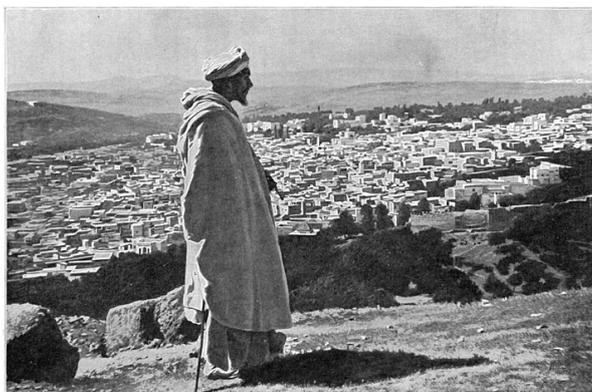


## CHAPTER 57

**Strange Trio - The Mulatto - The Peace-offering - Moors of Granada - Vive la Guadeloupo - The Moors - Pascual Fava - Blind Algerine - The Retreat.**



*57.1 View of a Moroccan city*

Three men were seated in the wustuddur<sup>1</sup> of Joanna Correa, when I entered; singular-looking men they all were, though perhaps three were never gathered together more unlike to each other in all points. The first on whom I cast my eye was a man about sixty, dressed in a grey kerseymere coat with short lappets, yellow waistcoat, and wide coarse canvas trousers; upon his head was a very broad dirty straw hat, and in his hand he held a thick cane with ivory handle; his eyes were bleared and squinting, his face rubicund, and his nose much carbuncled. Beside him sat a good-looking black, who perhaps appeared more negro than he really was, from the circumstance of his being dressed in spotless white jean - jerkin, waistcoat, and pantaloons being all of that material: his head gear consisted of a blue Montero cap. His eyes sparkled like diamonds, and there was an indescribable expression of good humour and fun upon his countenance. The third man was a Mulatto, and by far the most remarkable personage of the group: he might be between thirty and forty; his body was very long, and though uncouthly put together, exhibited every mark of strength and vigour; it was cased in a feriou of red wool, a kind of garment which descends below the hips. His long muscular and hairy arms were naked from the elbow, where the sleeves of the feriou terminate; his under limbs were short in comparison with his body and arms; his legs were bare, but he wore blue kandrisa as far as the knee; every features of his face was ugly, exceedingly and bitterly ugly, and one of his eyes was sightless, being covered with a white film. By his side on the ground was a large barrel, seemingly a water-cask, which he occasionally seized with a finger and thumb, and waved over his head as if it had been a quart pot. Such was the trio who now occupied the wustuddur of Joanna Correa: and I had scarcely time to remark what I have just recorded, when that good lady entered from a back court with her handmaid Johar, or the pearl, an ugly fat Jewish girl with an immense mole on her cheek.

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<sup>1</sup> The patio in the middle of the house.

"QUE DIOS REMATE TU NOMBRE," exclaimed the Mulatto; "may Allah blot out your name, Joanna, and may he likewise blot out that of your maid Johar. It is more than fifteen minutes that I have been seated here, after having poured out into the tinaja<sup>2</sup> the water which I brought from the fountain, and during all that time I have waited in vain for one single word of civility from yourself or from Johar. USTED NO TIENE MODO, you have no manner with you, nor more has Johar. This is the only house in Tangier where I am not received with fitting love and respect, and yet I have done more for you than for any other person. Have I not filled your tinaja with water when other people have gone without a drop? When even the consul and the interpreter of the consul had no water to slake their thirst, have you not had enough to wash your wustuddur? And what is my return? When I arrive in the heat of the day, I have not one kind word spoken to me, nor so much as a glass of makhiah offered to me; must I tell you all that I do for you, Joanna? Truly I must, for you have no manner with you. Do I not come every morning just at the third hour; and do I not knock at your door; and do you not arise and let me in, and then do I not knead your bread in your presence, whilst you lie in bed, and because I knead it, is not yours the best bread in Tangier? For am I not the strongest man in Tangier, and the most noble also?" Here he brandished his barrel over his head, and his face looked almost demoniacal. "Hear me, Joanna," he continued, "you know that I am the strongest man in Tangier, and I tell you again, for the thousandth time, that I am the most noble. Who are the consuls? Who is the Pasha? They are pashas and consuls now, but who were their fathers? I know not, nor do they. But do I not know who my fathers were? Were they not Moors of Garnata (GRANADA), and is it not on that account that I am the strongest man in Tangier? Yes, I am of the old Moors of Garnata<sup>3</sup>, and my family has lived here, as is well known, since Garnata was lost to the Nazarenes, and now I am the only one of my family of the blood of the old Moors in all this land, and on that account I am of nobler blood than the sultan, for the sultan is not of the blood of the Moors of Garnata. Do you laugh, Joanna? Does your maid Johar laugh? Am I not Hammin Widdir, EL HOMBRE MAS VALIDO DE TANGER? And is it not true that I am of the blood of the Moors of Garnata? Deny it, and I will kill you both, you and your maid Johar."

