THE RIFFIAN

By

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"Better a dog of the Ait Atta, than Sultan under the French."

— SAYING OF THE MIDDLE ATLAS

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PROLOGUE

No important episode in this book may be ascribed to any person now living.

1. Departure

The sun was setting behind the peaks of Marnissa, beyond the western borders of the Rif, and the slopes of the distant mountains were masked in black shadow as it sank slowly behind their stenciled crests. The sky above them, stippled with small clouds, glowed like a pool of blood.

A small company of Riffians was crossing the high pass which lay at the head of the Vale of Iherrushen, and behind the travelers all was mist and shadow. At their head marched Mimun, their leader, walking very erect, although the effects of weeks of hunger and confinement showed in the gaunt outlines of his bare legs and in the creases of his short, bony face with its firm chin, sunken cheeks, and craggy brow. He limped badly with his left leg, for six weeks before he had been wounded by a bullet in the arch of his foot. Only the schoolmaster's skill at bonesetting had saved him from being crippled.

A half-dozen bony cows, a few goats, and a donkey laden with grimy pots and blankets were being driven in the middle of the procession. Some of the women turned back, as they reached the crest, for a last look at their homes, and fancied that through the murk

they could see the smoke from their burning houses. Some of the women were weeping, holding the tails of their head cloths over their mouths. Gangling children—skinny-legged, and scabby of head—dragged their feet along beside their mothers, some of them staring with eyes sunk in hollow sockets, and others making no attempt to restrain their grief.

They formed a sorry company, leaving their homes in permanent exile. Mimun, who dared not look back down his valley lest he, too, might weep, was leading them forth in search of new fields to till and new pasturage for goats and cattle. A feud had been fought to the finish; and the Ulad Abd el Mumen, the clan which was now departing, had been defeated, after a desperate siege, by the many families allied against them. And Mimun's father and brother, the ablest fighters of the clan, had been killed by trickery.

With the cool of evening they walked more rapidly, for the trail leading down through the upland rye-fields of their neighbors was as gentle as the upward climb had been steep. The path led down through the village of Temjunt where the people stood in the low doorways of the clay-roofed houses to watch in silence as they passed.

The villagers had not taken part in the fight, and they held no strong feelings one way or the other; some of them were glad to see the trouble-makers of the tribe leaving, and others, who had had friends among them, felt slightly grieved. But no change would take place in their lives; they would go on ploughing and reaping, beating the fruit of the olive

trees loose from its stems with long sticks, grinding and pressing it into oil, and threshing vetch and rye laboriously with flails.

They would fight, at times, with their neighbors, but not often, for they were not great warriors like those who were now marching past them. This was but an incident in their lives, something to talk about. They could tell their children how Mimun's father, Malim Hamidu the Gunsmith, brought the first grain mill into the tribe and set it up down by the stream, and how he bought a whole mountain for three flintlock rifles; and how Amar the Scabhead, Mimun's brother, had given some unpleasant visitors the flesh of their own mule for supper.

Below Temjunt lay a barren plain of gravel bordered by cliffs, and near the trail a lone pillar of sandstone, carved by wind and water, stood up like a finger pointing at the sky. The exiles crossed this plain, leaning against the wind, and came to a broad but shallow stream which flowed southward. Lifting their skirts high about their thighs, they forded it, the men carrying the children in their arms. The goats, driven from behind, hopped from rock to rock, and the weary cattle ploughed through the chill waters of the mountain stream, oblivious to the cold.

On the other side, the company followed the bank of this river downstream. The ground rose in a rapidly increasing slope from the water's edge, and soon a steep hillside appeared on their right. From the flank of this hill the barking of dogs was heard, and soon a dozen yipping curs approached, their

manes bristling, and nipped at the heels of the goats. A square of light showed where a door was opened, and the smell of cedar smoke made the stomachs of the exiles constrict with hunger. At the thought of food they set aside, for the moment, their grief.

A short, sturdy man with a blunt gray beard and deep-set eyes stepped forward, and kissed Mimun on the forehead, while the two clasped hands. It was Hend, Mimun's cousin, who would feed the exiles and lodge them for the night.

The animals were herded into a courtyard, and two men lifted the panniers of woven palmetto fibre from the donkey's back, and set them carefully on the ground. The exiles scuffed off their grass sandals and entered a long, low-roofed room, thick with smoke. On the walls hung pottery plates and a few glass bottles, and several Mausers and flintlocks were supported upon pegs. At one end of the room two cows lay in a depressed pit, munching their cuds. The cows turned their heads to stare with bulging eyes at the strangers, and one of them scratched at the straw and manure of her bed.

Food was brought in: several disk-shaped loaves of rye bread, a dish of dried peas simmered in oil, and a large basketry tray of parched acorns and raisins. The men ate first, sitting around the dish of simmered peas and dipping torn portions of bread into it to scoop out the rich food. They ate sparingly, and when all had finished Hend smoothed out the surface of the peas with a spoon and handed the dish to the

women and children, while the men started in on the acorns and raisins.

There was not much to say. Hend had been present during the siege, with others of his village. Most of them had been killed, and the few left had been sent home by the council, and told to stay there. Hend would have to pay a large fine in a few days, and to do so would be obliged to sell much of his property.

"What do you think you will do when you get to Fez?" he asked.

"I will see the judge," replied Mimun.

He was referring to the judge with whom his oldest brother, Ali the Yellow-haired, had made an arrangement. Ali the Yellow-haired had been a robber; everything he stole from the Arabs he shared with the judge, and the judge protected him. But when he stole the rifles of the Sultan out of the palace, the judge refused help, fearing for his own safety. The Sultan's agents discovered the name of the thief through treachery, and chased Ali the Yellow-haired through the streets; he ran through the house of the judge, jumped from his roof to the wall of the city, and thence to the ground, where he was captured. After Ali the Yellow-haired had been thrown into the Sultan's dungeon, the judge swore that he knew nothing about the affair and that his house had been chosen by chance.

"What if he refuses to help you?" asked Hend.

Mimun laughed; and it was a very bitter laugh, out of the side of his mouth.

"He will help me, never fear. What if I should go to the Sultan and tell? I never would; but the judge does not know that."

"What will you ask him for?"

"I will ask him for some land outside the city. It will be bad enough living among Arabs, without having to see them too often. If we can, we will get some land north of Fez, on rolling country, where we can build terraces, and grow three crops a year. We will grow lentils and vetch and maize. We will raise goats and sheep and cattle. We will transplant young olive trees and press oil. If the judge has no land there, some of his friends will have, and he will persuade them to rent it to us for a share of what we grow. We will make out, one way or another."

"Where is Si Alush the Schoolmaster?" asked Hend.

"He has gone to live among his kinsmen in the Beni Urriaghel. He said that it would break his heart to live among Arabs. But we have three or four of his students with us, and someone will take his place. We will build a mosque, and our children will be taught the Holy Book; they will learn to read and write, and be brought up in a manner befitting the sons of Riffians. When the time comes for us to go back" — and here the lines of Mimun's face grew taut and hard — "even those to be born in exile, even those who have never seen the Rif, will know these valleys like the palms of their hands. They will be ready — well trained, and well armed."

Mimun dropped his face into his broad, gnarled hands. His back heaved, and he drew his elbows

tightly into his sides. The strain had been too much for him, and he did not want his women to see him weep.

"We will come back," he said thickly; "and let there be no doubt of it. We will come back, even if it takes many years; we will climb over the mountain in the nighttime, and when dawn breaks we will fire down on them from the rocks. We will leap into our valley with rifles in our hands, and then we will raise new roofs on our houses, and plant new trees to take the places of those that have been chopped down."

2. A Dog and a Gun

When the exiles arrived in Fez, Mimun and his brother Hamid went directly to the judge who dwelt by the Bab el Guissa, the northern gate, and informed him of their plight. At first he declared that he could do nothing, and that he had never heard of Ali the Yellow-haired; but the sullen look on Mimun's face and the eloquence of Hamid, who alone of the exiles spoke Arabic with any fluency, caused him to change his mind. He remembered their brother very well indeed, and knew that it would be dangerous to cast aside the pleas of anyone who resembled him. Besides, they were in possession of dangerous knowledge; and, although he might have them thrown in jail or even executed, on a trumped-up charge, they would still have time to speak on the way. Most of all, he feared that the Rif held still others like them, who would come down to Fez to sell olives, and who

would shoot him as he left his gate. These things went on forever once they were started; the judge knew better than to mix in a Riffian feud.

Hence, the exiles turned forth from the city soon after they had entered it—breathing deeply of the sweeter air of the open country, for they mistrusted cities and disliked them. They built themselves houses, after the Riffian style, on a spot to the north, which was rented them for a share of their crops. First they had to hew out terraces and plough the thin turf, beat out the grass roots, harrow the soil, then plant wheat and barley. In the meantime, food was not lacking.

Several months later Mimun and Hamid passed through a narrow street in the heart of the city, on their way to the northern gate. In this street a dim light filtered between the tops of the high houses, for the upper stories were tapered outward so that their roofs often touched. In some places, rooms had been built all the way across, connecting houses on either side. It was the region of brothels, and ill-smelling.

Walking under one of the bridged-over sections, Mimun tripped over something soft, which squealed and yelped. It was a puppy, and he was about to thrust it aside with his foot and proceed when he felt a pair of small arms close about his legs, and heard a child cry, "Leave that dog alone, it is mine!"

He reached down and loosed the small hands, and lifted the child up before him. In the dim light he

looked at it. It was a boy, little over four years old, with a pale white skin, blue eyes set slantwise in his cheeks, and a long, yellow pigtail.

"By Mulay Idris!" Mimun cried. "He looks like one of our family!"

Hamid stepped closer, and the two brothers carried the boy out into the light.

"What is your name?" asked Hamid.

"Ali."

"Ali what? Ali the son of whom?"

"Ali the son of Zahara."

"Not your mother," said Mimun—"What is the name of your father?"

At this point a voice broke in from the doorway—a woman's voice, speaking in the language of the Middle Atlas tribesmen, a Berber language comprehensible to Riffians.

"His name is Ali the Jackal," she said, "and his father came from your country. He was called Ali the Yellow-haired. You must have heard of him. Everybody has."

The two brothers were plainly startled. Mimun held the child up before him and looked into his eyes.

"It must be true," he said. "You are my nephew."

"He is really a Riffian," answered the woman. "He resembles his father in every way. Ali the Yellow-haired never knew that he was going to have a son. I meant to tell him, but he seemed anxious—and then they caught him."

"But," said Mimun, "my brother never married."

The woman laughed heartily. "Come inside," she

said, "we can talk better there than in the street."

The four entered, and the child, who was holding his puppy in his arms, looked suspiciously at the two men. Hamid and Mimun sat on the floor near the doorway, and the woman reclined on a low couch, covered with blankets, near the farther wall. On a peg over the bed hung a lute.

"Come sit with me," said Hamid to the child, patting his knee.

Ali the Jackal crossed the room slowly, and, with an expression of doubt on his face, sat on the proffered resting-place.

"Did n't your brother tell you about us?" asked the woman.

"Never," said Mimun. "We knew all about the fine house that he lived in, and his servants, and his mules; but never about his women."

"There are three of us, sisters," she said. "I am the youngest. We came down from Zaian when we were little, to play music at rich men's parties. Ali the Yellow-haired heard us one night, and he would not be content until he had taken all of us to his house, to stay with him and play for him when he felt like hearing music. We never knew what his business was; but when the Sultan caught him, that was the end of him. The house was taken away from us, and we were put out on the street. We still make music. Would you like to hear some? You are not so nice as your brother, and not nearly so well dressed; nor have you his fine manners. Still, I like you."

"I think," said Mimun, "that we will do without

the music. We lack many of our brother's habits, yet his memory is dear to us for his bravery. Many times he brought us bags of silver from Fez, to pay blood money with, and fine rifles."

"Does n't this child get in your way?" asked Hamid. "Does n't he interfere with your business? Also, it is rather dark in here for him, in this alley where the sun never shines, and his cheeks are pale. Perhaps we can take him home with us, where he can play in the fresh air, and go to school and learn the Koran."

"One moment," said Mimun to his brother. "This is a rather shameful thing. He is not wholly one of us, and the manner of his birth would lay us open to scorn."

"Ha! That is nothing!" said Hamid. "Who would know it? Besides, we are in the country of the Arabs, where customs are different."

"You need n't be ashamed of him," said the woman stiffly. "My family are not bad people. Besides, Ali the Yellow-haired would have married me, had he known."

"We will not argue about that," said Hamid. "What we want to know is, will you object very much if we take him with us?"

The woman thought for several minutes, and replied: "No, for he will have a better upbringing. I had thought to send him to the mountains, to my own people. But it is better for him to be with his father's family. I often leave him alone here, and, it is true, his cheeks are very pale. Besides, you are his uncles and you have the right."

Calling the child over to her, she stroked its head and asked, "Ali the Jackal, would you like to go to live with your uncles?"

The child turned quickly to Mimun, and asked, "May I take my dog?"

"Yes, but you must not keep it in the house."

"Will you give me a rifle?"

"It is settled!" cried Mimun. "He wants a rifle! He is my nephew — there is no doubt about it! Yes, boy, I will give you a fine rifle, such as your father had; and when you are a little bigger, you can shoot it! I will give you a horn of powder, and a leather bag full of balls, and a long knife, too, to wear at your side. And some day you can go back to the Rif with me, and shoot your grandfather's enemies."

"Good," said the boy. "Only teach me to shoot right away."

3. The Siege of Fez

For six years the Ulad Abd el Mumen lived peacefully at el Hajeb, and became known through the countryside as the most skillful of farmers. The figs and olives which they sold near the Bab el Guissa of Fez brought the highest price, and their wheat and barley were abundant. They bought most of the land which they tilled, to save rent, and hired a family of nomad Arabs from beyond the Atlas to care for their sheep. Black tents sprawled on the grassland behind their village, and they were pleased with these Arabs, for they found them to be true desert people and not

like the soft townsmen to whom they were accustomed.

One springtime, however, events took place which changed greatly the manner of their living. The Sherarda, a tribe of Arabs who lived on the near-by plain, revolted from the Sultan, and captured Fez. Then the Christians marched up, the Christians who had earlier taken Casablanca and Rabat and the surrounding country. These Christians came with artillery, and took the town from the Sherarda, and made the Sultan their mouthpiece. The Christians — who were French — signed with the Sultan a treaty which made them, on paper, rulers of the whole land — or "protectors," as they chose to call it. The people of Fez, upon hearing this term for the first time, wondered what it was that the Christians were to protect them against, unless it were the invasion of other Christians, which they considered unlikely.

It did not take the people of Fez long to grow dissatisfied with the French rule, and to conspire with the tribes of the Middle Atlas to invade them. Before this could happen, however, some of the Sultan's own troops revolted, street fighting took place, and many Christians were killed. While matters were in turmoil, the Braber rode down on the city, and forced the southern gate, while an army of Riffians, fearing lest the French conquest should spread and so imperil their own mountains, joined forces and broke through the Bab el Guissa. The French, trapped in the northern quarter, climbed into the tower of the mosque

which stood just within the gate, and fired down from the muezzin's calling-place, and from slits in the sides of the tower. Many of the Riffians fighting about the gate were killed, among them three of the Ulad Abd el Mumen. Mimun himself did not take part in this action, nor did Hamid, for they were too concerned with their own problems; yet some of the younger men had joined the throng swooping down from the north, and now they were killed.

The Fezzis, who had assisted the Braber and the Riffians, were suddenly bought off; and one morning when the fighting commenced anew the tribesmen found that they were without support. After this discovery, they disappeared as suddenly as they had come.

Once in control of the city, the French soldiery set about subduing the countryside, and a column of infantry marched upon el Hajeb. Ali the Jackal, with his dog, was tending goats upon a hill directly south of the village; and as he sat there, his flintlock in his hand, he could see the troops marching toward him. His first instinct was to flee, but he thought: "I have done nothing. Why should they bother me? Besides, if I run away and hide they will find me, and there is no time to drive the goats into shelter. If I leave them, they will wander away, or the soldiers will eat them."

So he whistled to his dog and with its help rounded up his charges. The dog was a Middle Atlas shepherd, high of shoulder and broad of back. His brown hair hung long over his belly, and his tail and legs were

finely feathered. The dog circled about the goats, barking and nudging them with his nose. Ali the Jackal too circled about, shouting and waving his gun. When the goats had been rounded into a compact, milling flock, the first of the column appeared in silhouette over the rise of the hill.

Ali the Jackal stood still watching them, and held his rifle at rest with its butt on the ground. The dog stood by his side, its four paws firmly planted. Its nose was pointed straight at the advancing soldiers, and its tail stood out backward in a straight line.

At the sight of the houses below, the soldiers halted and broke ranks. They shifted into a fan-shaped formation, and advanced slowly. An officer stepped up to Ali the Jackal, and asked, in Arabic, "What is this village?"

"El Hajeb."

"Who is the sheikh?"

"We have no sheikh, but Mimun is the leader of the council."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Of course you know!" shouted the officer. "Lead us to him at once!"

A second officer seized Ali the Jackal's flintlock, and said, "Give it to me! We are collecting all firearms."

Ali the Jackal made a lunge to recover his weapon, but the first officer held him. The second officer exclaimed, "Just an old flintlock, too heavy to carry back!" and banged it against a rock. The stock

splintered, and fell off on to the ground. The officer was about to hit it against the rock once more, to bend the barrel, when Ali the Jackal, with a cry, broke loose from his captor and leaped upon the one who was breaking his gun. At this the dog, which had been growling and advancing slowly, his mane bristling, leaped too on the officer, and fastened his teeth in the man's arm.

One soldier seized Ali the Jackal and threw him on the ground; others beat the dog off with their rifles, and shot at it. Ali the Jackal crawled over to his dog as it lay there, panting, with blood running from its mouth, and its eyes commencing to glaze. As the boy touched the dog's head, it wagged its tail feebly and wiggled its hips. Soon it was still, and the ants came.

Shots rang out from either flank of the hill. Brown-cloaked figures, crawling behind hummocks, took a heavy toll of the invaders. This unexpected help came from Riffians on their way home. At the sound of the fighting, another column of French mounted rode up to relieve their fellows. Meanwhile Ali the Jackal crawled to his house. Before the soldiers left, many of the roofs of el Hajeb were smoking; those of its men who could be taken were in prison, and their guns captured.

Part One

A PROMISE

I

A THIEF OF RIFLES

Two Riffian boys were walking into Fez through the Bab el Guissa, the northern gate, which opens into the quarter of olive presses. It was a warm day of early spring; outside the walls the rolling fields were green with the fresh shoots of wheat and barley, and inside the country people were swarming, happy and eager to exchange their first crops for tea, for sugar, and for cloth. Many gay mountain songs arose from the crowd, and the portly burghers of Fez eyed the throng with satisfaction.

The two boys were large for their age. Moh Umzien, tall, lean, and dark of hair and eye, had nearly reached his full height, but lacked beard; Ali the Jackal, much taller and sturdier, was a young giant, and, being older than Moh Umzien, displayed a soft yellow beard through which the pink flush of his cheeks was visible. These boys were cousins.

"Let us go first to the leather-workers' market," said Moh Umzien, the son of Mimun. "I need a new scrip. This old one has holes in it."

"Anywhere you like; I have no money to spend," replied Ali the Jackal.

They elbowed their way in through the crowd of

smaller Jebally men and townsfolk, who, when they saw Ali the Jackal's head with its fierce blue eyes and yellow pigtail towering over them, made way in haste. Perhaps the sight reminded them of Ali the Jackal's father, Ali the Yellow-haired, whom the elders remembered. They remembered seeing him gallop through the streets one early morning, years ago, the morning after he had robbed the Sultan's palace. They had ducked as he turned in his saddle to fire at the squadron of *mokhaznis* to whom he had been betrayed. The same morning they had seen Ali the Yellow-haired borne aloft on the arms of the crowd, spitting through his beard as he was carried into the Sultan's dungeon.

Ali the Yellow-haired had come down from the Rif to make his living from the fat of the Arab land; for centuries the Arabs had tried, and vainly, to enter the Rif, and to exact tribute from it; and it was but natural that a Riffian should think the Arabs his prey by birthright. There were few, however, as clever as Ali the Yellow-haired had been. His son, who knew this, had inherited a contempt for Arabs, a contempt which extended in added virulence to those new and even less tolerable invaders, the Christians, who had broken his first rifle, and killed his dog.

The boys had walked in from el Hajeb, the village on the outskirts of Fez whither their family had been exiled from the Vale of Iherrushen, the home for which all of them yearned, and which Ali the Jackal had never seen. Throughout his boyhood he had listened to tales of this country, told him by his uncles

—tales of feuds and of long rifles, of the merry times at the season of grape-picking, and of sallies in the snow of winter to shoot wild boar, the hides of which made stout buskins. By repute he knew every man in the valley—what he looked like, and what were his personal habits, and what was his standing in the eyes of Ali the Jackal's own family, the Ulad Abd el Mumen; whether he deserved friendship and help in his troubles, or whether his destiny was a bullet through the head. There was no doubt in the minds of the uncles that the boy of their adoption was the true son of Ali the Yellow-haired; his mop of golden hair and the jackal slant to his eyes could not be mistaken.

They passed into narrow streets, lined with shops, and roofed over with poles and rushes so that the eager light of the spring day was broken up into myriad squares of brilliance which flickered on the hard-trodden strip of earth beneath their feet, and checkered their faces as they strode onward. At length the passages opened and they stepped out into a broad square, on one side of which a small jet of water bubbled in a delicately carved fountain of blue and green stones and tiling. In front of this fountain stood an Arab, tall of stature and heavily bearded. On his head was wound a wide and ornate turban, and his muscular body was sheathed in a well-tailored khaki uniform. A blue band on his right arm gave evidence that he was a recruiting officer.

His teeth shone white and perfect through his full lips as he shouted: "Would you eat meat twice a day

and earn seven francs? Would you go to France and see the country of the Christians, where all things are new and perfect? Would you walk in the broad streets of Paris, with a full-breasted woman on either arm? Join the Tirailleurs, to fight the Germans! France will reward her soldiers well! See the wonders of the country of the Christians!"

Ali the Jackal pulled on Moh Umzien's arm. "Wait," he said, in the Riffian language; "let 's listen to what he says. Maybe if we went to France we could kill many Frenchmen."

"No," said Moh Umzien; "let 's go on and buy the scrip. If you once go to France you will be killed. They will make you fight in the front line; and if the Germans don't kill you, the French will shoot you to avoid the expense of shipping you home. Don't listen to him. We have enough work to do here. We must go back to the Rif and fight our neighbors until we can once more plough our terraces in the Vale of Iherrushen."

"That will come later," replied Ali the Jackal, "after we have seen the French finished." Ali the Jackal seized Moh Umzien by both arms, and held him there while the Arab continued.

"Come to France and earn money," he cried. "You can send it home to your wives, who will eat wheat bread every day, and who will hang their necks heavily with collars of silver. Your children will be clothed in striped garments, and wear slippers."

"Rubbish," muttered Moh Umzien.

"The war will soon be over. The Germans have

no more food, and are eating their dogs and mules, and even their children. The French are breaking through, and are already in the outer provinces. They will march to Berlin, plundering, and those of you who join now will march with them. There are storerooms full of gold in the houses of the Germans; but they can do nothing with it, because they are surrounded. Their women are comely and very white. Join the Tirailleurs, and march through Germany."

"Enough of that," said Moh Umzien in disgust. "Let's go to the leather market and buy my scrip."

Ali the Jackal at length released his cousin, and together they crossed the square and entered another shady alley. When they had bought the scrip, Moh Umzien led Ali the Jackal back by a different route to the Bab el Guissa. As they walked across the green hills northward toward el Hajeb, Ali was deep in meditation.

It was now late afternoon, and the warmth of the day was rapidly yielding to the oncoming chill of night. At length the two boys topped the last rise before el Hajeb, and hastened as they saw lying before them the flat-roofed houses. On the roof of the largest house stood a bottomless pot, serving as chimney, and from the lip of this curled upward a gray spiral of cedar smoke. In front of the door of this house a brown-cloaked man squatted on a flat stone. This was Mimun, Moh Umzien's father, and the leader of the Ulad Abd el Mumen. He did not move when they approached, and limited his greeting to a nod.

As evening came on, the boys lit candles inside the house, and started a fire in a brazier by placing the lighted stub of a candle under the charcoal. Ali the Jackal carried this brazier out of doors to let the fuel burn down to coals and finish its smoking.

After the brazier had been placed outside, Mimun arose from his stone, which had now grown cold, stretched his limbs, and entered. He sat down against the wall in a corner of the room, chafing his left calf between two broad, thick-palmed hands. He had sat too long on the cold stone, and had not noticed the warmth creeping out of it until a cramp had gripped his leg and his bad foot. It was in the arch of this foot that he had received a bullet that day, years ago, when his father Malim Hamidu and his brother Amar the Scabhead had been murdered from ambush in the Vale of Iherrushen. This scene lay constantly before his eyes and caused him to brood silently. Now that his foot was cramped, the memory became even more bitter.

Mimun had committed sacrilege on the morning after those murders. He had crawled, dragging his wounded foot, on to the mountain slope overlooking the houses of his enemies, and had waited in the dim light of early morning for them to appear. They had come out late, for it was the first morning of the Aid el Kebir, the greatest of Moslem holidays, and they had had many preparations to make. Finally they had emerged in a group, crouching to pass through the low doorway, and when they had straightened their backs outside, Mimun had shot four of them.

They had not expected an ambush, for during the Aid el Kebir fighting is forbidden, and a great sacrilege. Then Mimun's rifle had jammed, and he had wept to think that he could kill no more, and had crawled home.

These four murders had been a simple act of retribution, a partial payment for a great and irremediable injury. There had been no men like his father and his brother, brave, witty, learned in council, and fine companions. In the minds of the men of other families, however, his action had been a horrible thing, a great smirch which lay over the valley like a long clot of blood. On this account he and his family had been besieged, at the end of the feast, and after many days and nights of desperate resistance had been vanquished, and exiled from the Rif by the council of the whole tribe. Now he pictured himself striding over the crest at the head of the valley, his wife behind him and his infant son, Moh Umzien, bobbing sleepily on her back. He turned his head away as his eyes became watery at the thought. The years had only strengthened his bitterness and the intensity of his longing.

The door opened with a creak, and Mimun's brother Hamid entered. Shorter than Mimun, broad-faced and merry of eye, he had adapted himself more readily to this new life among the Arabs, and, although he too yearned to go back to the Rif, he seldom expressed this feeling by look or action.

Hamid's hands were muddy, for he had spent the afternoon transplanting onion seedlings from their

cramped bed into a wider terrace, which he had hewn from the slope of a near-by hill. Reaching up to a shelf, he took from it an earthen bowl and a blue cake of Spanish soap. With these he went outside to wash.

When Hamid returned, he handed the washbowl and a jug of water to Moh Umzien, who set the bowl in front of his father, and handed him the soap. Then Moh Umzien poured the water over his father's hands, as the latter washed. When he had finished Moh Umzien gave him a large towel. Then Ali the Jackal washed, with Moh Umzien pouring the water, and when Ali the Jackal's hands were clean, he held up the jug and assisted Moh Umzien. Their hands were now fit for the partaking of food.

The door opened, and a woman entered, carrying a heavy bowl from which arose a cloud of fragrant steam. Having set this down between the men, she drew two loaves of fresh barley bread from her apron and handed one each to Mimun, her husband, and to Hamid. Muttering "In the name of God," each man tore his flat disk into halves and then into fourths, and distributed the pieces. Each took a small morsel in his right hand, and, with a muttered incantation, dipped it into the rich gravy of a thick mutton stew, fragrant with turnips and onions.

All four ate heartily. Mimun, however, finished before the others and, having sucked the gravy from his fingers, rinsed his hands by pouring water over each in turn. He dried them on the towel, and commenced making tea. First he set a large copper kettle of water on the brazier to boil; then he got out the

nickel-plated teapot, the tea tray, the sugar box, the tea box, and a sprig of mint.

He sprinkled a pinch of green tea on the bottom of the pot, and poured boiling water over it; he broke up a conical lump of sugar with a brass hammer, and dropped pieces of sugar into the water until saturation was nearly reached; then he crammed the mint into the top of the dissolving sugar, and closed the lid. Picking up the full teapot, he set it on the brazier and left it there until steam came out of the spout and the lid commenced rising and falling rhythmically. He then picked it off quickly, for the handle was hot. Protecting his hand with a red handkerchief, he picked it up again and poured out a glass. He tasted this, making a loud sucking noise on account of the heat. He shook his head.

"Let me taste it," said Hamid, who by this time had finished eating and had washed.

Hamid likewise drew in a spoonful with a deep breath.

"A little more fire," he said.

Mimun put the pot back on the brazier. When the tea was at length satisfactory to the two brothers, Mimun poured it out into four tall glasses with thick bottoms, and all commenced drinking.

"It will soon be good weather for fighting," he said.

"We had better wait until the second sowing is over," replied Hamid.

"There is a rifle apiece for all of the men but three," declared Mimun, "and two hundred and fifty rounds

each. We cannot leave for our raid on the Vale of Iherrushen until we have armed everyone with breechloaders, and I hate to take the money out of the treasury. The women will need it while we are away."

"Wait until the lentils have been threshed and sold; then we will have enough," said Hamid.

"It is not good to wait," answered Mimun, with the far-off look in his eyes which was well known to his kinsmen. "We have been here twelve years, and none of us has seen our houses or our terraces since that day the council met. Small trees have grown large during our absence. Our enemies the Beni Tadmut and the men of Tiddest have forgotten about us. They are walking carelessly up and down the valley, past our roofless houses. To them we are as dead as the heathen buried in the gorge of Aswil. It is time that we let them know that we still live. We must be in position on the mountain over their houses before they hear that we are coming. If we wait for the lentils, word may leak through."

Ali the Jackal listened to his uncle's speech with great attention. He had heard Mimun's laments since he was a small child, and although others had learned to take them for granted, he had always been fired by them with a great eagerness and a great longing. Perhaps because he alone of all of them had never seen the Rif, perhaps because he had been born under circumstances which made him all the more anxious to be one of them completely, he had always held the grizzled old warrior in awe and respect, and

listened with absorption to his words. He set down his tea, and addressed his uncles and his cousin.

"I will get the guns," he declared confidently. "I will bring them here to-morrow night."

Mimun turned sharply and looked at him.

"How will you do that?"

"There was an Arab down in the Nejarine square, barking for volunteers to enlist in the Tirailleurs. I will enlist to-morrow, find where they keep the guns, and run home with three. Then we will start at once. I will give a false name and village. By the time we get back they will have left, and anyway I may be dead."

"I will go with you," said Moh Umzien.

"No, you will not!" shouted Mimun. "You are my son and you will, if God is gracious, be the chief one of the Ulad Abd el Mumen in your time! We cannot spare you for such a scheme as this. You may not even go with us on our surprise attack. Your time will come when we have taken back our fields and terraces. There will be plenty of time then for scheming and for fighting."

"I do not think that Ali the Jackal should go, either," said Hamid. "It is a dangerous thing, and some day they may catch him and send him to prison. He will always have it hanging over him. When we have settled again in the Vale of Iherrushen, he will never dare to go to Fez. We had better wait for the lentil threshing."

"It will be easy," said Ali the Jackal, his eyes twinkling with excitement.

"You are like your father," said Hamid, turning toward his nephew and eyeing him severely. "You cannot help it; you were born to do crazy things. Your father was all right as long as he kept away from gun stealing. It was only when he robbed the Sultan's palace and took his rifles that they caught him, and threw him into the dungeon out of which he never escaped. It is not intended that you should be a thief of rifles. There is evil in it, and you will not succeed."

"You have been very good to me, O my uncles," replied Ali the Jackal. "You took me from my mother's brothel and brought me up with your children. You have fed me and sent me to school, and given me fine clothing. But if my father were here he would tell me to go ahead. I am my father's son, and he would not wish me to hold back at a time like this. I do not like to go against you, but I know what is good for me. You will have three rifles tomorrow night."

Mimun listened to all this with his head bowed. Suddenly he looked up, and addressed his brother.

"We are all destined for trouble," he said. "None of us has shirked. It is in the blood. Let him go."

"Your voice is the greatest in our council," said Hamid, "and if you desire it, I will do nothing. But it is a bad scheme, and when it fails, Ali the Jackal's blood will be on your head."

II

ENLISTMENT

THE next morning Ali the Jackal again walked through the Bab el Guissa into Fez. He was whistling an Arab song, and looked very happy. From head to foot he was clothed in Arab costume, with a white turban on his head, a dirty white jellaba hanging from his shoulders to his ankles, and worn leather slippers of a faded yellow on his feet. He would have to give these clothes up anyway, and it would be foolish to waste good ones. As he strode downhill through the narrow streets, he tried to imagine himself an Arab, and to decide how he should act.

When he saw the recruiting officer he paused, and listened to his speech over again. It would not do to seem too determined. He noticed with amusement that the speech was the same as that of the previous day, to a word. While the Arab was pausing for breath, Ali the Jackal walked across the open space to the fountain, and touched the soldier's sleeve.

"Here is a fine recruit!" shouted the Arab. "Look how tall he is, and how well built! If men like this step up, we will beat the Germans in a week! Come on, let me see some others; none of you are as big, but you may all be just as brave!"

Ali the Jackal did not like to stand here while the Arab shouted in this fashion. Someone might recognize him.

"When are you going to take me to my regiment?" he asked. "I don't want to miss the noonday meal, for I have walked a long way without eating."

"Come along, then," said the sergeant. "We will go now!"

The two walked up the slope again, and people looked at them as they went. Finally they came to a region of gardens, and passed through a gate into the Jewish quarter. The sergeant led him through a low doorway beside which an enameled plaque, bearing the arms of France, had been made fast. At the end of a short corridor they entered a box-like courtyard, surrounded by an iron-railed gallery. On a table in the middle sat a Frenchman in Arab clothes, with shaven head and a long beard. Ali the Jackal could tell that he was a Frenchman by the roundness of his pate. Behind the table, on a chair, sat a corporal with a registration book, a pen, and a bottle of ink.

"Here is another," said the sergeant, pushing Ali the Jackal forward. He then turned and went out quickly.

