

# Former Minister of War to Sultan Talks About Future of Morocco



SULTAN'S SOLDIERS RECEIVING PAY.



ONE OF THE SULTAN'S SOLDIERS.

there from Tangier will be from \$30 to \$50 a day. I thought of making the trip, expecting to spend a month on the way there and back. One of Cook's dragoons said that I should have to pay \$30 per day for all the time of my absence, making my one month's journey, including a stay of two weeks in Fez, cost me \$1,050. For this trip I should have to employ a soldier or so, and would have required about three mules to carry my baggage, as well as mules for myself and guide and cook. I should have had to camp out every night, and would have been lucky had I reached Fez in one week. In connection with the American legation at Tangier I found a dragoon who offered to give me the same accommodations for \$50. At the same time there was great danger of being captured by brigands on the way and held for ransom; and, on the whole, I did not think the trip worth the risk.

will probably have no objections. When one or other of the great powers of Europe takes possession of Morocco, and I doubt not this will soon come to pass, one of the first things will be the building of a railroad from Tangier to Fez. If the French should be awarded the protection of the country they probably will extend their railroad which now goes from Tlemcen to the capital of Morocco. Neither route offers any great physical difficulties, and both probably would pay. A short line from Fez to one of the ports of the Atlantic and from Marrakech to the same coast eventually would be profitable. The Moors and Berbers will object to such roads at first, but they soon will learn their value. Last year there was a famine in and about Fez and a large part of the flour consumed had to be imported. That which cost \$10 a sack at the seaports sold for more than \$15 a sack in Fez, the extra \$5 going to transportation. Had there been a railroad that flour would not have cost more than 35 cents per sack for freight, and it could have been sold for \$10.50 in Fez, making a clear saving to the people of \$5.50 on that amount of their bread bills.

long time, practically controlled Morocco. He was in high favor until the rebellion of the so-called Son of the She Ass, who claimed to be the elder brother of the sultan, but after that became unpopular and was forced to resign. His excuse for leaving Fez was that he wanted to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. He went there via the Mediterranean, and after coming back settled in Tangier, becoming a British subject and thereby protecting himself against any possible persecution from his enemies who had taken his place in the favor of the sultan.

I understand that Menebbi saved a lot of money while he was one of the sultan's chief officials, and that, instead of burying it in the walls of his house at Fez or under its floors, as sometimes is done by the Moors, he deposited it in the Bank of England to his own draft. This prevented his enemies getting possession of his fortune. After his settlement in Tangier he withdrew the money, and he now has invested a great part of it in a large apartment house and other buildings there. His own home is one of the finest in the city, and I doubt not it will compare favorably with any private home in the country. It was there that I visited him.

Ride to the Palace. Traveling upon my mule through a street so narrow that I could almost touch both walls with my hands, I rode by the kasbah

or the governor's palace, past the soldiers and officials sitting at the gate of the city, and on out into the country. About a half mile from the city gates we came to a walled inclosure with a plain, unpretentious door. We knocked upon this and it was opened by negro slaves, who took charge of our mules. We passed in through a sort of porter's lodge, where a half dozen other slaves were sitting, and found ourselves in a great court or park surrounded by Moorish buildings, the rooms of which looked out upon it. This park was largely

made up of gardens filled with beautiful flowers and semi-tropical plants and trees. One section of it contained a tennis court, with a cement floor as smooth as marble, where the ex-minister delights to play tennis with his European friends. There is a central path through the gardens, and down this we walked until we came into two great reception rooms, where the war minister receives his men friends. We passed through the first set of parlors, which are floored with mosaic and luxuriously furnished, and then came into a large room walled with glass looking out upon the Atlantic ocean. The house is built on a high bluff hanging right over the sea, and the mountains of Spain were in plain sight across the way. We could hear the surf roar as it dashed against the rocks below. At the entrance to this room stood two tall clocks of the kind that sell in the United States for \$50 apiece, and they played the chimes at the striking of the hours. The tiled floor was covered with oriental rugs, the great divans were upholstered in rich red Morocco leather, and about the walls were cases containing rare china and swords, rifles and other weapons, inlaid with gold and silver. The surroundings were those of a man of taste, and this was my impression of Menebbi when he appeared.

A Typical Moor. Let me tell you how he looks. He is a typical Moor of the better class, and of a kind one does not expect to find in what is generally known as one of the black spots of this black continent. Si El-Mehdi el-Menebbi would make one of the handsomest Othellos who ever trod the stage. He is tall, straight and fine looking, and his Moorish costume makes him look taller. He has a light complexion and, like all Moorish men, wears a full beard, his whiskers being brown and curly and as fine as silk. A broad forehead with large hazel eyes was to be seen below his white turban. His nose is straight and his cheek bones high. His costume consisted of a long white woolen gown, or burnouse, with a hood at the back, and the sleeves of this were so wide that they showed his forearm to the elbow. The skin was as white as yours or mine. As we chatted he now and then smiled, showing a good set of strong teeth, and he twice perceptibly yawned.