"You have been eating hashish and majoon<sup>4</sup>, Hammin," said Joanna Correa, "and the Shaitan<sup>5</sup> has entered into you, as he but too frequently does. I have been busy, and so has Johar, or we should have spoken to you before; however, mai doorshee (IT DOES

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<sup>2</sup> Burke [Glossary]: The Spanish Word for a large earthen jar.

<sup>3</sup> The Moors of the kingdom of Granada were expelled from Spain in various waves, starting with the Christian conquest of the city from the last Muslim king in 1492, and ending with the final expulsion of all 'Moriscos' (Moorish descendants) in 1609. Most exiles did indeed settle in North Africa, be it in Morocco, Algiers or Tunis.

<sup>4</sup> Even Burke, who was well-versed in Arabic, could not explain this word. Since then, however, lots of information on narcotics has become available on the internet, where we learn that *majoon* is a Arabic derivative from the verb *Ajana*, which means literally 'paste made of different ingredients'. Moroccan Majoon typically contains marihuana tops, raisins, walnuts, spices like nutmeg, anis and ginger, honey, water and butter. If Borrow did not see the substance in Tangier, he may have learned of it from an 1840 publication by the Irish doctor William Brooke O'Shaughnessy.

<sup>5</sup> Demon, devil; closely related to 'Satan'.

NOT SIGNIFY), I know how to pacify you now and at all times, will you take some gin-bitters, or a glass of common makhiah?"<sup>6</sup>

"May you burst, O Joanna," said the Mulatto, "and may Johar also burst; I mean, may you both live many years, and know neither pain nor sorrow. I will take the gin-bitters, O Joanna, because they are stronger than the makhiah, which always appears to me like water; and I like not water, though I carry it. Many thanks to you, Joanna, here is health to you, Joanna, and to this good company."

She had handed him a large tumbler filled to the brim; he put it to his nostrils, snuffled in the flavour, and then applying it to his mouth, removed it not whilst one drop of the fluid remained. His features gradually relaxed from their former angry expression, and looking particularly amiable at Joanna, he at last said:

"I hope that within a little time, O Joanna, you will be persuaded that I am the strongest man in Tangier, and that I am sprung from the blood of the Moors of Garnata, as then you will no longer refuse to take me for a husband, you and your maid Johar, and to become Moors. What a glory to you, after having been married to a Genoui, and given birth to Genouillos,<sup>7</sup> to receive for a husband a Moor like me, and to bear him children of the blood of Garnata. What a glory too for Johar, how much better than to marry a vile Jew, even like Hayim Ben Atar, or your cook Sabia, both of whom I could strangle with two fingers, for am I not Hammin Widdir Moro de Garnata, EL HOMBRE MAS VALIDO DE TANGER?" He then shouldered his barrel and departed.

"Is that Mulatto really what he pretends to be?" said I to Joanna; "is he a descendant of the Moors of Granada?"

"He always talks about the Moors of Granada when he is mad with majoon or aguardiente," interrupted, in bad French, the old man whom I have before described, and in the same croaking voice which I had heard chanting in the morning. "Nevertheless it may be true, and if he had not heard something of the kind from his parents, he would never have imagined such a thing, for he is too stupid. As I said before, it is by no means impossible: many of the families of Granada settled down here when their town was taken by the Christians, but the greater part went to Tunis. When I was there, I lodged in the house of a Moor who called himself Zegri, and was always talking of Granada and the things which his forefathers had done there. He would moreover sit for hours singing romances of which I understood not one word, praised be the mother of God, but which he said all related to his family; there were hundreds of that name in Tunis, therefore why should not this Hammin, this drunken water-carrier, be a Moor of Granada also? He is ugly enough to be emperor of all the Moors. O the accursed canaille, I have lived amongst them for my sins these eight years, at Oran and here. Monsieur, do you not consider it to be a hard case for an old man like myself, who am a Christian, to live amongst a race who know not God, nor Christ, nor anything holy?"

