

## CHAPTER 56

**The Mahasni - Sin Samani - The Bazaar - Moorish Saints - See the Ayana! - The Prickly Fig - Jewish Graves - The Place of Carcases - The Stable Boy - Horses of the Moslem - Dar Dwag.**

I was standing in the market-place, a spectator of much the same scene as I have already described, when a Moor came up to me and attempted to utter a few words in Spanish. He was a tall elderly man, with sharp but rather whimsical features, and might have been called good-looking, had he not been one-eyed, a very common deformity in this country. His body was swathed in an immense haik. Finding that I could understand Moorish,<sup>1</sup> he instantly began talking with immense volubility, and I soon learned that he was a Mahasni<sup>2</sup>. He expatiated diffusely on the beauties of Tangier, of which he said he was a native, and at last exclaimed, "Come, my sultan, come, my lord, and I will show you many things which will gladden your eyes, and fill your heart with sunshine; it were a shame in me, who have the advantage of being a son of Tangier, to permit a stranger who comes from an island in the great sea, as you tell me you do, for the purpose of seeing this blessed land, to stand here in the soc with no one to guide him. By Allah, it shall not be so. Make room for my sultan, make room for my lord," he continued, pushing his way through a crowd of men and children who had gathered round us; "it is his highness' pleasure to go with me. This way, my lord, this way"; and he led the way up the hill, walking at a tremendous rate and talking still faster. "This street," said he, "is the Siarrin,<sup>3</sup> and its like is not to be found in Tangier; observe how broad it is, even half the breadth of the soc itself; here are the shops of the most considerable merchants, where are sold precious articles of all kinds. Observe those two men, they are Algerines and good Moslems; they fled from Zair (ALGIERS) when the Nazarenes conquered it, not by force of fighting, not by valour, as you may well suppose, but by gold<sup>4</sup>; the Nazarenes only conquer by gold. The Moor is good, the Moor is strong, who so good and strong? but he fights not with gold, and therefore he lost Zair.

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<sup>1</sup> In his letter to Brandram from Tangiers of 4 September, Borrow wrote: 'I was glad to find that I could make myself very well understood with the Arabic of the East, notwithstanding that it differs in many points from the Mograbbian, or language of the West. One thing has particularly struck me; namely that the wild people, who arrive from the far interior and who perhaps have never before seen a European, invariably understand me best, and frequently in conversation designate objects with the same words as myself, which however are not intelligible to the Moors of the coast' [Darlow, 439]. As was his habit, Borrow made a thorough study of the local language while he visited. A 74-page 'Moorish Vocabulary' of his survives, done up in Tangier in August and September of 1839 [Knapp, II : 378; Hopkins, *GBB* II : 6, 107 & 119].

<sup>2</sup> A garrison soldier, or a government official [Burke, Glossary; Hopkins, *GBB* II : 6, 113f]

<sup>3</sup> Fraser, *GBB* II : 6, 55: Rue es-Siaghin, Silversmith Street, in those days Tangier's main street.

<sup>4</sup> Algiers was taken by the French from its Ottoman rulers in July 1830.



56.1 Tangier main street

"Observe you those men seated on the benches by those portals: they are Mahasniah, they are my brethren. See their haiks how white, see their turbans how white. O that you could see their swords in the day of war, for bright, bright are their swords. Now they bear no swords. Wherefore should they? Is there not peace in the land? See you him in the shop opposite? That is the Pasha of Tangier, that is the Hamed Sin Samani, the under Pasha of Tangier; the elder Pasha, my lord, is away on a journey; may Allah send him a safe return. Yes, that is Hamed; he sits in his hanutz<sup>5</sup> as were he nought more than a merchant, yet life and death are in his hands. There he dispenses justice, even as he dispenses the essence of the rose and cochineal, and powder of cannon and sulphur; and these two last he sells on the account of Abderrahman, my lord and sultan, for none can sell powder and the sulphur dust in his land but the sultan. Should you wish to purchase atar del nuar<sup>6</sup>, should you wish to purchase the essence of the rose, you must go to the hanutz of Sin Samani, for there only you will get it pure; you must receive it from no common Moor, but only from Hamed. May Allah bless Hamed. The Mahasniah, my brethren, wait to do his orders, for wherever sits the Pasha, there is a hall of judgment. See, now we are opposite the bazaar; beneath yon gate is the court of the bazaar; what will you not find in that bazaar? Silks from Fez you will find there; and if you wish for sibat, if you wish for slippers for your feet, you must seek them there, and there also are sold curious things from the towns of the Nazarenes. Those large houses on our left are habitations of Nazarene consuls; you have seen many such in your own land, therefore why should you stay to look at them? Do you not admire this street of the Siarrin? Whatever enters or goes out of Tangier by the land passes through this street. Oh, the riches that pass through this street! Behold those camels, what a long train; twenty, thirty, a whole cafila descending the street. Wullah<sup>7</sup>! I know those camels, I know the driver. Good day, O Sidi Hassim, in how many days from Fez? And now we are arrived at the wall, and we must pass under this gate. This gate is called Bab del Faz; we are now in the Soc de Barra<sup>8</sup>."