Morocco of the Future. "Do you think that changes will soon take place in Morocco?" "That depends much upon the government and how the people are handled. If they could understand that Morocco could hold its independence and still have modern reforms I think many new things could be introduced. A strong government is needed, however, to make the experiment. When I went to London as the sultan's ambassador I entered into certain arrangements as to railroads and other modern innovations, but the situation in the country and the antagonism to foreign ways were such that I was not able to carry them out. I believe, however, that Morocco has a future, which will be far different from its past. We have a country here which is wonderfully fertile. We can raise grain of many kinds, and fruit that is surpassed by that of no other land. Cattle, horses and sheep will thrive almost everywhere, and our people make good stock men and farmers. Morocco is also rich in minerals. There is coal right here near the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Atlas mountains have deposits of gold, silver, copper and iron. The country has never been prospected, but its possibilities are undoubtedly great."

Message for the American People. In closing our conversation, I asked Mr. Menebbi to send, through me, a few words of greeting to the American people, saying, "Your excellency is about the most progressive man in Morocco, and I should like to take from you a word of greeting to what we consider the most progressive nation of the western world."

The sultan's war minister smiled at this. His face, however, soon grew serious, and he said: "I have a great admiration for you Americans, and I hope I shall soon be able to cross the Atlantic to visit you. The only message I have for you is that you should study the country, and cultivate closer trade relations with it. We have here about ten million inhabitants, and we are now large consumers of cottons and other things which Americans make. Our homes are chiefly lighted by American petroleum, and our people wear clothes made of stuff grown by you. Your raw cotton, however, goes to England; and the English do the weaving and sell us the goods. I understand that you have cotton mills of your own. Why not make the goods yourselves and get all the profit? We Moroccans are friendly to you, and we would be glad to trade with you; but as it is our chief supplies come from the various countries of Europe, and mostly from England, Spain, Germany and France."

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FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## MENEHBI WOULD MAKE A SPLENDID OTHELLO.

(Copyright, 1904, by Frank G. Carpenter.) **IN THE STRAITS OF MOROCCO.**—(Off the coast of Morocco.) Feb. 7.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—One of the best posted men on Morocco and its future is Mr. Walter H. Harris, the well known correspondent of the London Times. He has resided in the country during the greater part of the past sixteen years and has traveled by caravan over the most of it. Some years ago he made an expedition from Fez to the oasis of Taflet and he has written the only good book about that part of Morocco. Mr. Harris has also traveled widely in other Mohammedan countries; he has gone on camel back over Arabia and he speaks the Arabic fluently. During his stay in Fez he was a close friend of the sultan, and he has now an intimate acquaintance with some of the most powerful of his ministers. He is also closely associated with Si el-Mehdi el-Menebbi, who was for a long time minister of war, and who, as such, through his influence with his majesty, Abd-el-Aziz, practically controlled Morocco. Menebbi lost cast when he failed to quell the rebellion of Bu Hamara. He was then forced to leave the sultan's cabinet, and is now living as a British subject in Tangier. He is one of the most progressive of the Moors, and will probably be heard of in the regeneration of Morocco. I shall give you an interview which I had with him further on in this letter.

**Kidnaped by Raisuli.** To return to Mr. Harris, he was the first of the foreigners to be kidnaped by Raisuli. He was living in his beautiful home on the seashore, just three miles from Tangier, when 2,500 brigands, with Raisuli at their head, carried him off. They held him in captivity for more than three weeks, but released him without ransom. During this time Mr. Harris had a close view of Raisuli. He describes him as a man of strong character and a bluffer. He says that the sultan has but little power, that he is afraid of the two great rebels, Raisuli and Bu Hamara, and that he has bribed them to keep the peace. Bu Hamara has now about one-fifth of Morocco under him, and Raisuli, with comparatively few soldiers, is growing rich off the country east of this city. He is, I understand, laying up money since he got the big ransom for Raisuli, and is buying business properties here in Tangier.

**Dare Not Live at Home.** Mr. Harris thinks it rather hard lines that he dare not live at home, although the British have a treaty with the sultan which provides for the protection of foreigners. His villa is within fifteen miles of the fortifications at Gibraltar, and within an hour's walk of the walls of the sultan's chief port. Nevertheless, its owner has to live at one of the hotels in the city for fear of kidnapers. The governor of Tangier keeps fifty soldiers guarding the villa and its contents, but still it is unsafe.

At the same time Morocco insists on all the rights that it has under its treaty with foreign nations, and the foreigner is allowed no favors. The other day Mr. Harris attempted to send two white peacocks to a friend who was living at the hotel at Algeiras, across the strait. He brought them to the custom house, but was told that they could not be sent out of the country, as there was nothing in the treaty with Great Britain about the exportation of peacocks.

**Wealth of Morocco.** Mr. Harris tells me that Morocco is a poor country. The people have but little money and the riches of the few have been magnified a thousand fold. He thinks not more than \$5,000,000 a year, and that in good times. Just now they are less, as the government is out of favor and the people will not pay taxes. He tells me that Morocco is badly farmed. The lands are fertile, but the soil is only scratched, and there is no immunity from the exactions of the tax gatherers. There are vast plains in the south which yield vast quantities of wheat, but transportation is so high that it is impossible to take it where it is most needed. There are also laws against the exportation of grain, and as a result most of the wheat is consumed in and about where it is raised. Some of it is carried to the hills near by, for the mountain tribes have to rely upon the plains for their flour.