The Frenchman got off the table and stood up. He walked over to Ali the Jackal, smiling. The top of his head came to the Riffian's shoulder. Ali the Jackal tried not to look down on his face, a ludicrous circle of flesh cushioned with fat, for he felt like spitting into it. "How like pigs they are, these Chris-

tians," he said to himself. "One should pronounce no sacrament while slitting their throats, lest the knife be rendered unholy." He felt a desire to laugh, but controlled this with a smirk. "This will make me look embarrassed," he thought. "It will be all the better."

The Frenchman reached up and felt of Ali the Jackal's biceps.

"Make the muscles hard," he said in Arabic, without an accent.

Ali the Jackal strained so that the blood mounted to his face.

"*Magnifique!*" cried the Frenchman. "*Magnifique!* A pretty bullock!" He trusted that Ali the Jackal had not yet learned French.

"Let me see your hands," he continued in Arabic.

Ali the Jackal stretched out two sizeable extremities. They were broad of palm, long of finger, calloused, and thick of nail.

The Frenchman felt of them. "Like rocks!" he said.

"Can you shoot a rifle?" he asked.

"I have used a flintlock after pigeons and grouse."

Suddenly the Frenchman became businesslike. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Mohammed the son of Mohammed," was the reply.

The corporal looked at his superior with a quizzical expression, and wrote nothing.

"Come now," said the officer, "they all tell us that. What we want is your real name."

"I gave it," said Ali the Jackal, gazing down at him steadily.

"Where are you from?"

Ali the Jackal did not hesitate at this. He had decided on his answers on the way in.

"My tribe is the Tsoul."

"Whereabouts do you live?"

"We are nomads," said Ali the Jackal. "We live under tents, wherever it pleases God to look down upon our heads."

"Why are you joining?"

"I should like to see the country of the Christians, and all the marvels in it, of which I have heard. I should also like to fight the Germans, who are the Children of the Unclean One."

"Do you like the French?"

"You and I are like two bones in the same leg. We will stand up or lie down together."

"Where did you get your yellow hair and blue eyes? You don't look like an Arab. You could pass for a Christian."

"I was born in my mother's tent. How do I know what happened before that? Perhaps you are my father, who knows?"

The Frenchman hesitated a moment, and realizing that the one other person in the courtyard did not understand Arabic, slapped his thigh and laughed heartily. He clapped Ali the Jackal on the back, and said, "You are a fine fellow, and will make a good soldier. But don't try to joke like that with everybody, or you will come to grief."

Ali the Jackal thought of his own father, and of the tales which his uncle Mimun had told about him, and said to himself, "This one may well feel flattered."

The corporal finished writing in his ledger, and blotted the page carefully. Then he took a small card from the back of his book, and made several notations on it. The officer picked this up, looked at it, and handed it to Ali the Jackal.

"Your number is five thousand, four hundred, and fifty-six," he said.

He reached over to the table and pressed a button in the top of the bell, which rang. Soon a door opened in the rear of the courtyard and a soldier appeared, clicked his heels, and saluted.

"Take this man to the camp," the officer ordered.

The soldier with whom Ali the Jackal went out into the street was a Frenchman. He carried his rifle over his shoulder, and a bayonet dangled from his belt. "That is a good rifle," thought Ali the Jackal. "It is light, too. It will be no trouble carrying three of them home. It is the regular issue, and we have plenty of cartridges that will fit it." He looked at the stock, new and unscarred. "That will take a high polish," he said to himself. "I will have mine chased in silver, in a design like leaves."

They walked along the main street of the Jewish quarter until they came to a great square near the outer gate, under the lee of which the French were building a bank. In the middle of the square stood several automobiles, their drivers shouting for fares.

"Shall we take an automobile to the camp?" asked Ali the Jackal.

The soldier knew little Arabic, other than a few conventional phrases.

"Yes, those are automobiles," he replied. "You will see many others in France."

"Do they give us free rides in them?" asked Ali the Jackal, trying to appear very innocent.

This last question, like the first, was incomprehensible to the soldier. He turned on Ali the Jackal and asked, "What is your name?"

"Mohammed the son of Kuskus," he answered. *Kuskus* is the name of a popular Moroccan dish. Even the soldier had heard of it.

"Kuskus? That is food," declared the Frenchman.

"Kuskus is very good," answered Ali the Jackal, imitating the simple phraseology, devoid of grammar, used by his guide.

Soon they passed a group of countrywomen walking toward the city, their backs laden with baskets of eggs. Some of the women were young.

"Fatima is good?" asked Ali the Jackal.

The Frenchman looked up, and smiled. "Fatima is very good," he replied. He made his lips move as if he would say something more, but could not find the words. Instead, he made a gesture with his fingers.

"I expected that," said Ali the Jackal to himself. "They think always of women, and not only of their own kind. They have been here now but five years, yet in a few more the country of the Arabs will be

filled with children, toad-faced like these Christians. It would be better for the women of the Arabs to lie with negroes, even. These things will never happen in the Rif. We will never let the Christians in."

They traveled along the road which led to the new town the French had started to build, five miles from the gates of the Jewish quarter. Soon they could see rough walls of unfinished masonry rising from the fields around, and the tiled roofs, bright red in the sun, of the buildings which had been completed. The soldier led his charge on to a wagon road which branched off to the right, in the direction of Meknes. They climbed a low hill, and saw the camp before them. Hundreds of brown tents, conical in shape, dotted the plain. In the middle of the camp stood several corrugated iron houses, and off to the left a long train of freight cars rested near the end of the tracks which led to Casablanca and the sea. The engine was pointed in that direction. Steam issued from the stack, and the engineer craned his neck out of the window of the cab.

When Ali the Jackal saw this, he instinctively held back. He looked about him. If he were to run now, he might strike northward to the hills. There were plenty of bushes there in which he could hide. The blood rose in his neck and pounded the walls of his arteries.

The Frenchman looked up at him, and lowered his gun to port arms.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

"All right," answered Ali the Jackal, striding forward and smiling.

"Are you ill?"

"No, not sick."

"I should have run the moment we came to the top of the hill," he thought. "Now I will have to take his gun away from him."

As he tightened himself for a sudden spring, he heard the sound of heavy boots behind him. He twisted around and saw a squad of the Foreign Legion, dirty and drab in their pale blue uniforms. They must have come from the new town. They were marching rapidly. Now there was no chance.

"We will fall in with them," said the soldier, in French.

As they came into the camp, Ali the Jackal saw many soldiers, mostly native, standing at attention in review formation. "Those are the ones that are going," thought Ali the Jackal suddenly. "The train is about to pull out, and they haven't time to wait for me." Despite these inward mutterings, Ali the Jackal was full of foreboding. He would get away as soon as possible, with or without guns.

The squad of Legionaries halted, and Ali the Jackal and his escort marched on to one of the corrugated iron houses, which they entered. Three officers were standing there, about to leave. The soldier saluted.

"Here is a new recruit sent from the city," he announced.

"Good," said a captain. "We need him. We must send all native troops to Casablanca immediately.

Get him a uniform and shove him in Regiment Seven, Company Three. Hurry!"

Although Ali the Jackal could not understand French, he caught the word "Casablanca," which he knew to be the Christian name for Dar el Beidha—and the rest was obvious. As they went out, he started limping badly.

"Hurry," said his guide crossly, in French. He was no longer in the mood to labor over Arabic.

Ali the Jackal pointed to his ankle. "It twisted and broke," he said, with an expression of pain.

The soldier did not understand. He swung the stock of his gun and whacked Ali the Jackal on the buttocks. Ali the Jackal grew very angry. He looked about him; there were soldiers everywhere, all under arms. He continued limping until they reached the quartermaster's stores.

Two men inside seized Ali the Jackal. They tore off his turban, and one clipped his pigtail with a pair of shears. The other clutched his jellaba, which ripped in a long tear. Soon they had him stripped. He dove out of their hands and salvaged a small square of leather from the folds of his turban.

When the soldiers held him again, one of them whistled. "We can never fit him!" he exclaimed.

"Never mind, give him something," the other replied; and he hauled two pieces of underwear out of a box. They did not give Ali the Jackal time to put these on himself, but drew them over his limbs and stretched the cloth to make the buttons meet the holes. They found the largest shirt, coat, and pair

of trousers in the store, and forced the recruit into them. The collar was too stifling, the jacket hurt under his shoulders, the crotch was tight, and it chafed his flesh. One man wound a pair of puttees on Ali the Jackal's legs. Another seized the largest pair of shoes from a bin, and crammed the new recruit's feet into them. Ali the Jackal's toes bent under — his heels would not go down. He shouted, and kicked one of the men in the belly. This blow was rewarded by another, with the butt of a gun, in Ali's face. He put his hand up to his cheekbone. He looked at his fingers, and saw that they were covered with blood.

The pain cooled Ali the Jackal's mind. "I can never get away from here," he admitted to himself. "I will behave now, and later jump off the train." Consequently he helped the men force on his shoes, and finally crammed his heels into place. His toes ached like teeth. Before he left he put the small leather object into one of his pockets.

When he emerged, with his guard, from the quartermaster's stores, the soldier ran to an officer who was walking by, and said: "Give me an escort to take this man to his company. He is a new recruit, and he has been resisting. He just kicked a man in the belly. I can do nothing with him."

The officer strode up to Ali the Jackal and asked him sharply, in Algerian Arabic, "What is all this?"

"They gave me clothes that are too small, and shoes that break my feet. These trousers saw my

crotch, and I can barely walk, for my toes are bent under."

"What did you do that for?" asked the officer, turning to the soldier.

"We gave him the largest there were, sir. We were told to hurry, and—"

"All right, then, hurry! Get him to his company—can't you see the train waiting?"

"Yes, sir," said the soldier.

"Then run!"

Ali the Jackal and his escort went along without further trouble—the former now limping in reality. Soon they came to a double line of men, ill at ease and in poor formation. Few of them were holding their rifles in the proper position. A captain and two lieutenants stood in front of each company, and the sergeants were swearing at the men, trying to line them up properly. The escort took Ali the Jackal's card away from him, and handed it to the captain of the Third Company. The latter glanced at the new recruit, and shouted, "Shove him into the first squad, front rank! Fall the smallest man out, and put him behind!"

The escorting soldier saluted and departed. A thickset sergeant with negroid features seized Ali the Jackal by the arm and hurled him into place.

"Where is my gun?" asked the newcomer.

"Shut up!" roared the sergeant. "Yōu will get one when you need it."

Soon the order came to embark on the train. Ali

the Jackal hobbled forward, trying to keep in step. Once alongside the train they broke ranks and climbed aboard the roofless freight cars. Ali the Jackal installed himself in the middle of one, on the northern side. On that side of the tracks lay home. If he stood in the middle, he thought, he would be less likely to land under the wheels when he jumped. Then he reasoned it out all over again, and decided that the ends were better; but it was too late to shift, for the men were so cramped that it was impossible for them to change places. Ali the Jackal drew his feet under him, and with great effort took off his shoes. His toes smarted bitterly as he spread them out and wriggled them. If he were barefoot, he would be able to run, but with these fox-traps of shoes he would never get away.

After the train had started, the sergeant pushed his way through the car, stepping on hands and on legs. When he came to Ali the Jackal he noticed that the latter's shoes were off, and stepped intentionally on the new recruit's raw toes. Ali the Jackal gritted his teeth, and muttered, "Get off! Get off quickly!"

The sergeant looked down on him and said, "Who told you to take your shoes off? Put them on again right away!"

"Get off first," said Ali the Jackal, whose face had become very red.

The sergeant lunged forward with a jolt of the train, and fell upon the men behind. Ali the Jackal pulled his feet completely under him and sat on them.

When he saw that the sergeant had recovered him-

self, he said, "They issued me shoes that are very much too small. They were in a hurry and could not fit me. If I wear these I will be crippled, and you will have one soldier less in France. Let me stay like this until we get to Casablanca, where I can get new ones. I am telling the truth. If you make me put them on again, I shall never be able to walk."

The sergeant thought a moment. The man was right; but he was obliged to preserve his dignity.

"Let me see your feet," he ordered.

Ali the Jackal rose up on his hands, and cautiously thrust his feet forward. The sergeant seized one in both hands. The toes were bleeding. He squeezed them. Ali the Jackal screamed with pain, as loudly as his instinct prompted. "It will do no good to be brave, in this case," he reasoned.

"All right," said the sergeant. "Leave them off; but give me the shoes to keep. I won't have you throwing them over the side."

Ali the Jackal, now left alone, relapsed into a state of comparative peace. Meanwhile the train was rattling along on the level plain at a fair rate of speed. "It is going too fast to jump off just yet," thought he. "I will wait until it starts climbing a hill; and, when it gets almost to the top, after dusk has fallen, then I will try it. I hope there are bushes on the hill, so that I can crouch over and run between them."

For several hours the train continued. Unfortunately it was now but early afternoon, and by dusk the train would be far from el Hajeb. It would take him at least two days to get back, skulking

along in that uniform. When he did get home, he would have to hide until the Ulad Abd el Mumen made their surprise attack on the Vale of Iherrushen. All in all, these prospects before him were not pleasant.

The afternoon wore on. The soldiers on either side of him tried to engage him in conversation; but Ali the Jackal would not talk with them. Later, however, he realized that it would be bad to make himself look sullen and suspicious, and that he had better be friendly in order to avoid observation.

"Come on, tell us what your name is," said the man to the right of him, who had asked this question several times before without receiving an answer.

"It is Mohammed," replied Ali the Jackal with a smile.

"Where do you come from?"

"From the Tsoul."

"Really! There is another Tsoul man at the end of the car. Do you want me to shout to him?"

Ali the Jackal put his hand on the man's arm.

"Please don't," he said. "I have noticed him already, and he has seen me too. His family and mine are old enemies; we are in blood together. I should like to keep out of trouble, at least where it is so crowded. There is no room here to swing your arms."

After what seemed an interminable period, the sun set and dusk crept on. They were passing through mountainous country, and the train panted slowly up steep grades. Ali the Jackal felt in his

pockets and placed his fingers around the amulet, sewn in a leather case, which he had managed to salvage from his turban while being dressed. Its purpose was to keep him out of Christian jails, and heretofore it had succeeded.

"It was a good amulet," he thought, "under ordinary circumstances"—but now that he was in the hands of the Christians things were different. He was about to cross a large expanse of water, and an amulet which was carried over water lost its power. It would be no good to-morrow; so there was little sense in keeping it. He sawed at the stitching with his thumbnail, until the threads were at length severed. With great labor he took the paper out of its cover and unfolded it. He held it in his hand, inside his pocket, awaiting a propitious moment.

Soon he could feel the train slowing up. He straightened his legs and arose, removed the paper from his pocket, and peered at it, making believe that he was trying to read it in the dim light which still remained.

He allowed it to flutter over the side, and made a great leap after it. Just as his knees hovered over the edge, he felt a sharp pull on his belt. Now he was caught in a horizontal position. Great shouts arose behind him. There was no time to lose. He looked down for a brief moment and saw the gravel streaming by under him. The belt was too tight anyway. He strained suddenly, expanding his stomach muscles with all his might. The belt snapped, and he lurched forward, striking the side of the car

with his hands to drive him clear of the wheels.

But again something held him; three men had his legs. He started to kick; his hands slipped; and soon his head was hanging down by the rods, and he looked at the glassy whirl of the surface of the wheels. It was no use. He gave up and let himself go limp. The men hauled him aboard, and he fell on the floor in a heap. He felt sharp blows falling on his back. Turning over, he saw the sergeant beating him with a cane.

"I lost a paper," he said.

"You lost a paper!" shouted the sergeant. "Is that any reason to jump out of the train? You can't run away like that! Sit up! Don't take up so much room! You ought to be stood against a wall and shot!"

"It was a land paper," said Ali the Jackal. "It gave me ownership to two large fields at home. Now I have nothing to show for them. When I get back, someone else will be raising crops on them; and I won't be able to drive them off."

"When you get home!" laughed the sergeant. "If you behave like this, you will never get home. A big ox like you! The Germans will use you for a target, if the army does n't shoot you first. Now you must sit there without moving until we get to Casablanca. I will call the corporal to guard you."

He turned to the corporal, who was close at hand. "Come on, corporal," he shouted. "Stand close to this baby — he is hungry, and wants to crawl back to his mother. Cover him with your gun."

III

A PAIR OF SHOES

THE night was very cold and the recruits, huddled in the open freight cars, accustomed to the warmth of their loose jellabas and silhams, found the tight uniforms which the French had issued to them to be poor protection. Ali the Jackal slept little, and then only for a few minutes at a time. He drew his feet under him, and crushed his hands under his armpits, hunching his shoulders and forcing his chin into his collar. At times the jolting of the train threw him out of his position, and as his head flew upward he caught glimpses of the stars shining full and cold. There was no cloud in the sky; everything was deathly clear. Once they heard a distant jackal howling. "He is one of my own kinsmen," said Ali the Jackal to himself, "mourning that I have been caught in a trap. It is queer — men vary greatly from place to place. Only in the Rif are they knowing, and content with simple things, saving in matters of honor. But with animals it is different. They are the same everywhere."

The train rattled through the forest of Marmora, and Ali the Jackal could see the dusty leaves of the cork trees shining gray in the moonlight. No breeze

stirred them; they hung like a game net overhead. At length the trees thinned and the train rumbled out into a region of low hills. A damp wind blew through the wide cracks in the sides of the cars, and Ali the Jackal breathed in his first smell of the sea. Despite the cold, he stood up stiffly, as many of the others were now doing, and looked over the edge. The moon had faded now, and only one star, low on the horizon, still shone. The gray light of dawn had filled the sky. To the right of the train and somewhat below it, Ali the Jackal saw the white town of Salé with its high towers and flat roofs, and beyond it the wide, mysterious-looking arc of the sea.

Ali the Jackal was no fool. He had heard many times of the sea; but still, having never been near it, it was only natural that he should look upon it for the first time with a feeling of awe. It was one thing to know of something, and another to witness it. All the water he had seen lay in the shallow river beneath Fez.

The train turned, descending the steep banks of the Wed Bu Regreg; rumbled over a creaking bridge; then climbed an escarpment, and puffed slowly along the edge of a cliff overlooking the harbor of Rabat. It rolled alongside a high wall of red mud, and came to a jerking stop in the market place.

There was no chance of escape here, either, for the square was filled with Arabs and Christians. Ali the Jackal had never seen so many of the latter before. The French had taken this town several years before they had captured Fez. It was a smaller town;

there had been less bloodshed here; it was nearer to France; and the land could be taken more easily from its owners for the establishment of colonists. Hence, the French had made it their capital. All the houses to the left of the tracks were French structures, and Christians sat under awnings in front of them, drinking colored liquids out of tall glasses. Many of them wore wide hats which looked like mushrooms, and which made Ali the Jackal laugh whenever he saw them.

Soon the train got under way again, steamed through a gap in the wall, and proceeded on its way across the green countryside — almost always in sight of the sea — toward Casablanca. Arabs, scratching the earth with ploughs drawn by camels and donkeys yoked to a single shaft, looked up at the train as it passed, inwardly giving thanks to God and to their favorite saints that they were not seated upon it. Out of the murky openings of their black tents the faces of women and children peered.

As the train rattled on, the men grew hungry. Most of them had biscuits and bits of bread stowed in their pockets, and these were now brought out. The man on Ali the Jackal's right, seeing that his neighbor was unprovided for, shared with him, and this provender served partly to allay the hunger which was stirring sharply in the new recruit's stomach.

When the smoke and towers of Casablanca loomed ahead, Ali the Jackal asked his companion: "What will they do with us here? Will they put us in camp, or run us directly on to the boat?"

The soldier shrugged his shoulders. "God is aware. No orders have been given."

"Have you ever been to Casablanca before?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"Many times."

"Are there many Christians in it?"

"More than half, and most of the others are Jews."

This news discouraged Ali the Jackal. There would be little chance of escape, and less of getting home if he did. Yet he would keep his eyes open and take any chance that came. He thought of Mimun and Hamid, his uncles, sitting in the low-roofed room where he had argued with them the night before last. Hamid would be blaming Mimun that he, Ali the Jackal, had not returned. What was the use of going across the water, to shoot at men of whom he knew nothing, and against whom he had no grievance? "None of the men on this train know anything of Germans," he reasoned, "and one set of Christians is probably no worse than another. If only I could follow Mimun into the Vale of Iher-rushen, to shoot our way into the valley, and take back the land which belongs to us! But now"—and here he smiled slightly—"Mimun will have to buy only two more rifles, now. Perhaps he can afford to take the money for them out of the treasury."

He stood up again and looked over the side of the car. The train rolled down a slight incline to the very edge of the sea, which swung in a sharp curve to an unfinished breakwater ahead. At the end of the breakwater a huge machine was swinging blocks

of stone high in the air, and lowering them into place. Between the train and the breakwater rode a huge ship at anchor in the middle of the harbor. Ali the Jackal looked at it in fascination, measuring with his eye the height of the black wall of its hull, and watched the smoke roll out of its two stacks. A thick ball of steam darted out of the forward funnel, and commenced to spread and become thin. A piercing scream smote Ali the Jackal's ears.

"What is that for?" he asked.

"That is for us," replied his companion. "That means that we are to go aboard at once."

Ali the Jackal looked ahead, and saw a dozen smaller boats draw up alongside a cement pier. The train drew slowly on to this, and made ready to stop. The sergeant ran down from the end of the car with Ali the Jackal's shoes in his hands, crying "Get into these at once, before we leave the car."

The prospect of again confining his feet in these torture blocks dismayed Ali the Jackal. He leaned over to the man whose bread he had shared, and whispered, "Have you a pocketknife?"

He knew that the man had one, because he had seen him cutting bread with it. The knife was handed him secretly, and, when both the sergeant and the corporal had turned their backs, Ali cut out the toes of his shoes. The knife was dull, and the leather tough; but at length he succeeded. He tore strips from his shirt and wrapped his toes in them, and put on the shoes. His toes stuck out a fingerbreadth beyond the ends of the soles.

When the men had climbed out of the cars and formed in line, Ali the Jackal's company was the first to be embarked. Sitting by the gunwale of one of the tenders, he dragged his hand in the water. He was surprised to find it so cold. He drew in his hand, and sucked a finger. It was true then, what people had told him, that this water was salty. He was amazed to find that there was so much truth in the world, and wished that Moh Umzien were with him, just long enough for this experience.

The lighter bumped against the side of the ship, and a man in the bow caught hold of the ladder-rail. As Ali the Jackal climbed aboard, he struck the side with his knuckles. It was truly iron that this ship was made of. Once aboard, his company was marched to the poop deck, where they sat and looked over the rail at the city — up a wide avenue which led from the water front to an open square in which a dozen auto busses were stationed, and over which loomed a high clock-tower built in imitation Arab style.

Soon the ship was covered with men, and the last tender left. A grating noise came from the bow as the anchor was drawn in. The whistle blew again, and a shower of condensed steam fell on the poop deck, wetting the men. The land grew smaller behind them as the nose of the ship turned. When the land had become a rim of brown and of faint green, the ship turned again and the land wheeled quickly until it lay on the right side.

"See! The land has moved! Something is hap-

pening!" cried a youth who, like Ali the Jackal, had never before witnessed the sea.

Shouts arose at this, and many arms reached out to push the credulous one.

"He thinks the land is moving!" one man said to another, and the story was passed all over the ship.

At noon they were summoned amidships, where soup was ladled out to them in metal bowls. With the soup, they were given quarter-loaves of bread. After the men had eaten, many of them felt sleepy; for they had found little rest on the train, and the noonday sun was hot. Returning to the poop deck, most of them curled up and commenced to doze.

During the meal Ali the Jackal had noticed that one of the men of his company, who, like the rest, needed a shave, displayed a sprinkling of blond hairs on his chin and over his lip. The man's eyes were greenish, and his nose upturned. Ali the Jackal had heard him talking to others with an unmistakable Riffian accent. He had even used an *r* instead of an *l* in a certain word; and this left no doubt. While the others were sleeping, Ali the Jackal went over to this man and sat down beside him.

"Peace be upon you," he greeted him, in Arabic.

"And upon you the peace," was the reply.

"Shall we drop over a net and catch a few fish?" asked Ali the Jackal in Riffian.

Tears came to the other man's eyes. He grasped his compatriot's hand and kissed him on the forehead.

"Thank God there are two human beings here," he said, in a voice full of emotion.

"What is your name?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"Allal the son of Mumiud the Left-handed. But I am known here as Mohammed the son of Mohammed."

"Could n't you think of anything else? That 's the name on my card too."

They both laughed at this.

"What is your real name?" asked Allal.

"Ali the Jackal the son of Ali the Yellow-haired the son of Malim Hamidu the Gunsmith. My family's home is in the Vale of Iherrushen in the Gzennaya. Where do you come from?"

"From the Beni Tuzin."

"How long since you last saw the Rif?"

"Eleven days."

Ali would not admit, he decided, that he had never seen the Rif.

"How were things there then?" he asked.

"The almond trees were in blossom, and a sweet smell was in the air. The early figs were swelling, and purple stripes were beginning to come out on their green bellies. The women were climbing about cutting the wild asparagus shoots on the mountain, for we ate the last of our barley a month ago."

"Was there any snow left on the peaks?"

"Yes, a great deal."

How Ali the Jackal yearned for the sight of these things! He who had never seen the Rif! He pictured the Vale of Iherrushen in his mind's eye, with

its wet terraces and pale shoots, and goats grazing on the steep slopes overhead. He looked down at the hard deck beneath him, and saw his toes sticking out through the ends of his shoes.

"I must get a new pair somehow," he said.

"That will be easy," replied Allal, "I saw a big negro on the deck farther up. He has feet larger than yours, even."

The two arose cautiously and walked slowly along the rail, stepping over men, and setting their feet down gently so that the soles of their unaccustomed footgear would not make too much noise. At length they came to a huge negro who lay stretched out on the deck, sleeping on his belly, his feet spread out behind him. Apparently his shoes, too, were small for him, for he had undone the laces and had slipped out his heels, so that the heavy brogans were loosely perched on his toes.

Each of the Riffians took hold of a shoe, and withdrew it gently. The negro stirred and commenced to roll over. The two ran, ducking into a passageway between two sections of the deckhouse. They looked into the first door to the left, which was open, and from which a savory odor arose. There stood a French cook in a dirty apron, stirring something in a huge kettle on an iron stove, the lids of which were red hot. The cook reached for a long knife with his free hand and stabbed the air in the direction of the Riffians.

The two retreated farther down the corridor, until they came to a door on the right which was ajar.

They thrust this open and found themselves in a small room, with an electric light burning overhead. Ali the Jackal closed the door and bolted it. In front of him he saw a porcelain bowl of queer shape, half full of water. A hinged lid, the centre of which was missing, had been thrust back. A chain hung down from a box overhead.

"I wonder what this thing can be for?" asked Allal.

"Either to wash in or to drink from, or both," suggested Ali the Jackal.

"It can't be to drink from," decided Allal, "because they tell me that Christians drink water out of small pipes."

"Let's wash in it, anyhow," said Ali the Jackal, rolling up his tight sleeves as well as he could. "We are both very dirty."

While he was washing, Allal's attention was drawn to the chain hanging from the box. He tugged it, and water gushed into the bowl, sprinkling Ali the Jackal's coat.

"Hm, that is to change the water with after you have washed," said Allal; "that is a good idea."

When they had both finished washing, Ali the Jackal put on the negro's shoes, and left his old ones in the room of the strange washbowl. The negro's shoes were a fairly good fit.

Part Two

IN THE LAND OF THE CHRISTIANS

IV

THE ALARM CLOCK

ONE evening, Ali the Jackal and Allal, his friend, obtained leave to go forth from the camp of the Tirailleurs in which they were stationed. The camp lay outside the walls of Paris, near the Porte de Versailles, and was filled with Moroccans, Algerians, and Senegalese. The two Riffians had been unable to find other compatriots in it.

It was a sultry summer's evening, and beads of sweat stood on their foreheads as they marched down the boulevard which led toward the city. Both had become adept at marching and at the manual of arms; both had picked up, in the few weeks since leaving Casablanca, a smattering of military French, albeit grammarless and replete with heavy consonants, which sufficed their momentary needs. Ali the Jackal had resigned himself, with many inner reservations, to the new manner of living; he had, in fact, become so adept at it that, it was rumored, he might soon become a corporal. He and his friend Allal had both won sharpshooters' medals.

As they neared the Porte de Versailles they passed between fields covered with the box-like caravans of gypsies. About open fires, between the wagons,

crouched swarthy men in strange garments, and women, heavy with jewelry, scurried to and fro.

"Look!" said Ali the Jackal to his companion, "they are like Muslimin, especially the women. See their faces, and their clothing! Verily this is a tribe of Arabs who have given up their black tents in favor of carriages."

"Perhaps," said Allal, "we shall be able to converse with them. Let's ask them where is a good place in the city to find entertainment."

The two left the road, and walked over an expanse of earth, littered with refuse, to the nearest fire. An old gypsy, who was whittling something with a knife, clutched this more firmly in his hand and looked up at them. Two women arose and ran behind a wagon, where they looked at the newcomers between the spokes of a high wheel.

"What do you want?" asked the gypsy, in French.

"May peace be upon you, and it a very fountain of peace," commenced Ali the Jackal in Arabic. "May a great peace be upon all your clan, and all of your children, and upon all the children of your children. May there be no harm unto you, only a great blessing."

A second gypsy, taller and swarthier than the first, thrust his head out of the wagon behind which the women were hiding, and climbed down the steps to the ground. The two men conversed together in a strange language, with much gesticulation.

"What have you to sell?" asked the tall one, in French.

"Come," said Allal, "these are neither Muslimin nor Christians, but some strange people of whom we have never heard. There is no profit for us here."

The two left the camp and proceeded onward until they came to the Porte de Versailles. As they approached, a military policeman stepped out of a box and barred their way with a rifle.

"Permits!" he cried.

The two Riffians fumbled in their pockets, until they found crumpled pieces of paper. The guard examined these under a street lamp.

"Mohammed the son of Mohammed," he called out.

"Present," answered Ali the Jackal.

"Mohammed the son of Mohammed, again."

"Present."

"Pass. Is this your first time in the city?"

"Yes."

"Take the street car on the other side of the gate. That will take you into the middle of things. Be careful how much you drink, you Mohammedans who are not used to liquor. And give no woman more than five francs."

The two Riffians understood most of this, although not the individual meaning of each word. "Truly," thought Ali the Jackal, "this language of the Christians is not hard to learn."

When they had passed through the gate they saw a street car halted just ahead of them. It was the first one that either had seen. Hence they approached it with caution, and walked all the way

around to find the door. The conductor eyed them with suspicion as they entered.

"Which end is the safer, the front or the back?" asked Allal.

"If you sit in back, you will of course not get the brunt of the shock when it strikes something," said Ali the Jackal, "but if you are in front, you can see trouble ahead, and have time to run back and jump out."

"That is the best idea," said Allal.

The two walked to the front of the car and sat down. Soon other people entered, and at length the conductor blew a whistle, and pulled a lever. The door closed, apparently of its own volition. The motors commenced grinding, and the car moved.

"Now we are trapped," said Allal. "If anything happens, we shall not be able to jump."

Ali the Jackal laid a hand on his companion's thigh, and said, "Don't worry. There are ten Christians with us, and the French will let nothing happen to them."

The car rolled onward, stopping frequently. It passed through dimly lighted streets, between canyons of houses. Finally it came to a region of cafés, the seats of which were covered with soldiers and women. Strange music filled the air, and hysterical screams, and hoarse shoutings. The conductor stopped the car, and approached the two Riffians.

"Here is the best place for you to get out," he said.

Ali the Jackal and Allal arose, and stepped forth

onto the pavement. An automobile with glaring headlights, grinding on its brakes, swerved and barely avoided striking them.

"Children of pigs," muttered Allal—"this is no safe place for a Riffian."

They scurried to the sidewalk and commenced marching up and down, looking for two adjoining chairs. A small man slunk out of a doorway and approached them, speaking to them out of the corner of his mouth as they walked.

"We do not understand your pimpery," said Ali the Jackal in Arabic.

The skulking figure broke into the same language. His accent was that of Tunis.

"Come with me, my brothers," he whispered. "I will show you many wonders, to delight the eye, and more if you wish. I will show you women of great beauty lying with dogs, and will find you unsullied wenches, and soft boys, if you wish."

Ali the Jackal seized the man by his collar, and lifted him off his feet. As he did so he twisted his arm sidewise, so that the collar tightened.

"Truly it is hard to decide which are the fouler, Arabs or Christians," he said, and dropped his victim in the gutter.

The latter, crawling to his feet, set up a great howling, and soldiers arose from the tables. Bartenders, obese and aproned, stood in the doorways of their hostelries. Somewhere a whistle blew, and in the distance a gendarme could be seen, running down the street.

"Come, it will be better elsewhere," said Allal, and the two commenced running.

They ducked down a side street, and up a dark alley. At the end of it they came into another thoroughfare, and here slowed to a walk. On this street there was less music, and the tables were half empty. Approaching one well back from the street, they sat down, and mopped the sweat from their faces with handkerchiefs.

"This is good enough," said Ali the Jackal, panting; "they will not follow us this far. It was a small affair."

"Yes," replied the cautious Allal, "but what is small to us may seem large to Christians, who are violent only in countries other than their own. If anyone else annoys you, please leave him alone."

A waiter sidled his way between the chairs and stood before them.

"What will you drink?"

"Water," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Two beers!" called the waiter.

When the drinks were set before them, the two Riffians looked at the foamy glasses in surprise and disgust.

"Give me water," repeated Ali the Jackal.

"This is better than water," said the waiter.

"If you have no water, bring tea," said Allal, making his greatest effort in French so far, and using the familiar form of the pronoun. This was the way the officers addressed the Moroccans in camp, and they knew no other.

"We have no tea. Taste this and you will like it. It is very good." The waiter also used the familiar form, with a sour expression.

"What a strange country," said Allal, "in which they drink neither water nor tea."

The waiter shrugged his shoulders and departed.

Ali the Jackal decided to taste the beer. He scraped off the foam with the side of his hand, and snapped it to the sidewalk. Putting the glass to his lips, he cautiously sipped a little. He made a wry face, and spit it out. Taking out his handkerchief, he swabbed the inside of his mouth.

"What is it like?" asked Allal.

"The stale of mules!" exclaimed Ali the Jackal.

Two young women who were sitting at a table in front of them, and who had been constantly peering around in their direction, were having an argument.