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<sup>5</sup> Burke [Glossary]: Shop. More correctly, *hanūt*.

<sup>6</sup> Burke [footnote to 769]: Essence of white flowers.

<sup>7</sup> Burke [Glossary]: Cafilā: a caravan. Wullah: By God.

<sup>8</sup> Burke [Glossary]: Barra is Arabic for 'outside', hence the market outside the walls. Budgett Meakin [*Life in Morocco*, 1905, chapter 15] observes that the gate in questions is also known as the *Bab el Fahs*, as simply the *Sok Gate*, or – to the English – as St Catherine's Gate.



56.2 *The Soc de Barra from the south*

[From: Letter to Brandram from Tangier of 4 September 1839, in: Darlow, 438f.]

A market is held on every Thursday and Sunday morning beyond the walls of Tangiers in a place called the SOC DE BARRA or outward market-place. Thither repair the Moors from the country, bringing with them corn, fruit and other articles, the productions of their fields and gardens for the consumption of the town. It is my delight to visit this spot which is on the side of a hill, and sitting down on a stone to gaze. What a singular scene presents itself to the view: a wild confusion of men and horses, of donkeys and camels, of countenances of all hues, swarthy and black, livid and pale, of turbans of all dyes, white, green and red, of Jewish skull-caps with here and there an Andalusian hat, of haiks and gaberdines, of arrogant Moors, indifferent Europeans and cringing Hebrews, the latter walking barefooted in the place where the corn is sold, which the Moor says is sacred and unfit to be pressed by the sandals of the dog-Jew. What a hubbub of sounds: the unearthly cry of the enormous camels and the neighing, braying, and bleating of other quadrupeds, mingled with the discordant jabber of various and strange tongues. I have been in many singular places in the course of my existence, but certainly in none more so than the SOC DE BARRA of Tangiers.



56.3 *The Soc de Barra from the walls*

**[Chapter 56 continued]**

The Soc de Barra is an open place beyond the upper wall of Tangier, on the side of the hill. The ground is irregular and steep; there are, however, some tolerably level spots. In this place, every Thursday and Sunday morning<sup>9</sup>, a species of mart is held, on which account it is called Soc de Barra, or the outward market-place. Here and there, near the town ditch, are subterranean pits with small orifices, about the circumference of a chimney, which are generally covered with a large stone, or stuffed with straw. These pits are granaries, in which wheat, barley, and other species of grain intended for sale are stored. On one side are two or three rude huts, or rather sheds, beneath which keep watch the guardians of the corn. It is very dangerous to pass over this hill at night, after the town gates are closed, as at that time numerous large and ferocious dogs are let loose, who would to a certainty pull down, and perhaps destroy, any stranger who should draw nigh. Half way up the hill are seen four white walls, inclosing a spot about ten feet square, where rest the bones of Sidi Mokhfidh, a saint of celebrity, who died some fifteen years ago. Here terminates the soc; the remainder of the hill is called El Kawar, or the place of graves, being the common burying ground of Tangier; the resting places of the dead are severally distinguished by a few stones arranged so as to form an oblong circle. Near Mokhfidh sleeps Sidi Gali; but the principal saint of Tangier lies interred on the top of the hill, in the centre of a small plain. A beautiful chapel or mosque, with vaulted roof, is erected there in his honour, which is in general adorned with banners of various dyes. The name of this saint is Mohammed el Hadge, and his memory is held in the utmost veneration in Tangier and its vicinity. His death occurred at the commencement of the present century.

These details I either gathered at the time or on subsequent occasions.



*56.4 The flagpoles of the consulates from the roof of the British consulate*

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<sup>9</sup> Capell Brooke [vol. 1, 172] records that the market days for the Outside Market were the same in 1831, but that Thursday was the principle day. He gives a detailed description of commodities, prices, and customs. Both Burke [footnote to 770] in 1892 and Budgett Meakin [*Life in Morocco*, chapter 15] in 1905 mention that the market days were still the same when they visited Tangier.

