

# The Ruins of Cities Which Were Great Five Hundred Years Ago

(Copyright, 1907, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
 TLEMCEEN, Africa, March 1.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Come with me and my Mohammedan dragoman, Mustapha, and take a walk this bright Sunday morning through the Delhi of North Africa. We are in a city which was famous when the sun was at the height of its glory, and one which has mosques and tombs containing Moorish decorations which will compare in their beauty with those of the famed cities of India. There are doors of bronze in the mosque of Sidi Bou-Medine as beautiful as those at the entrance to the capitol at Washington, and equal in their fine workmanship to those of Ghiberti at Florence. There are temples of Mohammedan worship hundreds of years old, which have a beauty greater than the mosque of Cairo and Constantinople, and all were constructed when Europe was still semi-civilized and a hundred years or so before the new world of America began to be. Not far from these mosques are the remains of a ruined city, which surpassed Pompeii in extent and glory, and in another direction is the tomb of the man who built that city, with the Arabs praying in and about it today.

**Ruins of Tlemcen.**  
 All this is now in Italy, Greece or India, the countries to which they look for the monuments of the past. It is in this black continent of Africa, on the edge of savage, turbulent and warring Morocco, thirty miles south of the Mediterranean and about 100 miles from Oran, the chief seaport of western Algeria. It is so far out of the line of travel that strangers seldom come here, but it is one of the most interesting places on the continent.

Tlemcen of today is a city of, perhaps, 25,000, situated in a beautiful valley, at an elevation of about 1,500 feet above sea level as the average height of the Apennines. It has behind it great bare, rugged mountains, which are capped with huge rocks, making them look like fortifications thrown up by the gods, and their strength as fortifications was proved in the reasons for the site of these ancient cities.

Another reason was the valley and plains lying below. They are among the richest in Algeria. Standing upon the walls here, as far as the eye can reach there is nothing but vineyards and orchards and rich fields of grain. There are hundreds of thousands of olive trees loaded with fruit. There are rich gardens and fields of potatoes below the city until it meets the hills on the horizon. White roads cut here and there through the expanse of green all lead up to the walls of Tlemcen.

**Fortified City.**  
 The city is entered by gates. It was a fortified town in the past and the French have fortified it today. The high walls have port holes at every few feet, through which rifles and other guns can be thrust, companies of soldiers are always moving to and fro through the streets, and the citadel, where the sultans of the past had their gorgeous residences many centuries ago, is now a barracks, prison and hospital for the Algerian troops. Its old walls and gateways still stand, and the minaret of its mosque, ninety feet high, over-looks the rest of the city. About 500 years ago this citadel contained some of the wonders of the world. It had a clock which was celebrated two centuries before that on the Strasbourg cathedral was made, and in one of the galleries, which was paved with marble and on which stood a solid silver tree upon which were many species of singing birds made of gold and silver.

**Grand Mosque.**  
 Within a stone's throw of the citadel, surrounded by buildings which would not look out of place in any country town in France, rises the mighty mosque Djama el Kebir. It was built in A. D. 1136, but it is in as good condition today as when the Moors first worshipped in it 870 years ago. The buildings of this mosque cover about an acre and the roof is supported by a vast number of columns which end in great arches hung with many chandeliers. The buildings run around the court, in the center of which is a fountain of onyx about which, as I passed through, the Mohammedans were sitting and washing themselves before going in to pray. We were allowed to enter the mosque, but had first to put on slippers, and we walked about through the worshippers, who were kneeling on their prayer rugs and bowing again and again as they looked toward Mecca.

**Bull to Ghost of Candy Man.**  
 When Tlemcen was in the height of its glory it had seventy mosques. One of the most famous was built in honor of a confectioner saint who preached to the children as they gathered around his candy stall and whom, I doubt not, he attracted by giving them sweets. He became so popular that the sultan made him a tutor to his three sons. This angered the grand vizier, and he had the candy saint condemned as a sorcerer and beheaded outside the gates. Shortly after this the ghost of the candy saint appeared before the sultan and made a complaint, and the sultan tied up the grand vizier hand and foot and threw him into a vat of cement. As the cement hardened the grand vizier hardened with it, and he was thus buried alive in a solid block of stone. After this the sultan built the mosque, which remains to this day. This happened just 130 odd years before Columbus discovered America. I have no doubt it is true, for I saw the mosque here with my own eyes.