"Leave them alone!" said the first. "We have done very well to-night. And anyway, you are already drunk."

"What if I am?" replied the other. "I like their looks, especially the big one." She turned her watery dark eyes and looked curiously at the two men.

"Don't be a fool, Henriette. They are Moroccans —you can tell by their uniforms. You can't trust those Mohammedans."

"They are n't Moroccans, they are too light."

"I don't care what they are. They probably have n't any money anyway. I'm tired. Let's go home."

"No, I'm going over."

With this, Henriette arose unsteadily, a cigarette drooping from the center of her full, red lips. She drew up her short, tight skirt to adjust a garter. Her leg was plump and white, and as she leaned over Ali the Jackal could see the full arcs of her breasts. Her companion, resigning herself to this decision, with a shrug of her shoulders, stood up and approached Allal.

As they sat down beside the Riffians, Ali the Jackal reached beneath him to button the pocket in which his money was kept. Henriette laid a soft hand on his. He could feel its warmth, and observed with surprise the length of her pointed nails. "Like a dog's," he thought.

She bent her face close to Ali the Jackal's cheek, and, smiling, said, "You do not like beer?"

This was his first experience with a woman of the Christians. He felt somewhat embarrassed.

"No," he replied.

"Then I'll drink it. I'll get you something else which you will like."

She clapped her hands, and the waiter came running.

"Mix him up a tall glass of grenadine and water, and put two measures of cognac in it."

"The same for the other one," said the second woman wearily.

"You are a very big soldier," exclaimed the plump woman, smiling at Ali the Jackal, and accenting the adjective. At the same time she squeezed his nearest arm. "And you are very strong," she added.

"That's nothing," said Ali the Jackal. "That's nothing." He could think of better things to say, but not in French.

"Are they all as strong as you are in your country?"

"Yes, stronger," said Ali the Jackal.

"Oh—and where is your country?"

"Don't ask him," said the other woman, "you know where they come from, you can see their uniforms as well as I can."

"No!" exclaimed Henriette. "That is not true!" Turning to Ali the Jackal, she said: "You are too light! Look, you have nice blue eyes, and your hair is the color of gold. You should let it grow longer; it would be very nice."

She drew even closer to Ali the Jackal, and looked up into his face.

"You know what my friend thinks?" she giggled. "She thinks you are Moroccans! Isn't she silly?"

"What are Moroccans?" asked Ali the Jackal.

By this time the waiter had returned with the drinks, and Ali the Jackal tasted his. It was not so unpleasant as the beer.

"Watch out," said Allal. "There may be poison in it."

"You are wrong," replied Ali the Jackal. "They would never poison us, they need us to fight. Later, perhaps; but not now."

"Listen," said Henriette, tugging on Ali the Jackal's arm. "Listen, I'll tell you what Moroccans are." For some reason she considered this very funny, and

giggled into her hand. "Moroccans are horrid black men, whom we bring here to fight in the front lines. They get killed, and—"

"Henriette, stop!" cried the other woman, who had not been listening at first. "Don't say things like that, or we shall have our throats cut!"

"You're crazy!"

"And you're drunk!"

Ali the Jackal set his glass down empty. A strange warmth glowed in his stomach, and spread through his body, until he felt a tingling in his hands and feet. It was very queer, and very soothing.

"Listen, Allal," he said. "You may not have understood that, but I did. Moroccans are black men, and very bad. They are brought here to be killed."

"We had better leave them," said Allal.

"Nonsense," replied Ali the Jackal, "they are better than nothing, and we can leave them later."

Henriette tried Ali the Jackal on another subject.

"Are you married?"

Ali the Jackal did not understand.

"You know; have you a woman?"

"Yes, two or three."

"All at once?"

"No, one at a time."

"Are they as nice as I am?"

Ali the Jackal did not answer.

"It's all right," said Henriette, puckering her lips. "You are a long way from home, but I will take care of you." She began wiping her cheeks with

a handkerchief bordered with lace. To Ali's nostrils, the handkerchief smelled like a garden of jasmine in the courtyard of a house in Fez.

"Waiter, two more cognacs!" she called. The drinks appeared.

Ali the Jackal put his elbows on the table, and his head in his hands. After a while Allal's woman dropped a cigarette butt on the sidewalk, for she had smoked it until it burned her fingers. She stamped out the glowing end, and said: "Why sit here any longer? I've drawn a dead one, and yours is going to sleep."

"He'll wake up," said Henriette.

"If you get drunk again," replied her partner, "I'll find another friend."

The four arose, and Ali the Jackal paid the waiter, fumbling with the flap of his pocket as he extracted the money. He had saved all his pay; but now there was little left.

"A thin purse from that one," said Allal's woman.

"What of it? He's with me, not you."

Allal's woman took him by the arm, and the two walked down the street. Allal, for all his drinks, looked very sheepish. Ali the Jackal allowed himself to be led in another direction.

The two walked arm in arm through many streets, into a dark alley, and up a winding staircase, lit by a tiny gas flame in a bracket. Ali the Jackal's legs felt very queer. They were hard to lift; and when he did lift them, they went up too high. He stumbled on the steep stair, and clutched the woman's arm

for support. She too fell, and together they slid to a lower landing.

Once more on their feet, they climbed until the stairs went no farther, and a door stood in front of them. Henriette reached into her purse for a key, and unlocked the door with some difficulty.

Once inside, she lit a lamp on a small table, and fell on a narrow bed. She reached her arms up to Ali the Jackal, and opened her mouth. He fell beside her, and she embraced him with great heat. After a few moments he stood up again, saying, "If you can't take your clothes off, I'll do it for you."

He knelt on the floor and drew off her shoes. Then, reaching up her thighs, he removed her garters, and carefully took down her stockings. He held a soft foot, bent of toes and caked with corns, in one hand.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "So these are Christian feet!"

He undressed her, lifting her body with one hand under the small of her back. To his surprise he found that she wore but one garment.

The woman offered neither coöperation nor resistance. She was now frankly asleep, and soon began to snore a little. Disgust and boredom overcame Ali the Jackal. He arose and made himself ready for departure.

"She is like a corpse," he muttered. "In Fez, she would be stripped and thrown out into the street. She is too fat, anyway, and what feet!" He glared at her for a moment, and added, "And I am a black

man, brought here to have my throat slit like a sheep!"

He unbuckled her wrist watch, and put it in a pocket. He emptied her pocketbook, which contained fifty-three francs. Looking around the room, he spied an alarm clock on a dresser. Taking this in on hand, he turned it around. There were two keys on the back. He turned one, and it clicked. He turned the other a little way, and it did nothing. Having unbuttoned his tunic, he put the alarm clock under his armpit, inside. Then he opened the door, and proceeded shakily to the street.

Once outside, he drew several deep breaths. The street lights blurred all around him. People bumped into him as he walked. Realizing that he was lost, he tried to find the tracks of the street car on which he had entered the city. "When I find them," he reasoned, "I will be able to reach the gate."

Finally he came to a broad thoroughfare in the middle of which ran tracks. He walked up this street until he came to a place where several people were waiting. He joined them, clutching the clock under his arm. The ticking disturbed him. "If they hear this, they will know that I stole it and will throw me in prison," he said to himself, and consequently moved a short distance away from the others.

At length a car came clattering down the tracks. It was an open one, with a runway on each side. Ali the Jackal climbed aboard near the rear, and sat down. On the next seat to him sat a stern-looking Frenchman

with a long black beard. About his shoulders hung a black cape.

"He looks like a Jew," thought Ali the Jackal. "Maybe the French were Jews in the first place, and changed their religion. I should be little surprised."

After a whistle had been blown, the car started, and rumbled down the street. The Frenchman in the long beard looked curiously at the lump under Ali the Jackal's arm. Ali the Jackal shifted his alarm clock to the other side. He started to look over his shoulder to see what manner of people might be sitting in the few seats behind him.

Suddenly a loud noise came from under his armpit —a loud, strident jangling, which vibrated the flesh against which the clock was held. He had never before heard so loud a noise. He tore open his tunic, ripped out the alarm clock, and threw it into the street. A whistle blew. The car stopped. For the first time in his life, Ali the Jackal was truly afraid.

He leaped from the car, and fell, rolling across the street into the gutter. When he stood up, he could feel that his knuckles were bleeding. He dashed down a side street, through several alleys, and at length came to a peaceful thoroughfare, upon which no person walked. The only lights were those which illumined the streets.

He walked for hours, trying to keep in a straight line so that he might eventually come to the city walls, and then circle them until he reached the camping-place of the dark people who dwelt in wagons. But there were no walls on the side through which he had

passed. The buildings grew smaller and farther apart. Between them stretched piles of refuse, and here and there a tiny garden.

After some time, he came to a small building which squatted on the side of the road, and the door of which opened directly on the thoroughfare. It was lighted, and a taxicab was parked in front of it. The chauffeur and a man in uniform were standing over the back of it. The cab had just come from the country outside, and the man in uniform was measuring the gasoline. Ali the Jackal drew up alongside them, and leaned over to see what they were doing. The fumes of the gasoline entered his lungs, and made him cough.

Hearing him do this, the chauffeur looked up, and eyed him suspiciously.

"What do you want?" he grumbled, through a mustache which spread over his wide mouth almost to his chin.

"I am lost," said Ali the Jackal. "Seventh Moroccan Tirailleurs. How can I get back to camp?"

"If you had forty francs, I would take you there," said the chauffeur, and turned his back.

Ali the Jackal touched him on the shoulder.

"I will give you twenty."

"Don't bargain with me."

"Twenty-five."

The chauffeur turned around and faced him once more.

"Why should you go to the camp of the Moroccans?"

"I am one."

The chauffeur scrutinized him intently.

"Be that as it may, I will take you for thirty."

Ali the Jackal started to climb into the cab.

"Show me your money first," cried the chauffeur.

Ali the Jackal counted out thirty francs, showed them to the chauffeur, and put them back in his pocket.

When he reached his tent and lay down on his cot, he was feeling himself again, but very tired. Allal did not arrive until the next morning, and then in charge of a military policeman. He had been less fortunate than his friend; he had wandered the streets aimlessly and in a sorry condition until arrested, and was now without money.

V

SNIPERS

LIFE in the camp of the Tirailleurs went on, day after day, with but little variation. Corporal Mohammed ben Mohammed — he who had been Ali the Jackal — kept his squad of Arabs in order, and obeyed his superiors to the letter. There was no use rebelling, he had learned that very early; the only way out of this predicament was to go ahead. After his affair with the plump woman in the city, he seldom left camp, and when he did refused to drink anything but water, which, he found to his surprise, he was forced to buy from a bottle, and which then had often a sulphury taste.

The officers had detailed the Senegalese to dig trenches in the camp, and the Tirailleurs practised warfare in these. They were instructed, among other things, in the use of hand grenades, and both Ali the Jackal and his friend Allal soon became expert in their use. This type of weapon was very appealing to a Riffian.

"By the eyes of Mulay Idris," exclaimed Ali the Jackal to Allal when he had flung his first missile and heard it explode, "if I could only carry some of these home to my uncle Mimun for his surprise at-

tack! He would blow up the houses of the Beni Tadmut, and the Vale of Iherrushen would be ours! He would roll one under the skirts of Bukkeish, he who leads the council, and we would have no more trouble from down the valley! When the war is over, I will buy a box of them, and take them home with me."

The monotonous round of training in the camp was not, however, destined to endure. The French were sorely in need of shock troops at the front, and one day, two weeks after the introduction of the Tirailleurs to hand grenades, they were marched out of the camp in full equipment. Past the bivouac of the gypsies they marched, and Ali the Jackal saw the tall man with the dark skin staring at him from his seat by the wagon. In through the Porte de Versailles, and down the street of the trolley car, they tramped onward, their rifles properly tilted, and their eyes front. When they came to the region of music and women, now curiously hushed in the searching light of day, Ali the Jackal peered from the corners of his eyes, without moving his head, to see if the plump harlot of his earlier acquaintance was there. He did not find her, and blew out his breath in relief when they had passed into a more sober neighborhood.

The column of Tirailleurs crossed the city, and came to a halt beside a train of box cars in the Gare du Nord. Into these they were bundled, and, as before, were so crowded that there was not room enough for all to sit down. Ali the Jackal and Allal,

along with the sergeant, stood in the doorway; and soon the train pulled out.

Through smoky suburbs they rode, until a region of small fields and clustered villages stretched before them. They saw women ploughing fields, and boys leading huge dogs which were hitched to carts.

"Never," said Allal to his friend, "have women ploughed in the Rif. Often we have lived for months on raisins, when there was no bread. Often have our men been killed, until none were left but small boys and old men. But never have women ploughed fields. Truly the French must be in evil straits, and the Germans strong."

"That means nothing," replied Ali the Jackal. "From what you and I have seen of the women of the French, truly one must conclude that their place is with the beasts in stables. Ploughing is for them a proper task."

As the train drew ever onward, the country became more rolling, and even hilly. Copses of trees with dark green foliage dotted the landscape. "Truly," thought the Riffians, "the country of the Christians is a rich land. Everything in it is green — there is tillage and pasture everywhere, and much wood and water. Yet they do not irrigate, else they might raise two crops a year. No wonder they are fighting, when such land as this is at stake."

Food was served at noon; and much was spilled on uniforms already none too clean, what with the motion of the car and the cramping within it, men striking elbow against elbow as they tried to carry

the nourishment to their mouths. Scarcely had they finished eating when the ominous rumbling of artillery reached them from the north, and, as they drew nearer, increased in volume. Silence fell over the men. None of them had heard big guns before. Those who had taken part in the siege of Fez in 1912, on either side of the walls, were acquainted with the staccato barking of 75's, but the detonations which now shivered their eardrums transcended anything they had imagined.

The country was now deserted. No longer did inviting fields, fertile and richly glebed, bare themselves before them. A waste of weeds and low shrubs, variegated with the pockmarks of shell holes, offered its ugly body to the sky. The land was now taking on a more familiar appearance to those in the box car. Here and there abandoned trenches, crumpled bastions, blasted pillboxes of concrete, and twisted patches of barbed wire made themselves seen through the clay and shattered rock which had been thrown up from beneath.

The train rolled onward. The cannonade became more and more intense. At length a grinding set in beneath the cars, the train slowed, and came to a jerking halt. The men piled out and formed in line. Orders were given sharply. The battalion marched through the lessening light along a deeply rutted cart-road. Every now and then a man, catching his foot in a depression of the clayey soil, would lose his balance and fall against his neighbor, quickly righting himself afterwards.

A whistle blew and the columns hastily moved to one side while a fleet of trucks rattled past, heaving and swaying. A shell dropped a hundred yards away, and sticky earth spattered the troops. Ali the Jackal reached up with his left hand to pick a piece out of his eye.

The column turned to the right. Directly before them, dimly outlined against the last lingering yellow of the sky, — for it was now almost completely dark, — they could see the gaunt frames of the French fieldpieces. Crouching rapidly backward upon their haunches with each shot, and swinging forward into place again, they reminded Ali the Jackal of cobras recoiling and striking at a dangled cloth in the market place of Fez. Their heads swam with the noise.

They came now to a sunken passageway, which inclined farther and farther into the earth, until their heads were hidden by the sandbags at the edge. This passage zigzagged from side to side. The ground beneath was soft from earlier rain and the tramping of many boots; so that often the feet of the Tirailleurs sank to the ankles in mud. They were going single file now, each man picking his own way in the darkness. Only when a shell burst somewhere overhead could they see the blank walls at either side and the mire beneath.

At length the passage opened abruptly into the first line of defense. This trench was deep, and heavily walled in front with sandbags and loose earth. Frenchmen, standing in niches and leaning their arms and shoulders into depressions of the outer wall, were

firing intermittently. As the Tirailleurs passed beneath them, the Frenchmen glanced aside quickly to look at those who had come to relieve them. Thin faces, hollow eyes, and straggly beards stared down at the newcomers in unfeigned delight.

Several hours after the Tirailleurs had taken up their positions, a lieutenant, who was a Frenchman, and two Arab sergeants walked down the trench behind them. When they came to Ali the Jackal they stopped, and the negroid sergeant,—he who had trod on Ali the Jackal's toes in the car between Fez and Casablanca,—touched the Riffian's elbow. Ali the Jackal looked around.

"Come down," said the lieutenant.

Ali the Jackal climbed into the trench. The sergeant proceeded farther down the line, and summoned Allal. When the two were standing with the officers, the lieutenant said, in Arabic: "You two Riffians are sharpshooters. There is a little hill out in front, farther down. You will be issued special rifles, such as you practised with in camp, and will dig yourselves in on the hill. There you can look down on the German lines. Get as many as you can."

Ali the Jackal saluted. "What makes you think I am a Riffian?" he asked.

The negroid sergeant burst into a broad grin. "I was in Kasba Selwan with Bu Hamara," he said. "I was in charge of drilling Riffians. I ought to know."

"Do you speak Riffian?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"A little."

"Then go home and lie with your mother, who is a pig," said Ali the Jackal in his native tongue.

"What did he say?" asked the lieutenant.

"He says that he is a good shot, and that he will kill a lot of Germans."

"Hm," said the lieutenant, "I am glad to see that you speak Riffian. It may come in useful some day."

The lieutenant saluted, and retired in the direction of the communicating trench, and the sergeant grinned. He led the two Riffians into a dugout, where an officer took their names and numbers, and gave them each a long barreled rifle, with telescopic sights. They had already been shown the use of such weapons in camp. After a few moments of further instruction, Ali the Jackal and Allal were dismissed. It was still some time before dawn.

"What foolishness," said Allal, in Riffian, "that we who have handled flintlocks should need fancy things like this. We can rip off the sights once we are outside; they will only get in the way."

Armed and loaded down with many cartridges, the two Riffians were led once more into the trench. Passing along this for a considerable distance, they were brought to a halt before a certain loophole. A lieutenant who had been sent with them ordered the man defending it to descend, and climbed into it with the two sharpshooters. He peered cautiously outside and pointed his finger at a looming mound ahead.

"There it is," he said. "Jump over and dig in on the top."

"This is a jackal's business," said Ali. "Now I will earn my name to my own destruction."

The two crawled over and lay flat on their bellies. The earth felt warm after the dampness of the trench. They felt their way ahead with one hand outstretched, seeking small holes, and finding them, crawled in to wait before proceeding to the next.

Advancing slowly in this manner, they gradually lessened the distance between themselves and the hill. On the flank they crawled more rapidly, and when they neared the top slowed down again. The summit was bare and flat. They unbuckled their entrenching tools from their backs, and carefully scratched a small trench in front of them, piling the dirt ahead of it in a low ridge. As Ali the Jackal was crouching, a bullet raked through the cloth over his shoulder blade. He put his hand to the place, and felt that it was wet.

"Only the skin," he muttered. "We are black men, brought here for the slaughter."

At length the shallow hole they had dug was deep enough to afford them some shelter. They crawled in, and gradually enlarged it to more comfortable proportions. The gray streaks of dawn made their work easier, if more exposed. When they had finished, Ali the Jackal drew his bayonet and pried the sights from his rifle, and Allal did the same with his.

"Now we must find the range," said Ali the Jackal.

Ahead of them lay the trenches of the Germans. They could not look down into them as easily as the lieutenant had said, for, as the two Riffians decided,

the Germans were no fools. Facing the hill, the ramparts were higher than elsewhere. Yet they could see the tops of a few basin-shaped iron hats, and rifles stretching out through gaps in the parapet.

Ali the Jackal could dimly see the end of one of these rifles. "That is a good target to find the range with," he decided, "and it will harm no one." He aimed at it point blank, and fired. The bullet struck several inches below, but varied neither to right nor to left. "A fine gun," he thought—"the kind to take home with me." The next time he raised his barrel a little, and hit the end of the German's rifle. It flew out of its owner's hands, and fell in front of the parapet. Meanwhile Allal had found his range in a similar manner.

"Now we know what we can do with them, let's put them to good use. Later we can desert," whispered Ali the Jackal into his companion's ear. Allal nodded, and the two turned around and trained their weapons on the trenches of the French.

"I do not like to shoot Muslimin, even if they be only Arabs," said Allal.

"Nor I," replied Ali the Jackal. "Let's pick off what few Frenchmen we can see, and let it go at that."

The French troops had not all been relieved, and some few helmets still remained in the trench. At these the two Riffians carefully aimed, and fired. Thus they killed seven.

"We have won our entrance to Paradise," said Allal.

"We have each killed Christians. Now the gates will be opened for us, if we die this very night."

"Praise be unto God," said Ali the Jackal reverently.

Soon he saw the lieutenant who had ordered them up there walking down the trench. He could see more clearly now, for the low clouds, hanging over the eastern horizon, had lifted. He shot the lieutenant through the neck, and saw him fall, clutching the wall while the blood spurted.

"A fine gun," said Ali the Jackal in ecstasy, and kissed the warm barrel.

At that moment Allal clutched his comrade's arm anxiously. "I hear a noise down below," he whispered.

Ali the Jackal abandoned his sport instantly, and faced the German lines. In the dim light of early dawn a dozen forms, the same shade as the earth, were crawling past them.

"If we let them come, they will kill us," said Allal. "How will they know we are Muslimin? We cannot talk with them."

"Still it is a shame to harm them. It is said that their sultan has made his pilgrimage to Mekka, and is in alliance with the Turks," said Ali the Jackal. "Let's crawl down to them, and see what we can do."

"I do not like this," whispered Allal; yet he followed his companion downward.

They were better at concealing themselves than were the Germans, who had not seen them approach.

Ali the Jackal drew alongside the first man, and touched him on the foot.

Without warning there came a whine which filled the air. With a terrific shock Ali the Jackal saw a great light which blinded him. He felt himself rising — rising — as though he would never again touch the earth. The next thing he felt was when he banged against the ground, and pain racked every bone in his body. He twisted in agony from his back to his stomach, and tried to rise on his elbows, but fell limp. A wave of soothing sensation rose through his spine and filled his brain. Some woman must be stroking the back of his neck. He tried to reach around and find her hand, but could not move his arm.

It was bright morning, and he was lying in a clump of juniper over el Hajeb. Soft clouds of a surpassing whiteness floated overhead, and the warmth of the earth underneath was good. He looked down at the houses, and saw Mimun come out. His uncle was limping less than usual, in this dry weather. A smile lay on those gnarled features which were wont to look so forbiddingly at the world. Ali the Jackal felt down at his side, and the three rifles he had stolen were there. He felt the stock of one; here he would have the silver inlay chased. How pleased Mimun would be when he saw them. They could start their surprise attack at once; they could leave that very night.

Suddenly the white clouds thickened, then others rushed up from the horizon. They clashed together

in the middle of the sky, and there was an ominous rumbling from overhead. Suddenly a downpour came. A whole jugful of water smote Ali the Jackal's face, and some of it went into his mouth, and choked him. He looked up. It was raining.

Over him stood the negroid sergeant, grinning. ("Does he never cease grinning? I should think that the muscles of his face would grow tired," thought Ali the Jackal.) The sergeant was giving him a drink out of a canteen. Ali the Jackal looked around. Near him lay Allal and the twelve Germans. Some of the latter were dead, but Ali the Jackal could not of a certainty tell which. The others were all in a piteous state.

"You see," cried Ali the Jackal to the sergeant, "Allal and I had just captured these Germans when a shell landed, and from behind our lines, too. Is n't that right, Allal?"

Allal was unable to move.

"We crept up the hill, and found that they were already on top. They were sniping on our trenches; we saw them kill a number of men. We crawled around the side and jumped on them from behind, and they all surrendered."

When they lifted Ali the Jackal to carry him away, his left thigh buckled and twinged with excruciating pain.

"Mind my leg," he said.

VI

FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE

ALI the Jackal and Allal lay on adjoining beds in a long room. The walls and ceiling were very white, like the inside of a mosque, and many windows let in a dazzling brightness of sunshine. Ali the Jackal's left leg lay stretched out in front of him, tightly bound in a cast. He had already been there a week, and the monotony of his position irked him greatly. He longed to roll over and over, to jump up and down.

His friend Allal had been wounded in the head, and but for his metal helmet would have been killed. His head was completely swathed in bandages. As Ali the Jackal looked at him, he seemed turbaned, and his beard, which had not been shaved in the hospital, was already assuming natural proportions.

"Truly you are a Moslem again, Allal, while I am still a Christian," repeated Ali the Jackal many times, and although it seemed absurd, it comforted him a little to see his friend so accoutred.

There were women of the Christians who came every morning to visit the wounded soldiers — tall women, sweet-smelling, and marvelously red of lips and white of skin. Their hands, with the long nails

upon which Ali the Jackal had looked at first with such surprise, felt soft as they caressed those of the men lying helpless on their cots.

There was one such woman who was English, and who had hair and eyes very much like those of Ali the Jackal. She would seek his cot especially, and since she had lived in Syria and knew Arabic, he was able to talk glibly with her.

"You are no Moroccan," she said to him one afternoon. "You look just like an Englishman. You could be my brother. You must have English blood."

Ali the Jackal shook his head.

"No," he said, "my people come from the mountains. It is high there, and cold, and there are many trees, very green ones. It is a poor country, and men live on rye, and the flesh of goats, for it is too cold for wheat and sheep. They say that some were once Christians who turned, but not my family. My family," here he looked around to see if anyone was listening, "is descended from Abd el Mumen, a prophet, a great man, who came from the East. My family has no Christian blood."

It was very silly of Ali the Jackal. Tears came to his eyes as he talked about the home which he had never seen.

"It is beautiful there, my country," he went on. "There are fig trees, and almonds, and olives, and in the winter you can see the tracks of wild boar in the snow. No Arabs ever come there and no Jews, and —if God is willing— no Christians."

At this last word, he looked at her curiously. "You are not a Christian?" he asked.

"Not very much," she replied, with a smile.

"Then praise be unto God."

At this point there was a slight commotion at the end of the room. Looking down the long row of cots, and across the vast expanse of shiny floor, Ali the Jackal and the Englishwoman could see a very fat man with a long, curly beard, bifurcated and hanging over either breast. He was dressed in the uniform of a general. Much gold was on his cap, and many medals sloped outward on the curve of his bosom. A shiny belt surrounded his ample though well-corseted waist, and his silver-spurred boots too were shiny.

He was talking with two nurses, who were smiling at him, and a doctor, dressed in white, was bowing and gesticulating. This company approached the beds of the two Riffians. The doctor pointed at them with a flexible hand.

The general stood at attention. He saluted. In his left hand he held two ribbons from which medals dangled.

"Corporal Mohammed ben Mohammed, Seventh Moroccan Tirailleurs?" he inquired.

"Present," said Ali the Jackal, and saluted.

The general strode between the two beds, and leaned over Ali the Jackal. The curly beard tickled his neck. The fat lips kissed both cheeks. Ali the Jackal blushed. The general drew back his ponder-

ous head, and pinned a medal on Ali the Jackal's shirt.

"Corporal Mohammed ben Mohammed, in reward for your valiant services in the cause of our *belle patrie,* France rewards you with this high honor. This is a gracious tribute for your heroism in capturing, with your friend, twelve enemy sharpshooters, on hill number one hundred and fifty-six, on the sixteenth of April, nineteen hundred and seventeen."

Having finished this oration, he turned to Allal and went through the same formula. Bowing and smiling, he departed. Ali the Jackal and Allal looked at one another.

"We are women," said Allal.

Ali the Jackal, turning to his English friend, said: "Here; when no one is looking take this thing off me, please. Put it in your pocketbook, and when you have a son, give it to him to play with."

"But it is the Croix de Guerre!" she replied. "Are you not proud of it?"

"It is the manner of fools and utter idiots," replied Ali the Jackal, "to be deceived by such baubles. They lure us here to be cut to pieces and die for no profit of our own, and then seek to satisfy us with trinkets. What good is the thing? Maybe I could get fifteen francs for it. I would rather give it to you, for your son to play with when he is very small, and does not yet know very much. Besides, I did n't earn it."

VII

THE MOUSE

WHEN Ali the Jackal left the hospital, his leg was weak and hard to walk on. Still he felt that there was nothing permanently wrong with it, and that when he had built up his strength it would serve him as before. He would not, however, cease limping in France, lest he be sent back to the trenches, a thought which he did not relish. He might never succeed in deserting, and if he stayed with the French he might at least get home. Allal's wound in the side of his head had needed trephining, and he was forced to wear a warm pad over it to keep it from being chilled. He too was freed from fighting.

Although they were still members of the Seventh Tirailleurs, they were not sent back to their regiment, in which they would be of no use, but were assigned to kitchen duty in the officers' mess of a training camp outside Paris. They were taught to peel potatoes and to cut up meat, to skin fish and to mix together all manner of strange dishes in which the French delight. The colonel, who was in charge of the post, came often to the kitchen to see how things were proceeding, and to order special dishes of which he was fond. He took a fancy to Ali the Jackal, and, because of his clean and pleasant appearance, made him waiter.

Hence the son of Ali the Yellow-haired, who had himself had many servants, was now relegated to the position of food-bearer to infidels. Ali the Jackal accepted this with grace and with apparent contentment. At least, it kept him out of the trenches; and he was well fed. It could not last forever, and his time would come. Furthermore, outside of the hours of duty, his freedom was almost complete, and his activities unrestricted. By making good use of his time, he had acquired a much wider knowledge of French.

One afternoon the colonel entered the kitchen and grasped Ali the Jackal's arm from behind as he was stirring a kettle of soup. Ali the Jackal looked over his shoulder.

"Mohammed," said the colonel, "we are having guests to dinner. Ten officers of the American army. They are a big, hearty race, and do not care for delicacies. They like much meat, and they like it cooked little."

"Like the Aissawa in my country," said Ali the Jackal, "who toss a live sheep in the air, and catch it on their heads. They eat it raw, and drop the bones on the ground."

"A pleasant likeness," said the colonel with a smile, "a very apt comparison. You must get a flank of beef and roast it, just a little, in a pan, with potatoes around it. You must lard the roast. Do you know how?"

"Very well, my colonel, the cook has taught me.

When he comes in I will tell him, and we will do these things together."

"No delicate vegetables, like artichokes or asparagus," continued the colonel, "but coarse things, like cabbage and turnips."

"Very well, my colonel."

"That reminds me, Mohammed. We French had once a great poet, named François Rabelais. This is one of his songs: —

One night when old Tosspot had been at his butts,
And Joan his fat wife stuffed with turnips her guts — [1]

Oh, but pardon me; that is in old French, and you would n't understand it. Anyway, stuff them with turnips."

"Very well, my colonel."

"You are a fine boy," said the colonel, slapping him on the back. Ali the Jackal made an expression of distaste into the soup.

About seven o'clock the officers began to file in, and sat on either side of the long table chattering and gesticulating. Ali the Jackal threaded his way between them, setting the table.

"Pardon," he would say, as he moved a lieutenant's elbow from the spot on which a fork was to be placed. He was used to working under these difficulties, and owing to his general amiability, was permitted a greater liberty with the officers than would have been the case with most waiters. As he limped around

[1] Taken from Urquhart and Motteux's translation.

the corner of the table, he struck his wounded leg on the sharp projection of the boards. The blow pained him slightly. He winced mightily, and reached down to clasp the injured portion in both hands, letting the cutlery fall to the floor with a clatter. Allal rushed in from the kitchen to pick up the implements.

"Never mind, it was nothing. If I do this they won't send me back," said Ali the Jackal, in Riffian.

"Fear not," replied Allal. "They like you here, with your joking and laughter, to do their clowning. You have become their scabhead.[1] They will never let you go. I am the one to worry. I live in the kitchen and am never seen."

"Ah, but your head is much worse. You are really out of things."

More officers came, and Ali the Jackal finished setting the table. At length the door opened, and all those who were seated arose. The colonel could be seen outside, holding the portal open for his guests to enter. First came a colonel in an American uniform, tall, erect, and lean. Ali the Jackal, looking through a crack in the kitchen doorway, noticed the metallic gray glint of his hair, and the forward sweep of his jaw. Behind him entered a captain, short but exceedingly muscular, with a chest like the trunk of a tree. His face was round and freckled, and the tip of his broad nose upturned. Greenish eyes shone

[1] In the Rif a "scabhead," or victim of favus, is always considered a vehicle of comic relief. Thus to a Riffian the term "scabhead" is equivalent to "clown."

merrily from wide orbits. Ali the Jackal reached behind him and tugged at Allal.

"See the captain," he whispered. "He is like the men of Beni Urriaghel in the Rif."

Allal joined his friend at the crack of the door, and peered.

"By the grandfathers of Sidi Bu Jiddain," he exclaimed, "I have seen him in many markets, and on mountain trails. I have seen him at the olive press, and hiding behind a rock with a gun in his hand."

Three other Americans entered, tall men with white teeth, and deep-sunken eyes. Behind them came the French colonel, bowing and grimacing. When all had been properly introduced and seated, Ali the Jackal brought on the soup, which Allal handed him through the kitchen doorway. He passed it first to the guests, according to rank. As he leaned over the short captain, the latter looked up at him, then turned and addressed the colonel in French.

"Your boy is a Scandinavian?"

"No," said the colonel. "His race will be a great surprise to you. See if you can guess it." Turning to Ali the Jackal, the colonel warned him, "Say nothing, so that he may get no clue from your accent."

The captain looked at Ali the Jackal intently. The other Americans surveyed him likewise, while the three who had come in last and who could not speak French, conversed together in their own speech. Ali the Jackal listened to it as he served the soup, and it seemed strange yet very familiar to him. Although he understood nothing, yet the words were firm and

well rounded, chary of vowels, and at times even somewhat harsh. In intonation it resembled the Riffian tongue, and he was constantly hearing words which meant something in the latter speech. "It does not drip from the nether lip, like French," he thought, "but comes out in whole pieces."

The freckled captain addressed the French colonel.

"He is perhaps a Breton, but he is too big. He might be a Norman; but, as in the case of the Breton, his head is the wrong shape. As I look at him more, I see that he is unlike most Scandinavians. He might be English or American. Yet there is something about his hands and the way he walks that suggests open country, from the cradle."

"He has been wounded in the leg," said the colonel.

"I know; but there is something else. Before the war it was my business at one time to study such things."

"Do you give up?"

"I am probably wrong, but I will call him an Icelander."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the colonel, and turned to his compatriots. "Our guest the captain has called Mohammed an Icelander!"

"Mohammed?" questioned the freckled one in surprise.