[From: Letter of 4 September 1839 to Brandram from Tangier, in: Darlow, 435]

Tangiers contains a population of about twenty thousand souls, of which at least one-third are Jews<sup>10</sup>: the Christian portion does not amount to about two hundred and fifty individuals, including the various consuls and their families. These latter gentlemen enjoy considerable authority in the town, so much so that in all disputes between Moors and Christians they alone are the judges, and their decision is law<sup>11</sup>; they are a very respectable body, being without one exception exceedingly well-bred gentlemanly individuals, and several of them, particularly Mr Hay, the British consul-general, possessed of high literary attainments. They enjoy very large salaries from their respective governments, varying from ten to sixteen thousand dollars per annum, so that, as all the necessaries and indeed many of the luxuries of life may be obtained at a very cheap price at Tangiers, they live in a state of magnificence more akin to that of petty kings than consuls in general. The most perfect harmony exists amongst them, and if, at any time, any little dispute occur between two or three of them, the rest instantly interfere and arrange matters<sup>12</sup>; and they are invariably united to a man against the slightest infringement of their privileges and immunities on the part of the Moorish Government, and a slight or injury to one is instantly resented by all. The duties of the greatest part of them are far from being onerous, more especially as each is provided with a vice-consul, who is also an exceedingly well-bred and very well-paid gentleman. They pass the greatest part of their time in cultivating their delicious gardens, which, surrounded by hedges of KSOB, which is a species of gigantic reed, cover the hills in the vicinity of Tangiers. Their houses, which are palace-looking buildings in the European taste and which contrast strangely with the mean huts of

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<sup>10</sup> Blanca Krauel Heredia [*GBB* II : 6, 77 note 34] disagrees as to the totals. According to her the population of Tangier was about 9,500, of which 2,500 were Jews. Richardson [vol. 1, ch. 2] bears these numbers out. He gives 10,000 inhabitants, of which 2,500 Jews, 1,400 blacks, 300 Rif Berbers and some 100 Christians.

<sup>11</sup> Blanca Krauel Heredia [*GBB* II : 6, p. 63 & note 22 on p. 76] points out that this is nonsense. At this time, the European consuls were not even allowed to *intervene* in a legal conflict between a Muslim and a Christian, let alone decide it.

<sup>12</sup> This may have been so by 1839, but in 1801, James Grey Jackson [*An Account of Timbuctoo and Houssa*, London 1820, p. 130f, Letter XV] had another story altogether. He wrote that ‘Tangier is the residence of the consuls-general of all the nations of Europe, who send occasionally ambassadors to the Court of Morocco; and these gentlemen generally act as envoys or ministers, as well as consuls. The English, French, Dutch, American, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, and Danish consuls reside here, some with their families, some without. I had not been long here before I perceived that the Moors of Tangier manifested an extraordinary contempt for Christians, the general respect which is shown to them at Mogodor, is unknown here. The reason is evident: the families of these gentlemen were at variance with each other, and the respective ladies did not visit one another. This circumstance was too well known to the Moors, and materially contributed to create among those people that contempt for the Christians, which [is due to all who have not charity enough] to maintain harmony in their own community. I was shocked to see so many amiable families at variance. I will not declare if it was pride, ambition, or contention for pre-eminence that produced this want of harmony; but it is most certain, that Christians, whose destiny it is to reside among Muhamedans, should have more than ordinary care to preserve that philanthropic disposition to each other, which carries with it a high recommendation, particularly in a country like *West Barbary*, where the gate of every tent is open to the largest, most disinterested, and unqualified hospitality, and where the sheik of every douar considers it his first and indispensable duty to provide food and rest to the needy traveller, and to the stranger at his gate.’

the Moors, are all surmounted by a flag-staff, which on gala days displays the banner of its respective nation. It is curious then to gaze from the castle hill on the town below; twelve banners are streaming in the wind of the Levant, which blows here almost incessantly. One is the bloody flag of the Moor, the natural master of the soil; but the eleven are of foreigners and Nazarenes, and are emblems of distant and different people. There floats the meteor banner of England beside the dirty rags of Spain and Portugal. There the pride of Naples, of Sardinia, and Sweden. There the angry tricolor; and not far from it the most beautiful of all, the Dannebrog of Denmark, a white cross gleaming consolingly amidst blood and fire, as when first seen by Waldemar; neighbour to it the Austrian; there the Orange; and yonder, far remote from all, like the country, the stripes and stars of the United States. Tangiers, with a Moorish and Jewish population, is not the city either of the Moor or the Jew: it is that of the consuls.