**Sidi Bou Medina.**  
 One of the most interesting of the mosques lies several miles from Tlemcen, on the side of the mountains. It is that of Sidi Bou Medina, one of the most famous scholars of the Moors who lived 900 years ago. This man studied at Granada and Fez, and then traveled to Mecca. He lectured at Baghdad, Seville and Cordova, and ended his career by lecturing here. This mosque is a wonder of fine workmanship. It is covered with mosaic, its doors are of bronze and its decorations are of Moorish lace work of wonderful patterns. Near it there was a famous Moorish college, and while I walked through the mosque itself I could hear the boys singing out their Koran as they walked back and forth, going over and over the Arabic sentences written on their wooden slates. I found many turbaned worshippers at prayers inside, and the red-faced keeper grew quite angry when I asked if I might make their photographs.

On my way back to town I stopped at an Arab cafe and drank coffee with a half dozen dark-faced Berbers who had just left the mosque. They were bearded and turbaned. They had taken off their slippers as they sat down to drink, and I observed that their bare feet were clean and the soles of their shoes were as white as snow, though a mauler, or rather a pedicure, had worked upon them. The men looked strangely at me from under their turbans, and evidently thought me as much a curiosity as I considered them. Nevertheless, they were friendly, and we drank our coffee



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF SIDI BUN MEDIN AT TLEMCEEN.



RUINED TOWER OF MAUSOURA.



ENTRANCE TO THE MOSQUE OF THE CANDY SAINT.

like three hundred acres, and it had a magnificent mosque, with a minaret or tower 125 feet high. This tower was decorated with green porcelain tiles, and it was a wonder of beautiful workmanship. The ruins of it still stand, the most of the tower being intact, but the mosque has long since crumbled to dust.

**Ruined City of Mausoura.**  
 I next drove to the ruins of Mausoura, on the other side of Tlemcen. That city was built when Tlemcen was great and when it had a population of 125,000 souls. Tlemcen was then noted as a city of light and genius. Its kings were lovers of art, science and literature. They had their own armies of disciplined soldiers, and they had a police force, judges and courts. They coined their own money, and had schools and colleges. This was several hundred years before America was discovered.

It was just about that same time that Mausoura sprang up almost in a night on the plains. An Arab general, Abou Yakoub, had besieged Tlemcen and had occupied with his army about three miles from the city. The siege lasted seven years, and Mausoura was constructed during the intervals of fighting by Yakoub. For many years it was a rival of Tlemcen. Its walls and forts inclosed a space of something

like three hundred acres, and it had a magnificent mosque, with a minaret or tower 125 feet high. This tower was decorated with green porcelain tiles, and it was a wonder of beautiful workmanship. The ruins of it still stand, the most of the tower being intact, but the mosque has long since crumbled to dust.

**Among the Natives.**  
 But let me describe the Tlemcen of today. A live dog is better than a dead lion and the Algeria of the present is more interesting than that of the dead centuries of the past. I like the swing and go of this French colony, the jaunty air of the soldiers as they strut about in their fat, red pantaloons and short jackets and their tall caps of blood red; the stately walk of the Arabs as they go on slippers through the streets; and above all the long gowns and tall hats of some of the native gentlemen of Tlemcen. We think \$5 much to pay for a derby and \$8 a big price for a black silk tie, but these Tlemcen natives pay quite as much for straw hats. Their hats are, however, gorgeous beyond description, and they stand from twelve to eighteen inches above the crown of the head. They are made of straw as finely

woven as a Panama and of several different colors. The brims are covered with silk embroidery, and they extend for six inches out all around the hat. These hats are large enough to be worn over turbans, so big that I was able to put one over my cork helmet, while my photograph was taken with my guide, Mustapha, standing beside me.

**Many House Industries.**  
 One of the industries of Tlemcen is making such hats. The town is quite a manufacturing center. The natives—I mean the Berbers and Moors—seem to be all engaged in house industries of one kind or other. I went through street after street lined with little shops, lighted only by the doors at the front, containing men and boys weaving clothes, embroidering caps for women and hats for men, sewing on slippers and shoes and working at the various other trades of the country. The weaving is all done with raw wool upon rude hand looms. In the dirtiest of shops the most beautiful of white burnouses are made, and little round caps

covered with velvet and embroidered with gold and silver are turned out in places no better than dog kennels. The whole of the native quarter is a mixture of the gorgeous and the squalid. A man will wear an \$8 hat and at the same time have bare feet and legs bare half way to the knee and a dirty white gown. A woman will go along wrapped in a white flannel blanket much the worse for wear and on her head will be one of these gold embroidered caps, just about as big around and of the same shape as a tin funnel such as is used in our kitchens. The cap will be hidden by the blanket and she will keep it so tight about her face that only a hole the size of a postage stamp can be seen. Through this hole peeps a liquid black eye, and it is only when she stumbles or when the amorous wind tears open her garments that you see any other part of her person. Even little girls are often so draped, although some show their faces.