Ali the Jackal, who had been unable to follow all of this conversation, yet who knew that he was the subject of it, turned, thinking that he had been addressed. The way in which the stranger had pronounced the name Mohammed bespoke a knowledge

of Arabic, and instinctively Ali the Jackal made use of that language.

"You have spoken to me, sir, in the language of Muslimin, even though you said but one word. Is there anything which you desire to be done?"

"Peace be upon you, O son of faithful ones," replied the captain. His Arabic was that of Egypt, yet not difficult to understand. "The colonel has asked me to guess the country from which you come. I have failed, for you have the bone and flesh of my own people, yet I knew that you were not one of us. Tell me, my brother, whence do you come?"

"I am from Morocco, but I am not an Arab, and Arabic is not my language. Don't tell these Frenchmen, but I am a Riffian."

"Of course," said the captain. "I have seen some at Tangier. Are there many like you in the Rif—in looks, I mean?"

"My father was called Ali the Yellow-haired, and they say that I resemble him. All are not like me; but there are many. There are more who resemble you, with freckles, and red in their hair. You are like the Beni Urriaghel. If you were to dress in their clothes, you would never be distinguished from them."

"Is it a good tribe?"

"Next to my own, the best."

This conversation was slowing up the service. The French colonel leaned over the table, and said, "Pardon, my captain, but we must be served. You may speak to Mohammed later, as much as you like."

When Ali the Jackal reëntered the kitchen, Allal punched him in the ribs.

"What do you mean, the Beni Urriaghel is the best tribe, next to your own? How about mine, the Beni Tuzin?"

"I was just trying to please him," replied Ali the Jackal.

The meal went on. The roast beef was served, with great success. Ali the Jackal was constantly limping from cup to cup pouring wine, of which a great quantity was consumed. Dessert was a custard with burnt sugar sauce, and by the time it appeared the Frenchmen were giggling and conversing rapidly, their arms about each other's shoulders, while the Americans sat in different attitudes, some with their heads in their hands, and others leaning back in their chairs. Only the colonel sat erect. His tense face had become red, but had not otherwise changed.

At the appearance of the custard, quivering lasciviously on its plate, the Frenchmen set up a howl of laughter, and pointed at it with their fingers. One of them jogged Ali the Jackal's arm so that the custard shook in greater agitation, and almost slid from the plate.

"How would you like a girl like that?" one of them asked Ali the Jackal, as he nudged him.

Ali the Jackal turned to the freckled captain, and said in Arabic, "They think these things are funny; but they do not amuse me very much, especially after the fifth time."

The captain looked at him with a gleam of understanding, but said nothing.

After the dessert liqueurs were served, and Ali the Jackal went around the table with six bottles hanging from his large hands. The American colonel was drinking very little, and the French colonel glanced at him from time to time uneasily. When the coffee cups and liqueur glasses were empty, the French colonel called Ali the Jackal to his side, and bade him bend over close to his ear.

"Go to my quarters, and tell my orderly that you have come for the bottles. I have the drink which Americans like, it is whisky. That will make them happier."

"How many bottles are there?"

"Three. Bring them all."

When Ali the Jackal returned, he found the company on its feet. The American colonel was shaking hands with his host, and saying, "No, no, thank you, I am an old man and must sleep. I have much work to do in the morning."

He smiled wanly. As his subordinates apparently offered to go with him, he waved them back to their seats. When he had departed, the others sat down in obvious relief. As Ali the Jackal uncorked the whisky and poured it into tall glasses to be mixed with gassy water, what formality remained in the gathering departed. Ali the Jackal smelled of the liquor, and made a wry face. "It smells the way bitter acorns taste," he said to himself. The Frenchmen were singing together, and when they at length

ceased, everyone clapped loudly. As far as Ali the Jackal could gather, the song concerned a station master and the infidelities of his wife.

The four Americans now arose and stood in a circle, their arms on each other's shoulders, and their heads together. They burst into a loud and rollicking ditty, of a dozen verses. When they had finished, Ali the Jackal turned to the freckled captain and asked: "What is the song about? It sounds like a good one."

The captain smiled, and replied: "It is about a sultan of the English of ancient times. He was a rough fellow, and wore queer clothing. He had an affair with the queen of Spain, and his rival was the king of the French."

"Who won her in the end?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"The English sultan succeeded at first," was the reply, "and likewise baited and sorely mutilated the sultan of the French; but the latter won in the end, by unfair means."

"A pity; but I am not surprised," commented Ali the Jackal.

"Let Mohammed sing a song of his country," demanded the captain in a loud voice. The French officers turned and looked at their waiter.

"Excellent! Excellent!" they cried.

Ali the Jackal thought a moment. He would not sing a Riffian song, to have it laughed at here; but he would sing a song in Arabic which the Tirailleurs had made up against the French, and which they were wont to sing in private.

"I must have my comrade from the kitchen," he announced.

"Bring him in! The other Mohammed!" cried the French officers.

Allal thrust his head through the doorway, his face wrinkled with smiles.

"Come here, let's sing to them about the Hajj Giun," said Ali the Jackal.

"First I must fetch my mandolin, which is in the kitchen."

"A drink for the musicians," cried the freckled captain, and he poured out two double portions and mixed them with water. The Frenchmen looked at this performance askance, but said nothing. Ali the Jackal and Allal tossed off their drinks in a single gulp. A great warmth smote the pit of Ali's stomach. He made an evil face, regurgitated, and smiled. Allal strummed upon his mandolin, and tuned it.

"Ay, sir, what takes place this year?"
"The French are fighting with Germany."
"What do the nations send to battle?"
"Only the youths of twenty years."
"Ay, ay — what will they do?"
"The Hajj Giun will castrate them."

The verses went on and on, all ending with the same dire fate of the Allied forces, and of the French in particular. The audience was delighted. The only one who understood the words, he of the freckles and the upturned nose, filled the glasses of the musicians

and presented them with another drink, which they quaffed at once.

"Who is the Hajj Giun?" he asked.

"The sultan of the Germans," replied Ali the Jackal. "We call him 'Hajj' because he made a pilgrimage to Mekka, and is allied with the Turks."

"It is a good song," said the captain; "but be careful where you sing it."

The two Riffians were about to sing more, when one of the French officers shouted. A mouse was running across the floor in the direction of the kitchen. One of the American lieutenants snatched a saucer from the table and hove it with great force. The saucer skimmed past the mouse's head and shattered on the floor. Other saucers followed — and cups, and glasses.

The two Riffians were delighted. The Frenchmen looked at one another with chagrin.

"It is we who pay," one of them said.

"Pay? Pay?" cried the freckled captain. "I will pay; but we must break the rest of them first."

So saying, he pulled the cloth from the table, and gathered it up by the corners. With the cloth full of what crockery and glassware remained, he swung it around his head and dashed it against the wall, then opened it and spilled its clinking contents on to the floor.

"Now that it is all broken, how much is it?" he asked.

This deed moved the two Riffians greatly. They walked unsteadily to his side, and grasped his hands.

"Sir," said Ali the Jackal, "you are a man of great spirit. You have worked a compulsion of shame upon them. Even by destroying these things for which you will pay, you have placed them in the company of Jews."

"You are my friends," said the captain, pushing them away; "but you had better not be seen too close to me, or they will take this out on you."

Part Three

THE GAY TIRAILLEUR

VIII

THE RETURN OF THE EXILES

THE war ended. Corporal Mohammed ben Mohammed, Number 5,456 of the Seventh Moroccan Tirailleurs, and his friend, Private Mohammed ben Mohammed, were returned to their regiment, and shipped back to Morocco, where the Seventh Regiment, what was left of it, was stationed at Fez.

After arriving in France, Ali the Jackal had discovered that he had enlisted for three years. Two of these years were already finished, but the prospect of the one which remained irked him greatly. He was especially annoyed since his friend Allal had been sent home as unfit for further service, on account of the wound in his head. Ali the Jackal had been examined by a doctor, who pronounced his leg sound. He could no longer use it as an excuse.

Three days after returning to Fez, he obtained two days' leave, and betook himself immediately to the row of shops near the Bab el Guissa. Here he purchased three loaves of sugar to take with him to el Hajeb. It was a warm spring day, just such a day as that on which he had enlisted. The narrow street was uncovered at this point, and he could look up at the sky above, a blue expanse such as he had never

seen in the country of the Christians, with small white clouds floating slowly across it.

As he left the booth in which he had bought the sugar, he turned toward the gate and walked slowly, watching the crowd which passed him. It was pleasant to be once more in Fez, and to delight his eyes on the familiar scene. A feeling of friendliness arose within him, he looked upon all with a tolerant eye. There was a fat Fezzi merchant, puffed out in his filmy white robes, crowned with a high red fez which was wound about with an elaborate turban. Under the turban shone two beady black eyes on either side of a hawk-like nose, and the flabby cheeks beneath them were as white as dough. These cheeks, and the merchant's paunch as well, slapped up and down gently with the pace of the single-footing mule upon which he rode. A negro, dressed in a striped jellaba, ran ahead shouting, "Out of the way! Watch yourselves! Out of the way for the judge!"

Ali the Jackal stood to one side in the press of the crowd. He did not even feel resentment toward the judge. Behind the mule, and taking advantage of the open space left in the judge's wake, walked two Jews in dusters, the European garters showing on their hairy legs. On the backs of their heads perched two flat black fezzes, and luxuriant black curls billowed in front of these and hung over their bony noses. Even at them Ali the Jackal felt no rancor, but was amused.

As he drew nearer the gate he saw, over the heads of those walking in front of him, a bright patch of

color huddled under the wall at the right of the heavy portal. This patch of color fascinated him; he could not keep his eyes off it. When he had drawn nearer he saw that it was a girl, dressed in the costume of the Middle Atlas. Although her dress was black, a brilliant red and orange scarf was draped over her shoulders, and the cloth on her head was red. Her legs were swathed in heavy stockings appliquéd with patches of green and yellow felt, and her leather slippers bore the same decoration. About her waist was wound a tight belt of brilliant red, studded with cowrie shells. She was selling bread.

Ali the Jackal looked at her face, which was uncovered. Brown hair, with a reddish glint in it, hung over her forehead, and her black eyebrows were thin and arched over eyes of deep blue. Her nose was small and delicate, her lips mobile, and her chin firm. Blue tattooing in zigzags and herringbones covered her neck and lower jaw, combining to render the effect of a thin, bluish veil. He noticed that the same tattooing covered her slender wrists and hands.

He found himself standing over her, looking down in great absorption. When she glanced up at him and their eyes met, he became greatly embarrassed.

"I should like—a loaf of bread," he stammered, in the dialect of the Beni Mtir which he had learned from his mother and had never entirely forgotten.

"You talk the Shillhah of the mountains, soldier?"

"It is my language."

"But you are not Beni Mtir?"

"I was once."

"Then why did you join the Christians?"

"It is a long tale. I will meet you here to-morrow one hour before sunset, and then we will go somewhere to drink tea together, and I will tell you."

"Here is your loaf of bread."

"Will you be here to meet me?"

"It is fresh bread; it was baked this morning."

"Yes; but will you be here?"

"I wait two days for no man."

Ali the Jackal was about to reply when two women pushed between him and the girl, and started pinching the bread.

"This is yesterday's bread," said one of the women.

"It was baked this morning," replied the girl. "You will find none better in Fez."

The argument went on, and the girl paid no more attention to Ali the Jackal. He began to feel even more embarrassed. He decided to wait no longer, for people were beginning to look at him. He turned and went out through the Bab el Guissa into the bright sunshine, and when he saw the green fields before him, and the high, rolling hills, his self-consciousness left him. He strode onward in the direction of el Hajeb, swinging his three sugar loaves in rhythm with his step.

He watched the birds wheeling overhead, and the smell of the earth delighted him as he passed a field in which a negro was ploughing. The negro halted the oxen hitched to the plough, and leaned over to pick a large stone out of the way of his furrow. Ali the

Jackal passed on, and soon an old man in a tattered white jellaba rode by on a thin red mule.

"Peace be upon you, my uncle," said Ali the Jackal.

The old man looked at him over his shoulder, and sniffed. His beard seemed to bristle as he turned his head again to the front. Ali the Jackal thrust his chin into his collar and looked down upon himself. "It is these clothes," he decided. "No wonder he would not greet me, in the uniform of the French."

The rest of the way to el Hajeb he spoke to nobody, and no one addressed him. He grew oblivious to the warmth of the day, which now seemed only irksome. He loosened his collar. He could not keep his mind from building up the picture of the girl inside the gate who sold bread. "She waits two days for no man," he mused. "Then she cannot be very good. I should not consort with such women." Still her image clung to his mind, and he could not set her loose from his thoughts.

At length he came to the last crest which separated him from the home of his boyhood. It was here that the French officers, years ago, had broken his first rifle and killed his dog. He breathed harshly through his teeth.

Standing on the green height, he looked down upon the houses which sprawled out below him. He counted them, and took stock of each. There were no new houses, and those which stood there had not been altered since the time of the siege of Fez. The fields were still hemmed by the same boundaries, and over beyond lay the black tents of the Arabs, they

who tended the sheep of his family along with their own.

He could see people moving in front of his uncle Mimun's house. There was Mimun himself in the midst of them, limping about and giving orders. Ali the Jackal could see that Mimun's shoulder was hunched as if from a new wound. The arch of his foot had always been bad, ever since Ali the Jackal could remember. This wound in the shoulder—perhaps the Ulad Abd el Mumen had not fared well in their surprise attack, on account of which Ali the Jackal had joined the army—so long ago, it seemed—Then in the middle of the crowd he discerned a tall, supple figure, bending over and holding by the horns a gigantically fat ram. This was Moh Umzien.

Ali the Jackal waited no longer, but ran down the slope full tilt until he drew up breathless before the assembly. He strode over to his cousin Moh Umzien, and kissed him on the forehead. He clasped his uncle Mimun's hand, and kissed the seared brow likewise. His uncle Hamid was there, and all the others. The greetings took some time. There was a little shouting, and some quiet weeping.

Mimun clutched Ali the Jackal's arm in a broad, heavy-nailed hand, and pinched his flesh. He felt of his thighs and calves, and punched him in the back.

"You are all right? No wounds?" the old man shouted.

"No, just a little one on my leg. It is healed now."

Ali the Jackal bared his thigh and exhibited the shiny patch of scar tissue to his family. They

crowded around to look at it, and a woman scratched it lightly with a finger nail.

"How many Germans did you kill?" asked Mimun.

"None."

"How many Frenchmen?"

Ali the Jackal looked about him cautiously. It was his own clan, but he had been a long time away.

"How many sheep have you? How many feathers are there on the back of an eagle? I did not stop to count them. At any rate, the gates of Paradise are not closed to me."

"God be praised!" cried Mimun. "May you live to pluck other birds!"

"What is all this gathering for?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"We are going back to the Vale of Iherrushen," declared Mimun solemnly. "The ram is to slaughter in Bukkeish's mosque. I shall leave Moh Umzien in my father's house, and a dozen others with him. I have talked with members of the council who have been to Fez, and they say that the way is clear now, even after our surprise attack."

"Did you kill many?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"Sixty-eight that we counted. Some of the Beni Tadmut may have died in their houses besides."

Mimun paused a moment, and then went on: "Moh Umzien will carry on in the path of our people. Si Alush the Schoolmaster will come down from Beni Urriaghel, where he has been living. I myself will return here,"—at this point Mimun spoke softly and appeared very sad,—"because they say I com-

mitted sacrilege and can never return to stay. But if God is just He will not consider vengeance sacrilege on the Final Day."

"Let me go with Moh Umzien," begged Ali the Jackal.

Mimun pondered, his chin heavy in his hand. Before he had formulated a reply, Hamid spoke up.

"How much longer have you to serve?"

"Another year."

"Then you would be foolish to desert. Serve it out; and by then Moh Umzien will have made things easy, and you can join him. If you should go now, they would remember your father, and the things which he did. On that account, it would go hard with you and with Moh Umzien. Besides, you could never again see Fez."

At this Ali the Jackal thought again of the Beni Mtir girl within the gate, and of the blue tattooing which covered her thin wrists. He tried to dismiss this picture from his mind, but could not. The moment for which he had waited all his life had come —the chance to go to the Rif; and now he did not feel as great a thrill as he had anticipated.

"Besides," continued his uncle Hamid, "if the French should conquer the Rif, then you would know no peace; there would be no place left for you to go."

Mimun stamped on the ground.

"They will never take the Rif!" he shouted.

"And twenty years ago you would have said that the Ulad Abd el Mumen would never have left it,"

replied Hamid softly. "No; in these days when men fly in the air like birds, all things may come to pass."

"Then I will be dead," said Mimun.

"No," said Hamid firmly; "Ali the Jackal must stay here until his service is up. Then we shall see what can be done."

"In that case," said Mimun sullenly, "it is time for us to start. The sun is getting high, and we must find a good place to sleep before night."

The entire company climbed the first hill to the north, and those who were bound for the Rif continued, while their kinsmen stood watching them in silence. It was a strange procession, of old men leaning on canes, and old women who could not be persuaded to remain. Among them were a half-dozen boys who had never seen their ancestral home, and others whose memories of it were dim. These strode eagerly ahead, leaving the older people to lead the mules and the cattle. When they had gone too far ahead, they would squat on the ground and wait impatiently until the others had caught up.

At length this thin column of men and of beasts seemed, in the distance, to grow small, until it was difficult to distinguish one from the other. Finally, when they were the size of ants, they crawled around a bend in the trail. The last to disappear was an old woman, whose back was bent.

The watchers on the hill stood in silence. Many were holding kerchiefs up to their faces to hide their weeping. They turned slowly, and, led by Hamid, climbed down again to their village.

IX

WET HANDS

Ali the Jackal and his uncle Hamid entered the latter's house. Neither of them felt the desire for speech, for each was occupied with his own thoughts. Hamid scooped live coals from a cooking fire, and placed them in a brazier. He set a pot of water on this to boil, and made tea. Not until he had sipped his first glass, and, finding it too hot, had set it down for a moment, did Hamid ask his nephew about himself.

"What is it like there, in the land of the Christians?" he demanded.

"Everything is green. It is well watered, and cold, and the cattle are fat and give much milk. But the farmers are stupid; they do not know how to hew trenches from the sides of hills and lead water into them — else they would grow more grain than they do now. There are many roads, which are broad and good; and a multitude of carts, and some automobiles."

"How is their food?"

"They do not season it properly. Everything tastes flat until you become used to it. They eat their meat almost raw, and it is not fresh. You never see them

slaughtering their cows and sheep, yet there is always meat hanging in the shops, and it is bloodless and cold. The Muslimin at first refuse to eat meat which is old and which they have not seen killed, but at length they weaken through hunger, and give in."

"It is forbidden," said Hamid, "to eat meat which has not been killed in the proper way. It must be killed by a butcher or by a literate man. The animal's neck must be bent toward the East, and its throat must be cut with a knife, while the slaughterer says, 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.' You know these things well. You were instructed by the schoolmaster in the mosque."

"I know them well, but in the land of the Christians it is cold, and meat is needed to give warmth, and much fat on the meat. If there are no beasts to slaughter and no one to kill them properly, we must eat what is set before us."

"Still it is wrong."

"But think of it this way, Uncle Hamid: We are on a journey. Do you forget what the Koran says —that women whose bellies are large with child, men who travel on journeys, and they who go forth to fight in the Path of God are excused from keeping the fast of Ramadan? In the same wise they can eat with safety the food of the Christian, under stress."

Hamid grunted, and looked at his nephew slyly.

"I suppose you even went so far as to eat the flesh of the pig, since you say it was cold there?"

Ali the Jackal blushed; then caught the twinkle in his uncle's eye.

"As I remember it, I have seen shrunken haunches of very red meat hanging from these rafters when I was a child. You called it gazelle meat; but it tasted very strong. And I have heard tales from the Rif of tusked carcasses found lying on the slopes above the vineyards, with gobbets of flesh hacked out too smoothly for jackals' teeth. Our Lord Mohammed was not thinking of the country of the Christians when he spoke against the flesh of swine — nor was he thinking of the Rif, either."

"Hush," said Hamid. "The women may hear you."

Whether or not the women heard him, they brought him food. Hamid's daughter, a plump girl of sixteen with yellowish hair and an upturned nose, entered, bearing in her hands an earthen bowl full of mashed peas, glistening with melted butter, steaming and savory. Her hands, as they gripped the edges of the bowl, were wet and red. She set her burden down between the two men and left them hastily.

"She doesn't speak much, and I am her cousin," said Ali the Jackal. "She and I used to play together when we were children."

"She hasn't seen you for a long time, and you have grown very much. She is shy toward you," replied Hamid, with his head bent, looking up through his eyebrows.

"Perhaps it is this uniform," said Ali the Jackal.

"No, I think it is something else."

The two ate in silence. When the meal was almost finished, Hamid said: "You are getting older now, and

it is already past time for your wedding. There is a girl who is big and strong, and who knows how to cook. She is also a fine potter, which is rare in these days among women."

"She is one of my own family," murmured Ali the Jackal, for his thoughts were far distant, loitering about the northern gate.

"The old people," said Hamid, "thought it wrong to marry the daughters of their fathers' brothers; but we are in a new country, and things have changed. The old people were foolish."

"My uncle Mimun would not like it," said Ali the Jackal, grasping at an excuse.

"But Mimun is away."

"If I go back to the Rif with my cousin walking behind me, evil things will be said."

"You will not be returning to the Rif for some time," replied Hamid.

"Then there is the question of money. I have saved nothing, and own nothing. What could I pay for her with? She is a fine girl, tall and strong, and pleasing to look at. As you said, she is a fine cook, and the best of potters. She will bring a great price, much more than I will ever be able to pay. You had better save her for someone who has money and a good house, and much land."

"It is I," said Hamid, "who should be concerned over money, since it is I who should receive it. If it bothered me I should not be talking to you in this way."

"Surely you will not give her away without

money?" asked Ali the Jackal, blending a slight note of suspicion into his voice.

Hamid grew red.

"No, you young goat! You can live with me here, and work it off. I will give you the usual portions: one third of grapes and of all things which grow on trees, a fourth of lentils and of peas and vegetables, and a fifth of grain. You may eat what you need; and I will take back the rest in payment until the price has been met."

"If I do that," exclaimed Ali the Jackal, "I shall have to stay here for many years, and my children will not be born in the Vale of Iherrushen, as they should."

"You were not born there either," muttered Hamid. "You have never seen the place. Mark what I say, it is bleak and full of trouble. Your father went there only when he needed an earth to hide in. You would not be content, you who have seen the world—you who know Fez, and have lived in the land of the Christians. You would be walking back to el Hajeb at the end of the first harvest, with your wife and cattle behind you."

Ali the Jackal arose, and carefully put on his shoes and tied the lacings. He had taken them off upon entering, a practice which he had not followed for two years, and now he found it a nuisance.

"I must be getting back to my regiment," he said. "My leave is up at sunset."

"That is a short respite, when you have been away so long," said Hamid.

"They don't dare let us out for long, for fear we will run away," lied Ali the Jackal.

He went into the other room of the house and said good-bye to his aunt and to his cousin. The girl blushed when he kissed her on the forehead, and her hands felt damp and warm. In order to hide his thoughts, he made his salutations elaborate and over-emphatic. At length he was out again in the air and light, and he walked rapidly over the springy earth. He looked over his shoulder from time to time to observe the position of the sun, and although he knew well that he had time to reach the gate by sunset, nevertheless he was worried.

X

THE TENT IN THE FOREST

As Ali the Jackal drew nearer the gate, his excitement increased and his pace quickened. He wanted to run, but knew that to do so would attract undesirable attention. When at length the bulky yet graceful structure loomed up ahead of him, the bright blues and greens of its enameled tiles had already yielded their lustre to the oncoming darkness. Inside the vaulted passage, which twisted and turned so that no attacker could shoot directly through it, the darkness lay heavy and thick. Ali the Jackal tripped over the extended legs of a beggar, and as he sprawled forward on his face he heard the wooden bowl of the mendicant clatter on the cobblestones.

"May Sidi 'l-Arbi curse you!" shrieked a thin voice. "May your mother be buried! May you break the fast of Ramadan, and may God cast you into the Fire!"

Ali and Jackal picked up his cap, which had fallen off his head, and climbed to his feet. His knees hurt, and he felt of them. Luckily his trousers were not torn. He rubbed the palms of his hands together, and felt them sting. He spat on them and rubbed them on the backs of his thighs. Leaving the

beggar uncomforted, he rounded the last turn in the murky passageway and came out again into the light.

Swerving sharply to the left, he drew up short in front of the person whom he had come to see. On the point of leaving, she had arisen and was bundling the last remaining loaves of bread into her apron. Her head was bent as she did this, and Ali the Jackal looked at the stray curls of hair which hung over her neck. Her throat was long, well rounded, and very white. Ali felt a strong desire to seize her and press his face against this cool recess, but restrained himself. His hands trembled slightly at his sides.

The girl looked up at him without changing her expression.

"You are a day early," she said.

"I couldn't find the people I was looking for, so I came back."

"If you failed to meet them, you can perhaps discover others. Do not delay me. I am tired and must go home."

"There are no others," said Ali the Jackal, "except you."

"How do you know that I haven't a husband?" she asked.

"Then you and I will go somewhere else."

"What if he should find us?"

"I will kill him."

The girl looked up at Ali the Jackal's body, starting with his middle and ending at the top of his head.

"What if he is bigger than you are?"

"I doubt that he is," replied Ali the Jackal; "but if so, I will stand on a box."

"Well, I must be going," said the girl, and started slowly down the narrow street.

Ali the Jackal walked beside her, and reached into her apron, drawing out two loaves of bread. He placed one under each armpit, and reached in again for the two which remained.

"All you want is to steal my bread," said the girl. "If I scream the guard will come running and take you to jail."

"It is not your bread that I want to steal," said Ali the Jackal.

"What else have I that is worth taking?"

"We will find that out shortly," he replied.

Most of the shops were already shut. Soon they came to one, however, from which a fat merchant was climbing down into the street. He had lowered a little ladder, and was feeling his way cautiously down the rungs with his toes. He reached the ground, and was stretching his arms upward to unhook and lower the heavy shutter, when the two approached.

"Give me a loaf of sugar, and some tea," demanded Ali the Jackal.

"The sugar will cost you twelve francs, for it is late," mumbled the proprietor.

"Eleven is the price," said Ali the Jackal.

"It is twelve to-night."

"Very well, I am in a hurry. Get me the sugar and a box of tea."

The purchase was made, and the two set out again.

"I know a house with a warm room in the back of it," said Ali the Jackal.

"I know another house with a warm room, and there is someone in it who wishes to eat," replied the girl.

"Very well, we will go to that house. But first we will find some meat."

They turned down an alley which was very dark, and Ali the Jackal drew close to his companion, so that their arms rubbed as they walked. At length they came to a lighted thoroughfare, along which a few shops, still open, displayed haunches and strips of mutton hanging from hooks. Ali the Jackal bought meat, and then let his companion lead. Down a steep slope they went in almost complete darkness, then at the bottom they turned up an alley over which second-story rooms had been built. Occasionally they came to sections where the sky was open overhead. In these places a faint glimmer of moonlight filtered in between the high walls, which tapered together overhead.

At a gloomy doorway they halted, and the woman drew a key out of her belt. A thin streak of light simmered through the keyhole, and was cut abruptly as the key was inserted. The door opened, and they stepped down and bent their heads to enter. It was a large room, with a fire burning in a brazier in the

centre. Over the brazier an old woman was bent. She, too, was dressed in the costume of the Atlas, but her clothing was faded and thin from long use.

As the two entered, she looked up at them and smiled. Her face was wrinkled and a black gap between her lips revealed the absence of teeth. Despite the handiwork of age, Ali the Jackal could see that she had once been beautiful, and that the other with whom he had entered the room must be her daughter. She gazed at him intently, and the blue of her watery eyes seemed to hold something in them which was familiar.

"Take off that foreign thing on your head," she mumbled in the language of the tribe from which she came.

This dialect did not seem strange to Ali the Jackal, although he had left his mother very early and had not seen her for many years, and had spoken with few persons of her race. Besides, it was not very different from Riffian.

Ali the Jackal removed his hat.

"I should like to take all these things off," he said. "They are hot, they chafe, and they fit like the skin on a monkey. I should like to put on the clothes of human beings once more, if only for to-night."

The old woman paid no heed to this speech, for she was looking closely at his head.

"It is the same shape," she mumbled, "and the hair is the same color. You do not see much hair like it nowadays. If he only had a pigtail he would be just the same."

The girl was cutting the meat up into small chunks, and dropping these into a bowl. When she had finished, she reached over to a basket by the wall and drew out an onion. Ali the Jackal looked at her, and then back at the old woman.

"Are you talking about Ali the Yellow-haired?" he asked.

The old woman's lips parted, and her cheeks wrinkled into a smile. Her eyes watered anew until tears ran down her cheeks. She clutched her knees with her bony hands, and commenced rocking back and forth.

"Ali the Yellow-haired, Ali the Yellow-haired," she muttered. "You are Ali the Yellow-haired all over again; and you have come with my daughter. Ah, we are back again! We are back in the high white house in the street with one end."

Ali the Jackal looked at her even more intently, and a lump rose in his throat. His heart pounded against the tightness of his tunic. He looked at the girl, who was peeling an onion, and a feeling of shame mingled with a heightened desire.

Glancing back at the old woman, he said, "You are not my mother?"

"No; oh no, your mother is dead; I was her oldest sister, and we lived together in the house of Ali the Yellow-haired and played music for him. We loved him very much; he carried our hearts in his scrip wherever he went."

She shifted the position of her legs and rose unsteadily to her feet. She started toward the back

of the room, where Ali the Jackal could see a lute resting on a shelf. It was an old lute and the sounding board was deeply worn where she had plucked the strings. She clutched it tenderly in her arms and returned to the brazier.

"I will play for you the way I played for him," she said. "But my sisters are not here to sing. Daughter! Daughter! You must sing."

Ali the Jackal busied himself with making tea. The old woman tuned her lute, and commenced playing. As she stroked the strings she bent her head close to the finger board, and swayed back and forth gently, her seared face puckered like a ploughed field.

Her daughter, who was threading the gobbets of meat on thin wire spits, commenced singing softly. Her voice was low for a woman, and very clear. It was a song of the mountains, an old one. As Ali the Jackal listened to it the room faded from his vision, and he felt his body swaying in rhythm. He had heard that tune before; he knew it, yet no picture came to his mind at once.

The music from the lute grew louder and more stirring, and the girl's voice rose. He was walking through a great forest, and sheep were grazing between the boles of the trees. The sheep were half wild, and jumped aside as he passed. He walked on, with great determination and dignity, until he came to a clearing in the forest. In the middle of this clearing crouched a low tent of black hair. He stooped to enter, and saw a woman sitting in the

back of it, smiling. She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She was very like the girl who sold bread at the gate.

Just then he heard a sharp hissing, and looked straight ahead. The teapot was boiling over, and he snatched it from the brazier. The old woman with the lute drew back to avoid the scalding water which dripped from the spout. The girl whom he had seen in the tent was crawling across the room with her bowl full of loaded spits, and set a half-dozen of these across the lip of the brazier, above the coals.

The old woman, seeing the cup of tea which Ali the Jackal had set on the ground in front of her, raised her head from the finger board and concluded the piece with a high chord. She set her lute down on a mat and clutched the glass of tea between her calloused fingers, not bothering to hold it by the heel and rim. "Old people like that," thought Ali the Jackal, "do not feel the heat and the cold as do the young. The juices are dried out of them like strips of boar meat."

The three drank their tea in silence. The girl was cold from sitting on the ground near the gate, and the old woman was filled with the endless chill of old age. Ali the Jackal, whose nerves were on edge with a strange excitement, sucked the tea eagerly over his lips, burning his tongue as he did so. The strong brew made him even more excited.

When they had finished drinking, the meat was done, and the girl handed a spit to her mother and

one to Ali the Jackal. The old woman thrust the end of her spit between her lips and drew off the first chunk with her gums. She champed it between them, and swallowed with an effort.

"The meat is tender," she mumbled. "I can swallow it."

Ali the Jackal and the girl ate in silence. He looked at her furtively. A strange shame had come over him and would not be dispelled. He knew that she was not the daughter of his mother, but still the chance remained that he and she had been begotten by the same father. Strong desire and horror of incest struggled within him, each intensifying the other, until for the first time in his life he found himself almost inarticulate. When the meat was finished, and while the old woman licked her greasy fingers with a loud sucking noise, he found courage to ask.

"What is your daughter's name?" he inquired.

"Rowazna."

"Was her father the same as my father?"

At this the old woman opened wide her jaws, which were not yet free of food, and laughed.

"May God be compassionate upon you and upon us!" she exclaimed. "My sister conceived from him, but I did not. Rowazna was made afterwards. Do not ask me who it was, my memory grows dim."

Ali the Jackal brewed a second pot of tea, and handed it in silence to Rowazna and her mother. They drank three cups, with little speech.

"My daughter is quiet to-night," said the old

woman, setting down her glass for the last time. "That is a good sign. When she talks very much, that means she doesn't like him."

Rowazna looked at her mother, and in the reflected light of the brazier Ali the Jackal could see that her eyes were very bright.

"Never mind her," she said. "Whether or not I like you is my own business. Tell us some things. You have been in the land of the Christians? Tell us about it."

"The chief thing," commenced Ali the Jackal, "is this. We, who sit here in Fez and watch the Christians walk down our streets with great confidence, knocking lesser persons out of their path — we, who say 'yes' when they demand money, and tremble when they draw us into their Bureaus for questioning, do not realize that there are poor folk in their own land, humble people, many who cannot read and write, who plough their fields as do we, and are content with their own cattle and grain. These people do not lift their chins when they look at us, but treat us with respect, like our own kind. In his own country the Christian is a bull without horns, but when he comes to live among us he grows long hair about his shoulders and takes on the stature of a wild ox."

"It is like a water-carrier," said Rowazna, "who finds a pot of gold coins and buys himself fine garments, and a large house, and rides arrogantly upon a black mule, sending a slave before him to smite people out of the street."

Ali the Jackal crawled across the floor and sat down beside Rowazna. The latter stood up, and, opening a box which stood in a corner, lifted out of it a heavy blanket of long-napped wool, woven in many colors into an intricate geometric design. She spread this out on the floor and lay on it. Ali the Jackal joined her, and then looked quizzically in the direction of the old woman.