### [Chapter 56 continued]

On the north side of the soc, close by the town, is a wall with a gate. "Come," said the old Mahasni, giving a flourish with his hand; "Come, and I will show you the garden of a Nazarene consul." I followed him through the gate, and found myself in a spacious garden laid out in the European taste, and planted with lemon and pear trees, and various kinds of aromatic shrubs. It was, however, evident that the owner chiefly prided himself on his flowers, of which there were numerous beds. There was a handsome summerhouse, and art seemed to have exhausted itself in making the place complete.<sup>13</sup>

One thing was wanting, and its absence was strangely remarkable in a garden at this time of the year; scarcely a leaf was to be seen. The direst of all the plagues which devastated Egypt was now busy in this part of Africa - the locust was at work, and in no place more fiercely than in the particular spot where I was now standing. All around looked blasted. The trees were brown and bald as in winter. Nothing green save the fruits, especially the grapes, huge clusters of which were depending from the "parras"; for the locust touches not the fruit whilst a single leaf remains to be devoured. As we passed along the walks these horrible insects flew against us in every direction, and perished by hundreds beneath our feet. "See the ayanas<sup>14</sup>," said the old Mahasni, "and hear them eating. Powerful is the ayana, more powerful than the sultan or the consul. Should the sultan send all his Mahasniah against the ayana, should he send me with them, the ayana would say, 'Ha! ha!' Powerful is the ayana! He fears not the consul. A few weeks ago the consul said, 'I am stronger than the ayana, and I will extirpate him

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<sup>13</sup> The gardens of the Swedish consul, whom Capell Brooke [vol. 1, 294] identified in 1831 as Colonel Ehrinhoff. John Buffa [*Travels through the Empire of Morocco*, 1810, letter 1] wrote about this garden in 1806: 'Among the Consuls' villas, some of which are built near the spot where the Socco is held, that of the Swedish Consul is the most worthy of notice. The pleasure-ground is laid out with great taste in orange groves; the gardens abound in fruit-trees, and the Consul has made a curious botanical collection.' Richardson [vol. 1, chapter 1] writes: 'The Swedish Consul has a splendid garden, which is thrown open to the European residents.' Fraser [*GBB II* : 6, 55] observes that the garden today has been absorbed by the Mendoubia Park.

<sup>14</sup> Burke [Glossary]: 'Arab. According to Borrow, a locust. It is not an ordinary Arabic word, possibly of some North African dialect.'

from the land.' So he shouted through the city, 'O Tangerines! speed forth to fight the ayana, - destroy him in the egg; for know that whosoever shall bring me one pound weight of the eggs of the ayana, unto him will I give five reals of Spain; there shall be no ayanas this year.' So all Tangier rushed forth to fight the ayana, and to collect the eggs which the ayana had laid to hatch beneath the sand on the sides of the hills, and in the roads, and in the plains. And my own child, who is seven years old, went forth to fight the ayana, and he alone collected eggs to the weight of five pounds, eggs which the ayana had placed beneath the sand, and he carried them to the consul, and the consul paid the price. And hundreds carried eggs to the consul, more or less, and the consul paid them the price, and in less than three days the treasure chest of the consul was exhausted. And then he cried, 'Desist, O Tangerines! perhaps we have destroyed the ayana, perhaps we have destroyed them all.' Ha! ha! Look around you, and beneath you, and above you, and tell me whether the consul has destroyed the ayana. Oh, powerful is the ayana! More powerful than the consul, more powerful than the sultan and all his armies."

It will be as well to observe here, that within a week from this time all the locusts had disappeared, no one knew how, only a few stragglers remained. But for this providential deliverance, the fields and gardens in the vicinity of Tangier would have been totally devastated. These insects were of an immense size, and of a loathly aspect.



56.5 Prickly Pear

We now passed over the see to the opposite side, where stand the huts of the guardians. Here a species of lane presents itself, which descends to the sea-shore; it is deep and precipitous, and resembles a gully or ravine. The banks on either side are covered with the tree which bears the prickly fig, called in Moorish, *kermous del inde*.<sup>15</sup> There is

<sup>15</sup> Burke [footnote to 773]: More commonly known as the prickly pear (*Opuntia vulgaris*). Hopkins [*GBB* II : 6, 113f] explains that this Berber word for the *Opuntia ficus-indica*, or 'Indian fig', was deliberately adopted to denote the fruit, since the Arabic for fig, *tīna*, had become a common designation of the female genitals.