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<sup>6</sup> The common Moroccan word for brandy, arrack, made especially by Jews and Christians, often made of figs. [Burke, Glossary; Hopkins, *GBB* II : 6, 111.]

<sup>7</sup> Burke [Glossary]: Moorish for someone from Genua. Genouillos is de diminutive.

"What do you mean," said I, "by asserting that the Moors know not God? There is no people in the world who entertain sublimer notions of the uncreated eternal God than the Moors, and no people have ever shown themselves more zealous for his honour and glory; their very zeal for the glory of God has been and is the chief obstacle to their becoming Christians. They are afraid of compromising his dignity by supposing that he ever condescended to become man. And with respect to Christ, their ideas even of him are much more just than those of the Papists, they say he is a mighty prophet, whilst, according to the others, he is either a piece of bread or a helpless infant. In many points of religion the Moors are wrong, dreadfully wrong, but are the Papists less so? And one of their practices sets them immeasurably below the Moors in the eyes of any unprejudiced person: they bow down to idols, Christian idols if you like, but idols still, things graven of wood and stone and brass, and from these things, which can neither hear, nor speak, nor feel, they ask and expect to obtain favours."



57.2 City walls

[From: Letter to Brandram from Tangier of 4 September 1839, in: Darlow, 436f.]<sup>8</sup>

Were it possible for any unprejudiced and rational being to doubt for a moment that the religion of Mahomet is a false one and uncalculated to promote the moral and political improvement of mankind, a slight glance at this Mahometan country would be sufficient to undeceive him. The Moors are the most fanatic of all Mahometans, and consider the Turks, Persians, and other followers of the Desert-Prophet, as seceders from the severe precepts of their religion. What is their state? They are governed in their towns and provinces by arbitrary despots called Pashas, who are accountable to no person but the Emperor, whose authority they frequently set at

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<sup>8</sup> For unknown reasons, these less enthusiastic views on the Muslim religion, which Borrow also harboured, were left out of the text of *The Bible in Spain*.

nought, and who is himself a despot of the most terrible description. Their lives, properties, and families are perfectly at the disposal of these men, who decapitate, imprison, plunder, and violate as their inclination tempts them. In this country it is every person's interest, however wealthy, to exhibit an appearance of abject poverty; as the suspicion of wealth instantly produces from the Sultan or Pasha a demand for some large sum, which must be forthwith paid or decapitation or torture are the severe alternatives. Here justice is indeed an empty name, the most atrocious criminals escaping unpunished if able to offer a bribe sufficient to tempt the cupidity of those whose duty it is to administer it. Here money is sought after with insatiable avidity by great and small, for its own sake, and not for what it will produce. It is piled up in the treasury or is buried underground, according to the situation in life of its possessors. In this land there is neither public peace or individual security; no one travels a league but at the extreme danger of his life, and war is continually raging not against foreign enemies but amongst the people themselves. The Sultan collects armies and marches against this or that province, which is sure to be in a state of rebellion; if successful, a thousand heads are borne before him on his return in ghastly triumph on the lances of his warriors; and if vanquished, his own not unfrequently blackens in the sun above the gate of some town or village. Here truth and good faith are utterly unknown, friendship exists not, nor kindly social intercourse; here pleasure is sought in the practice of abominations or in the chewing of noxious and intoxicating drugs; here men make a pomp and a parade of their infamy; and the cavalcade which escorts with jealous eye the wives and concubines of the potentate on a march or journey is also charged with the care of his ZAMMINS, the unfortunate youths who administer to his fouler passions. Such is the moral and the political state of Morocco! Such are the fruits of a religion which is not that of the Bible.

**[Chapter 57 continued]**

"VIVE LA FRANCE, VIVE LA GUADELOUPE," said the black, with a good French accent. "In France and in Guadeloupe there is no superstition, and they pay as much regard to the Bible as to the Koran; I am now learning to read in order that I may understand the writings of Voltaire, who, as I am told, has proved that both the one and the other were written with the sole intention of deceiving mankind<sup>9</sup>. O VIVE LA FRANCE! where will you find such an enlightened country as France; and where will you find such a plentiful country as France? Only one in the world, and that is Guadeloupe. Is it not so, Monsieur Pascual? Were you ever at Marseilles? *Ah quel bon pays est celui-la pour les vivres, pour les petits poulets, pour les poulardes, pour les perdrix, pour les perdreaux, pour les alouettes, pour les becasses, pour les becassines, enfin, pour tout.*"

"Pray, sir, are you a cook?" demanded I.