**A Land of Queer Costumes.**  
 I wish I could tell you American girls just how your well-to-do sisters of this

side of the world are clothed. If you saw a party of them on the street you would think they had picked up their bed blankets and started out for a great masquerade. If you were a man you could not possibly get near enough to examine them, but one of my lady friends has told me just how they are dressed. Under those blankets they have baggy trousers which come about half way to the ankle, and above those jackets of embroidery with one or two vests under them. They wear sashes about the waist and undergarments of fine gauze.

At home the ladies either go barefooted or wear slippers of velvet embroidered with gold. They plait their hair in long braids and tie it up in knots behind the head. They wear the little gold caps I have already described and tie them on with cords of gold threaded under the chin. Those who can afford it are loaded with jewelry. They have bracelets and anklets and some wear gold rings in their ears. Even the children wear jewelry. I see little girls with earrings almost as big around as the bottom of a tin cup and anklets of silver as thick as their own little fingers.

The Arab men have gowns of white woolen material striped with silk bound in by sashes at the waist. Under this they often wear baggy trousers and over it a white woolen burnouse of fine texture. The richer men sometimes have a sort of overcoat of the navy blue cloth embroidered with silk and made in the shape of a burnouse. Some of the men wear stockings and some riding horseback have instead long red boots of the finest Morocco leather which are almost as soft as wool. Over the foot they have a shoe covering the boot to the ankle, and to this shoe a spur is attached. The poorer Arabs wear black, long gowns of a night-shirt shape, made of camel's hair and wool in white and black stripes.

Many of the native garments are made in Tlemcen. This town has long been noted for its good workmanship and its lace, hats, shawls and blankets are famous. Among other garments are some made for the Jews, and especially the bright red shawls which they use here for mourning.

**New French Towns.**  
 The Tlemcen of today is largely composed of new French buildings. The streets are French streets. There is a square in the center of the town where the people meet to walk about, and there is a park outside it filled with great plane trees and wild olive trees which is known as Tlemcen's Bois de Boulogne. About six years ago the city was first reached by railroad, and it now has two trains each way every day. On my way here I stopped at Sidi Bel Abbas, a French settlement of 15,000 people, which has grown up within a few years. Sidi Bel Abbas is named after a Mohammedan saint, and it has its Arab quarter today. The city is built in the shape of a rectangle with great walls about it, and, like most of these Algerian towns, it has its military quarter. This is inhabited by several companies of the foreign soldiers employed by the French to defend Algeria. They are composed of Swiss, Poles, Germans and such other nations as can be enlisted at a few cents a day. The troops there vary in number, at times reaching as many as 6,000.

Sidi Bel Abbas has its regular concerts by the military band; it has a theater where they are now playing "Box and Cox," and a "Cafe Chantant," where the songs and dances are even more wicked than those of Paris itself. Indeed things are moving fast in this French section of the African continent.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## Rubber Cultivation Becomes Important Industry



TRANSPORT ELEPHANTS ON A CEYLON RUBBER PLANTATION.