something wild and grotesque in the appearance of this tree or plant, for I know not which to call it. Its stem, though frequently of the thickness of a man's body, has no head, but divides itself, at a short distance from the ground, into many crooked branches, which shoot in all directions, and bear green and uncouth leaves, about half an inch in thickness, and which, if they resemble anything, present the appearance of the fore fins of a seal, and consist of multitudinous fibres. The fruit, which somewhat resembles a pear, has a rough tegument covered with minute prickles, which instantly enter the hand which touches them, however slightly, and are very difficult to extract. I never remember to have seen vegetation in ranker luxuriance than that which these fig-trees exhibited, nor upon the whole a more singular spot. "Follow me," said the Mahasni, "and I will show you something which you will like to see." So he turned to the left, leading the way by a narrow path up the steep bank, till we reached the summit of a hillock, separated by a deep ditch from the wall of Tangier. The ground was thickly covered with the trees already described, which spread their strange arms along the surface, and whose thick leaves crushed beneath our feet as we walked along. Amongst them I observed a large number of stone slabs lying horizontally; they were rudely scrawled over with odd characters, which I stooped down to inspect. "Are you Talib<sup>16</sup> enough to read those signs?" exclaimed the old Moor. "They are letters of the accursed Jews; this is their mearrah<sup>17</sup>, as they call it, and here they inter their dead. Fools, they trust in Muza<sup>18</sup>, when they might believe in Mohammed, and therefore their dead shall burn everlastingly in Jehinnim<sup>19</sup>. See, my sultan, how fat is the soil of this mearrah of the Jews; see what kermous grow here. When I was a boy I often came to the mearrah of the Jews to eat kermous in the season of their ripeness. The Moslem boys of Tangier love the kermous of the mearrah of the Jews; but the Jews will not gather them. They say that the waters of the springs which nourish the roots of these trees, pass among the bodies of their dead, and for that reason it is an abomination to taste of these fruits. Be this true, or be it not, one thing is certain, in whatever manner nourished, good are the kermous which grow in the mearrah of the Jews."

[From: Letter to Brandram from Tangier of 4 September 1839, in: Darlow, 437f.]

The state of the Jews in this country is in every respect pitiable. It is one of great thralldom, yet is nevertheless far superior to what it was previous to the accession of the present monarch Muley Abd al Rahman to the throne<sup>20</sup>; before that period they

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<sup>16</sup> Hopkins [*GBB* II : 6, 113]: literally a seeker, especially of truth. Thus student, savant, scholar.

<sup>17</sup> Literally the word means cave. Here it signifies 'graveyard'. 'Cave' was used to avoid a direct reference to death and corpses. [Hopkins, *GBB* II : 6, 113]

<sup>18</sup> Moses.

<sup>19</sup> Gehenna, Hell.

<sup>20</sup> Muley Abd-er-Rahman I Ben Hisham came to the throne in 1821 and reigned until his death in 1859. He succeeded his uncle, Muley Suleiman, who himself had assumed the throne in 1794 or 1795, after the death of his brother Muley Hisham, Abd-er-Rahman's father. The move was cautious, since his nephew was then a child, and the dangers of child-kings and regencies were immense. The remarkable thing is that Muley Suleiman by-passed his own children to return the throne to his nephew. [See Richardson, vol. 2, chapter 2 for details.]



enjoyed scarcely any of the rights of human beings, and were plundered, beaten, and maimed by the Moslems at pleasure.<sup>21</sup> As the Moors of Barbary are the most fanatic amongst the Mahometans, so are the Barbary Jews the most superstitious of their race, observing in the strictest manner the precepts of the Talmud and the sages<sup>22</sup>. A great many singular ceremonies and usages are to be found amongst them which are not observed by the Hebrews in any other part of the world, more especially at their wedding festivals which are carried on during a period of eleven days, during which the house which is open to all comers exhibits a continual scene of dancing, feasting, and revelry of every description. There is much at these marriages which has served to remind me of those of the Gitanos of Spain at which I have been frequently present, especially the riot and waste practised; for like the Gitano, the Barbary Jew frequently spends during the days of his wedding not only all that he is possessed of, but becomes an embarrassed man for the rest of his life by the sums which he is compelled to borrow in order not to incur the opprobrium of appearing mean on so solemn an occasion<sup>23</sup>. The books current among them are the Bible with the commentaries of the rabbins, parts of the Mischna, and the prayers for all the year; likewise, but more rare, the Zohar, which all speak of with unbounded veneration, though few pretend to understand it. I have not unfrequently seen at their synagogues the Bible Society's edition of the Psalms, and they appeared to prize it highly. (...)

I am by this time exceedingly well known at Tangiers, indeed I take the best means of being so by entering into discourse with every person. I believe I am liked by the Moors and am certainly treated with much respect by the Jews amongst whom a report prevails that I am a Polish rabbi. Shortly after my arrival I was visited by the most wealthy Jewish merchant of Tangiers, who pressed me in the strongest manner to take up my abode at his house, assuring me [that I should live] at free cost, and be provided with all the comforts and luxuries which could be procured.