*"Monsieur, je le suis pour vous rendre service, mon nom c'est gerard, et j'ai l'honneur d'etre chef de cuisine chez monsieur le consul hollandois. a present je prie permission de vous saluer; il faut que j'aille a la maison pour faire le diner de mon maitre."*

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<sup>9</sup> Much as this notion is here ascribed to Voltaire, it smacks, once again, very much of Count Volney's 'Les Ruines' (see footnote 20 to chapter 3).

At four I went to dine with the British consul. Two other English gentlemen were present, who had arrived at Tangier from Gibraltar about ten days previously for a short excursion, and were now detained longer than they wished by the Levant wind. They had already visited the principal towns in Spain, and proposed spending the winter either at Cadiz or Seville. One of them, Mr. -,<sup>10</sup> struck me as being one of the most remarkable men I had ever conversed with; he travelled not for diversion nor instigated by curiosity, but merely with the hope of doing spiritual good, chiefly by conversation. The consul soon asked me what I thought of the Moors and their country. I told him that what I had hitherto seen of both highly pleased me. He said that were I to live amongst them ten years, as he had done, he believed I should entertain a very different opinion; that no people in the world were more false and cruel; that their government was one of the vilest description, with which it was next to an impossibility for any foreign power to hold amicable relations, as it invariably acted with bad faith, and set at nought the most solemn treaties<sup>11</sup>. That British property and interests were every day subjected to ruin and spoliation, and British subjects exposed to unheard-of vexations, without the slightest hope of redress being afforded, save recourse was had to force, the only argument to which the Moors were accessible. He added, that towards the end of the preceding year an atrocious murder had been perpetrated in Tangier: a Genoese family of three individuals had perished, all of whom were British subjects, and entitled to the protection of the British flag. The murderers were known, and the principal one was even now in prison for the fact, yet all attempts to bring him to condign punishment had hitherto proved abortive, as he was a Moor, and his victims Christians. Finally he cautioned me, not to take walks beyond the wall unaccompanied by a soldier, whom he offered to provide for me should I desire it, as otherwise I incurred great risk of being ill-treated by the Moors of the interior whom I might meet, or perhaps murdered, and he instanced the case of a British officer who not long since had been murdered on the beach for no other reason than being a Nazarene, and appearing in a Nazarene dress. He at length introduced the subject of the Gospel, and I was pleased to learn that, during his residence in Tangier, he had distributed a considerable quantity of Bibles amongst the natives in the Arabic language, and that many of the learned men, or Talibs, had read the holy volume with great interest, and that by this distribution, which, it is true, was effected with much caution, no angry or unpleasant feeling had been excited. He finally asked whether I had come with the intention of circulating the Scripture amongst the Moors.

I replied that I had no opportunity of doing so, as I had not one single copy either in the Arabic language or character. That the few Testaments which were in my possession were in the Spanish language, and were intended for circulation amongst the Christians of Tangier, to whom they might be serviceable, as they all understood the language.

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<sup>10</sup> The identity of this gentleman, who managed to impress George Borrow, is unknown.

<sup>11</sup> This sentence was quoted 15 years later in James Richardson's *Travels in Morocco*, vol. 1, chapter 1, in a long diatribe upon the misgovernment and disloyalty of the Moroccan kings.

It was night, and I was seated in the wustuddur of Joanna Correa, in company with Pascual Fava the Genoese. The old man's favourite subject of discourse appeared to be religion, and he professed unbounded love for the Saviour, and the deepest sense of gratitude for his miraculous atonement for the sins of mankind. I should have listened to him with pleasure had he not smelt very strongly of liquor, and by certain incoherence of language and wildness of manner given indications of being in some degree the worse for it. Suddenly two figures appeared beneath the doorway; one was that of a bare-headed and bare-legged Moorish boy of about ten years of age, dressed in a gelaba<sup>12</sup>; he guided by the hand an old man, whom I at once recognised as one of the Algerines, the good Moslems of whom the old Mahasni had spoken in terms of praise in the morning whilst we ascended the street of the Siarrin. He was very short of stature and dirty in his dress; the lower part of his face was covered with a stubbly white beard; before his eyes he wore a large pair of spectacles, from which he evidently received but little benefit, as he required the assistance of the guide at every step. The two advanced a little way into the wustuddur and there stopped. Pascual Fava no sooner beheld them, than assuming a jovial air he started nimbly up, and leaning on his stick, for he had a bent leg, limped to a cupboard, out of which he took a bottle and poured out a glass of wine, singing in the broken kind of Spanish used by the Moors of the coast:

"Argelino,	(Algerine,
Moro fino,	Moor so keen,
No beber vino,	No drink wine,
Ni comer tocino."	No taste swine.)