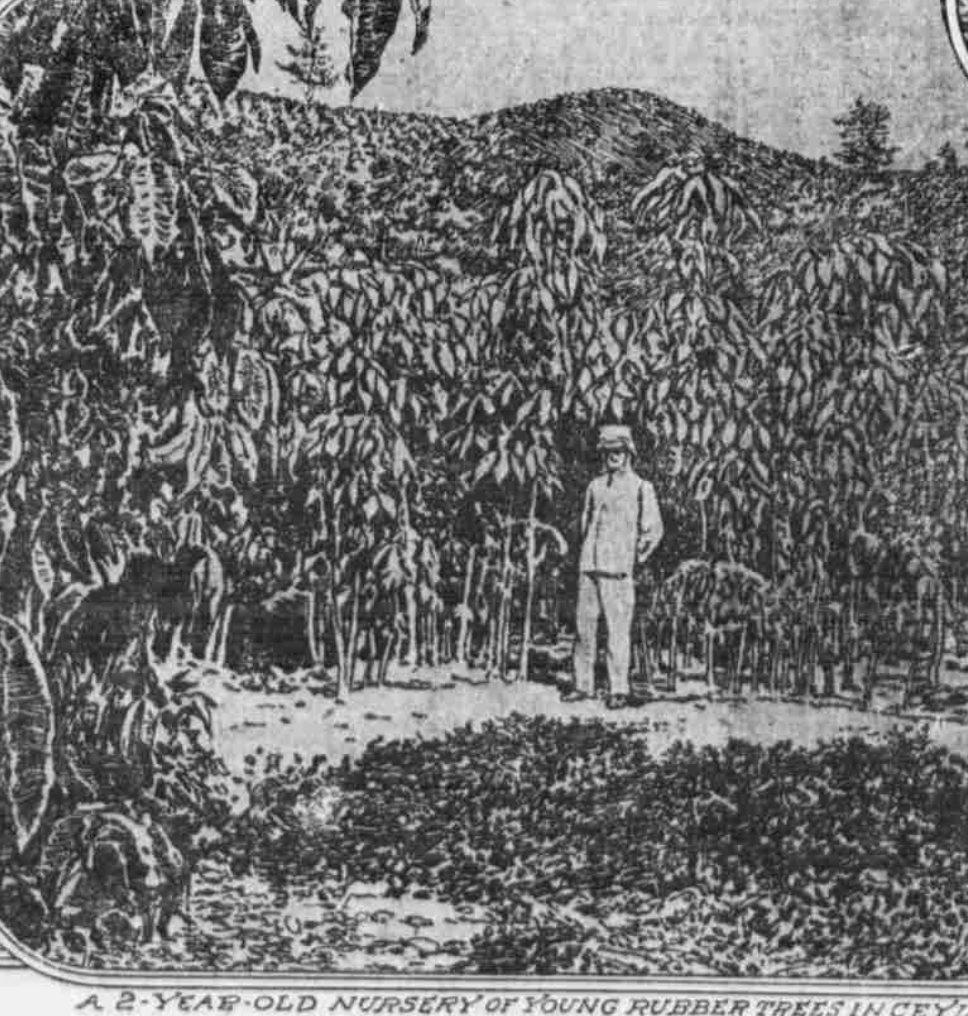


HOW A RUBBER TREE IS TAPPED.

**W**ITH crude rubber of fine grade worth nearly \$1.50 a pound and only 70,000 tons a year available for use in a world that could use double the quantity, it is no wonder that plantations of hevea and Ficus elastica are regarded as so many gold mines.

Brazil last year provided rather more than half of the world's supply—35,000 tons. Fine Para is still the market's highest standard, and accordingly to the Amazon and her tributaries men are lured as others are lured to golden Australia. Moreover, artificial planting is in progress all over the tropics, especially in Ceylon, the Malay peninsula, India and Mexico.

Borneo and Java, too, are beginning to enter the markets with crude rubber, and so are Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, the Philippines, Hawaii, the Seychelles, the west coast of Africa and the West Indies. Last season almost the whole supply of the African west coast, about 17,000 tons, was sold in advance, owing to the great demand for tires for automobiles.



A 2-YEAR-OLD NURSERY OF YOUNG RUBBER TREES IN CEYLON.

But, like gold, nature guards this commodity with jealous care and throws about it the terrors of fevers, poisonous reptiles and hostile savages. It is believed that the basin of the Amazon could supply the whole world with rubber could only the natural obstacles be overcome.

here at long intervals, but now it has been proved that the whole bark can be tapped without ill effect. It would seem that the latex is very little used with the tree's nourishment, and in one season a good specimen will yield seven pounds of fine rubber.

A series of oblique cuts are made across the stem and a cup put at the end to receive the milk. This is the herringbone system and may run from the tree's base to a point six feet up. Some of the finer trees have yielded as much as sixteen pounds of fine rubber in a year, but this is exceptional.

The profits of rubber culture are tempting. Thus an investor who acquires one acre of 5-year-old trees at say \$1,000 may look for an income of that amount from the milk of his trees. These will live for 100 years, and it seems that the older they get the more hardy they become and the larger and more certain their yield.

### These Hustling Americans

At a recent gathering in Baltimore two men from different sections of the country were discussing the capabilities of "nervous, restless Americans" for being most slow and deliberate. The Marylander claimed the palm for slowness for the inhabitants of the eastern shore of his state.

### Polly and Tom



Polly and Tommy ten, Slater and brother, they go to school the whole week through, Excepting Saturday.

On Saturday they help mamma, About the house, you know Tommy sweeps the steps and walks, While Polly kneads the dough.



But soon as it is afternoon, And the dinner work is done, They go to see some young friends, And have the mostest fun!

They play and play till almost dark, Then home they go to tea, With toys in their little arms, As happy as can be.

ANNIE JAMES.