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No. 2

SONG OF THE SHIRT.

[From 'Punch,' or the London Charivari.]

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the 'Song of the Shirt!'

'Work—work—work!
While the cock is crowing aloft!
And work—work—work!
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's O! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

Work—work—work!
Till the brain begins to swim!
Work—work—work!
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

O! men, with sisters dear!
O! men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

But why do I talk of Death?
That phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own.
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
Oh God! that bread should be dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

Work—work—work!
My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof, and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime;
Work—work—work!
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

Work—work—work!
In the dull December light!
And work—work—work!
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show me their sunny backs,
And twit me with the spring.

Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet!
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want,
And the walk that costs a meal!

Oh but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart;
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—

Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!
She sang this 'Song of the Shirt!'

From Simmonds's Colonial Magazine RECOLLECTIONS OF ALGERIA IN 1843.

Sine studio et ira

(Continued.)

It cannot be doubted, however, that colonisation has commenced. On the road between Algiers and Blidah, a distance of ten leagues, there are already five or six establishments worthy of the Capital of the Regency. Four times as many might be met with at varying intervals, on either hand. But rapid improvements, and the best chances of success, indeed, attend those who have settled themselves along the high roads. There may be seen, on all sides, enclosures, marked out into long straight streets, with large squares, traversed by streams of water, which will soon be confined in pipes of lead and iron, and fountains of marble. The Alsatian, the Comtois, and the Mahonnais leisurely construct their farm-houses, and plant and water their kitchen-gardens. The Provencal, the Gascon, and the Parisian put the last finish to the coffee-house, the tavern, or the inn, on which they have already bestowed the pompous title of Hotel. The neighbouring barracks furnish them with well-burnoused customers, who came to fraternize with the armed, but plain dressed militia. The military aspect of the cities, towns, and villages, still surrounded by entrenchments and crenellated walls, with empty sentry-boxes at intervals, is admirably varied by the united appearance of soldiers and colonists. These decaying momnetoes of a past danger double the relish of present security. War is not now waged within a hundred leagues of Algiers and thirty of the sea. For this the Colony is mainly indebted to the indomitable valour of Lieut.-Gen. Changarnier, and we have much satisfaction in annexing a portrait of this distinguished French soldier.



GEN. CHANGARNIER.

Civil magistrates, commissioners, justices of the peace, mayors, &c., are established, besides the military authorities. There is a registry of births, that double source of joy to parents who may have been joined together merely by chance, caprice, or temporary affection. Colonisation is commenced by male and female adventurers, who are both moralised by the tie which a child constitutes. The mayor soon opens his register for a marriage, and the cure has his little church ready to bless it after baptism. Brothers and cousins born in France seem already as Algerian as the young products of the soil; fair girls of Alsatia, little French children with blue eyes, chatter in Arabic as gutturally as the Bedouins and the Moors, which, however, does not prevent them from going to learn their catechism in the provisional chapel, a sort of wooden barn, surmounted with a rude imitation of a steeple.

Dely-Ibrahim, the suburb of Algiers, has a fine stone church, the interior of which is adorned with paintings, and the exterior by a colonade. At Blidah, at Medeah, and in Algiers itself, beautiful mosques have been converted into Christian temples, and their minarets now bear a Cross instead of the old Crescent.

Vast squares and large streets, with magnificent porticos, are being built in Blidah, which seems destined, at some future day,