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<sup>21</sup> All foreign travellers, both before and after Borrow, commented upon the nauseating treatment of the Jews by the Moroccans, and give horrid examples of the humiliations and abuse to which they were exposed. They were insulted in the street, stones were thrown at them, they were spat at, their women outraged, their property plundered with impunity. When passing in front of a Mosque, or through a Moorish street, even a Jewish consul had to take off his shoes and walk barefoot; they were forbidden to ride horses or mules; could not bear witness against a Muslim; never won a court case against a Muslim even if they were allowed to bring it; were forced to live in ghettos where they were locked up and night and massacred when convenient; were forced to wear distinctive clothing and to paint their houses yellow so as to be readily identifiable; and if at long last they had had enough and wished to emigrate, had to buy their freedom with a prohibitive tax to the sultan. They were, in short, treated like dogs.

<sup>22</sup> Buffa [*Travels through the Empire of Morocco*, 1810, letter 8] also observed that 'Men, women, and children, still preserve the same costume as in the time of Moses. You cannot conceive any thing more ridiculous than the tout ensemble of a Barbary Jewess in full dress. Every part of her apparel is rich, but is so heavy, that, to an European, nothing can appear more awkward and unbecoming. The Jewish ladies wear immense ear-rings. I have observed several full twelve inches in circumference, and of a proportionate thickness; and a few ornaments being affixed to the ear-ring, I leave you to judge what materials their ears must be made of, to bear such a weighty appendage.' Capell Brooke [vol. 1, chapter 8, 146], however, paints a more positive picture of the looks of the richer Jewish women.

<sup>23</sup> Buffa [*Travels through the Empire of Morocco*, 1810, letter 8]: 'The Jews marry extremely young. It is not at all unusual to see a married couple, whose united ages do not exceed twenty-two or twenty-three years.'

**[Chapter 56 continued]**

We returned to the lane by the same path by which we had come: as we were descending it he said, "Know, my sultan, that the name of the place where we now are, and which you say you like much, is Dar Sinah (THE HOUSE OF THE TRADES<sup>24</sup>). You will ask me why it bears that name, as you see neither house nor man, neither Moslem, Nazarene, nor Jew, only our two selves; I will tell you, my sultan, for who can tell you better than myself? Learn, I pray you, that Tangier was not always what it is now, nor did it occupy always the place which it does now. It stood yonder (pointing to the east) on those hills above the shore, and ruins of houses are still to be seen there, and the spot is called Old Tangier. So in the old time, as I have heard say, this Dar Sinah was a street, whether without or within the wall matters not, and there resided men of all trades; smiths of gold and silver, and iron, and tin, and artificers of all kinds: you had only to go to the Dar Sinah if you wished for anything wrought, and there instantly you would find a master of the particular craft. My sultan tells me he likes the look of Dar Sinah at the present day; truly I know not why, especially as the kermous are not yet in their ripeness nor fit to eat. If he likes Dar Sinah now, how would my sultan have liked it in the olden time, when it was filled with gold and silver, and iron and tin, and was noisy with the hammers, and the masters and the cunning men? We are now arrived at the Chali del Bahar (seashore).<sup>25</sup> Take care, my sultan, we tread upon bones."

We had emerged from the Dar Sinah, and the seashore was before us; on a sudden we found ourselves amongst a multitude of bones of all kinds of animals, and seemingly of all dates; some being blanched with time and exposure to sun and wind, whilst to others the flesh still partly clung; whole carcasses were here, horses, asses, and even the uncouth remains of a camel. Gaunt dogs were busy here, growling, tearing, and gnawing; amongst whom, unintimidated, stalked the carrion vulture, fiercely battenning and even disputing with the brutes the garbage; whilst the crow hovered overhead and croaked wistfully, or occasionally perched upon some upturned rib bone. "See," said the Mahasni, "the kawar of the animals."<sup>26</sup> My sultan has seen the kawar of the Moslems and the mearrah of the Jews; and he sees here the kawar of the animals. All the animals which die in Tangier by the hand of God, horse, dog, or camel, are brought to this spot, and here they putrefy or are devoured by the birds of the heaven or the wild creatures that prowl on the chali. Come, my sultan, it is not good to remain long in this place."

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<sup>24</sup> Burke [Glossary and footnote to 775] points out that the translation 'House of the arts' or 'House of the handicrafts' would be better.