"Feel no shame toward my mother," whispered Rowazna. "She is used to this, she is always with me."

"No, no," said the mother, who had heard part of the conversation, "pay no attention to me. My eyes are dim and I can see no farther than my knees. If my daughter pleases you, that is all that I ask."

She picked up her lute, strummed upon it for a moment, and then paused.

"This is the way it used to be in Ali the Yellow-haired's house. Some nights I would play for my sister, and sometimes she would play for me. And some nights,"—here she cackled loudly,—"neither would play, for we would both be at his side."

Her fingers started moving rapidly. Music poured out of the lute in a wide stream, and rose and eddied through the room, like a billowing cloud of sweet smoke seeking a hole through which to escape.

Ali the Jackal closed his eyes. He was back again in the tent in the forest glade. The woman who was squatting before him raised her arms and lay back, and as she did so he curved one arm around her body, and slid his hand gently upward over a hard, rounded

breast. With the other hand he loosened her belt, and she raised her hips so that he might unwind it. In the innermost fold he felt something hard, and drew it out. He could feel the edges of a stiff ticket. He knew that this was blue. He tore it in tiny pieces and threw them away from him.

"You will never need that again," he murmured.

XI

RUBBER STAMPS

FOR two weeks more the Seventh Tirailleurs remained in Fez. Ali the Jackal managed to obtain leave frequently. He walked about daytimes in a pinkish haze. Everything was pleasant, except his uniform, which he longed to tear in shreds so that he might clothe himself once more in a brown jellaba and yellow turban. Although he had just returned from the land of the Christians, that country seemed infinitely remote to him, like an evil dream, and it seemed that years had passed since he had left it.

One day he was called to the quarters of his captain, a Frenchman, new to the regiment. He entered the officer's tent, saw the latter sitting behind a table, and saluted.

"Corporal Mohammed ben Mohammed."

"Present, my captain."

"I have observed that you are a very cleanly fellow. You are neat and orderly about your dress. You have been a waiter in an officers' mess in France."

"Yes, my captain."

"I will make you my orderly."

"Thank you, my captain."

"My present orderly leaves to-day. He is being

transferred. You will find him now, and talk with him. He will show you what your duties will be. After that he will leave."

"Yes, my captain."

Ali the Jackal looked at the captain. The latter was a young man who had seen little of the war. He was tall, as Ali the Jackal could see from the legs stretching out under the table, and his hair was the same color as that of his new orderly. In fact, the two resembled each other rather closely. "Perhaps," thought Ali the Jackal, "that is why he has chosen me."

This new occupation gave him more leisure than he had had before, and the opportunity to obtain many delicacies which he took to Rowazna and her mother. The captain spent his evenings in Fez, and this gave Ali the Jackal more time in the house in the dark alley. His only care was to arrive at the camp earlier than the captain.

These were blissful nights for Ali the Jackal, and the days seemed like blank gaps between them. He was giving his pay to Rowazna, and she had agreed to marry him at the end of his service. They would go to the Rif directly, and no one would know about the blue ticket. If anyone mentioned it, Ali the Jackal would kill him.

At the end of two weeks, orders came through to move to the Gharb, where the armies would be used in extending the boundary of the submitted zone farther in the direction of the River Wergha. The orders came in the morning, and by night the Seventh

Tirailleurs were already under way. Ali the Jackal had no time to say farewell to Rowazna, but sent her a note by a small boy whom he found near the outskirts of the camp.

Things went quietly in the Gharb. The Arabs who tilled this rich granary were in no position at this season for resistance. The column marched in and camped. Sheikhs were confirmed or ejected, bureaus were set up, and taxes were levied. There were constant wrangles over the ownership of land. After the third such advance, when Ali the Jackal's company was stationed alone in the midst of a sea of sprouting grainfields, the captain went away and the lieutenants with him.

"We are going to Knitra," said the captain to the sergeant-major, "and we will be back by night."

Ali the Jackal sat idle in the captain's tent. The sergeant-major and the other sergeants joined him, and they played cards on the captain's table. They played with numberless cards, those vivid pasteboard rectangles upon which the heart, liver, and other organs of the body are bloodily depicted. Ali the Jackal lost all but three francs of his pay.

The captain and his lieutenants did not come back that night. The next day Ali the Jackal staked his three francs, and won forty. The sergeants and the sergeant-major grumbled. On the second night the captain and the lieutenants did not come back.

On the third morning, Ali the Jackal and the sergeant-major and the three sergeants again came to the captain's tent.

"The food is gone," said the sergeant-major. "The men are hungry."

"Maybe the captain will be back this morning," murmured one of the sergeants.

"Maybe he won't," said Ali the Jackal. "The three of them have gone off on a drunk. I bet that they are now in Casablanca."

"We must have food," said the sergeant-major.

Ali the Jackal held his head between his hands, and then looked up suddenly. He was smiling.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "Go out and bring in all the sheikhs. Send out the sergeants and the corporals, and bring them all in to this tent."

"What are you going to do?" asked the sergeant-major.

"Never mind what I am going to do. If it doesn't work, I will give you back my winnings, and next week's pay besides. Tell the sheikhs that the captain wants to see them, and bring them here."

When the sergeant-major and the sergeants had departed, Ali the Jackal closed the flaps of the tent. He undressed completely, and drew the captain's suitcase out from under the bed. Handling them very gently, he lifted out the parts of a complete uniform, and then the captain's silk underwear.

He dressed slowly and with great care. He put on the captain's extra pair of boots and spare cap. He polished the boots once more, and the cross-strap belt, and burnished the spurs, the chevrons, the buttons, and the buckle. Then he took the captain's nail-file and carefully cleaned his finger nails, cutting

them afterward so that they were pointed. When he had finished his preparations, he raised the flap and sat down at the captain's table. He arranged the papers in an orderly pile, and set the pen and ink close at hand. Opening the captain's tin box which sat on the corner of the table, he took out a rubber stamp and pad, and a dozen or more unfilled paper forms.

He inked the rubber stamp and pressed it on the topmost form; as well as he could see, the imprint was perfect. Then he dipped the pen in the ink and scribbled, making the line of ink march from left to right. This was difficult to do. He must not forget and make it go from right to left, like Arabic.

He went again to the captain's suitcase, and took out a box of cigarettes and an ivory holder. Looking out through the flap, he saw the sergeant-major striding between the tents, dragging an aged man after him by the hand. Ali the Jackal placed a cigarette in the holder, and lighted it. Leaning back in his chair, he puffed idly as the sergeant-major and the old man appeared.

He looked disdainfully at the sheikh, a tall, hawk-nosed Arab wearing a grimy white robe which swept the ground. The sheikh's skin was sallow and spotted with moles. The tip of his nose had grown with old age and hearty living until it hung over his shrunken lower lip, a curtain to a toothless jaw.

"Who are you?" asked Ali the Jackal, in Arabic, speaking slowly and with a forced accent.

"Peace be upon you and upon your children," mouthed the old man. "The day shines bright when I walk into your presence."

"Very well; but who are you?"

"I am Sidi Abd es Slam the son of Sidi Mohammed, the sheikh of the Ulad Othman; we are a large family, but poor, for the last two crops have been harvested without rain, and we are close to starvation."

"Your paunch belies your words."

The old man drew in his breath and expanded his chest. He patted the tightened abdomen, and said, "Truly what is there is but habit, for we were once rich and powerful. You must excuse an old man his belly."

"Would you like to remain sheikh of the Ulad Othman?"

"Truly, by the blessing of God, I have been sheikh for thirty years, and I should not know what to do otherwise. My father was sheikh before me, and my son will follow, if God is merciful."

"I was thinking that the Ulad Othman might do better with a younger and more active man."

"I am active! You should see me ride upon a horse!"

"Very well, old fellow — if you wish to remain sheikh, go home at once and bring back twenty double panniers of wheat."

"But, captain, we have only eight in the whole camp. Twenty is more than we have harvested in two years."

"Then steal the rest! Get out! If you come

back with one short pannier, I will give the papers to someone else. I have a younger man in mind."

The old sheikh left in great haste. When he was out of sight, Ali the Jackal offered the sergeant-major a cigarette. The latter shook his head back and forth from side to side. He made a clucking noise with his tongue against his front teeth.

"Lyautey could never tell the difference," he said.

"Well," said Ali the Jackal, "we must eat."

"When the captain comes back, he will do things to you," said the sergeant-major.

"I will take all the blame, but I am not afraid. He is absent without leave himself."

Soon a sergeant hove into view, walking beside another sheikh, who rode on a white horse. The sergeant-major stood up, dropped his cigarette and ground it under his heel, and stood at attention.

This sheikh was younger, and was dressed in cleaner clothing. The spotless turban which surmounted his thin brown head was of great size and complexity of winding. His nose was thin from root to tip, and his beard foppishly cut and shaven around the edges.

"Your name?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"Sheikh Musa ben 'Omar, of the Ulad Abi 'l Afia."

"I have heard that you are rich in sheep?"

"We have a few."

"Then bring me twenty, at once, if you wish your office confirmed. I will give you a stamped paper when the sheep have been delivered."

"I have already been promised by another officer, and have paid him far too much already."

"What officer?"

"He was in a bureau at Rabat. I visited him there."

"He was a small man?"

"Yes, rather small, and with a big belly."

"Had he a brown mustache?"

"Yes, with long ends to it."

"I know the man. It must be Fournier. How much did you pay him?"

"Three hundred and twenty rials."

Ali the Jackal whistled.

"So Fournier did that!" he exclaimed, and looked knowingly at the sergeant-major. "He put it into his own pocket."

"Will I get it back?" asked the sheikh.

"If he still has it. Bring the sheep at once, and I will give you a paper. When I get back to Rabat I will expose Fournier and collect your money and send it to you."

"May God be kind to you," said the sheikh, bowing, "for you are a just man, and one of great wisdom. May you be stationed here forever, to be the intermediary of your government among us."

Three other sheikhs were brought in, and all set out again to bring tribute. By four in the afternoon the last of them had returned with his offering. On the far side of the camp the soldiers had set up a butchering-place, and the ground was covered with blood which ran hither and yon in small rills, for there was no definite slope. The dogs had gathered from all the encampments nearabout, and were lap-

ping at the red ground beneath them, and tearing at pieces of intestine — a bristling, yellow company.

The five sheikhs were lined up in front of the captain's tent. Ali the Jackal was smoking a cigarette, and the sergeant-major stood beside him.

"Sidi Abd es Slam," called out Ali the Jackal.

The old sheikh tottered over to him.

"Raise your right hand and swear in the name of God that you will defend the Sultan and his intermediaries and officers, and abide loyally by his laws."

"In the name of God," muttered Sidi Abd es Slam.

Ali the Jackal took a blank from the pile, and scribbled on it from left to right. At the bottom of the sheet he made believe sign his name with a great flourish. Then he inked the rubber stamp, and brought it down on the paper with great force. He then picked up his handiwork and blew on it.

"Here," he said to the old man, "guard this carefully. It is your badge of office. It will be precious to you and to your children."

The old man grasped Ali the Jackal's right hand in both his own, and pressed it.

"I knew that you would follow in the path of righteousness," he said, and turned to depart.

"Sheikh Musa ben 'Omar," called Ali the Jackal.

The young sheikh stepped up and stood stiffly at attention.

"You heard the oath. Do you swear in the name of God that you will defend the Sultan and his intermediaries and officers, and abide loyally by his laws?"

"In the name of God," replied the sheikh in a low voice.

Ali the Jackal made out another paper, with equal care, and handed it to the sheikh, saying, "Do not worry about the money you gave Fournier. I will get it back for you."

"May the blessing of God be upon you," said the sheikh.

The three others were given their documents, and when all had departed, the soldiers devoted themselves to feasting. Half-carcasses of mutton were roasted, after the manner of the Arabs, and the wheat was converted into huge tubs of kuskus. Rank and distinction vanished — all thronged around the bowls and about the low tables where the meat steamed. The savory odors of broiled mutton and of kuskus filled the air, and the dogs who had been present at the butchering lingered on, sniffing and darting in and out hungrily.

The men gathered into little circles, each with its own fire, to make tea, and the music of many mandolins rose into the clear air of the night. Men stood up and danced, and a dozen youths from the nearest settlement came over with thin-waisted clay drums which gave out a high note when beaten. Several girls followed them, and threw off their veils and danced, lifting their skirts high as they did so. All the men sat around in a large circle and clapped their hands together with the rhythm.

A faint roaring made itself heard over the sounds of revelry. Ali the Jackal looked up, expecting to

see an airplane. Soon two bright lights set close together shone at them and grew larger as the roar increased. The men jumped up and scattered, and the women ran into the shelter of a tent. An automobile bumped over the trackless ground and came to a jarring halt. The chauffeur, a Casablanca Arab in European clothes and a red fez, jumped out and opened the door to the back seat.

A leg, booted and spurred, was thrust out; then a knee, and finally an arm and a head. The captain emerged, cautiously and slowly. As he stood up he had great trouble to keep from falling. The two lieutenants issued forth after him and all stood in a row, looking dubiously about them. All of the men had disappeared except Ali the Jackal. The captain walked unsteadily over to him, and saluted with a shaking hand.

"It can all be explained, my colleague," he said. "We were detained by unavoidable circumstances—"

"Good evening, my captain," said Ali the Jackal, approaching more closely and thrusting his face near to that of the captain, "I too have something to explain, of which I think, under the circumstances, you will approve. The chauffeur wants to be paid. Give me the money and I will beat him down and save you a few hundred. You are too tired to-night to argue with him. If you and the lieutenants will go to the tent, I will mix you up something that will make you feel better."

XII

A SABRE FLASHING

THE Seventh Tirailleurs remained three months in the Gharb. Ali the Jackal had saved all of his pay and had added to it considerably by his success at cards, as well as in other ways. When he returned to Fez, one thousand francs and over reposed in a leather wallet inside of a buttoned pocket.

The summer was at its height, and as the train carrying the Tirailleurs from Petitjean to Fez rumbled over the last stretch of plain, wriggling sheets of vapor arose from the brown and hard-baked earth. The men in the cars had brought bottles full of water with them and were drinking the warm liquid frequently. Over their heads they held pieces of newspaper to protect them from the direct glare of the molten sun. Ali the Jackal looked over the edge of the car toward the north and saw in the far distance the lancelike peak of Tizi Tidighin gleaming invitingly with snow.

Few travelers were abroad. Now and then the train passed donkeys, plodding along stiff-legged and slowly, their drivers too inert to beat them wholeheartedly. Outside the black tents which they

passed could be seen yellow dogs lying in the shade of the cloth, their tongues hanging out over their forepaws. Hobbled horses wandered aimlessly, and sheep, closely shorn, were motionless. In front of a flat-roofed country house, dazzlingly white, two negroes were going through the motions of digging a well.

The train continued. Ahead could be seen, over the edge of a decline, a few needle-points, which grew and took on color. These were the towers of Fez, and before long the ruined wall which extends from the Jewish quarter to the European town appeared. In front of it lay the brown tents of the army, and in front of these the straggling buildings of the railroad terminal. The train slowed with a grinding of brakes, and steam puffed out from the flanks of the engine. With a still louder grinding, accompanied by the straining and creaking of couplings, the train came to a halt.

The soldiers buttoned up their tunics, put on their caps, reached for their rifles, and crawled out. They formed in a straggling column and marched to the encampment. Their tents followed, and these were erected; Ali the Jackal busied himself with setting up that of his captain, and in putting the officer's belongings in order.

Toward the end of the afternoon, when the burning heat of the day had yielded to the sultriness of sundown, the captain called Ali the Jackal to him.

"Ho, Mohammed."

"Yes, my captain."

"You have people you would like to see in Fez?"

"I have my family."

"I am going to the city in half an hour. Set my things straight and you may leave when you have finished. I will not need you when I return. If you come in time to care for me in the morning it will be sufficient."

"Thank you, my captain."

Ali the Jackal helped the captain change his clothes, and polished his boots and shined his spurs. He could not wait for the officer to leave, so that he could follow him, without keeping busy.

"You were very clever, Mohammed, with the sheikhs. You were like a jackal."

"My duty is to care for you, my captain, and I was caring for you in your absence."

"You were caring for everyone. But be careful in Fez. Do not try any of your tricks in the city. It may go badly with you, and I don't want to lose my orderly."

"No, my captain, I will be very careful."

When the captain had been rolled out of sight in a covered carriage drawn by two emaciated horses and driven by a Jew, Ali the Jackal took out his wallet and counted his money. One thousand, two hundred, and forty-three francs. He would take Rowazna out to the shops and let her buy whatever she wanted. He thought of the smooth gracefulness of her neck, and how well silver would hang from it. And her thin waist, too, would look well in a fine belt of silk embroidered with cloth of gold.

He replaced the money carefully in his pocket, and set out.

It was growing dark now, and as he walked rapidly in the lee of the ruined wall, he shivered despite the damp warmth of the early evening. He thought once more of the new belt, and of the waist and belly it would surround, and about which he had found such pleasure in placing his arm. And he felt, all over again, the sharp edges of that blue card which he had torn into small pieces. He set his teeth grimly together, and placed his hand under his armpit, and fingered fondly the contours of an automatic pistol, which he had stolen in France and had hidden ever since. It was loaded with seven cartridges and would shoot as fast as he could pull the trigger. He pressed his arm tightly against this revolver, and the feel of it was sweet to him.

Then he came to the Place de Commerce, at the entrance of the Jewish quarter. Here many automobiles were drawn up, loading and discharging their passengers. Jewish procurers, thinly disguised in a travesty of European clothes, with wide-brimmed black hats and tightly fitting trousers which reached halfway between knee and ankle, were hard at work. One of them dogged the heels of Ali the Jackal, who turned suddenly and smote him with the edge of his hand. The blow landed on the Jew's teeth, and he paused, bending over to spit out blood. This kept him from shouting forth curses, which made him doubly angry.

Ali the Jackal walked on without hastening his

pace, and several Jewish children followed him, looking at him in wonder. Just before the Bab el Makina, the gate which had, in its day, been the Sultan's arsenal, he stopped at a Soussi's shop to buy tea and three loaves of sugar. Through the Bab el Makina he walked, and down the lengthy space between the walls of the Sultan's palace and the quarters of the French veterinaries. Having passed another gate he walked into the region of sweetmeat vendors. Here he bought a kilogram of sticky candy and a bag full of almond cakes. He passed by the motion-picture theatre, in front of which a seedy-looking Arab with decayed teeth was standing, barking out descriptions of the marvels within.

"A picture of the land of the Americans! See the Americans riding on horseback, and throwing ropes at wild cattle! See them shooting the heathen, the Beni Arian who run about naked shooting sticks out of strange contrivances! See the comic, the man with the wide trousers! They are throwing pastries at each other, a thousand francs' worth of pastries! And there is an automobile which falls apart and no one is hurt! See the picture move—it is no deceit. There is a man behind with a machine that has a great light in it. Step right up, you that have two francs, and see the marvels of the Christians!"

Ali the Jackal paused a moment to look at the brilliant posters leaning against the wall of the theatre. There, in garish colors, was a man riding on a piebald horse, pulling on the reins so that the horse was rearing and waving its front hoofs in the

air. The man was leaning out of his saddle and waving a huge hat in front of him. His legs were encased in untanned goatskin, and his face convulsed in an enormous smile.

"I will take Rowazna to see this later," Ali the Jackal said to himself. "I know what they are from the land of the Christians, but she will not know, and it will be fun watching her."

He hastened his step and walked rapidly downhill. He stopped in front of a store in which a Spaniard sold wine, and went in. Walking directly to the counter he said in French, "Give me a bottle of Pernod."

The Spaniard looked at his uniform and replied in Arabic, "I do not sell to Muslimin."

"What did you say?" asked Ali the Jackal in French.

"You know what I said. I do not sell to Muslimin," he replied in French.

"But I am not a native, I am a German. They have transferred me from the Legion."

The Spaniard looked at him again.

"You are right, you are not a Moslem. You are a damned Riffian. I have seen your kind on the Isle of Alhucemas. You look enough like a German, though. How should I know the difference?"

The Spaniard wrapped a bottle of Pernod in a newspaper, and money changed hands.

Ali the Jackal visited the street of butchers and added a flank of mutton to his burdens, and finally a sweet melon. He was now heavily laden, and was

obliged to walk with caution lest he bump into people and spill his purchases. The necessity for caution exasperated him, for now that he was on the way to Rowazna's house his heart had begun beating rapidly and he felt an overpowering desire for haste. He was hungry, too, and his stomach rumbled within his tightly fitting tunic. He felt a warm glow mount to his cheeks, and his chest had the sensation of being bound.

He increased his pace, feeling in the dark places with his elbows, and at length came to the narrow alley which slopes steeply downhill. Here it was difficult to keep from running. There below him in that blur of darkness was a door, and inside was Rowazna. He pictured her rapidly in his mind, lying on a pile of blankets in the corner, the smooth shapeliness of her cheeks and forehead lighted in outline by the glow from the brazier.

A sound came from the end of the alley. Ali the Jackal stopped short. The old woman had begun to play on her lute. It was the tune that she had played on the first night Ali the Jackal had spent in that room. He tiptoed to the door, and set his bundles down noiselessly. He stooped over, and peeked in the keyhole. It was blocked with the black bulk of the key. He thrust his little finger into the hole, and the heavy key clanged to the floor.

He put his eye to the hole at once, and the contrast between the light inside and the darkness without kept him from seeing everything at one glance. Red and blue, brilliant in their contrast, registered them-

selves first to him. There was a wide silham of the style worn by the cavalry, blue with red lining, spread over the floor. On top of it lay a silver-sheathed sabre, the convexity of the scabbard reflecting a symmetrical path of light.

He did not pause to look at these things. Beyond was sprawled the huge form of a man in white, booted and spurred, his swarthy head tightly bound in an elaborate turban of brilliant whiteness.

The Arab rose up on his fists and turned, looking toward the door. His nose was strongly aquiline, and his black mustaches long and curled at the ends. Rowazna hitched away on her elbows, and for a moment Ali the Jackal could see the delicate blue lines of tattooing on the white background of her thighs. She wrapped herself in a blanket.

Ali the Jackal stood up and crashed his shoulder against the door. It let forth sounds of splintering, but it did not yield. He ran back to the other side of the narrow alley and threw himself with all his weight against the door. It toppled with a crash, and he landed, sprawling on it, in the middle of the floor. As he tightened his muscles quickly to leap up he could see the Arab draw his sabre from its scabbard. Ali the Jackal ripped open his tunic, scattering buttons in the direction of the old woman, who was crouching against the far wall, hugging her lute in both arms.

The cavalryman swung his sabre high, and the point stuck in the ceiling. He clutched the hilt in both hands, and pulled it down with his entire

weight, and quickly swung it behind him sidewise. This gave Ali the Jackal time to draw his pistol and to fire. The Arab twitched convulsively and hunched his left shoulder downward, while he closed his left eye and contracted the left corner of his mouth. The sabre sparkled and sang through the air. Ali the Jackal could see it leaping toward his neck. He ducked, and fired two shots as fast as he could pull the trigger.

The steel bit into the side of his head. He felt numbness creep over him, and slumped gently to the floor, resting on his left elbow. Hammers beat upon the side of his head, and pain came with the blows — an excruciating pain such as he had never before felt. His head was a drum, and a tall negro was beating it with an iron stick. He felt great drops of water splash on his left hand. The negro was drooling on him, with large drops of saliva dripping from his swollen lips. He drew his hand away quickly, and fell upon his left shoulder. The shock of the fall drove an even sharper pain through his head, and he opened his eyes.

Everything was pink; huge, shapeless cubes of pink matter swirled and danced around him. He shook his head, and the shapes stood still. Gradually they faded, and he could see the line where the floor ended and the wall began. This line was double, and each part was composed of two finer ones, and each of these was again subdivided. All of the lines were tilting up and down, up and down, never losing their parallel formation. He focused his eyes upon them

with great concentration, and they drew together into one line, which ceased its tilting and lay still. He turned his head a little and looked farther.

Rowazna was crawling out of her blanket. There were her white thighs again, with their blue design. She jumped into a pair of loose trousers and dropped her skirt over them. Then she stepped quickly over to the Arab and covered those parts of him which were bare. He was lying on his back. She rolled his huge body over so as to arrange his garments properly. Ali the Jackal could see that the skin of his belly was almost black. "His face is not just sunburned," muttered Ali the Jackal to himself.

He raised his body up on his elbows again, and mumbled to Rowazna, "So you lie with negroes."

The words cost him great effort; his arm gave way, and he fell again to the floor. Noises issued from the far corner of the room—low, liquid moans, which grew louder and became wails. Ali the Jackal looked sidewise at his right hand and saw that he was still clutching the pistol.

"Here, you old woman!" he said, in as loud a voice as he could muster, "take this thing out of my hand and throw it away. Hide it, before anyone gets here."

The wails shrank in volume, and he could hear the rustling of the old woman's garments as she crawled across the floor. But suddenly louder noises came from outside, the sound of many feet running toward them, and voices shouting. Ali the Jackal looked toward the doorway. A man in a pointed red

fez stooped and entered. In his hand he held a stick looped around his wrist with a thong. His clothes were of white and his skirts brushed the ground. After him came two policemen in brass buttons, catch-Mohammed trousers, and turbans. A welling crowd outside pushed these three in, and others followed, until the room was rapidly filling.

The *makhzani,*[1] he in the pointed fez, turned on the others, and shouted, "Get out! Get out, you dogs! How can we work when you are milling around in here?"

He swung savagely with his stick and hit several, on arms, faces, and heads. The two policemen seized the people and threw them out; then one policeman took charge of the doorway. Ali the Jackal lay still, his eyes open. The makhzani looked down at the pistol.

"Aha," he said.

He reached down and picked it up by the barrel, and wrapped it in a handkerchief. Then he placed it carefully in his scrip. He leaned over Ali the Jackal's head, and pressed his fingers around the wound.

"Ho!" cried Ali the Jackal—"Let that alone!"

The policeman who was on guard at the door joined the makhzani, and looked at Ali the Jackal's head.

"His skull is cracked," he said.

They turned to the cavalryman, and pulled open his shirt. His hairy chest was darkly matted with

[1] A makhzani is a special officer of the Sultan.

blood. It ran in streams off the curve of his ribs to the floor, and crawled across the hard-trodden clay toward Ali the Jackal's left arm. He tried to move this out of the way, but found that now he could not. He tried to move his left leg, and found that this also would not respond. His right arm was all right, and his right leg. He opened his mouth to speak, but the left side of each lip felt stiff and glazed. Saliva dripped from the left corner of his mouth.

"What did you do to me when you pressed my head?" he muttered thickly to the makhzani.

The latter finished his inspection of the Arab. "He is dead," he pronounced. "I don't recognize this uniform," he added.

"He was a special guard of the Kaid el Marnissi," said a policeman. "He was not in the regular service. I have seen him in the streets."

Three men picked up Ali the Jackal, one under the shoulders and one at each leg. A policeman seized Rowazna by the arm, and another jerked the old woman off the floor.

"Come along," shouted the makhzani, and the procession filed out of the house into the alleyway, which was now lit by a dozen lanterns held in the hands of onlookers. The makhzani led, smiting about him with his stick, and the crowd bellied inward before him, turned, and ran up the alleyway ahead.

As Ali the Jackal rode bumpily between his human carriers, his eyes again lost their power of focusing, and the brilliant display of light in the wider streets

became for him a swirling and rotating planetary carnival. He could see faces twisting about him, rising and falling — fat, bearded faces, with protuberant eyes glittering with excitement; thin, hollow-cheeked faces, with snub noses and horse-like stupid eyes; and dark-lidded eyes, — sympathetic and inviting, he thought, — looking at him from between heavy folds of cotton cloth.

At length his bearers halted, and stooped to enter a room. There was a table in the middle, and several straight-backed chairs, and a bench along the wall. His bearers dropped Ali the Jackal with a thud on the bench, and brilliant lights flew up like sparks before his eyes as his head hit the hard wood.

A Frenchman jumped up from a chair behind the table. He was a short Frenchman, fat and sleepy. All of the newcomers, excepting Ali the Jackal, commenced talking at once, in Arabic and in French. The fat Frenchman waved his short arms over his head.

"Shut up! Shut up! Silence!" he cried, and when the noise had subsided, turned to the policeman.

"The prisoner whom you see on the bench shot and killed one of Marnissi's mounted guards."

"When? Where?" shouted the Frenchman.

"Down in the section of brothels, about a quarter of an hour ago."

"Where is the body?"

"We left it under guard."

"What is the matter with this man?" asked the

Frenchman, advancing rapidly toward Ali the Jackal.

"The other one chopped his head open with a sabre."

"Take him to the hospital, you fools!" cried the Frenchman. "If he dies here I will be blamed! Take him away, and stay there on guard."

The three bearers picked Ali the Jackal up again, and hauled him out into the street. One of the policemen went along. As the cold air of the night hit Ali the Jackal's head once more, pains even greater than those he had felt before darted in his head. The streets were deserted now, and the three bearers trotted. They went through wide streets, past the French hotel, and the shop where the Dutchman sells antiques, past the motion-picture theatre, where the barker paused for a moment to look at them, and through the gate. Outside, a row of decrepit horses stood on gaunt legs, harnessed to still more decrepit carriages.

The bearers threw Ali the Jackal into the first carriage and jumped in after him. The gendarme mounted the box with the driver, whom he pounded in the ribs to awaken. The driver grunted thickly and turned to look at his assailant through gum-lidded eyes. The gendarme snatched the reins from his hands, seized the whip, and lashed the bony steeds, which broke into a shambling gallop as soon as the carriage had been turned around.

Ali the Jackal felt the swaying motion of the carriage. It was regular, and with each rise of the seat his pain would increase, and with each fall die down.

This went on for what seemed a long while, until the horses, feeling the pull of the reins, slowed to a shattering trot. The carriage was wrenched up and down rapidly and convulsively, and Ali the Jackal felt as though his brain would be shaken out of his skull. He heard a shrill grating of iron on iron, and the carriage stopped.

Now he heard the heavy panting of horses and a staccato knock upon a gate. Then followed a creaking, and he knew that the gates were open. Hands reached in for him, and he was picked out of the carriage and carried into an enclosure, along a dimly lighted gravel path toward a gray building. He could hear the crunch of six feet upon the gravel beneath him, and the sound grated on his nerves. A door was thrown open, and he looked upon a sea of light.

The three men threw him upon a hard table, and he looked up at two women and a man who leaned over him. All three were swathed in white, and the women had wide white wings floating from their heads. The man's face was obscured by a pair of thick spectacles and a heavy mustache.

The doctor pressed strong fingers on the broken skull. Ali the Jackal screamed. Then he saw his left arm being lifted, the sleeve rolled up to the elbow, and a pin scratching his white forearm. He saw the sharp point furrow his skin, and little drops of blood pop up, but he felt nothing. The doctor jabbed him, and Ali the Jackal could see this also, but it meant nothing to him.

"Cut me up with a knife if you want," he muttered; "but stop taking me apart by little pieces."

The doctor lowered Ali the Jackal's arm to the table, and looked at the nurses.

"Trephination," he said.

"Shall I get the ether?" asked a nurse.

The doctor thought a moment, holding his chin in one hand.

"No," he said, "this fellow won't know the difference. It will mean awakening Dr. Pagani. He has had a hard day. Besides," and here he grinned, "the stuff is expensive."

The doctor drew some broad straps from under the table and fastened Ali the Jackal down so that he could not move. He turned the patient's head on the right side, and held it there, with his fingers over Ali the Jackal's eyes. A nurse leaned over with a pair of scissors, and commenced cutting skin and flesh. Ali the Jackal shivered and screamed. He fought with all the strength of his half-paralyzed neck against the downward-pressing hand.

"You will have to hold him tighter," said the nurse.

The pressure increased, and the shattering pain in Ali the Jackal's scalp rent through him once more.

"Here, you three men, hold his head while I cut out the bone," said the doctor.

Ali the Jackal felt many hands on his forehead and neck, and over the bridge of his nose. He felt a dull vibration on his skull, which made him dizzy. The whole world wiggled up and down, but now there was little pain.

The door of the room flew open. Everyone looked up. The doctor removed his drill from the naked skull. A finger slipped away from in front of Ali the Jackal's right eye, and he could see. In the doorway stood a tall man, whose body was broad and muscular. He was clad in a loose nightgown; a long gray beard and closely clipped gray hair wreathed a massive forehead, and nose and lips of great strength and intelligence.

"Dr. Pagani," said he who had been drilling Ali the Jackal's skull.

The newcomer took in the entire situation at a glance.

"You ass!" he shouted. "Trephining a man without anæsthetic! What is the matter with you? Get out of the way!"

"We didn't want to awaken you, and he is only a native."

"Get out of here before I choke you, you intolerable ass!" shouted Dr. Pagani. "Run to my room and get the ether and a cone!"

He strode across the room and laid his strong fingers gently on Ali the Jackal's forehead.

"There, there, my son," he said softly in Arabic. "You will be all right soon. You are a brave boy, and a fine soldier. I will put you to sleep and you will feel nothing. I will send these jackasses back to France on the next boat."

Tears came to Ali the Jackal's eyes.

"There is no other Christian like you," he said with great difficulty, in the Riffian tongue.

"Religion is nothing to me," answered Dr. Pagani in the same language. "We are all children of Adam. I came to this country to give aid and not to cause suffering. You may trust in the skill of my hands."

Ali the Jackal wept. He felt something resting lightly over his face, and could see nothing. He drew a deep breath, and smelt something sickening and sweet. He drew another breath, and another, and soon he was still.

Part Four

THE DESERTER

XIII

JUSTICE

It was hot and stuffy in the courtroom, and very bright. Ali the Jackal's buttocks ached from sitting on the hard seat of the chair. He lifted one and then the other, shifting from side to side as he did so. The heat and discomfort made his head throb, and he put his hand up to the bandage and felt of it. Dr. Pagani had put something hard over the hole to protect his brain. The bone was growing back over the hole, or so he had been told, and the whole side of his head itched.