to be the seat of manufacturing industry. Its waters, when properly confined, will fall in eight or ten places, with sufficient strength to encourage capitalists to establish water-works upon them. The wood of the neighbouring mountain will furnish fuel wherewith to bake bricks and tiles; whilst its water-mills can grind the corn produced in the plains, and set at rest the hand-mills of the Kabyles and the Arabs. Before cotton and silk can be introduced, the wool of the country may be twisted into yarn and woven. Luxurious clothing and good flour are no longer unattainable, and civilised modes of conveyance are already much liked by the natives. The omnibuses of Algiers and its vicinity are full of burnouses; and the Arab, who of yore, would have gone sixty miles on foot, to avoid the expenditure of some farthings, now pays readily his five pence for the quarter of an hour's ride from Mustapha to Bab-Azoun, and sacrifices as much as four shillings for the journey from Algiers to Blidah. Thirty splendid *fiacres*, besides the official diligence, ply on the high road between these two points; in them the European is as commonly to be met with as the native, the *bourgeois* as the soldier. The principal centre of all this activity, Blidah, will one day be the seat of important agricultural, commercial, and industrial interests. Blidah will be the common emporium of Algiers and Titteri, into which the colonists will henceforth enter no longer by the short and rugged pathway of Tenia, so well known to the army, but by the magnificent road cut along the Chiffa.

The Lesser Atlas, though very slightly examined, has already revealed mines of copper, iron, and lead. The vulture wheels silently above the mountain; the little birds of the plain warble the songs of spring. The monkeys, who live almost in the air, frolic on the trees, and descend to bathe and play in the waters when the road is solitary. It is then that the French inn-keepers watch and track them. The Arab coffee-houses are abandoned towards evening by their masters; but the two French inns are inhabited night and day. The tenant of one is lodged in a wooden hut, in which plaster is also made; his rival, established half-way between two distant villages, possesses as yet nothing more than a cabin made of branches, supported by a few large olive trees. It is merely a military bivouac, whose host, a sturdy son of the South of France, has but lately quitted the service. His former companions, when they put up at this resting-place, make no secret of their apprehensions, and are liberal of advice. But he fears neither the Beni-Sala, Mouzaia, and Soumata Bedouins, nor any other marauders who may be tempted by his small competence. He is armed with a gun loaded with shot to scatter the monkeys, the hyenas, and jackals, which visit him every night, but never attack human beings. Lions do not harbour in the valley—at least this is his opinion. His wife shares his fatigues, and alternates with him in his journey to Blidah, with a mule loaded with provisions. A servant, or partner, a young and vigorous fellow, is a recent addition to his establishment, and proves how well it has succeeded. Such is this truly primitive little world, whose fortunes at present afford amusement to the caravans, and convoys that continually pass along the road.

At Medeah, civilisation is in a more advanced state; though we do not meet there, as at Blidah, with gardens and Italian music, still it enjoys the comforts afforded by many coffee-houses, with the billiard room as a matter of course, and boasts of two hotels between which there is a division of labour, for one supplies board, the other bed. In the month of August last, the rooms were not yet quite furnished, for this reason, that the carpenter had not completed the stairs which were to lead to them. A tinman talks of establishing baths; some mention has been made of a theatre. Medeah is the seat of government of the province of Titteri.

We shall not attempt to describe one by one of the French settlements in Algeria; this would be a task at once laborious to the writer and tedious to the reader. Nevertheless, we cannot pass silently over the village Draria, two leagues and a half from Algiers, the first which owed its origin to private enterprise, under the sanction of the civil authorities. This village comprises about fifty houses in stone and some wooden hovels, and has been erected entirely at the expense and by the hands of the colonists, who have also broken up and cultivated the surrounding fields.

Draria is situated between the two roads from Algiers to Blidah by Birkadem and Dely-Ibrahim. It is reached on both sides by a pretty lane in perfect repair, bordered with trees which sometimes overarch it and form a complete bower. Two elegant bridges are crossed at the entrance of the village, which is replete with life and movement. At Draria is to be seen, as in a European village, a laborious though small population devoted to the pursuits of agriculture. Here and there are cattle in paddocks—carts moving to and fro laden with hay, or with stone required for building, furnished by a quarry discovered in the neighbourhood. The armed militia amounts to a hundred men. In fine, it may be interesting to those who desire to visit the place, to know that the new village is abundantly provided with eggs, milk, butter, cheese, fruit, and all that is necessary for the comfort of life. There was one thing hitherto wanting, which the authorities have recently directed their attention to: the