack upon the Arabs by the above-named tribe, which ended in a complete victory for a handful—perhaps three hundred—mountaineers over ten times their number of Arabs, who were, too, better armed and mounted, while the Sari were on foot. A great quantity of spoil—women, jewellery, animals such as horses, mules, donkeys, &c.—was carried away by the successful mountaineers, who left only two dead, while some seventeen of the Arabs were killed.

There is no reason why Europeans should not travel over this road from Wazan to Fez. I found the natives most hospitable, but on account of their, in most cases, never having seen Europeans, great care must be taken not to give offence in any way. The country is pretty and there is plenty of sport, but the road is impracticable in winter, on account of the mud and flooded state of the river. However, in summer it is one of the most enjoyable districts in Morocco.

Summary of Recent Pendulum Observations in Russia.

By E. DELMAR MORGAN.

IN 1884 the Russian Geographical Society decided on taking in hand a series of pendulum observations at a great number of stations, in order to investigate the distribution of gravity in Russia. The necessary pendulums were ordered of Repsold, at Hamburg, and the clock of Messrs. Hohwü, at Amsterdam. With these, preliminary observations were made by M. Lenz, at Berlin and Pulkova, in order to establish a connection with those hitherto made in Europe and Asia, notably by Bessel, Savitch, Lenz, Smyslof, Basevi, Heaviside, Tsinger, Stebnitzky, and Kuhlberg. By the end of 1886 matters were so far advanced as to allow of the projected scheme being begun, and Lieut. Wilkitzky, of the Imperial Navy, undertook the difficult task of making the necessary observations in Nova Zembla, the most advanced station towards the north, and at Archangel. Having familiarised himself with the use of the instruments at Pulkova, under the direction of M. Lenz, M. Wilkitzky started on the 18th (30th) June, 1887, for his destination. A schooner was placed at his disposal by the Minister of Marine, to transport him and his instruments from Suma, on the White Sea, to