



The Races of Morocco

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A paper by Dr. SHORTT was read on *The Armenians of Southern India*. (The paper appears in the *Journal of Anthropology* for October.)
[Abstract.]

Early in the sixteenth century a few Armenians found their way into Southern India with the countenance and support of the Honourable East India Company, and under a contract with the company equal privileges with British subjects were conceded to the Armenians. The company further extended favours to them when they reached, in any town, the number of forty, by the provision of a place of worship and by annual grants of money. For a long time after their arrival in India they avoided mingling with other people, but latterly that rule has been broken through and alliances in marriage with Europeans are not unfrequent. The Armenians have diminished in numbers; and, it is said, are daily decreasing in influence. The chief causes of their approaching extinction in India appear to be the vice of intemperance, the taint of disease, and the contact with the Europeans, more especially the English. The physical and moral characteristics were described; in the former it was stated that the Armenians are strongly allied to the Jewish race, from which they claim descent.

The CHAIRMAN, referring to the uniformity of Armenian character, etc., wherever met with, said, according to the author of the paper, the priests entered the married state; the people sometimes intermarried with the English; they were addicted to intemperance; and, with regard to stature, that they were short and stout. Now, the Armenians of Transylvania were generally somewhat stout, and rather above the middle size; they were temperate; they intermarried with the Magyars, but not with the Saxons; and the priests were permitted to marry, but did not do so. According to Dr. Shortt, the first Armenians found their way into Southern India early in the sixteenth century; and the Armenians, like the Jews, are scattered over the earth. But there was this distinction, that the Armenian kingdom was broken up long before the sixteenth century, and no doubt most of the Armenians of India were colonists; indeed, the Armenians were generally very good colonists. According to Dr. Shortt, they profess to be descendants of Haïk, grandson of Japhet; and after Aram, a descendant of Japhet, they called their country Armenia, and themselves Armenians. But Genesis did not mention Haïk as a grandson of Japhet, and Aram was a descendant of Shem, and not of Japhet. The Armenians also derived their name, and that of their country, from Togarmah, grandson of Japhet; another grandson of Japhet was named Ashkenaz, and the latter was a geographical name in Armenia. The best etymology of the name Armenia was from *Har-Minna*, "the mountainous part of Minni"; the Minni of Jeremiah (a district placed between Ararat and Ashkenaz); the *Mavus* of Nicholas of Damascus.

The following paper by JOHN STIRLING, Esq., M.A., F.A.S.L., was read, on *The Races of Morocco*.

The inhabitants of that portion of Barbary known as Morocco are usually called Moors. But this name, of course, is no more descrip-

tive of race than the term *English* is, when used to denote, as it often is, the natives of Great Britain and Ireland, or even the "rock scorpions" of Gibraltar.

The races of Morocco may be arranged under the following names: Berbers, Al Ryf (the Ryf-men), Arabs, Bohara troops, and other negroes, or half-breeds, and the Jews. In books I have sometimes seen the word "Kabyles" employed as if to designate some North African race; but, as far as I am aware, the term, as used by the Moors, refers in a general way to villagers or country people employed in agriculture.

Of the history of the Berbers, there is probably less to be known than of that of the other races of Morocco. On the route to Fez, I have seen small walled towns built high up on the hills. These, I believe, are the dwelling-places of Berbers, and of Berber origin. But it is more easy to say what a Berber is not, than to define what he is. That he came from the East is most probable; but did he come from Canaan, and if so, is he a Gergesite, a Jebusite, or a Phœnician?

According to M. Deveaux, the Berber is the original or oldest element of the North African village population. "The base," he says, "of the Kabyle population is of the Berber race, consequently of the Caucasian. The Berber race forms the nucleus of the population which inhabits the portion of Africa which extends from the northern (!) shore towards a zone as yet unexplored, perhaps reaching to the confines of Ethiopia" (*L'Institut*, sect. ii, 306, 1861).

Le Hon mentions that M. Desor, since his journey to the Sahara, has described numerous and important dolmens on the slopes of the Atlas; and it is suggested that the ancient Numidians and the actual Berbers may be the descendants of the mysterious people who erected the dolmens. Relics of the character here alluded to are not very common in the northern districts of Morocco; but I have myself seen at least one important specimen not above two days' journey from Tangier.

It is at least probable that people of Phœnician race mixed with the most ancient inhabitants of Morocco. On this point M. Texier remarks: "The Phœnicians built a fortified place in Numidia on the same site as that of the existing town of Tingis" (Tangier).