<sup>25</sup> Burke [Glossary]: '*Bahar* is "the sea" in Arabic; *shát* is "the shore." *Chali* is possibly a misprint for this.'

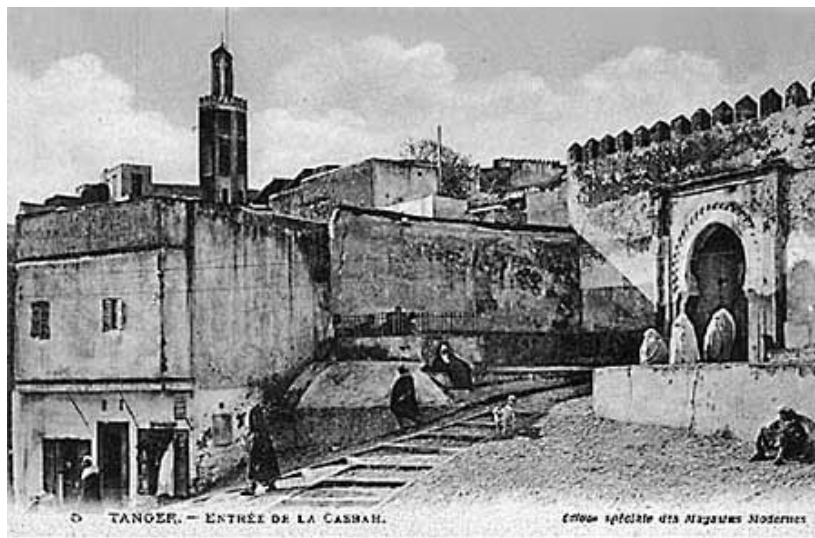
<sup>26</sup> Burke [Glossary]: An uncommon word, meaning cemetery, prob. derived from *ḵabr*, tomb.

We were preparing to leave the spot, when we heard a galloping down the Dar Sinah, and presently a horse and rider darted at full speed from the mouth of the lane and appeared upon the strand; the horseman, when he saw us, pulled up his steed with much difficulty, and joined us. The horse was small but beautiful, a sorrel with long mane and tail; had he been hoodwinked he might perhaps have been mistaken for a Cordovese jaca; he was broad-chested, and rotund in his hind quarters, and possessed much of the plumpness and sleekness which distinguish that breed, but looking in his eyes you would have been undeceived in a moment; a wild savage fire darted from the restless orbs, and so far from exhibiting the docility of the other noble and loyal animal, he occasionally plunged desperately, and could scarcely be restrained by a strong curb and powerful arm from resuming his former headlong course. The rider was a youth, apparently about eighteen, dressed as a European, with a Montero cap on his head: he was athletically built, but with lengthy limbs, his feet, for he rode without stirrups or saddle, reaching almost to the ground; his complexion was almost as dark as that of a Mulatto; his features very handsome, the eyes particularly so, but filled with an expression which was bold and bad; and there was a disgusting look of sensuality about the mouth. He addressed a few words to the Mahasni, with whom he seemed to be well acquainted, inquiring who I was. The old man answered, "O Jew, my sultan understands our speech, thou hadst better address thyself to him." The lad then spoke to me in Arabic, but almost instantly dropping that language proceeded to discourse in tolerable French. "I suppose you are French," said he with much familiarity, "shall you stay long in Tangier?" Having received an answer, he proceeded, "as you are an Englishman, you are doubtless fond of horses, know, therefore, whenever you are disposed for a ride, I will accompany you, and procure you horses. My name is Ephraim Fragey: I am stable-boy to the Neapolitan consul, who prizes himself upon possessing the best horses in Tangier; you shall mount any you please. Would you like to try this little aoud (STALLION)?" I thanked him, but declined his offer for the present, asking him at the same time how he had acquired the French language, and why he, a Jew, did not appear in the dress of his brethren? "I am in the service of a consul," said he, "and my master obtained permission that I might dress myself in this manner; and as to speaking French, I have been to Marseilles and Naples, to which last place I conveyed horses, presents from the Sultan. Besides French, I can speak Italian." He then dismounted, and holding the horse firmly by the bridle with one hand, proceeded to undress himself, which having accomplished, he mounted the animal and rode into the water. The skin of his body was much akin in colour to that of a frog or toad, but the frame was that of a young Titan. The horse took to the water with great unwillingness, and at a small distance from the shore commenced struggling with his rider, whom he twice dashed from his back; the lad, however, clung to the bridle, and detained the animal. All his efforts, however, being unavailing to ride him deeper in, he fell to washing him strenuously with his hands, then leading him out, he dressed himself and returned by the way he came.