He could hear people talking rapidly and loudly in French, arguing passionately. He looked in front of him and saw a little man in a frock coat gesticulating nervously in front of the bench, to Ali the Jackal's side, where sat the judge. There were many people in the courtroom, both Christians and Muslimin, most of them looking at him. In the front row sat his uncle Hamid, his old aunt whom he had last seen cowering in a corner hugging her lute, and Rowazna. An Arab in a tall fez and garters was whispering to Hamid, translating the lawyer's speech. Hamid's lively eyes showed like glowing points through the slit of his cheeks, and his mouth was twisted into an

expression which was half smile, half sneer. The old woman gazed at Ali the Jackal through watery eyes; and Rowazna's glance was directed at the floor. She looked very bored.

"But he is very young!" cried the lawyer. "He enlisted in the service of France when he was under age — of his own will, through sheer loyalty and love of our cause. He went to France and fought gloriously, valiantly, for our country. He led a sniping expedition and captured a dozen Germans, breaking up an advance. He was given the Croix de Guerre. France should look with lenient eyes on one of his youth, one so strong and brave, who served her so well. He killed in a moment of passion, and in self-defense! The horseman had drawn his sabre before Mohammed fired. He shot in self-defense. Think of his chagrin, think of his shame, at seeing his beloved in a strange man's embrace! Well may he be excused the momentary madness of rage and of despair, especially when a heavy sabre was swinging toward his head!"

Ali the Jackal listened to parts of this speech, but could not understand all of it. The French was too flowery for him, and spoken too rapidly. He knew that the lawyer was doing all that he could to save him, and beyond that nothing mattered.

The lawyer sat down amid applause. Another leaped up from the front row — similarly attired, tall and lean. He held a paper in his hand, and waved it about.

"My learned colleague forgets," he began, "that the

prisoner carried the revolver with him to his rendezvous. He must have been expecting trouble, and he was therefore armed and prepared to commit this bestial crime. Do not let the prisoner's youthful and naïve appearance influence the court! He is young, but already well versed in the ways of sin. He was going to meet a prostitute, and prepared to kill any rival whom he might find.

"With such a woman, he naturally expected to find some lover. Had she been a woman of good family and of good repute, that would have been different; and the court knows, furthermore, that under the strict moral code of our Fezzi subjects he would not have been permitted to visit a virtuous woman. Remember, further, that he is a Riffian, brought up in an atmosphere of feud and of carnage. He is young, yes, but already inured to bloodshed. Among his fellows death is of small account. Had he been a Fezzi, or any other subject of our honored Protectorate, such an event would never have happened. He is a Riffian, and his people have ever been rebels and pillagers, scavengers and murderers. Let this fact not be forgotten."

The judge banged on the table with a wooden hammer. Ali the Jackal turned his head to watch. The judge half rose from his seat, and exclaimed, "You are introducing irrelevant material into this trial. Whether he is a Riffian or a Soussi makes no difference. Proceed, but with caution."

The lean lawyer approached Ali the Jackal and glowered at him.

"Where did you get that pistol?" he shouted.

"I found it under the wall on the way into Fez. Someone must have thrown it there. I put it inside my tunic to carry it more easily, because I had many bundles."

"You found it under the wall? Is that likely? Will the court accept this feeble subterfuge?" roared the lawyer.

"You tell me, then, where I found it," suggested Ali the Jackal. He purposely made his French as poor as possible.

"Impertinence!" shouted the lawyer. "The tender boy is impertinent!"

Hamid looked up at this, and then whispered hurriedly to the interpreter, who answered. Hamid glanced at his nephew and shook his head.

"We will leave the pistol," said the lawyer. "You had it with you, and that is all that is necessary. You fired it at the guardsman the moment you entered the room. Is that not so?"

Ali the Jackal's lawyer jumped to his feet.

"I protest!" he cried, "I protest! If he had fired when he first entered, he would have hit the horseman in the back, instead of in the chest! The angle of the bullet shows that the victim must have been standing on his feet."

A titter of laughter spread across the room. The judge banged on his desk. "The learned attorney's observation is correct," he said.

The attorney for the defense now started to question Ali the Jackal.

"Had you ever seen the cavalryman before?" he asked.

"Never," was the reply.

"Then you could have held no previous grievance against him?"

"I had never even heard of him."

"What were your relations with the girl?"

"I do not understand you."

The lawyer spoke very distinctly. "What had you done with the girl?"

"When?" Ali the Jackal now appeared very stupid.

"Do you not understand me?"

"I understand what you say, but not what you want."

"Had you had sexual relations with that girl?" asked the lawyer, pointing toward Rowazna.

"You mean that one?"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders and lowered his hands in a gesture of despair. He walked over to Hamid, and said, "If the client does not coöperate, I shall withdraw."

The Arab in the fez and garters translated this. Hamid looked at Ali the Jackal and nodded his head vigorously. The lawyer returned, and once more asked his question.

"Yes, several times."

"Were you deeply attached to the girl?"

"Yes, I was very fond of her."

"Is it true what she tells us, that you tore up her blue ticket and gave her all your pay?"

"Yes, it is true."

"Then you had reason to be overcome with deep emotion when you found her in the arms of a stranger?"

"I was very angry."

"So angry that you lost control of yourself, did not know what you were doing?"

"I always know what I am doing. I killed him, that's all."

The lawyer for the prosecution jumped up.

"There!" he cried. "He has admitted it! No more is necessary."

"I protest!" shouted the fat lawyer for the defense.

The judge banged on the table. The prosecution lawyer sat down, his gloomy face wrinkled into a smile.

"In my defendant's country," said the lawyer for the defense, "morality is very strict. This may seem strange to Christians, accustomed as we are to adultery—"

"I protest!" shouted the prosecutor.

The judge banged on his table. "Continue," he said.

"Accustomed as we are to adultery," the lawyer went on, "we do not realize that there are peoples in the world who look upon this unnatural crime with horror. It is part of their ancient code to punish adultery with death. This young man, filled with the idealism of his race, considered this woman his betrothed. It was only natural that, finding her

without warning in the arms of a stranger, and inflamed with sudden and uncontrollable anger, he should instinctively shoot. It was natural for him, and in the eyes of our common God," here the lawyer raised his eyes with great dignity, "it was a deed not entirely without justification. But under the present circumstances, such a consideration is not necessary. As we have previously demonstrated, he killed the man in self-defense."

At this point two guards appeared and led Ali the Jackal to a small wooden pen in the rear. Rowazna was summoned, and sat in the chair her lover had occupied. A puffy interpreter, resplendent in shiny fez and frock coat, stood beside her.

The prosecuting lawyer arose and faced her.

"You are a prostitute?" he inquired gently.

"Yes."

"You have been regular in attendance at Monday inspection?"

"Yes."

"Is it true that your friend Mohammed tore up your blue ticket upon the occasion of your first meeting?"

"Yes."

"What did you do afterward?"

"When he had gone I got another."

"Did you feel a great affection toward the accused?"

Here Rowazna commenced to weep.

"Yes," she answered.

"Then why were you unfaithful to him?"

"I was not unfaithful. I needed money."

"You thought that returning to your former manner of life would make no difference in your relationship with him?"

"Why should it?"

"I am asking the questions, and you should answer."

"No, it made no difference that I could see."

"Did you think that it would make any difference to him?"

At this Hamid looked at her in a very pointed manner.

"Yes," she sobbed. "I knew that it would, if he found out."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"One other thing. Did the defendant fire before the victim swung at him, or afterward?"

"I did not see. I was hiding in a blanket."

Here the prosecutor surrendered the witness to the defense attorney. The little man stood up, breathed deeply, and commenced: —

"If you were hiding in the blanket, the cavalryman must have left you before any action took place?"

"That is right."

"How long was it from the time he got up until you heard the first shot?"

"Quite a while. It seemed like a long while."

"Very well," said the little lawyer, "let us have the last witness."

Rowazna's mother was led to the chair. She who had spent her life squatting and crouching on cush-

ions and mats did not know how to sit in a chair. She pulled up her legs, and thrust her feet under her. The prosecuting attorney approached her.

"What is your name?"

"Fatima," she replied, in a small, wheezy voice.

"What relation are you to this girl?"

"Her mother."

"Were you a prostitute too?"

"I was a female musician."

"Who was your daughter's father?"

"Why do you ask me that? How do I know?"

Those in the courtroom who understood Arabic burst into laughter, and after the reply had been translated, the others joined them.

"You were present on the night of the murder?"

"Yes."

"Tell us, in your own words, what happened."

The old woman arched her back and moistened her sunken lips.

"I was playing the lute for my daughter and her friend. I told her not to bring in such men, but she paid no heed to me. Suddenly we heard a loud noise and the door fell in, and on top of it was Ali the—"

"Ali? Who is Ali?"

The old woman grew red, and her eyes began watering.

"I mean Mohammed," she said. "There are so many that I cannot keep their names straight."

"Very well, Mohammed fell in. What next?"

"The Arab jumped up and reached for his sabre.

He drew it out, and swung it over his head. It stuck in the ceiling. Then he pulled it out, and swung it sidewise. Then Mohammed fired, just before the steel hit him."

"How many shots were there?"

"Three."

The lawyer seemed dissatisfied. He thought a moment, and asked, "You are not an Arab?"

"No."

"You are a Braber?"

"Yes."

"Is it true that among your people adultery is not considered serious?"

"The men go about visiting each other's tents at night," said the crone. "Nothing is thought of it."

"Then infidelity meant nothing to your daughter, and would have meant nothing even had she been, let us say, virtuous?"

"No, nothing."

"That is all."

The lawyer sat down with a flourish of his hand.

The defense attorney sprang up.

"Did Mohammed know that it meant nothing?"

"No, he is a Riffian. How should he know that?"

"I am finished."

The old woman was led back to her seat, and Ali the Jackal was brought back from his pen. The judge turned in his chair and addressed him: —

"Young man, you have heard everything that has gone on in this court?"

"I have heard most of it. My head hurt and I could n't hear all of it."

"What do you think should happen to you now?"

"I should be sent back to my regiment to finish my service."

The judge arose, and all in the audience arose likewise. One of the guards prodded Ali the Jackal, and he too stood up.

"The court sentences Mohammed ben Mohammed to seven years of penal servitude for unpremeditated murder, after the expiration of which sentence he shall return to his regiment and finish his term of enlistment."

The lawyer for the defense rushed to Ali the Jackal and wrung his hand.

"Very good, my boy, very good!" he cried. Then, leaning over, he whispered, "Had it not been for me, you would have been guillotined."

Hamid came up and kissed Ali the Jackal on the forehead.

"I will pay for this fellow," he said. "Don't worry about him."

Rowazna and her mother walked directly out of the courtroom.

XIV

A KILO OF PEAS

"ULLAH, Ullah, Ullah! Ullah!"

The name of God pounded itself into Ali the Jackal's narrow cell through the heavily barred aperture which gave it light. Three fast beats and a heavy blow, three beats and a blow — this rhythm had kept the prisoner from sleeping throughout the night. He sat on his thinly padded cot, his hands over his ears. The thin place on the side of his head where new bone was growing over the hole throbbed and ached.

It was the feast of the Aissawa, the yearly ceremony which brings to Meknes hordes of wild Braber from the Middle Atlas, and frenzied desert dwellers, tall, kinky-haired, and blubbery of lips. Mingled with the chant came the piercing ululation of women on the housetops: "You you you you you, you you you you you!"

Ali the Jackal stood up and went to the window. Since he could not stem the throbbing of the feast, he would look at the cause of it. The morning was one of surpassing heat and glare, yet the sun was obscured behind a blanket of high-riding sand. August had come, and Meknes was like an oven. Ali

the Jackal blinked and drew his eyelids into a narrow squint.

Between two tightly packed throngs of spectators, a procession of dancers twisted its way slowly down the street. Directly below the prison window five men were jumping up and down, facing each other in a ring, leaping prodigiously in perfect rhythm, and swinging, by deft motions of their heads, their waist-long streamers of hair in unbroken circles. Their eyes were staring, their lips and nostrils distended, and their bodies rigid. Round and round they gyrated as they leaped. "Ullah, Ullah, Ullah! Ullah!" came from their glazed lips.

Beyond them danced a single negro. But for a filthy rag about his waist, brown with caked blood, he was naked. He danced with his knees bent, so that his buttocks almost touched the ground. One arm was twisted behind his back, its fingers wiggling, and the other was stretched in front of him. Froth dripped from his mouth and hung in thin gobbets from his chin. As he writhed and twisted, small flakes of foam were flung out from him. He leaned far back, until his head almost touched the earth, and then twisted forward, until he picked up a mouthful of dirt with his long, prehensile lips. He chewed this and blew out air between his closed lips, so that they vibrated. The foam increased, and became brown. Slowly he passed on.

Next came a line of five women holding hands. Brilliant reds, yellows, and greens showed on their garments. Their hair hung free, and Ali the Jackal

noticed that one of them was red-headed. They swayed backward and forward, bending from the waist. First their hair brushed the ground in front, and then almost touched it behind. Their skirts were short, and they kicked their legs high as they leaned backward. Their chant was quick and complicated; it seemed that there were five beats to it for each in the other rhythm.

Ali the Jackal curled his lip. "Braber women," he muttered. "They are foxes with many earths. Ground them by night, and they are gone next morning."

After the women came a man dressed in jackal skins, with small mirrors sewn into it, and cowrie shells dangling from strings. On his head was a high cone of fur, and his face, arms, and legs, as well as much of his garment, were smeared with blood. He danced bent over forward and trotted about on all fours, imitating the attitudes of a jackal. He spied a fruit stand opposite the prisoner's window, and loped over to it. Reaching up with one hand, he seized a pomegranate; then he ambled off into the middle of the street once more. The merchant shouted, and jumped out of his booth. The jackal tore the pomegranate apart with his teeth, and scooped the juicy kernels into his mouth. The merchant shrugged his shoulders, and shuttered up his shop.

Next came the Hamadcha, or head-choppers. They were covered with blood from head to foot, and long open wounds gaped on their hairless scalps. In their hands they waved gory battle-axes and heavy

clubs dripping with sticky, half-congealed blood. They had just come from their private ceremony of self-mutilation, and danced with a frenzy that overshadowed the zeal of the others.

The door of Ali the Jackal's cell rattled, and the prisoner left his window. Through the bars of the door he could see the warden, a short, paunchy man with wide, curling mustaches. Over fat cheeks his gray eyes twinkled.

"Come in, Monsieur Marchant," said Ali the Jackal.

The warden entered.

"How do you like this business?" he asked, waving a chubby hand in the direction of the window.

"They are crazy," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Don't they hold this feast in your country?"

Ali the Jackal snorted. "No, never," he replied.

"You do not like it, then?"

"No, it hurts my head. I can feel the beating of the drums in here."

Ali the Jackal tapped the bandaged side of his head gently. The warden stroked his chin, and the merriment left his eyes.

"Come down into my kitchen," he said. "It is away from the street, and little noise filters in."

Ali the Jackal followed his jailer out of the cell to a passageway overlooking a courtyard, and down a staircase to the door. There were few prisoners, and these looked up at Ali the Jackal in sullen disapproval. He was the warden's favorite; they knew it, and consequently hated him.

The two crossed a small outer court and entered

the kitchen. Tables, cupboards, kettles hanging from the walls — all were spotlessly clean and shiny. The stove, too, shone, from constant blacking, but was not now in use. In a corner a kettle steamed on a hissing Primus stove. The warden's peasant wife sat in a rocking chair, shelling peas.

"Good morning, Mohammed," she said to Ali the Jackal, looking over her glasses.

The latter drew up a chair beside her and helped her at her task. It was cool in here, and there was no noise other than the combined hissings of stove and kettle, and the dull thuds of peas dropping into a pan. The throbbing in Ali the Jackal's head slackened and ceased.

When the task was finished, and the pods had been neatly gathered into a basket, the warden's wife arose and straightened her apron with a pair of plump-fingered hands.

"François," she said, "I must have another kilo of peas, and two loaves of bread."

"I cannot leave," answered the warden. "There is no one else here."

"Then I will go myself."

The warden jumped up from his chair and took his pipe out of his mouth.

"But the Aissawa are outside. They are all mad, they might kill you!"

"Pooh, I am not afraid of the dirty Aissawa."

"I will not allow you to go alone! I will not permit it!"

François blew out his flabby cheeks until they

pushed his mustaches forward and thrust the curving tips toward his wife.

"Then send Mohammed with me."

The warden scratched his head with a horny thumb.

"It is irregular," he said.

"Who will know the difference? You can depend on him."

"All right," muttered the warden; "take him with you, but we must not do this often. This is an—exceptional circumstance."

The correct use of these long words flattered the warden. He looked at Ali the Jackal and smiled.

"Go out with Madame, and take good care of her. I know that you will do nothing foolish."

"I am in charge of Madame," replied Ali the Jackal with great dignity. "I will bring her back unharmed."

The two sallied forth to the street, Ali the Jackal holding Madame Marchant's plump arm in one hand, and a basket in the other. The crowd was tightly packed with pale burghers and bronzed country folk, all standing on tiptoes and straining to watch the frenzied tumult of orgiastic religion in the street. Their lips were twisted in orthodox disgust, but their eyes opened widely in fascinated wonder.

With his left elbow Ali the Jackal chopped a path through the mob, and trod ruthlessly, with his heavy-shod feet, on toes protected by thin layers of soft leather. Evil looks were directed toward him, and oaths were muttered. One man, dressed in the short jellaba of the hills, drew a knife, but by the

time its tip had emerged from the scabbard, Ali the Jackal and his charge were gone.

Turning right down the first cross-street, they found themselves suddenly alone, and walked down the narrow sidewalk in welcome freedom. They turned another corner, and approached a still open shop. There were peas here, and turnips; sprigs of mint; and a bin of small, wormy apples.

"A kilo of peas," said Ali the Jackal, in Arabic.

"They will cost three francs."

"That is too much. I will give you two."

"Then go look for some other shop — you will find them all closed through fear of the Jackal Society."

"This is an important person," said Ali the Jackal. "Madame is the wife of the warden at the jail. Her husband is a person of consequence."

"Then I will give them to her, as a great favor, for two francs and a half."

"You will give them for two francs or you will be reported."

"Reported for what?"

"Reported for extortion. Your shop will be closed."

"Very well, if you will treat me that way. Two francs is less than what I paid for them. It is oppression! And you, a good Moslem, help them!"

The merchant wept.

"Enough, you fox," said Ali the Jackal. "Before the French came you were lean, and now your belly has grown so fat that your trousers cannot contain it. Let others who have suffered complain; and as

for you, do not bite the fingers that hand you a bone."

As the Arab was weighing out the peas, taking out a large pod and putting in a small one so as to make the scales balance perfectly, the sound of feet made Ali the Jackal look up. A tall man, dressed in the uniform of a colonel, approached, followed by an orderly who slunk at his heels.

"Aha, Joseph, here is a shop which has not been closed!"

"Yes, my colonel."

The colonel halted, and crowded himself in front of the shop, elbowing Ali the Jackal's ribs as he did so.

"I want—" he started to order, and then turned and surveyed Ali the Jackal's face, from the distance of a handbreadth, with great suspicion. He dilated his narrow nostrils, and compressed his lips. He contracted his forehead, so that the bristling hairs of his eyebrows met over the high arch of his nose.

"Who are you?" he asked sharply.

"Mohammed ben Mohammed."

"You lie!"

"Pardon, my colonel. It is not my fault that others have taken the same name."

"Impertinent! Impertinent! Joseph, place him under arrest!"

The small Joseph, made bold by the wrath of his master, seized Ali the Jackal by the arm.

"It is a mistake, a grave mistake," cried Madame Marchant, who was wringing her hands with great

force, as if to squeeze fat out of the ends of her fingers.

"And you, Madame," said the colonel, bowing haughtily, "I have seen you before, too! You are—aha, you are Madame Marchant, wife of the warden of the prison! I am enchanted, Madame, but what are you doing with this man? I have seen him, yes, with that little bandage on his head. Yes, I have seen him in your husband's jail, during inspections!"

"He is just a boy," said Madame Marchant, looking up at the colonel's face with an expression of supplication on her ample features. "He is very trustworthy, and he is devoted to my husband. He is a person of confidence, of the greatest confidence. As my husband said, this is an—exceptional circumstance. There is no one with him at the jail, and he feared to let me go out alone."

"Confidence!" shouted the colonel. "Confidence! Confidence in a bastard of an Arab!"

The face of Ali the Jackal grew red. He threw out his chest, and raised his elbows quickly, clipping Joseph on the chin and releasing himself.

"Call me a bastard if you will," he shouted, "and then we are brothers! But an Arab, never! I am insulted!"

He glanced about him and knew that he was free. His first impulse was to run and mingle with the mad crowd swirling at the end of the street. They would have a hard time finding him. Then he looked down at Madame Marchant, and saw her weeping. He took her gently by the arm.

"Come, Madame," he said. "We must go home with the peas."

The colonel blew a whistle. Several gendarmes appeared running toward them from the crowded street below, waving their sticks. Joseph straightened his collar and commenced swearing bravely. Ali the Jackal and Madame Marchant did not go home alone.

XV

THE SAND LINE

MONSIEUR MARCHANT was removed from his post as warden of the Meknes jail. Ali the Jackal, to the joy of the other prisoners who had been jealous of him, was sent to the open-air prison camp of Kasba Targa. If one were to draw a straight line from Fez to Marrakesh, this post would be found in the centre of the line. It was the scene of constant fighting, since it formed the boundary between the fertile plain inhabited by peaceful Arab farmers and the wild, heavily wooded mountain of the Beni Mguild. These tribesmen, dashing down from their forest on wiry ponies, harried the edges of the plain, slaughtering Christian and Arab alike in their search for plunder. It was to stem these raids that the French were building a new fortress, and, in accordance with Gallic notions of economy, the heavy labor was being done by convicts.

It was a chilly afternoon in late October. The rains, two weeks overdue, sent ahead of them as a warning the bleak wind which raised fantastic spirals of dust from the surface of the flat land, and blew against the gray limbs of the olive trees, soft and rounded as the arms of a young girl, streaming the

green and silvery leaves out from them like slender parallel pennants.

On the top of a high mound which stood alone on the plain, clear of the last foothill, could be seen evidence of work. Low walls of masonry crested the hilltop in a close-fitting square, inside of which men were mixing cement in wide troughs with the aid of long-handled hoes. The men looked weary; their faces were white with the blowing powder which they were mixing with water and sand; their bodies were thin and corded, and their garments, some military and others Moslem, were torn and flapping.

Up the side of the hill like a column of ants crawled a line of men, bent over, carrying heavy bags of sand on their backs. Halfway up stood an Arab with a whip in his hand. His head was wrapped in a voluminous haik to protect his face from blowing particles, and a long silham hid his feet. As the ants in this column approached him, they commenced to run, despite the steepness of the ascent and the weight of their burdens. Those who would not or could not run felt the end of the lash coil about their shins like a hot wire.

On the crest of the hill stood another such Arab who held a stick in one hand and a revolver in the other. As each man passed him he smote him on the small of the back, below the sandbag, to remind the prisoner that he must not pause to get his breath or he would suffer even more than at present. The line moved on and on. Each man, having passed the crest, ran through a gap in the wall to the middle of

the enclosure, shifted his load and grasped the bag by the ears, threw it sideways with a heave of the hips, and emptied it. Clutching the empty bag, the prisoner ran down the slope to have it refilled. On and on this went, from daylight until dark, with no pause for the heat of the day.

Ali the Jackal stared fixedly at the ground as he climbed upward in this line. He must not miss a step, nor must he tread on the heels of the man in front, for then both would fall and neither might arise again. He ground his teeth and clenched his jaws, to still the pounding in his now unbandaged head. Many months had passed since the operation, but it still bothered him.

His gaze rested on the heels of the man in front. He was an old man, with thin calves blotched with age and almost devoid of hair. His ankles were bleeding where the cross-straps of his sandals chafed them. Ali the Jackal hunched his shoulders so that he could look up at the man, and saw a pair of long, white fingers, with narrow curved nails that had never been flattened on hoe or ploughshare, clutching desperately the sides of his sandbag.

The grimy cloak, the ragged edges of which flapped about his thin knees, had been delicately woven, and was covered with discolored embroidery. The old man climbed onward, and as he did so Ali the Jackal felt his pace slackening, for the younger man was forced to shorten his own step to avoid treading on the ankles of the older.

Ali the Jackal looked to the left over his shoulder,

and saw the Arab with his whip poised. Its handle moved sharply, and the outer lash bent into a curve which ran toward the tip like a high wave across a quiet pool. The end curled, and drew swiftly nearer. With a smack it coiled itself quickly around the old man's left ankle. The old man stumbled and then recovered his balance. A twist of the handle loosened the coils, and the whip was withdrawn.

As Ali the Jackal watched the calf in front of him, three white rings swelled out from the surrounding surface, as if three large worms were crawling around the leg under the skin. The rings grew pink and then red, until fine points of blood appeared. The old man stumbled onward.

They came to the lip of the hill, and Ali the Jackal brought his foot down hard upon the level surface. He looked up and saw a stick descend upon the small of the old man's back, and a puff of dust fly out of the thin cloak which protected it. The sandbag skewed sidewise; the thin fingers tightened and reddened as the coarse burlap slipped under them. The bag fell with a thud and burst open. The old man, stretching out his arms to either side for balance, pawed one foot in the air and brought it down in the loose sand which had escaped. The sand yielded, and he fell sprawling over it.

Ali the Jackal halted. The Arab leaned over and whacked the old man with all his might, across the shoulders. He raised his arm to smite again. The old man stared up at him, and doubled his fist. "God

damn you for a sodomite!" he shouted. "I will kill you!"

The dusky cheeks of the Arab flushed. Holding his stick still aloft in his left hand, he aimed the pistol in his right, and fired. A dark spot appeared simultaneously on the old man's bared thigh, and blood gathered in the hole and spurted out. It flowed in a sparkling stream over the leprous whiteness of his leg.

The Arab turned to Ali the Jackal and shouted angrily, "Get on, you! Run around him!"

As Ali the Jackal crossed the enclosure, he saw a French officer running toward the place from which the shot had been fired. His face was white. As Ali the Jackal ran down the slope with his empty sandbag, he watched the Frenchman gesticulate at the Arab with the curved palm of his hand, and shake two fingers under the Arab's nose. Then the officer shrugged his shoulders and turned back to his overseeing. Ali the Jackal glanced up at the gray swirl of clouds above him, while his bag was being filled. Two vultures, apparently heedless of the wind, wheeled overhead.

XVI

SNOW

Day after day this torture of the sand line went on, and the walls of the fort, grim and ugly, rose ever higher. Seeing the lowering grayness in the east, and the black clouds hovering across the mountains and obscuring their peaks, the captain grew more and more anxious, and his minions prodded the prisoners while it was yet dark, and set them to work in the chill grayness before dawn. But an arm's length of wall remained to be built before the roof could be nailed on, when the rain came.

Down at a steep slant beat the sheets of water, stinging the wrists and legs of the men in the sand line. The open hole whence the sand was dug filled like a pool, and thin trickles, growing visibly into swift torrents, washed and carved the naked slopes of the hill into folds and creases. Small deltas of silt formed rapidly at the feet of these miniature torrents. The sand-bearers slipped, slithered, fell, and rolled down the bank. The Arab with the whip, running down to lash them, himself fell, and arose a sticky ball of mud.

Ali the Jackal, recovering himself at the foot of the slope, looked about him, thinking that in the

confusion he might escape. He looked toward the mountains, which loomed now as a black blur tilting up the somewhat lighter disk of the sky. In front of him he saw a dozen splotches of red — the fezzes of the Senegalese guards who surrounded the camp. They were crouching in a line, their blubbery lips tightly compressed over file-pointed teeth. They too had thought of this, and their large, white-balled eyes roved eagerly through the welter of rain for some fleeing form to shoot at. Ali the Jackal decided to wait. With the others, he returned to his tent.

On the next day the rain continued, and on the crest of the mountains to the west could be seen a white line of snow. On the third morning the line had grown wider, and every day the snow crept lower and closer to the hill of Kasba Targa. After three weeks of rain, the mountain of the Beni Mguild was entirely covered, and when, one morning, the day broke cold and clear, the whiteness to the east of them shone forth in a bright glare.

On this morning Ali the Jackal and his fellow slaves crawled out of their tents and threw the flaps back wide to let in the sun. Work recommenced, and under the frozen surface of the sand pit loose material could be dug for building. The men shivered as they loaded their bags and lifted them on to their backs, and it was not until the second trip up the hill that sweat broke out on their faces and they were warm. Flabby from three weeks of inaction, they found the labor more painful than before. Those of them who were barefoot felt the frozen earth cut the soles

of their now softened feet, and the trail up the hill was spotted with bright points of blood where the drops had frozen to the surface of the thin crystals of hoarfrost.

At noon the men toiling in the sand line saw broad flakes flutter in front of their faces, and fall on the ground in a thin sheet which grew rapidly thicker until the trail was obscured. They worked on, until the snow reached halfway from ankle to knee, and the legs of the men grew red and wet.

To many of them, dwellers on the flat lands, this was the first sight of snow, but they had no time to pause and study it. They ploughed on, up the hill and down again, feeling a mounting wrath against this new element which had descended to make their slavery more bitter, while others, children of the mountains, found the relief from heat welcome, and grew almost gay.

When it had become too dark to see clearly they were ordered to halt, and filed by the cook tent, where each man was handed a half-loaf of bread. Supplies had been expected that day, but the truck which had been sent out had failed to return through the snow. Confronted with a cold meal of dry bread, the men grumbled quietly to themselves. Ali the Jackal, however, received his half-loaf with satisfaction. Portable, imperishable food accorded well with his plans.

He headed directly for his tent, a high, round one which sheltered a dozen prisoners. Each man entered and wrapped himself in his blanket. Most of the

blankets were khaki, but at the time Ali the Jackal had arrived the stores had been empty, and a thin Arab blanket, of undyed wool, had been requisitioned from a neighboring village and given him. He had washed it frequently in the small stream which flowed in front of the hill, until it was quite white.

The other men were busily munching their bread. Ali the Jackal nibbled at his, with the greatest possible jaw movement for the smallest amount of bread. After a while he broke what remained into two pieces, and put one in each side pocket of his tunic. He wrapped himself up in his blanket so that only his nose protruded, and lay down, with his knees close to his chin, in a narrow space, far from the flap, which had been allotted him.

For the last three weeks the men had sat up late in the tent talking, by the light of a candle lantern, which was now burning, hanging to the side of the central pole. To-night, however, worn out from the unaccustomed work, their faces, arms, and legs glowing from exposure, all of them rolled over with little speech, and soon heavy snores announced the prevalence of sleep. The candle lamp still burned, and although Ali the Jackal could see it through the slit of the blanket next his nose, he did not see fit to crawl across the other men and blow it out.

After an hour or more he heard soft steps padding through the snow outside. The flap of the tent was raised, and a draught and a flurry of flakes blew in. Through his minute peephole, Ali the Jackal could see an Arab guard standing just inside the doorway, shin-

ing a flash light from one face to another. One of the men grunted; another rolled over, muttering thickly. None of them awoke. When the beam lay on Ali the Jackal's face, his eyes were tightly closed.

"Animals!" grunted the Arab. "Those candles cost ten sous apiece."

He reached over and picked the lamp from its hook, drew it toward him, and blew it out. Ali the Jackal could hear footsteps swishing through the snow in the direction of the next tent. Taking care not to shift his position, he let one hand steal slowly to a pocket, and felt in it with his fingers. They hooked around a glassy-surfaced piece of flint. He had found it in a shovelful of sand which had been poured into his sack several days previously, and had stooped to pick it out without being observed.

It was a long, slender piece of flint, smooth on one side and knapped on the other into two parallel bevels with a valley running between. Along both edges little notches had been taken out by chipping. "A curious flint," he thought. "It would be no good in a gun, yet it must have been fashioned for some purpose. Perhaps it is the work of *jnun*, who fear iron and all things made from it."

Still wrapped in his blanket, he hitched across the small space between his resting place and the outer canvas of the tent. Too many men lay between him and the flap. He could not possibly crawl over them without awakening some of them. Well he knew how to slit the canvas without noise, for tales of such exploits had been told him as a child.

He gathered a fold of the stiff fabric in his left hand, and bit into this with his teeth. Then he grasped another fold in the same hand, and slackened the canvas between teeth and fingers. With the flint in his right hand he commenced sawing, and found that the stone, with its cleverly placed notches, was more effective than he had thought. Soon he had made a slit which reached from the height of his shoulders, as he crouched upon the ground, to the earth.

He thrust his head outside with great caution. The cold flakes alighted gently on the back of his neck and melted. As he looked upward, they eddied past his nose. It was snowing very little now, and yeasty clouds were racing past the full arc of the moon. Over to the east the white bulge of the mountain rose, like a fabulous monster lying awake under its blanket.

About a hundred paces away he could see the dim form of a Senegalese. More of them appeared at regular distances apart. He stared hard at the nearest one, until he could see the sentinel more clearly. The negro was huddled into a compact ball, with a blanket wrapped around him. Ali the Jackal could not distinguish the features in the black blur of the face, but could well imagine the terror and discomfort it portrayed. Truly to a Senegalese snow must be a fearsome thing.

Holding his blanket over him, Ali the Jackal crawled through the slit and lay flat on the ground, completely covered. He crawled slowly in what he thought to be the direction of the sentry, and a little

to the right. After a few moments of this, he paused and lay quiet to catch his breath. The beating of his heart made what seemed to him a prodigious noise. After it had quieted a bit, he lifted a corner of his blanket and peered outside.

Not ten paces away crouched the sentry, shivering within his blanket. His eyes, white-balled and bulging, stared like those of a man in a trance. Ali the Jackal covered himself once more and crawled, very slowly, to the left. After a moment he looked out again, and saw the negro's back. "He is too busy with his own troubles," thought Ali the Jackal, as he once more covered his head and proceeded.

He did not pause again for some time. Suddenly he felt the ground sloping downward under him, and gripped the uneven surface of the snow-covered earth to steady himself. When he looked out the next time, he found himself on the edge of the brook. He turned and glanced behind him. The sentries were far away, and none faced him. He arose to a crouching position and gathered his blanket in one lump over his back. Still stooping, he waded the brook and lay flat, with his blanket over him, on the farther bank. A pain like knife-thrusts crawled from his ankles to the height of his knees, so cold was the water. After it the snow seemed warm.

Peering around again, he saw the sentries unchanged. No one had noticed him. He rose to his hands and knees, and crawled rapidly away from the brook, up the farther slope. When he felt himself proceeding downhill once more, he sat up on his

haunches and looked over his shoulder. The camp was not in sight. He stood erect and stretched his limbs.