Pleyte, a recent and admirable Dutch historian, writing of the Berbers, referring to *Talmud Jeruschalmi, tract Schal.* c. 6, f. 35, says, that on the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, the Gergesites, "who believed in God," took to flight and made their escape into Africa.

Bearing somewhat on the Canaanitish origin of the Berbers we read (*Chron. Paschale*, ii, p. 96) of neighbouring populations, that the inhabitants of the Balearic Islands were descended from Canaanites, who fled before Joshua, and that the town of Cadiz in Spain was built by Jebusites and other Canaanite tribes.

The name Berber is probably derived from the Arabic word *berbera*, and if so, may mean a jumble of unintelligible cries—a not unnatural description for one barbarous people to give of another barbarous people's language which they did not understand. Al-Ryf (the Ryf-men) are a somewhat more tangible subject than the Berbers.

On landing about two years ago at Tangier, I began to remark, about the market-places, lightly-clad, sun-burnt figures, with heads shaved, all but one occipital corner, where a tuft of hair was allowed to develop into a long tress, which was worn either plaited or flowing luxuriantly and unconfined, like an animal's tail. "Who are these men?" I asked my interpreter. "Bery bad men, sir!—suppose you want to kill me—then you give one of these men a penny—one penny—and he will do it."

These wild relatives or descendants of the Ryf pirates of other days are the inhabitants of the northern spurs of the Atlas range which separate Morocco from Algeria; and, though they are nominally the subjects of the Sultan of Morocco, they never have been really subdued in their mountain fastnesses. They are very jealous of any violation of their territory, and for a stranger to attempt to pass through these mountain ranges is said to be certain death. Al-Ryf, however, are by no means confined to these inaccessible and inhospitable regions. The entire Tangier district is reckoned to be Ryf territory, and what little agriculture goes on is in the hands of al-Ryf. But this province is by no means one of the most fertile in Morocco. Many of these people are also shopkeepers in the towns, practise handicrafts, and occupy themselves in commercial pursuits. The present Basha of Tangier is a Ryfy (Ryf-man). Like all the fair people of Morocco, al-Ryf are a handsome and well-formed generation. When they are constantly exposed to the sun, their skin takes on a magnificent bronze colour; but those who follow indoor pursuits are of a delicate olive complexion.

During the famine-winter of 1867-8 there wandered about the streets of Tangier a small Ryf family of three orphans. The eldest was a girl just developing into womanhood, and possessing splendid dark eyes, rather well-proportioned features, and in other respects as much beauty as was consistent with constant exposure to the weather and a chronic experience of very short commons. The next member was a girl much younger, and the third a little boy about four years of age. The father of these children, I was told, had been killed by his brother, so that, being without a natural provider, they had wandered, in that cruel winter, to semi-European Tangier, where charity somewhat more abounds than in the less mixed Moorish population. The brother of tender years, when asked "what will you do to your uncle when you are big enough?" used to answer with infantine energy: "Kill him, kill him, kill him!" I mention this as an illustration of how early the sentiment of the "blood-feud" becomes a part of the young idea of these people.

As the traveller advances from the coast towards the great plains of the interior, he finds the character of the population change. The villages are no longer composed of mud or cane-built huts, but consist of groups of tents. This indicated the presence of the Arab race, who, like all invaders, have occupied the richest portions of the country. However, in the great fertile plains of Morocco there is room for a much larger population. According to the best information I have been able to obtain, the number of the inhabitants has very much de-

creased, and is still decreasing. I have met persons who deny that the entire population of Morocco can exceed five millions.

It would be needless to describe the Arab of Morocco, as I am not aware that he differs materially from his brother of the east. A somewhat remarkable race are the Bohāra troops. Their ancestors were a rebellious Negro tribe, living south of the Atlas; and being subdued by one of the Sultans, were afterwards formed into a body-guard, at present numbering two thousand men. Though they have since intermarried with Moorish women, they have not lost the Negro type of feature, nor much of that complexion which is "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun."

The Sultan himself, though Sheryf, that is to say, the descendant of the Prophet, is pretty nearly as dark as his Bohāra horse-guards; and this complexion is likely to show itself for some generations, as his Sheryfian Majesty's predilection for dark coloured wives is well known.