"Good are the horses of the Moslems," said my old friend, "where will you find such? They will descend rocky mountains at full speed and neither trip nor fall, but you must be cautious with the horses of the Moslems, and treat them with kindness, for the horses of the Moslems are proud, and they like not being slaves. When they are young and first mounted, jerk not their mouths with your bit, for be sure if you do they will kill you; sooner or later, you will perish beneath their feet. Good are our horses; and good our riders, yea, very good are the Moslems at mounting the horse; who are like them? I once saw a Frank rider compete with a Moslem on this beach, and at first the Frank rider had

it all his own way, and he passed the Moslem, but the course was long, very long, and the horse of the Frank rider, which was a Frank also, panted; but the horse of the Moslem panted not, for he was a Moslem also, and the Moslem rider at last gave a cry and the horse sprang forward and he overtook the Frank horse, and then the Moslem rider stood up in his saddle. How did he stand? Truly he stood on his head, and these eyes saw him; he stood on his head in the saddle as he passed the Frank rider; and he cried ha! ha! as he passed the Frank rider; and the Moslem horse cried ha! ha! as he passed the Frank breed, and the Frank lost by a far distance. Good are the Franks; good their horses; but better are the Moslems, and better the horses of the Moslems."

We now directed our steps towards the town, but not by the path we came: turning to the left under the hill of the mearrah, and along the strand, we soon came to a rudely paved way with a steep ascent, which wound beneath the wall of the town to a gate, before which, on one side, were various little pits like graves, filled with water or lime. "This is Dar Dwag,"<sup>27</sup> said the Mahasni; "this is the house of the bark, and to this house are brought the hides; all those which are prepared for use in Tangier are brought to this house, and here they are cured with lime, and bran, and bark, and herbs. And in this Dar Dwag there are one hundred and forty pits; I have counted them myself; and there were more which have now ceased to be, for the place is very ancient. And these pits are hired not by one, nor by two, but by many people, and whosoever list can rent one of these pits and cure the hides which he may need; but the owner of all is one man, and his name is Cado Ableque. And now my sultan has seen the house of the bark, and I will show him nothing more this day; for to-day is Youm al Jumal (FRIDAY), and the gates will be presently shut whilst the Moslems perform their devotions. So I will accompany my sultan to the guest house, and there I will leave him for the present."



*56.6 Entrance to the Tangier Kashbah*

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<sup>27</sup> Burke [Glossary]: 'Dar-divag, Dar dab-bagh, the house of the bark, or tannery.' The bark of certain trees – in Europe mainly oak - is essential in the process of tanning leather.

We accordingly passed through a gate, and ascending a street found ourselves before the mosque where I had stood in the morning; in another minute or two we were at the door of Joanna Correa. I now offered my kind guide a piece of silver as a remuneration for his trouble, whereupon he drew himself up and said:-

"The silver of my sultan I will not take, for I consider that I have done nothing to deserve it. We have not yet visited all the wonderful things of this blessed town. On a future day I will conduct my sultan to the castle of the governor, and to other places which my sultan will be glad to see; and when we have seen all we can, and my sultan is content with me, if at any time he see me in the soc of a morning, with my basket in my hand, and he see nothing in that basket, then is my sultan at liberty as a friend to put grapes in my basket, or bread in my basket, or fish or meat in my basket. That will I not refuse of my sultan, when I shall have done more for him than I have now. But the silver of my sultan will I not take now nor at any time." He then waved his hand gently and departed.

[From: letter of 4 September 1839 to Brandram from Tangiers, in: Darlow, 434f.]<sup>28</sup>

The castle of the Governor stands at the northern extremity of Tangiers, on the top of a high eminence which towers above the town; its outer walls embrace a very large portion of ground, which is principally occupied by large edifices in the greatest dilapidation and decay. The castle itself when I visited it was undergoing repair, during the absence of the pasha who has since returned. All its inlets and outlets and also the greatest part of the apartments were choked up with ruins, rubbish, and mortar. The courtyard however is very fine, and is adorned with a fountain distilling limpid water, which is a rare spectacle in Tangiers where water is not in abundance. At each end of this court there is a hall of audience, highly magnificent in its way, with a roof of rich fretted work in the old Moorish taste, such as I have seen in the Alhambra of Granada, and in that truly fairy palace the Alcazar of Seville.

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<sup>28</sup> Although there is no trace of it in *The Bible in Spain*, it would seem that the old soldier did guide Borrow around the Governor's palace at some moment between 9 August 1839, when the narrative of the book ends (see next chapter), and 4 September 1839 when Borrow wrote the letter from which the below description is taken.