He then handed the wine to the old Moor, who drank it off, and then, led by the boy, made for the door without saying a word.

"HADE MUSHE HALAL," (that is not lawful,) said I to him with a loud voice.

"CUL SHEE HALAL," (everything is lawful,) said the old Moor, turning his sightless and spectacled eyes in the direction from which my voice reached him. "Of everything which God has given, it is lawful for the children of God to partake."

"Who is that old man?" said I to Pascual Fava, after the blind and the leader of the blind had departed. "Who is he!" said Pascual; "who is he! He is a merchant now, and keeps a shop in the Siarrin, but there was a time when no bloodier pirate sailed out of Algier. That old blind wretch has cut more throats than he has hairs in his beard. Before the French took the place he was the rais or captain of a frigate, and many was the poor Sardinian vessel which fell into his hands. After that affair he fled to Tangier, and it is said that he brought with him a great part of the booty which he had amassed in former times. Many other Algerines came hither also, or to Tetuan, but he is the strangest guest of them all. He keeps occasionally very extraordinary company for a Moor, and is rather over intimate with the Jews. Well, that's no business of mine; only let him look to himself. If the Moors should once suspect him, it were all over with him. Moors and Jews, Jews and Moors! Oh my poor sins, my poor sins, that brought me to live amongst them!

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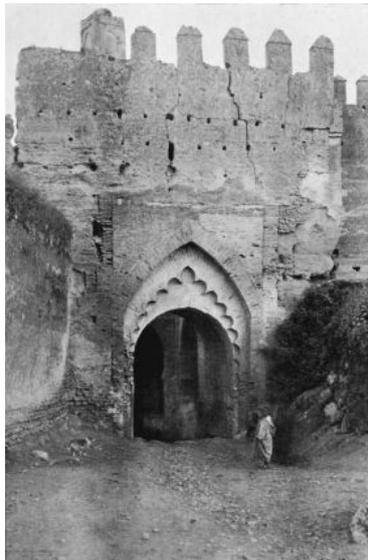
<sup>12</sup> Burke [Glossary]: Gelaba. A long cloak. In Arabic *jilbāb*.

"Ave Maris stella,  
Dei Mater alma,  
Atque semper virgo,  
Felix coeli porta!"<sup>13</sup>

He was proceeding in this manner when I was startled by the sound of a musket.

"That is the retreat," said Pascual Fava. "It is fired every night in the soc at half-past eight, and it is the signal for suspending all business, and shutting up. I am now going to close the doors, and whosoever knocks, I shall not admit them till I know their voice. Since the murder of the poor Genoese last year, we have all been particularly cautious."

Thus had passed Friday, the sacred day of the Moslems, and the first which I had spent in Tangier<sup>14</sup>. I observed that the Moors followed their occupations as if the day had nothing particular in it. Between twelve and one, the hour of prayer in the mosque, the gates of the town were closed, and no one permitted either to enter or go out. There is a tradition, current amongst them, that on this day, and at this hour, their eternal enemies, the Nazarenes, will arrive to take possession of their country; on which account they hold themselves prepared against a surprisal.<sup>15</sup>



*57.3 Tangier city gate*

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<sup>13</sup> Burke [footnote to 791]: 'Hail, star of the sea, benign Mother of God, and for ever virgin, blessed gate of heaven.' A Latin vesper hymn especially popular in the Middle Ages.

<sup>14</sup> The day was Friday 9 August 1839.

<sup>15</sup> Capell Brooke, vol. 1, 345, records the same tradition, but also a story of how the Portuguese one day introduced crates full of men into the town of Ceuta, in Trojan Horse style. When the whole populace was at the mosque during Friday prayer, the Christians jumped out at seized the forts and the town. From that time on, all gates were closed at Friday noon.