He searched the dim landscape for a trail, but under a foot or more of snow all irregularities had been rounded over, and one place looked as promising as another. Hence he struck out in the direction of the greatest slope, and climbed forward. Soon the scrub conifers yielded place to lofty cedars of Lebanon, thick-branched, and with bare spots about the bases of their trunks. These bare patches, he saw, were parts of a thick carpet of needles, and he paused beneath one of the trees to run these through his fingers. They would make excellent bedding, soft and warm. He felt a great weariness and a desire to bury himself in them for the night. This would, however, be very foolish, since the Beni Mguild might shoot him for an enemy, or the French, if they should search that distance, might find him. He filled the fold of his blanket with the needles, and continued upward.

After hours of climbing through the snow he at length stepped out upon a crest, beneath which, in the light of the now uncovered moon, he could see a steep-walled glade, warm and sheltered from the wind. Ali the Jackal climbed carefully down the wall of this chasm, feeling ahead with his toes for each foothold. When he had descended below the level of the cedar-tops, snow no longer obscured his way, but it was very dark, and this again made his progress difficult. When he had almost reached the

bottom, and was hanging to the wall by one hand, he lowered one foot to search for a crevice or protuberance of the rock, and found to his surprise that the foot hung in space.

Dropping his blanket so that he might have both hands free for climbing, he saw the white mass fall and alight several feet below the point reached by his toes. He now let go his hold and dropped on the soft, needle-filled blanket. He found himself on a ledge, and a black space ahead indicated the opening of a cave. Dragging the blanket after him, he entered this and, finding a flat spot, made his bed. No sooner had he made himself comfortable than he fell into a heavy sleep.

XVII

ONE WHO SNORES

OBLIQUE rays of sunlight crawled across his ear to his cheekbone, and from his cheekbone to his eye. His eyelids fluttered, closed tightly, and then opened. He lifted his head and looked around him. He was about to rise to his knees when he heard a muffled sequence of sounds. It was like someone beating a loose drum.

Ali the Jackal crawled cautiously to the mouth of his cave and looked out. Up the trail by the brook rode a column of horsemen, in single file. They were tall, bearded men, clad in long silhams of white wool, which hung below the stirrups and flapped over the hind quarters of their mounts. The horses, short and wiry, trotted without sign of fatigue. Over the shoulders of each man hung a rifle.

It was Ali the Jackal's first impulse to shout to these warriors and to join them. "But then," he thought, "what if they are a *harka* on the side of the French? I should be back in the sand line to-morrow." He scanned their faces closely. "They have n't the look of traitors," he said to himself, "but of honest men." Then he stared at their rifles, trying, from his distance, to discern their make. The heavy stock, dull and

unpolished, and the fat, long bolt, meant Mausers. If they had been the slenderer, shinier cavalry rifles of the French, then these men would be enemies. But the Mausers, shipped originally from Spain, were brought on camels up the Wed Draa and across the Middle Atlas. Ali the Jackal knew this, and was now sure of himself.

He crawled back to his bedding, and shook the soft needles out of his blanket. Wrapping this around him so as to hide the ragged remains of his uniform, he returned to the mouth of the cave and placed himself in full view of the passing column.

He raised his hands to his lips, and shouted in Arabic: —

"There is no god saving God! Behold Mohammed is the messenger of God! God is most great!"

Fingers tightened on bridles, bits pressed against palates, and horses' fore hooves raised themselves from the ground and pawed the air. Rifles were unslung in a flash, and Ali the Jackal found himself looking into fifty muzzles and as many bearded faces. One man, red-whiskered and scowling, tapped the flanks of his horse with his heels and rode forward between the trees. He stared at Ali the Jackal a moment; then asked, in the Braber tongue, "Are you a Moslem or a Christian?"

"You have heard my profession of faith," replied Ali the Jackal in the same dialect.

"How did you get here?"

"I escaped from the new fort, where I was a prisoner."

"What is your country? You speak our language, but as a stranger would speak it."

"I am a Riffian."

He of the red whiskers snorted.

"Once there was a Riffian in Fez," he said, "who stole the Sultan's rifles, and sold them to the Ait Yusi. They were taken prisoner at the gate, by the Sultan's men. Since then we have had no confidence in Riffians."

"That wasn't the Riffian's fault," said Ali the Jackal quickly. "He was captured too, and killed."

"How do you know so much about it? You weren't born then."

"No, but I have heard people tell."

"Very well, but jump down out of that cave! Hold your hands over your head!"

Ali the Jackal dropped his blanket on the ledge, lifted his arms, and stepped down to the soft floor of the gully. A man dismounted, walked over to the cave, and picked up the blanket. He approached Ali the Jackal and searched him. From his pocket he drew forth a piece of bread and a flint.

"What are you doing with that stone?" asked the bearer of the red whiskers.

"I cut my way out of the tent with it."

"Where did you get the French uniform?"

"I was in the Tirailleurs, and served in France. I joined by mistake, and in France we killed many Frenchmen."

"A fine story. Get on a horse and come along."

A riderless horse was led up, and Ali the Jackal

mounted. He was too large for it, and the stirrups were too short. He had ridden little on horseback, and for this reason was embarrassed in the presence of his captors. Placed directly in front of the red-bearded chieftain, he was under constant observation.

They soon had left the shelter of the gully and were climbing a zigzag trail up a steep and barren slope, up to the horses' knees in snow. Here they were forced to dismount and lead their horses. The sun shone with dazzling brightness and made Ali the Jackal squint, until his eyes became two narrow lines of blue and white; and, owing to the heat of climbing and the excitement of having changed the manner of his captivity, the wound in his head throbbed. At a bend of the trail he looked over his shoulder to the west. There, far below him, lay the fort he had left, strangely inactive. The tents, resembling small blots of dirt upon the whiteness of the snow, were flat. Farther over, coils of smoke arose from the village beyond the fort.

Ali the Jackal turned to the man with the red beard, and said, "You have done well, my uncle. You have knocked it flat."

"They will build it up again in the spring, and once more we will push it over."

"They did n't expect you to raid in the snow. It is not the manner of your people."

"New times bring new manners. If they will build in the winter, we will raid then too."

"They thought you were grazing your sheep in the valley of the Gigo, or on the banks of the upper

Muluya, in winter pasturage. It was a good trick."

"You know too much about us for a Riffian."

"I have been many places, and heard many things."

"In all your travels, have you been taught how to read and write? Have you learned the whole Koran by heart?"

"I was taught when I was small by good schoolmasters. Everything they taught me I still remember."

"If that is true, we will make you our schoolmaster and scribe. You are good for little else. I see that you cannot ride."

"In my country," answered Ali the Jackal, "the mountains are too steep for riding. We have no horses. Yet we can walk and climb faster than any animal on four feet, and we have our own way of fighting. We do not swoop down on a place and burn it and then turn tail and run away. We dig trenches around it and starve and shoot the men out, then get in ourselves and keep them off when they come back. In that way we need take a place only once. If you like, I will teach you not only the Koran, but also a new way of fighting."

The chieftain grunted and spat through his beard.

"Like all Riffians, you are filled with confidence," he replied. "If your new manner of fighting were good,—if you always took and never lost,—by this time you would own the whole world. Instead of that, you have neither sheep nor horses, and your land has grown no larger. We will fight in our own way, and take no advice from schoolmasters."

"Our land has grown no larger," said Ali the Jackal, anxious to have the last word, "because we have never been pressed; no one has ever tried to bother us. Were we to stretch out our hands and take the country of the Arabs, our children would see their children and learn evil ways. They would learn the smoking of *kif*, the lending of wives, and unnatural methods of intercourse. It is better to stay where we are."

"It was for these things that they drove you out," said the chief.

Ali the Jackal bit the dried skin from his chapped lip. He could think of dozens of things to say, but knew that they would anger his captor. It hurt him to do so, but he kept silent.

Once they had surmounted the barren slope they paused to rest their horses. Ali the Jackal could see the column stretching out far beneath him, and, in the middle distance, many horses laden with rifles and boxes of ammunition. Ahead stretched another deep forest, on leveler ground, and the head of the procession was already lost in the darkness of its trees.

"We must hurry," said the chieftain — "soon they will be coming."

As they swung their long legs once more into the saddles, a faint humming could be heard in the west. Ali the Jackal turned — and saw a black speck like a tiny fly crawling toward them over the sky. The humming grew slowly louder, and soon another black speck appeared.

The red-bearded leader turned in his saddle and cupped his hands, shouting at the procession below him: "Hurry! Hurry! There are planes after us! Get into the forest before they reach us!"

The men below pulled hard on the bridles of their horses as they led them, and smote the rumps of those in front with switches. The horses jumped, and some kicked. The procession doubled its pace. Ali the Jackal drove his heels into his horse's sides, and trotted rapidly into the forest on the trail trampled down by those ahead of him. Under the trees, the snow was but ankle deep; and there, copying the others, his horse broke into a canter. Ali the Jackal had never before ridden faster than a trot. The deep, swaying motion almost unseated him, and he was constantly ducking to miss the branches which hung down like nooses to catch his head.

For about ten minutes more they rode thus, until a loud crash behind them announced the bursting of a bomb. He of the red beard shouted over his shoulder, "Were any men hit?" and the question was relayed back from man to man. Soon the answer was shouted back, "All were in the forest. Praise God there is no harm!" and Ali the Jackal shouted this in his turn and the cry traveled through the forest faster than the canter of horses.

Soon another bomb fell, and the splintering of tree trunks mingled with the noise of the explosion. Ali the Jackal's horse jerked up his head spasmodically, and stretching it out in front of him and flat-

tening his ears, commenced to gallop. All of the horses were doing the same, and it was hard to keep nose and flying heels apart in the close cavalcade, as well as to avoid the trees, which grew closer together and were lower-limbed.

Ali the Jackal saw the procession ahead of him slacken speed; he tugged hard on his bridle—his horse reared and threw him on to the snow-covered ground. He landed on his elbow, still clutching the bridle in the fingers of the other hand. His horse stood quivering before him. The red-bearded chieftain, who had drawn his steed to a perilous halt, shouted at him, "Get up, you driver of donkeys; mount! Remember that our bits are heavy, and our horses soft of mouth! If you haul on your bridle like that again, I will make you work off the price of the horse!"

Ali the Jackal brushed the snow off his trousers and remounted, his face very red. The company walked their horses now through the dense forest. No more bombs fell. The French had apparently abandoned the pursuit.

"Once you have shaken them, do the planes come back?" asked Ali the Jackal.

The chief drew his lips in tightly, and said, "No, they will find a village somewhere, and blow it up instead."

Darkness fell early on the forest riders. The black murk crept out from the boles of the trees and spread until it covered all but the path, which was faintly

lighted through the narrow openings overhead. Fearing lest night overtake them, and knowing that their mounts were sufficiently rested, they again commenced to trot.

When the last light was floating upward from the path the company entered a wide glade of snow-covered grass. Sheep, huddled into a cramped circle, had tramped and nozzled the snow away from the tender blades of well-watered herbage. Beyond the sheep the humped backs of a half-dozen black tents loomed against the greater blackness of the forest wall. Inside them glowed high-leaping fires, flaming yellow from the pitch with which their fuel was saturated. Behind the fires crouched the figures of women, muffled in robes, their forearms thrust out bare and glistening as they roasted long spitfuls of fat mutton. The sweet smell of simmering fat filled the glade, and Ali the Jackal breathed in deep lungfuls of it. Never had he smelt such perfume. His stomach rolled and rumbled, and he rubbed its emptiness with his fist.

Having dismounted from his sweat-covered horse, he followed his captor to one of the tents. As he walked through the snow, he felt that his thighs were bowed, and the muscles in the backs of his calves burned with unaccustomed use. A boy came out of the tent and took the two horses. Redbeard sat in front of the fire, just under the shelter of the tent, and motioned Ali the Jackal to join him. The latter found himself seated next to a woman, apparently his captor's wife, who was squatting behind the

flame broiling pieces of mutton, as were the women throughout the camp. She looked at him and smiled, and as she did so Ali the Jackal could see that she was still young. Her arms and shoulders were strong and smoothly shaped, and through a slit at the side of her garment he could discern the outline of a high full breast.

"Peace be upon you," she said.

Ali the Jackal was embarrassed. He was not used to speaking so openly with women, although he knew that here it was the custom.

"And upon you the peace," he replied.

She turned to her husband and asked, "What kind of a man is this that you have brought home?"

"He is a Riffian schoolmaster whom I have persuaded to join us. He is going to teach our children the Koran, and lecture to us when we break Ramadan. If there is any reading or writing to be done, he will take care of it."

"Is n't he going to fight the French with you?"

The red-bearded leader made a disparaging noise with his lips.

"He would fall off his horse."

The woman turned to Ali the Jackal.

"Is that true?" she asked.

Ali the Jackal shrugged his shoulders. "It is true that I have never ridden a horse before, because there are no horses in my country. Yes, I might fall off. As for fighting the French, I have done that before, and in France. If your husband wishes to conquer them, he will listen to my advice."

"Your advice," said the chieftain, and made another queer sound with his lips.

"What is your name?" asked the woman.

"Ali the Jackal." He saw no reason at present for taking the pains to think up a false one. Turning to his captor, he asked, "O great councillor, what name shall I call you by, you who have saved me and brought me here?"

"Moha U Moha."

"Are you any kin to the great Moha U Hammu?"

"I am his cousin. He is *kaid* of all Zaian, all of Beni Mguild; I command a single clan under him."

"I was always told," said Ali the Jackal, "that you people pastured your sheep on the mountain in summer, the while you dwelt in tents; but that in the winter time you dwelt in castles built of earth, and pastured your flocks elsewhere."

"Whoever told you was not wholly a liar. Some of us live in castles, but others keep to the tents the year round."

"It surprised me to find you tenting here with your wives and sheep, while the ground is covered with snow."

"So are we surprised. We came here to attack the French when we heard that they were rebuilding their fort. They know our old habits, so we changed them. You will see that we have just enough sheep for food, and just enough women to do the work."

The meat was now ready to eat, and as the woman

handed a spitful to Ali the Jackal, sizzling drops of fat sprang off and alighted on his hand, causing small, stinging pains which intensified his hunger.

"In the name of God," he muttered as he picked off the first gobbet between thumb and fingertip and placed it between his teeth. He then blew on it to cool it, his lips curled lest they be burnt.

"I suppose you will soon have us mumbling on the first bite," said Moha U Moha, his mouth full of meat and his fingers shiny with grease.

"Yes, and washing your hands before you eat," replied Ali the Jackal.

"You will be a good scribe," said Moha U Moha. "We need someone to teach us manners—but not how to fight!"

This thought seemed to amuse him and he laughed heartily, opening his mouth so that the shreds of half-chewed meat could be seen hanging from his teeth. His wife looked at Ali the Jackal and smiled with the nearest half of her face.

Soon the music of bagpipes welled out of one of the tents, skirling and rolling, rising and falling in rapid cadences, and voices rang out to accompany it. The song grew as it went along, a boasting, gloating song of their victorious raid.

Oh, Oh, Oh, we galloped down the valley,
  The snow lay on the ground —
We slaughtered half the Frenchmen,
  Before they made a sound.
Oh, Moha U Moha, he rode before us all;
His red beard was waving like a torch beneath the wall.

The reference to their leader's beard brought a round of laughter which interrupted the train of the ballad, but soon it was resumed again. One man, crouching in the entrance of a tent, seemed to be making up most of it as he went along, the others repeating the words as soon as they had left his mouth. Now and then he would find himself momentarily thwarted, and in order to preserve the close continuity of sound would insert a verse from an older ballad, returning again to the theme of the early morning's fighting.

The women piled more wood on the fires, which by this time had burned themselves down to embers. The flames leaped up anew, and with them the singing took on a fresh start. The ballad maker had exhausted the subject of the new battle, and the whole company was joining in an older narrative, familiar to them all.

Ali the Jackal lay back on his blanket, which had been returned to him, and folded one end of it over his outstretched legs to protect them from the intense heat. Although his legs smarted and were stiff when he tried to move them, his belly was full of meat, and a glow of contentment burned his cheeks. After the torture of the sand line this new life was satisfying. To be schoolmaster to the ignorant would be an easy lot for a time, but he was not intended for such a life. He would enjoy it for a while and then, God willing, would make his way back to his own country. He glanced covertly

at the wife of his captor and benefactor, the harsh-tongued old fighter Moha U Moha. He imagined the chieftain's other wives, wrinkled and lacking in teeth. He had brought the youngest and most comely along with him.

The sight of her made Ali the Jackal think of Rowazna. Rowazna had been fairer, and more beautiful, but the fully developed body of the woman who sat now beside him left little to be desired. Fair are the women of the Braber, thought Ali the Jackal, but not meant for marriage to a Riffian. If he should unite with one here and beget sons, then he would not wish to leave them when he went to the Rif, and should he take such a woman there, her habits would shame him and cause him to do murder near to home. He could wait for marriage until he had seen for the first time the home of his father's people. In the meanwhile, perhaps pleasure would not be lacking. The rôle of schoolmaster would give him certain privileges. He would be sought out as a magician and writer of amulets. He had written papers which had fooled the sheikhs of the Gharb. Now he might write others which would satisfy the women of the Braber.

The fire lost its brightness, and the yellow flames grew smaller, until nothing remained but a reddish bed of coals. The music, too, had slackened. The bagpiper had laid aside his pipes, and the singers had grown few in number. At length the last of them finished with a long-drawn-out note.

"It is time to sleep," said Moha U Moha, who had been yawning for some time into the palm of his hand.

"I will roll up in my blanket, if you will show me a place," offered Ali the Jackal.

"Roll up in your blanket? It is too cold. Lie with us and we will throw them all on top of the three of us. Then we will all be warm. I hope you don't snore."

"I have never heard myself do it," answered Ali the Jackal.

Moha U Moha chuckled. "You will make a strange schoolmaster," he said.

The three lay down in a row, first the red-bearded leader, then his wife, and then Ali the Jackal on the other side. Beneath them was stretched a heavy-napped rug of undyed wool, and over them they drew two mountain blankets and the thinner covering of Ali the Jackal.

"Take off that monkey-clothing of yours," said Moha U Moha, "and I will give you something decent to wear in the morning."

With these words, the chieftain began breathing heavily, and in a few moments was evidently asleep. Despite his warnings to his captive about snoring, he soon indulged in that practice himself. Ali the Jackal, who had removed his outer garments, felt the bare thigh of the woman against his own, and the smooth warmth of it excited him and made it impossible for him to go to sleep. He lay there, his muscles tense, not knowing what to do. "A curious

people," he thought to himself, "with the courage of lions and the shamelessness of wild swine." The surface of his skin which was in contact with the woman's itched strangely and tingled. He thought of Rowazna, and pictured himself in the room with her in Fez, and saw the old woman leering in a corner, about to pluck the strings of her lute.

He felt the blankets rise, and a firm arm crept over his chest. As the woman's face drew close to his, he whispered, "What if he should awaken?"

"I thought you were a brave man," she whispered back, "and now you are afraid of one who snores."

The taunt stimulated Ali the Jackal until his head swam.

"You are strange women," he whispered, raising his buttocks to shift them a short distance away. Then he lay on his side, and felt a warm body following his own.

XVIII

A SPAT OF LEAD

THE raiders, satisfied with what they had done, packed their tents and rugs on horses and moved out of the forest. Going in the snow was difficult for the loaded animals, even though the tents were small ones and came apart in many sections. Moha U Moha led them on to a treeless plateau, and down a long valley which in spring would be ankle deep in grass, to the head of the Gigo valley. This they descended until they came to the chieftain's castle, in which they spent the rest of the winter. Ali the Jackal was given a room in which to instruct his students, and those who came to learn the Koran were of all ages and sizes.

When spring came, and the snow had melted from the plateaus and high valleys, the waters of Gigo ran high and swift, and overflowed their banks. Rocks larger than a man's head were rolled about like pebbles, and strewn by the force of the stream over the narrow flood plain. Those of the chieftain's followers who were wont to till the soil went out to irrigate their terraces, built up above the level of flooding, and those whose duty it was to lead the

sheep up to pasture repaired their tents and set all in order for departure.

Then word came through that the French had patched up their fort on the edge of the plain and that, instead of waiting there to be raided and cut off as they had in former years, they had pushed on to the plateau country with a large column, thinking to stave off in this manner any attempts which might be made to prevent the rebuilding and strengthening of their stronghold.

With some difficulty Ali the Jackal persuaded Moha U Moha to take him along on the expedition against the invading column. His scholars would be scattered, some following the sheep, others staying in the castle to tend the fields, and others riding off after Moha U Moha. The red-bearded leader had grown very fond of his new schoolmaster, and finally decided to include Ali with his warriors.

They rode upward over soggy turf and greasy shale, and at length reached the plateau on which the French column was camping. Moha U Moha sent out scouts, swift riders on lean, wiry steeds, who knew how to follow under the lips of hills, and to expose themselves as little as possible. These men brought back news of the French. The column had thrown up a square of loose rock around a natural hollow, and the wall was waist-high. Behind this, they could snipe at all comers, while their low field-tents were hidden from view. A spring in the bottom of the hollow furnished water, which flowed away through underground channels.

The horsemen were encamped under the lee of an overhanging cliff, near the edge of the plateau. Their resting-place could be approached only by a narrow trail at either end, over which one must ride in single file, and then in full view of the warriors. On the lip of the cliff, which could be scaled on the other side only by hard climbing, sat three sentries, watching over the plain.

Down below them, over the edge of the plateau, the raiders could look upon a barren expanse of varicolored rock, devoid of vegetation. The distant surface of this tortured landscape was creased in innumerable folds, among which the cones of extinct volcanoes, cup-like at their tops, protruded. The watchers could see birds of prey floating on the air below them, rising by quick flaps of their wings, and soaring, on the lookout for small prey, in wide circles.

The older men and leaders squatted in a small circle, and Ali the Jackal, owing to his favor with Moha U Moha, sat on his haunches with them. He was now clad in a long white jellaba with a capacious hood, had let his beard grow, and appeared little different from the fairer of his comrades.

"We will lead our horses up there in the night," said Moha U Moha, "so that they will be fresh in the morning. Let each man give his horse a half-basket of barley at sundown. In the morning, as soon as it is light enough to see, we will ride down on them, stirrup to stirrup, and shoot over the wall. Then we will wheel and scatter, collect again, and charge

once more. They will not be ready for us. It has worked before. It will work this time."

At this point Ali the Jackal spoke up. "I know, Moha U Moha, that you have a low opinion of my riding. It is not very good, even yet. But if you attack the square as you said, they can shoot straight into a solid wall of horses and men. If they have machine-guns, as they probably have, they will mow down dozens. By the time you get ready for your second rush, they will be ready for you and will slaughter many.

"I have seen warfare in France, and also know the manner of the Riffians. Let me have ten men. We will crawl up in the night and build low walls of rock overlooking the camp, all around it. When the first ray of light comes, we will start sniping at them, and they will not be able to dislodge us. If they make a sally, you can rush them, and if they do not, we will be safe until night, when we can crawl back for more ammunition. If we hem them in their square, they can never get out. They have water, but their food will not last forever. In a week or two, when their ammunition is low, you can rush them. If there are low places in the wall, the horses can leap it. You can finish them off completely, and they won't come up here again, at least for a long while."

"We have always fought by swift charges on horseback," said Moha U Moha, "and have never been beaten. Besides, if we wait too long, another column will come to relieve them."

"You can see a relieving column a day before it reaches them," said Ali the Jackal. "When you see it coming, then you can charge. If they had flint-locks, it would be all right to charge them at once, but that way will not work against machine-guns and repeating rifles. Let me have ten men, and try my plan. The French are expecting you to rush them. They have fought you before, and know your way of fighting. Don't think that they aren't expecting it. If we snipe at them from shelter, that will surprise them, and the chances are that they are not prepared for a long siege."

"You are a good schoolmaster—" began the chieftain.

"Let him try it," interrupted one of the leaders, whose beard was flecked with gray. "He is right. Machine-guns would cut down half of us, and ruin many of our horses. I will go with him, and the men of my family, if you say the word."

Moha U Moha tugged at his red beard with short, muscular fingers. He was not used to having his decisions challenged in council. He wrinkled his brow and set his jaw, so that the edges of his lower teeth stood in front of the upper ones.

"Good," he said, biting the words off short as he spoke them. "We will try it once. But if he fails, God and all his saints help the schoolmaster!"

Ali the Jackal had asked for ten men, but he was given twenty. About midnight, after a hearty meal, they set out, on foot, for the camp was not far distant. Their scrips were full of parched grain, and

about their belts hung small kidskins of water. Their shoulders were heavy with full cartridge-belts, and some of the men carried more ammunition in small woolen bags.

The thinly pared crescent of the new moon gave little light, but enough for the raiders to work by. They crawled on hands and knees once they were within shouting distance of the camp. Ali the Jackal, peering over a low, rocky hill, could see the rough square of rock outlined before him. The level of his eyes was slightly higher than the surface of the wall.

He picked up loose stones and set them down gently in a row. The men with him handed him other stones, and he arranged them in an open semicircle. He held them by the lower edges so that his fingers would strike first, and there would be no noise. Leaving three men in this redoubt, he crawled on, followed by the others. Coming to a pockmark in the surface of the plateau, the depth of a man's waist, he crawled into it, and built another low wall. The plain was covered with loose blocks of limestone, and the men did not have to crawl far to reach them.

After the second position had been fortified he allowed the men who had helped him to erect others. It would soon be light now, and he would not have time to set up all the nests himself. He gave whispered warnings against noise, and crawled back to the first shelter on the low hill.

After the moon had set, what little light there was

faded into utter darkness. The stars, partly hidden by a thin veil of cloud which had risen from the west, shone too dimly to be of any use. The hollow was a sea of blackness, and the raiders finished their defenses by sense of touch alone. It was evident that the French had heard nothing, for no noise came from the camp, and no shot had been fired.

The redoubt to which Ali the Jackal returned had been finished early by the three men whom he had left in it, and he lay there on his side, his rifle resting in a gap between two stones. Blood throbbed in his temples, and he felt a tingling in the thin place on the side of his head. He unwound his turban and wrapped it anew in such a way that the thin place was well covered. It was chilly on the rocks, although the low wall broke the wind. Passing one hand over the opposite wrist, he felt the skin puckered into goose flesh.

A faint glow rose along the flat line of the horizon to the east, and this grew until the surface of the plateau was suffused with pink, reflected from the sky. The darkness in the hollow became thinner; and the faint outline of the defending wall and the peaks of the low tents were visible. Ali the Jackal strained his eyes, and scanned the upper surface of the wall. At regular intervals he could see niches, and in them the muzzles of rifles. As the light grew stronger he could make out the stiff brims of caps.

"It is the Legion," he whispered to the man nearest him.

The wall was completely manned. It was evident

that the enemy expected a cavalry charge such as Moha U Moha had planned.

Ali the Jackal drew a bead on the brim of one of the caps. The distance was not great, but he raised his barrel slightly, for he knew that Mausers do not carry far. "If only I had that rifle they gave me in France," he said to himself. The three with him likewise chose their targets, and, when he saw that all were ready, Ali the Jackal fired. A volley answered from all sides, and so close together did the shots come that single reports could not be distinguished.

Ali the Jackal smiled with satisfaction. He saw the rifle fall from the breach at which he had aimed, and the stiff brim was no longer visible. Other rifles sagged, and a few clattered out upon the stony ground.

"That accounts for eleven men," whispered the man lying close to Ali the Jackal.

"Never mind, keep firing."

Clip after clip entered the breeches of the Mausers, and the clicking of bolts between shots was rapid. Heads replaced others which had fallen behind the wall, and the return fire was scattered, for the defenders had not located all of the raiders' positions. Ali the Jackal looked to the east, and saw the whole disk of the sun perched on the lip of the horizon.

"Take it easy now," he whispered, "or your barrels will get too hot, and we may have to wait when we don't want to."

The morning wore on. Ali the Jackal and the

two men with him aimed at the peaks of the tents, and fired at random into them. They could see no men excepting those at the walls. No one could be standing up in the camp; all must be crawling as they moved from one place to another. It was evident that the Christians had lost many, so frequently were the defenders replaced at the wall.

"This cannot last many days," whispered Ali the Jackal.

The men ate sparingly of their parched grain as they fought, but did not touch the water. Toward noon, as Ali the Jackal was thrusting a hand into his scrip for a fistful of barley, he heard a slight grating noise behind him, and turned quickly, wrenching his gun out of its notch. A dirty white turban appeared over the crest of the rise, and a familiar voice said, "Don't shoot at me. The Christians are in front of you."

A pair of greenish eyes appeared, and a red beard. Moha U Moha crawled into the shelter, dragging his gun at his side.

"Let me take a shot at them," he whispered.

Ali the Jackal made room for him and thrust his gun into a narrow crack which had not been used. The chieftain made use of Ali the Jackal's niche, and fired several rounds with great deliberation. Turning his head, he laid a hand on the Riffian's arm, and smiled.

"Don't crow at me, you schoolmaster," he said.

"It works," replied Ali the Jackal. "That is all that needs saying."

"It works here, this time," said Moha U Moha; "but I have not given up horse attacks forever."

Toward the hour of mid-afternoon prayer Moha U Moha drew his gun out of the niche, and made ready to leave the redoubt.

"The horses are back there, behind a long ledge," he whispered. "When dusk comes, we will charge them. Keep up a steady fire to cover us."

"If they bring out a machine-gun, you will be mowed down," said Ali the Jackal.

"They haven't used one yet," answered Moha U Moha.

"No. They are saving it for your charge. They know that if they used it against us, you might not rush them."

"Have you seen one?"

"No, but I am sure that they wouldn't come up here without any."

"If we don't charge," said Moha U Moha, "this siege will last too long, and a relief column will be sent."

"If they hear nothing from these men, they will think you wiped them out in a surprise attack. The idea of a siege which might need relieving would never occur to them."

By the time Ali the Jackal had finished this speech, Moha U Moha had crawled out of the sniping nest, and only the top of his turban could be seen by those in it.

The steady rattle of musketry continued through the afternoon. The besieged, seeing that they could

not easily squelch the redoubts, spared their fire, and shot only when they thought they saw good targets. As far as Ali the Jackal could determine from where they watched, only one of the attackers had been killed, and he by a bullet through the eye. None had been seriously wounded.

The sun had finished its course through the sky and was sinking rapidly over the edge of the plateau. The clouds to the west were lighted as if from within, and floated slowly across a sea of orange. The shadows of the eastern wall of the fort reached out far upon the stony ground beyond it.

With the approach of night the firing increased in rapidity, for the besiegers knew that with darkness they could creep back and secure more ammunition. The defenders returned the fire briskly.

Suddenly a wild yell shattered the air, and rose above the detonations of rifle fire. Around the base of the low mound on which Ali the Jackal was perched burst a close-ranked cavalcade, galloping wildly, the horses' heads arched in the air and their manes flying. The riders, standing in their stirrups, clutched their bridle reins up to their trigger guards, and their long ghostlike silhams flapped as they dashed forward, firing.

The men in the low rock shelters discharged their rifles as fast as they could load and pull their triggers. As the dense horde rushed onward, the besiegers turned their fire toward the flanks of the wall, to avoid hitting their own men. On the horsemen galloped, with a great clatter of hooves; and the red

beard of Moha U Moha could be seen bristling out stiffly in the middle of the line.

Suddenly Ali the Jackal, who could scarcely keep his eyes on the wall for the splendor of the sight before it, saw a thick cylinder raised by four hands to a gap in the centre of the wall. He sighted quickly, on the top of a cap behind it, and fired. The machine-gun, which had at that moment begun spattering, was silent. Another cap appeared, and the dull vibration began once more. He shot again, and again the sound ceased. The cylinder tilted upward at the end.

The horsemen dashed on toward the rampart, without opening the solid wall of hooves, for as soon as a man fell or a horse stumbled, the ranks closed about the hole. Several riderless horses, which could not be thrust back, galloped in the midst of the others, their bridles hanging.

At the very lip of the wall the horsemen leaned forward in their saddles and fired over the crest of the rock, aiming low at the heads of the defenders. With a great cry they wheeled, and scattered.

One man, however, in the very middle of the line, next to Moha U Moha, pulled so mightily on his bridle that his horse reared over the wall, and its front hooves pawed the air directly over the machine-gun. Fresh hands tilted this farther upward, and a stream of lead poured into the horse's breast. The rider, drawing his knife and dropping his gun, leaped from the saddle and disappeared behind the wall. The men in the redoubts could see the end of the

cylinder tip downward; the machine-gun rose, butt foremost, and tumbled off the lip of the wall. It lay on the ground three feet from the base of the rampart. In a few moments the body of the horseman was thrown out after it.

After the charge wounded men crawled frantically across the stones, but most of them were hit before they reached the shelter of the sniping boxes. Wounded horses writhed on the ground, their legs beating the air, letting out shrill neighs and whinnies. One of the wounded, dragging a punctured leg behind him, reached the redoubt on the hill, and Ali the Jackal thrust head and shoulders over to haul him in. Bullets whizzed around his face, and flattened themselves on the stones. A hot spat of lead ricocheted, and burned a small patch of skin on his jaw. He could smell the tart odor of his beard sizzling, and his teeth ached from the impact.

When darkness had fallen, he crawled down from the redoubt with the wounded man, and joined Moha U Moha behind his ledge. There a fire of twigs crackled, and in its light could be seen the limp forms of the wounded. Horsemen, stripped of their white cloaks, were crawling back and forth, bringing in the dead and those who still breathed. Two men, whose knives, hastily thrust into their belts, dripped with blood, hauled in the machine-gun. At the sight of it Moha U Moha's face gleamed with delight.

"There it is," he said to Ali the Jackal. "You were right; but now it is finished."

The next day the siege continued, and the faces

which peered through the niches looked haggard and anxious. The defenders relieved those who fell more slowly, and often single loopholes would rest for hours unguarded.

On the third day the firing within the wall became slower. It was hot and sultry, and at noon Moha U Moha and his men charged once more, and this time some of the horses leaped the wall. The riders of others dismounted and climbed over the top. Although many were killed who did this, others followed them; until soon knives were drawn and the Legionaries were forced to defend themselves at close quarters. The snipers crawled out of their redoubts, and rushed on the fort from all sides, whooping and yelling. The battle inside the walls lasted less than an hour.