**Railroads in Donkeys.** I asked some questions about railroads. Mr. Harris says that the Moors object to them on the ground that they would be a foreign innovation, and also because they would put the donkeys, mules and camels out of business. As it is now, the whole trade of Morocco goes by caravan, or by sea from port to port. The freight rates per animal in the interior are comparatively low, and the charges for board and feed at the Moorish hotels are almost nothing. In Fez it costs about 4 cents a day to feed a camel, and less than 2 cents a day for a horse or a mule. The ordinary native can be taken care of for a little more. The

## Experimenting with the Zebra as a Burden Bearer

**T**HE development of the African colonies belonging to the great powers of the world has been retarded on account of the difficulties of transportation. In South Africa the oxen are used, but vast numbers of these are killed by the dreaded tsetse fly. North of the Zambesi horses, mules, donkeys and draft animals of every kind are found absolutely impossible owing to the same scourge. And, although many scientific commissions were sent out, notably to the west coast and round about the great lakes, it was found impossible to make the animals altogether immune from the attacks of these insects. The absence of efficient transport has been specially felt in the Congo Free State, and although its owner, King Leopold of Belgium, is said to draw \$14,000,000 a year from its rubber, ivory, timber, gold and other minerals, it is believed that this sum would be doubled if only there were better railroad development in the territory or at any rate an efficient service of draft animals.

A year ago it occurred to Captain F. Nye of the Belgian Grenadiers, and if only the zebras which roam in innumerable herds throughout the Katanga country could be tamed and tamed they would solve the problem forthwith, for the zebra is said to be immune from the deadly effects of the tsetse fly. He made known his idea, and King Leopold set aside the sum of \$30,000 for the experiments proposed by Captain Nye. Accompanied by Lieutenant Pultz, Nye set out for Stanley Pool, traveled 1,000 miles up the Congo and landed at one of the usual river villages.

Here he proceeded to get a caravan together. Although he had great experience, having already served three years in the field, he found immense difficulty in persuading the natives to join him as beaters, constructors of the corral, cooks and porters. The Congo tribes seldom or never work, preferring to leave this disagreeable phase of life to their wives. Moreover, they have been so persecuted and oppressed that they absolutely refuse any service whatever except in extortionate terms and the cash in advance principle. Eventually Captain Nye got together twenty-five men and established headquarters camp near the village of Swamps. Here he was in the middle of the zebra country. Some of the herds seen numbered

3,000 and in their wake trailed troops of lions and leopards. At first the men were told to go forth with their big nets of vegetable fiber and capture the zebras by these means. They

were also clever at lassoing the handsome animals. But both methods were found altogether too slow. The zebras were extremely sensitive and timid and difficult to approach.

As the weeks slipped by, with only a round dozen or so of these striped asses to show for all the expense and trouble involved, Captain Nye decided to abandon his plans and adopt with the zebras the

Indian method of corralling wild elephants. The idea was to build an immense staked enclosure with a funnel-shaped mouth into which hundreds or even thousands of zebras might be driven at once by beaters strategically disposed and instructed. Once inside the great enclosure the animals would find their favorite grasses and plants, with fresh water and all their natural surroundings. In the various corners stables would be built, and here the animals might be approached and gradually tamed.

The scheme was a promising one, but again there arose the question of labor. Many weeks passed in palaver with the head men of neighboring villages. Gradually they were won over to supply so many men each. At length a small army of some 700 cannibals were engaged and instructed in their duties to regard to the tsetse. Capt. Nye himself had to travel many hundreds of miles interviewing the chiefs, and in many cases literally howling his way through primeval forest. He was always on foot, for horse or mule was impossible in the tsetse fly country. To construct a stockade was a work of several months. It covered perhaps 200 acres and was enclosed with a fence of young cottonwood trunks perhaps twenty feet high. The army of beaters were officered by specially intelligent men; one memorable morning they spread themselves out fanwise for fifty or sixty



THE OX TEAM OF THE CONGO.



A CAPTIVE ZEBRA BEING FED

A CORNER OF THE BIG KERAL.



THE PRESENT RAILROAD TRAIN OF THE CONGO

miles and gradually drove in something like 8,700 zebras. It was a beautiful sight to see this immense herd, of which very few broke through the corral. The anxious captain thought his troubles at an end when he saw the vast herd fast nearing the funnel of his corral, but disappointment awaited him. Toward dusk there came a sudden stampede among the herd, clearly due to the presence of a large troop of lions. The terror of the zebras was astonishing. Not fiery torches nor spears could beat them back, as, screaming, rearing on their haunches, biting and leaping, they overwhelmed the army of beaters and doubled back into the wilderness. Barely twenty-five out of nearly 4,000 animals were taken. There was nothing for it but to begin the battle all over again another day. To