There are many Negroes in Morocco, both slaves and free men; and the intermarriage of the females with the fair Moors produces a mixed race. But the true Moor is a fair man; I have seen some individuals with blue eyes and light or red hair. The Jews form a not inconsiderable portion of the population of Moorish towns; and in Tangier, where these people are more numerous than elsewhere, they constitute, perhaps, one third of the native community: but in other places they perhaps do not form a tenth of the town population. An adequate account, however, of the character and real condition of the Jews of Morocco would require almost a separate paper.

Though all the native races, with the exception, of course, of the Jews, profess to believe in "God and his prophet Mohammed," yet the traditions of far older phases of religion are unquestionably still extant. Even the primeval Fetish still flourishes. There is on the beach at Tangier a large cylindrical stone, or rather rock, which daily, at low water, attracts the devout salutations of many Moorish women.

Mr. A. L. LEWIS said the paper raised a number of questions, some of which had a deeper interest for Britons than might be generally supposed. It was extremely probable that there might have been a Canaanitish influence in North Africa, and there were also various, though perhaps obscure indications of a residence in Africa of the progenitors of the Irish, who might have been influenced during such residence in such a manner as to receive and transmit to their present representatives some of those peculiarities which now puzzled anthropologists and politicians. The fact of megalithic monuments being found in North Africa showed, amongst other things, that a certain influence, perhaps of Phœnician origin, had been at work there, which had pervaded many other countries from India to Britain and Scandinavia, but these monuments were not as yet known to exist in that part of North Africa which lay nearest Egypt, which tended to show that the builders had come over from Sicily and worked towards Gibraltar.

The CHAIRMAN said the author of the paper derived the term

“Berber” from the Arabic word *berbera*, “a jumble of unintelligible cries.” This reminded one of an etymology of Leo, quoted by Müller, that the name which the Germans gave to their neighbours the Celts, *Walh*, in old high German, *Vealh* in Anglo-Saxon, the modern *Welsh*, is supposed to be the same as the Sanskrit *mlechha*, “a person who talks indistinctly,” a sort of etymology very well for babies. It would be absurd to suppose that the Welsh could have derived their name direct from the Sanskrit. But it might be as well to see whether a better etymology of the word Berber could not be found than that suggested in the paper. The Arabs also give the name of Berber to the Somāli, who inhabit the country between Abyssinia and Zanguebar, and to the Barābrā, the general name by which the peoples of Nubia are designated in Egypt. But these three peoples are different in race, language, and everything else. Burckhardt derives the name of the Barābrā from a wady or district of Upper Nubia, on the right bank of the Nile. The Hebrew word *bar* signifies “son,” and *êber* or *êbr* “region on the other side”; so that *Bar-êber* or *Bar-êberon* might signify “the people on the other side”, *i.e.*, “the people beyond the boundary, or across the stream.” Again, the Hebrew *bar* is a field, plain, country, and the Arabic *barr* is also a desert: so that a compound, *Bar-ber-ber*, or *Bar-berim*, might mean “people of the country or of the desert.” Now this latter etymology (people of the desert) was supported by the fact that Barbary, before it was inhabited by the Arabs, was almost depopulated, and also because all the oases of the desert were formerly peopled by Berbers. But another etymology might still be found. Among other names for Barbary, in vulgar Arabic, were *Belād-êl-Moghârebah*, “the country of the West”; and *El-Moghreb*, “the West,” *Berr-êl-Gharb*, and *El Gharb* respectively of the same meaning. Now, if the term *El-Gharb* was used to designate Barbary, might not this district also be called the *Berr*; and if so the inhabitants would be named *Bar-Berr*, “the people of the Berr.” The term *Kabylah* meant “men who lived in tribes,” from Arabic *kabâil*, a tribe, plural *kabyléh*; and *Tawârik* or *Tuârik*, is a plural formed from the Berber word *terkâ*, of the same meaning. Mr. Dendy was of opinion that the descendants of Cush peopled the North, and those of Ham the South, of Africa; but he admitted that this was a sweeping assertion; and he, Dr. CHARNOCK, agreed that it was such.

Sir HUNTER GIBB, Bart., read the following paper: *On the Paucity of Aboriginal Monuments in Canada.*

I have oftentimes been struck by the remarkable scarcity of monuments of an aboriginal character when residing in Canada, contrasted with the neighbouring, more southern territory of the American Union and the nations of Central America. Being familiar with most of the archæological discoveries such as we know them in Canada or the immediately bordering lands, such as the pictured rocks of Lake Superior, and the great mounds of Ohio, and other states contiguous to Canada, it has occurred to me there must be some good reason why architectural monuments are either wholly absent in Canada, or so scarce that as yet we know of very few or almost none of them.