The raiders rode home with many horses loaded with rifles and one machine-gun, for which they had found much ammunition. Ali the Jackal took especial charge of this, and soon puzzled out its mechanism.

Part Five

A PROMISE KEPT

XIX

THE CHAPTER OF THE COW

For several years Ali the Jackal lived with the Beni Mguild. He became devoted to Moha U Moha, and his master to him, especially since the day the French were routed on the plateau. Ali the Jackal had a tent of his own in which he instructed the children of the encampment in praying, and loud were the exhortations which rose to heaven through the opening of his pavilion. Doing no work, either of farming or of herding, he was supported by each family in turn, and his tent was well supplied with mutton and with milk and with baskets of barley. A turban of whitest and finest wool surmounted his head and warmed the thin spot of his skull where the Arab horseman had sliced it, and his long limbs were covered with the warmest of silhams and jellabas.

Although he tried to influence them in burial customs, his advice was wasted. Still they laid their dead in the earth, heads north and feet south — a scandal to good Moslems, who face their corpses toward Mekka. They were tardy in circumcision, although he became adept at scissor work and the manipulation of goat droppings. Many came to him who were almost grown men, and wished to be made

true believers before the time of their marriage. "A scandal," said Ali the Jackal; for in the Rif children are circumcised during the healing chillness of their first winter.

Being scribe, and the only literate man in the encampment, he was privy to those plans which came through in writing, but many, not destined for his ears, were brought to Moha U Moha by word of mouth. Ali's beard had grown down to his collar-bones, and he was beginning to fancy himself an old man, and still without children, — although it was often said as a joke that the number of blonds had strangely increased among his neighbors. Slowly news filtered through to him that the Riffians were at war with France. It was a serious war, and a man named Abd el Krim had risen as their leader. For some time, his people had been fighting the Spaniards — but that, he knew, was of no consequence, and could hardly affect the Vale of Iherrushen, to which he still hoped some day to return.

But now that the French were involved, his old obsession flared up anew — he must visit the home of his father, and of the strange clan in whose exile he had been reared; Mimun the scarred and wrinkled and twisted, Hamid the sleek and suave, and his cousin Moh Umzien, tall as a reed, serious and learned in council. Si Alush the schoolmaster, too, the gentle setter of bones who could in battle become the fiercest of them all, rose before his mind, with his thin gray beard and the tender look in his eyes. Ali the Jackal

had seen him on his visits to Fez. Now he longed once more to be with these people.

Moha U Moha observed the change that came over Ali the Jackal. He watched him slyly, and set young men to guard him, while appearing only to seek his company, but Ali the Jackal was not deceived. When at times he arose in the night to relieve himself, he was aware of eyes watching and of feet creeping after him. When the clan was on the move, he was not permitted to lag behind, nor to wander off on any sidetrack.

Once he had heard the first news of fighting in the Rif, no more was allowed to reach him. Moha U Moha, when asked directly about it, said time after time: "It is a small thing and will soon be over, if it is n't finished already."

Months after this, the nomads drove their sheep down from their high valley, — which could pasture thirty thousand heavy-fleeced ewes and rams, — and moved to the barer ground east of the mountains, near the banks of the Muluya River. Here grass was short and sparse, and the flocks must be kept constantly moving; yet no snow fell, and the sheep would not grow too thin before spring would come and the snow melt in the mountains.

Moha U Moha had set up his tents on the edge of a small oasis inhabited by sedentary people. There were date trees there, and, curiously enough, apples and pears grew there also. The nomads traded with the house dwellers for what things they needed, and

if the sedentary folk should object it would go ill with them. The kaid of the oasis lived in a long house built of mud, and professed a great friendship for Moha U Moha.

Ali the Jackal's tent, with a white flag tied at its saddle, had been set near a date tree on the edge of the oasis. Here his students gathered, with flat slabs of wood on which they were taught to write with brushes dipped in ink made of burnt goat-horn, and here they recited the Koran loudly, in many voices.

One morning after his students had appeared Ali the Jackal bade them to recite the Koran as far as they could go, that those who knew more than the others might continue alone while their teacher instructed the delinquent ones. It was a frosty morning, and the breaths of the boys rose from their mouths in thin, white clouds as they intoned the sing-song verses.

Ali the Jackal looked out through the broad, triangular gap at the front of his tent. There was little life in the encampment. All of the men were out with the sheep, except Moha U Moha. He could see the white blurs of the separate flocks, with taller splotches of white indicating the shepherds. Most of them were quite distant, but in the clear, winter air of the flat country one could see far.

Moha U Moha was resting in his tent, because he had been out all night rounding up two horses which had broken loose from the stake line and strayed. "If it weren't for me," thought Ali the Jackal bitterly, "he would be out with the others. He is

afraid that if he leaves me alone I will travel northward."

The students finished the *Fatiha,* or opening chapter of the Koran, without failure, for indeed it is a short one and much used for prayer. Then they started on the second, the Chapter of the Cow, which is the longest in the Book.

"In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. *Alif, Lam, Mim.* This book has no doubt in it; it is for the cautious ones, those who believe in what is hidden, and who keep the hours of prayer, and who, from that with which we have provided them, give forth alms; those who believe in what has been set down before thee, and which was also set before thee earlier, and in the life afterward they are confident . . ."

Over the high-pitched voices of the students Ali the Jackal heard a distant rumbling, and peered out the door of his tent. Down the valley he saw a cloud of dust rising into the clear, sharp air, and an automobile running at the head of it, in the direction of the village.

Some of the boys stopped chanting, and crawled over their schoolmaster's legs to look. Ali the Jackal seized his switch and brandished it aloft, crying: "Get back! Finish the Chapter of the Cow. Do not let an automobile interrupt the Koran; there is no mention of such a thing in it!"

The automobile drew nearer. Ali the Jackal knew that the French, having found the Middle Atlas impregnable, had set up posts on the southern side, on

the edge of the desert, and that these posts were reached by following the flat, arid land along the river. He knew that they were not in the habit of molesting those who camped there, unless they themselves were attacked; still he felt uneasy.

Passing the house of the kaid, the car clumped over the rutted ground until it reached the tents. Here it slowed down, and, with a spasmodic buckling of the brakes, halted. A cloud of dust rolled through the opening of the low tent, and the students coughed. Ali the Jackal unwound the end of his turban and held it over his nose and mouth. As he did so the cloth slipped a little toward his ears, for his scalp was smooth and newly shaved.

A French captain climbed out and stretched his legs. A lieutenant and a sergeant-major followed, while the chauffeur stood by the running board.

"Peace be upon you," said the captain in Arabic.

"And upon you the peace," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Why are you covering your face?"

Ali the Jackal made his Arabic halting and ungrammatical.

"My face? There is dust," he answered slowly.

The Frenchman sat down on the rug near Ali the Jackal, just inside the tent. The lieutenant and sergeant-major stood outside.

"What tribe is this?" asked the Frenchman. "I have not seen them here before. The last time I came through from Midelt, there were no tents. I am stationed at the Bureau. We like to know about everybody in our territory."

"We are from the mountain," said Ali the Jackal.

"What mountain?"

Ali the Jackal waved his hand toward the west.

"What tribe?"

"We are part of the Beni Mtir." Ali the Jackal knew that some of the Beni Mtir had submitted. "We have been here before, but not last year. We come only when the snow is very deep up above."

"Who is your sheikh?"

"His name is Abdullah."

"Where is he?"

"He has gone away. The kaid is in charge here. You can see him at his house."

"I don't want to see him. I know him already. You people are new."

"Ask the old commandant about us—he knows. We have been here many times."

"I am glad to know that. I have been at Midelt only two months. Before that I was on the Riffian front."

Ali the Jackal's heart pounded. The Riffian front! So it was as serious as that! Moha U Moha had kept much news from him.

"How are things there?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"We are driving them back," he said. "Our column has gone through to Bured, and we will soon cut a trail to the sea at Ajdir. Then, when they are split in two, we will finish them off."

This news came as a great blow to Ali the Jackal. How much he had missed! If he had known this earlier, he might have escaped the watchful eye of

Moha U Moha, and made his way to the Rif. He pondered a question in his mind, and finally decided to risk asking it.

"What about the tribe called Gzennaya — are they all submitted yet?"

"Most of them. There are only a few valleys left in the very north, and they probably will give in before very long. It is almost finished up there in the Rif."

"What did he say about the Gzennaya?" asked the lieutenant, in French.

"He wanted to know how much of it had submitted," answered the captain.

"That seems very suspicious. How should he know about the tribes of the Rif?"

The captain turned to Ali the Jackal and asked, "Where are all the men of this encampment?"

"Out tending sheep."

The captain beckoned to the sergeant-major. "Go to the tents and make sure there are no men about. If not, we may have an interesting time."

The sergeant-major departed, and peered in tent after tent. Ali the Jackal knew that Moha U Moha would be well hidden.

The captain turned to Ali the Jackal — who had meanwhile been thinking up answers for the questions he knew would be asked him — and inquired, "What do you know about the Gzennaya?"

"Nothing," he replied. "The old schoolmaster of this tribe was from there, and it was he who taught me the Koran."

The captain eyed the schoolmaster intently.

"You look like a Riffian yourself," he said.

Ali the Jackal laughed.

"You see all kinds in the mountains," he answered.

At this moment the sergeant-major returned to the tent, and reported, "I can find nothing but women."

The captain, who had been looking at the top of Ali the Jackal's head, ran his fingers over the newly shaven scalp, until he came to the depression where the bone was thin. As his fingers dug into it, Ali the Jackal winced and drew away.

"I thought so," said the captain, in French.

Ali the Jackal picked up his stick from the rug. His rifle, toward which his eyes turned furtively, could be seen in outline, where it lay under a rug too far for him to reach without shifting his position. Some of the students had stopped chanting. He waved the stick over their heads, and said in Braber, "When you see me leave, all chant together, 'Redbeard, O Redbeard, they are taking our schoolmaster,' over and over again. In the meanwhile, yell out anything that comes into your heads, if you can't remember how the Cow goes. Don't follow me outdoors unless I tell you to."

"Some of them are not very bright," he said in Arabic to the captain.

"What doctor fixed your head?" asked the captain. "Who put in these stitches?"

"Those stitches are Pagani's work, in Fez," declared the lieutenant in French. "No one else in Morocco

could do a piece of work like that — if it was done in Morocco."

"The old schoolmaster did it," said Ali the Jackal in answer to the captain's question. "He used a hot iron saw for the bone, sewed the skin with a carpet needle, and healed it with hot beeswax poultices."

"Sergeant, have you the handcuffs ready?" asked the captain, trying not to indicate by his tone of voice that anything of importance was about to happen.

"They are in the car; I will get them."

"Keep them in your pocket until I give the word."

The captain once more spoke in Arabic. "Would you mind stepping outside with me a moment, schoolmaster? I have something private to say to you."

"These boys would n't understand," said Ali the Jackal.

Waving his stick once more, he cried, in Braber, "All right, start in now!"

"May God be merciful to them, they are stupid," he continued in Arabic.

"Redbeard, O Redbeard, they are taking our schoolmaster! Redbeard, O Redbeard, they are taking our schoolmaster!" The chant was louder than Ali the Jackal had wished. The boys swayed from their hips in rhythm, and opened their mouths wide as they sang it, lifting their faces upward.

"What is it that they are reciting now?" asked the captain suspiciously.

"It is the Chapter of the Cow," answered Ali the

Jackal. "I told them to start over again at the beginning. Their pronunciation is frightful."

"Come out with me now," said the captain.

The three Frenchmen watched Ali the Jackal carefully as he arose and readjusted his turban. There would be no chance to reach his gun. The lieutenant had his hand over the hilt of his revolver, and the holster strap was unbuttoned. Once outside, the three drew close about Ali the Jackal.

"Hold out your wrists quietly," said the captain. "You are coming to the Bureau for questioning. I am not satisfied with your story."

"There is no doubt that he is a deserter," said the lieutenant. Thrusting his face up to Ali the Jackal's, he asked loudly, "*Sprechen Sie Deutsch?*"

"No, no," said the captain. "Save that for later. He is unquestionably a Riffian."

The captain took the handcuffs from the sergeant-major and reached for Ali the Jackal's wrists. As he did a shot rang out. The captain slumped forward. The lieutenant drew his revolver, and as he did so Ali the Jackal caught the captain's elbows. Holding the corpse to him as a shield he rushed at the lieutenant.

The sergeant and lieutenant dashed for the car, and jumped in, slamming the doors. The chauffeur was already in his seat, and the car leaped forward, with a grinding of gears. Ali could see the end of a rifle smoking, where it pierced the thorn bushes under the edge of the chieftain's tent, a few feet away.

Moha U Moha ran out of the tent, and commenced firing at the fleeing automobile. Ali the Jackal dropped the captain's body, and snatched his pistol from its holster. The two stood there shooting.

Bullets dented the rear mudguards, and a tire blew out with a bang. Suddenly the car lurched to the left, and ran on two wheels. Then it straightened, and the chauffeur could be seen lying over his wheel. The car gathered speed, then veered and crashed into the trunk of a date tree. The green fruit, small and hard, fell on the hood and top like a shower of hail.

The lieutenant and sergeant-major, both of whom had been hit, crawled out of the doors on the far side and squirmed under the chassis. Ali the Jackal and Moha U Moha dropped to the ground, and held the captain's body in front of them. From under the running board the two Frenchmen fired their pistols. Almost immediately, one ceased; and soon the other, who had run out of ammunition, was silent.

The two men behind the corpse jumped to their feet. "Come out!" cried Ali the Jackal to his students. The boys ran out of the tent; and all made for the car, which they surrounded. More than a dozen of them, lining up on one side, lifted the car by the mudguards, wheels, and running board, and tipped it over. Then they fell on the sergeant-major, who still lived, and knifed him.

"It was a hard shot," said Moha U Moha, "to hit the captain and miss you. We will have to pack up quickly now, and run for the mountains. The noise of these shots will bring our men in at once."

"It is my fault," said Ali the Jackal. "Now I have spoiled your pasturage."

"Never mind that," replied Moha U Moha. "But you will have to pay the kaid for his dates."

XX

A GLASS OF TEA

AFTER the trouble in the Muluya country Moha U Moha led his people back to the valley of the Gigo and thence, when the snow had melted, up to the lofty valley which was his summer pasture. Here Ali the Jackal set up his tent once more, and held school in it. The students were now fewer in number, for most of them spent their days following the sheep.

The words which the French captain had spoken to him rankled in his mind. The picture which they drew may have been exaggerated; but still there was probably truth in most of it. If the northernmost valleys remained unconquered, then surely his own people still survived. Beyond them, in the tribes to the north, the Spanish had surely made little headway.

Sweet years in the forest-clad mountains and in moist upland meadows, open living with a free and generous people, had softened Ali the Jackal, both in body and in ambition — or so it now seemed to him. He felt that he had done little but sit in his tent and recite formulas. Furthermore, the life of a magician, writing out charms for lovesick youths

and women, did not suit him. He wanted to live in the Vale of Iherrushen and to marry there, and to plough the terraces of his people, reaping grain in harvest time and storing up dried figs and raisins for the winter. If the French should come in, he could never remain there; but that was a chance worth taking, and he would like to do his share in keeping them out. He knew their ways, and might be of help to his kinsmen. If the worst happened, he could slip over the mountains into Spanish territory.

All in all, the time was ripe for Ali the Jackal's departure; and he laid his plans accordingly. It was late June, and, although the nights on the forest edge were cool, the sultriness of the daytime gave warning of the terrific heat of the flat lands to the north and west.

One morning, Ali the Jackal arose and stood at the entrance of his tent. Although the sun was still a red ball stenciled against the black tops of two giant cedars, the air hung heavy and still, and fine streamers of steam were already wriggling upward from the ground. Ali the Jackal felt in his scrip. There was a revolver, a fine one, which Moha U Moha had given him after the trouble on the Muluya.

The sound of hooves traveled across the glade and beat a muffled staccato on his ears. He withdrew his hand from his scrip, folded the flap over, and looked around. Mounted on one horse, and leading a second, Moha U Moha drew rein before him—his

wiry beard glistening with sweat more redly than ever.

"Good morning upon you," said the leader.

"And upon you no harm," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Mount the spare horse, and ride along with me," said Moha U Moha.

"Where are you going?"

"I have been summoned before the great chief, Moha U Hammu. Something is stirring. You had better come along."

"Have you provisions for the way?"

"My saddlebags are full of dried meat and bread."

"And no tea?"

"No, I have brought none."

"But I must have my tea. I am an old schoolmaster, and set in my ways. Wait until I go inside and fetch the things."

"Then hurry."

Ali the Jackal lowered his head and entered the tent. He reached into a small sack and drew out a folded piece of paper, which contained many green shreds of hashish, the gift of a seeker after magical aid. Very little of it was used in the mountains, and Ali the Jackal had kept it—for he had no desire to smoke it—until some other use might arise. In a few moments he came out of the tent, holding a small teapot, a box of tea, and a half cone of sugar. He stowed these carefully in the saddlebags of the led horse, and mounted.

They trotted quickly out of the glade into the shelter of the forest. It was still cool here, under

the wide-stretching arms of the great cedars, and the smell of their resin and bark was sweet. Between their high, arching roots, which writhed like struggling snakes, in the midst of dry needles and large cones, pale violets swayed gently on long, delicate stems. A hedgehog scampered out of the path and rolled himself quickly into a bristling ball at the foot of one of the trees.

The trot scattered itself into a walk, and Ali the Jackal discovered to his delight that his horse was a fast single-footer.

"I brought her along because I know you don't like to ride," said Moha U Moha over his shoulder.

"She is a good mare," answered Ali the Jackal. "It was on such as her that Our Lord Mohammed fled from Mekka unto Medina. If I ride long upon her, I will begin uttering prophecies."

They rode a while in silence. Then Ali the Jackal asked, "Where is Moha U Hammu camping?"

"On the edge of the forest on the way to Taza."

"Perhaps he wants an emissary to send to Abd el Krim?"

Moha U Moha again looked over his shoulder and surveyed Ali the Jackal with an anxious glare.

"Cast that notion out of your mind. You are our schoolmaster and scribe, and you are not going to the Rif. Moha U Hammu may use you for the length of a day; but you will be coming back to the tenting place with me."

"After all these years, am I still a captive?"

"Until you decide to stay with us of your own

accord. Why don't you take a wife, instead of sleeping with everyone else's? A man who owns sheep can make trade, but he who has none is a thief forever."

"Perhaps you are right. There are several fat ewes in the flock, and full-fleeced. We will talk about it further, when we get back."

The sun rose higher and higher until it stood almost directly overhead. Pulsating heat beat down upon the turbaned heads of the two riders, and the feathery outlines of the branches were sharply stenciled on the path beneath. They rode on in silence, plucking from time to time the sweat-soaked woolen garments from their streaming chests and backs. The massive muscles of Ali the Jackal's body were encased now in a thin layer of fat. Never had he sweated as much before. "In a few days more," he thought, "I will get rid of that."

At length they rode into a small opening in the forest, where a patch of long grass covered the ground, half in sunlight, half in shade. To the right a huge boulder leaned toward them like an overhanging wall, and in its shadow soot-blackened stones and a bed of fine ash and charcoal suggested a halt.

Moha U Moha reined in, and swung from his saddle; and Ali the Jackal followed. They cast their mounts loose to graze in the shaded portion of the grassplot, after loosening the girths of their saddles. Moha U Moha drew forth a loaf of bread, soft and newly baked, and a small kidskin full of chopped

meat, preserved in fat. Ali the Jackal set his tea kit upon the ground, and broke the dry under-branches from the nearest tree. Soon he had a fire going, and water from a skin bottle was simmering in the pot.

They ate their bread ravenously, and dipped their fingers into the kidskin to hook out scoops of meat. When they had finished, Moha U Moha tied up the neck of the small sack and laid it to one side. Ali the Jackal turned to his teapot, which was now boiling. Into it he dropped a pinch of tea and two large pieces of sugar. He reached into his scrip and drew forth a sprig of mint, and crammed this into the pot on top of the sugar. Sweet, mint-scented steam bellied out of the pot.

"It smells good," said Moha U Moha, "I am glad that you brought it."

"So am I," answered Ali the Jackal.

Handling the vessel gingerly, for it was very hot, he poured out two glasses of steaming, amber-colored liquid, and handed one to the chief. Moha U Moha raised it to his lips and drank with a noisy intake of breath.

"Your tea is always good, but it tastes better than ever to-day," said Moha U Moha.

"It is the tea-making of the Rif," replied Ali the Jackal. "Have another glass."

He filled the small glasses once more, and both drank.

"I think it needs more mint," said Ali the Jackal, with a critical expression on his face, as he tasted it.

"I find nothing wrong with it," answered Moha U Moha.

"I know better about tea. You can teach me to ride, and to fight from horseback; but there are a few things which you can learn from me — reading and writing and the making of tea."

"No man can know everything," said Moha U Moha.

"No," answered Ali the Jackal. "No man can know everything. That is the province of God."

Ali the Jackal reached into his scrip and drew forth another sprig of mint. As he placed this in the pot, he kept the little finger of his right hand closed. A tiny greenish flake fell out of the crook and fluttered to the ground. Ali the Jackal saw this when it commenced falling, and placed his left arm in front of his right. He poured two more cups of tea, and held the pot high on the second one to drain it. He handed a glass to Moha U Moha with his right hand, the little finger of which was now open.

Moha U Moha emptied his glass in a long gulp, his head thrust back and his red beard pointed toward the sky. He set his glass down, and wiped his lips on the back of a freckled hand.

"That last glass was the best," he said.

Ali the Jackal rubbed the pot on the grass to wipe the soot from its bottom before putting it away. He heard a deep yawn, and looked over his shoulder. Moha U Moha was stretching his arms, and his jaws were opened. He shook his head, and muttered:

"It is cool here, and soft underneath. We have ridden far and can afford to sleep."

"Yes," answered Ali the Jackal; "and it will do no harm to rest the horses."

"I wish," mumbled Moha U Moha, and his eyes were watering strangely, "that you would marry."

"We will talk about that when we awake," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Good, good, we will talk about that . . . later. . . ."

Moha U Moha lay on the ground. His eyes, thick-lidded and wet, were closed. Deep breathing set in; and Ali the Jackal heard the grating snore of the first night of his mountain captivity.

Arising softly, Ali the Jackal caught his single-footing mare, and transferred two loaves of bread, a bottle of water, and the kidskin of meat to her saddlebags. He tied the other horse to a tree so that it would not follow, and mounted.

"I will give him three hours," he muttered to himself; "and if that is not enough, the fault will be with me. God grant that no harm comes to him, for he has no equal."

As Ali the Jackal rode out of the glade he dared not glance back, for a heavy lump had risen in his throat.

XXI

STONES IN THE PATH

ALL afternoon Ali the Jackal rode as swiftly as he was able. When the shadows of the trees had stretched out obliquely, darkening the path, the flanks of his mare were white with sweat. He rode more cautiously now, fearing that he might stumble on the camp of Moha U Hammu, for few people knew where this wily leader kept himself, and Moha U Moha's location of it had been far from detailed. When at length he came to a forking of the path, he pulled on the bridle and halted his mare, her sides heaving. He studied the path intently in the dim light. Many hoofprints, of both horses and sheep, went to the right. To the left were few tracks, and all of them old. The broad, cloven imprints of wild boar, sunk as by a great weight, seemed more recent. Farther along, he spied a dried boar dropping cupped in the print of a horse's hoof. Ali the Jackal turned left.

Feeling safe now, he kicked the mare into greater speed, so that he might travel as far as possible while the light held. This path was narrower than the one before, and the branches of the cedars hung low over it. Often he was forced to crouch down over his pommel to avoid being swung out of his seat. He

was riding downhill, and the air grew cool and moist. The hooves of the mare sank deeper into the soft earth, and she slackened her pace. The path was now muddy, and a sucking noise was heard each time she raised a leg. Ali the Jackal dismounted, and led her ahead to a small stream. Here he unbuckled the bridle, took the bit from her mouth, and let her drink. He himself drank as much as he could hold, and filled his skin bottle with the fresh, cool water of the sunless brook.

He rode until it had grown completely dark between the trees; then dismounted, and led the horse by the bridle, feeling ahead of him in order to keep on the path. The trail was worn ankle deep, in most places, below the surface of the earth to either side, and hence he was able to go forward at a fair pace. Proceeding in this manner for several hours, he at length became aware of the trees thinning out and losing their majesty. He could make out their shapes vaguely; and when the moon burst forth from a black wall of clouds he saw that he was in a different type of country. Scrub cedars and live oak straggled across the slope he was descending, and the earth underfoot was shaly rather than soft. Behind him he could see the black mass of the forest he had left. This forest had sheltered him, on and off, for several years, and he looked long at it before mounting the mare, which was now somewhat rested.

He knew that if he should follow this trail downward he would sooner or later come upon the habitations of men; and hence, when he saw a side path to

the right which skirted the knee of the mountain, it was with relief that he bore on the neck of his mount and turned her. This trail was open, and well lighted by the moon; hence he urged her out of her fast single-foot to a trot, at which he held her until by constant slackening she made known her great weariness, and he permitted her once more to walk.

Late in the night, when his chin was beginning to nod on his chest, the distant barking of dogs brought him instantly to attention. He halted the mare, and surveyed the moonlit landscape. Ahead and below him lay a half-dozen flat-roofed houses in a cluster, and from this village arose a bedlam of yipping, interspersed with throaty bayings which revealed the presence of shepherd dogs among the pack of curs. Ali the Jackal, dismounting, led the mare hastily across country, climbing high above the settlement, and rejoining the trail far to the other side. Here he mounted again, and rode as fast as his mount would carry him.

In this fashion he traveled through the night, alternately riding and walking, guiding himself northward and eastward by the stars and by the general axis of the mountain range. When the moon had set and the first glow of pink was crawling over the broken horizon to the east, he searched for a hiding-place in which to spend the ensuing day. He was not sure whether the country he was now in belonged to the French or to Moha U Hammu; in either case, it would not be safe for him.

Leaving the trail, he wandered amid a vast tumble

of rock, searching for a cave or deep, sheltered cranny, and came at length to a crevice roofed over by a fallen block. It was dark inside, and he entered cautiously, leading his horse. The mare reared suddenly, pulling on the bridle; and he heard a noisy shuffle ahead of him. Drawing a box of matches from his scrip, he lit one—and saw lying on the floor in front of him the foot-long quill of a mountain porcupine. He patted the mare's nose to calm her, and proceeded farther. It was evident that he was now in a cave, the entrance of which the fallen block had masked.

The passage narrowed, and was just wide enough for the body of the spent horse. A strong draught of cold, wet air rushed through this corridor, and chilled his sweat-covered face and hands. Soon the air ceased blowing, and, reaching out to either side, he stretched his fingers into empty space. Lighting another match, he found himself in a vast chamber, studded with long mineral tentacles which cast back at him reflections of the feeble glow in his hand. Of the height of the roof or the depth of the chamber he could form no idea.

He heard a flapping of wings overhead and small, shrill cries; and a bat, swooping down, smote him on the cheek. Ali the Jackal made the bridle fast to a stone, which he found by groping, and, lighting another match, reached the narrow entrance of the cave. Walking down this, he soon saw the light of day filtering feebly under the roof-stone at the mouth. Climbing the wall by means of crevices and

rough knobs on the limestone, he crawled into a crack directly under the overlying slab, and, by means of his elbows, eased his body into a niche invisible from below. Drawing his revolver from his scrip he cocked it, laid it by his side, and fell asleep.

His day was spent in alternate periods of sleeping and watching from the mouth of his shelter. The country below him sloped rapidly to a plain, on which he could see fields and villages of rough-walled houses, and many flocks of sheep, so distant that he could not distinguish single animals in the slowly moving blurs of grazing beasts. He ate sparingly of his bread, and drank little water. At night, after the moon had risen, he led out the mare and tightened her girth. She was shivering, and looked ill. He knew that with such treatment she could not last long, and intended getting as much use as possible from her before taking to his feet.

The night passed like the latter part of the one that had gone before. Sometimes he was able to follow good trails for an hour or more, and at other times he was forced to lead her. Once he came to an isolated settlement of three houses and, tethering the mare above them, crawled down to an outlying haycock to steal fodder. The stack was held down by ropes, weighted at the ends with stones; as he scooped the hay out from the underside, he took care to make no noise which would alarm the dogs. They commenced barking only when he had started to leave; and he ran swiftly uphill, took off his upper silham, stuffed the hay into it, and mounted, with a

dozen yellow dogs snapping and snarling at his heels. He kicked the mare to ride off; a shot rang out from the direction of the houses; he could hear the swish of a ball over his head.

Luckily the moon held, and the sky was without clouds. When morning came he found himself in a rocky gorge, for he had climbed somewhat higher to avoid the dwellings of men. This gorge rose sheer-walled for a great distance on either side, and a well-marked trail ran down it. On the right side of the gorge several caves, barricaded with stones, gaped darkly in the rocky wall. There was shelter for him, but not for the mare. He dared not ride farther, and was unwilling to turn back. Leading the mare behind a high boulder, he tethered her to a twisted bush, and gathered branches from other bushes to build a tangled screen in front of her. When this was done he fed her on the straw from his silham, and crawled into the nearest of the caves, holding his revolver in his hand.

He had lain there for some time, trying to decide whether to remain or to seek better shelter, when he saw the figure of an old man, bent of back and long-bearded, walking up the trail from the direction in which he intended to travel. The old man paused at each large or sharp stone in the trail, reached over to pick it up, and cast it to one side. In this manner he approached Ali the Jackal very slowly, so that from his hiding-place the Riffian had ample time to study him well.

The old man would have been tall had he stood

straight, and his face was long and thin. A high-arched nose, rising over his beard, separated two narrow-lidded blue eyes, over which bushy eyebrows hung in protection. His head, long and high of forehead, showed pink where the white hair had recently been cropped from his scalp. The hands with which he gathered the stones were long-fingered and thickly calloused.

Presently he stood directly in front of Ali the Jackal, and the stones which he cast flew dangerously near. At sight of the brush shelter which concealed the mare, he stood up straight. He cast a stone at it and a grunt, followed by a whinny, came from the mass of branches. The old man walked over rapidly, pushed the shelter aside, and stood before the horse.

Clutching his revolver, Ali the Jackal leaped from the cave and ran toward the old man, who turned and looked at him in surprise.

"There is no need to shoot me," he said gently. "I will not hurt your horse. She is in need of food and care. If you don't attend to her she will soon be dead."

"What is this place?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"This is the Gorge of Chekka."

"To whom does it belong?"

The old man eyed him sadly.

"To the Sultan of Pimps, and to the French."

This speech reassured Ali the Jackal considerably, but he remained on his guard.

"And who are you, my uncle?"

"We were once a large family, and now there are left eleven women and myself. The French killed all the rest. My brothers and sons died defending those caves"—he indicated them with a sweep of his hand—"and then the French took us. They offered to make me sheikh! Sheikh of what? Better a dog of the Ait Atta[1] than Sultan under the French!"

Ali the Jackal replaced his revolver in his scrip, and kissed the old man on the forehead. Curving his arm about the aged man's shoulder, he said, "My uncle, I hold you in great honor. Forgive me for showing the pistol."

"He who has a gun is more fortunate than the man with four wives, and a thousand head of sheep."

"Why are you picking the stones out of the path?"

"I refused to be made sheikh; the world is finished. When nothing remains for a man to do, he had best turn his thoughts to helping, in some small way, the daily work of men. I am picking the stones from the path that the road may be easier for travelers such as yourself. Some day, a great army will come galloping out of the mountains; and it will be my fault if one horse stumbles."

Ali the Jackal knelt before the old man, and kissed his ankles. "Truly, my uncle," he sobbed, "you are a living saint. When you die a white tomb will be built over your bones, and I will come, with many others, to slaughter a goat at its door."

[1] The Ait Atta is a small and impoverished tribe of the Anti-Atlas which has not, at the date of writing, surrendered itself to the French.

"Get up! Get up!" exclaimed the old man. "It is growing late, and someone may approach. Take your mare by the bridle, and lead her to my house."

The two walked rapidly down the gorge until the walls grew less steep, and commenced to recede. They stood on the lip of a deep slope, and far below them, itself on an eminence, stood a city of white roofs and walls. On a plaza to the right Ali the Jackal could see miniature cannon drawn up in line, and tiny soldiers drilling.

"Not Taza?" he gasped.

"It is Taza."

Below the city lay an olive yard of dark green foliage; beyond that, a few scattered French houses, and the thin line of track which marked the railroad—the same track which, farther to the west, had borne Ali the Jackal, so long ago, to Casablanca and the sea, and to France. He raised his head slowly as he scanned the rising landscape beyond. On the rim of the northern horizon a dark, portentous-looking wall of mountain rose to a jagged fence of peaks.

"That is the Rif," said Ali the Jackal.

"Yes, the Rif. Brave men live in it, but now most have surrendered."

"Who are left?" asked Ali the Jackal anxiously, with a slight choking.

"They say that the Vale of Iherrushen, the valley of the Ikhuanen, and some of the Beni Urriaghel, to the north of them, are still free."

"Praise be unto God!" exclaimed Ali the Jackal.

"You are from there?"

"Yes; and God willing I will return before they give in."

"God willing," repeated the old man.

The two climbed along a side trail to the left until, rounding a bend, they came to a half-dozen houses perched in the side of a cliff. The old man pushed a door open, and the two entered a courtyard, with doors on two sides. An old woman stepped cautiously from one of the doors, and looked anxiously at them.

"It is a friend," said the old man. "Take his mare; comb her, water her, and feed her, and put her to rest."

Leading Ali the Jackal by the hand, he entered a dark room. When his eyes had grown accustomed to the dimness, Ali the Jackal saw that the walls were lined with the figures of women, most of them wrinkled and lacking in teeth.

"This is a friend, whom God has sent us; feed him and care for him. I will be back at nightfall, to guide him on his way."

The old man left, and the women arose one by one and kissed Ali the Jackal on the forehead.

XXII

WOODEN BOWLS

ALI THE JACKAL'S good fortune held. Again the night shone bright and clear, as he rode down the trail with the old man joggling by his side. He tried to make his guide mount; but the old man refused, saying that his day was finished, and that Ali the Jackal, with a hard ride ahead of him, should save his strength for more important deeds. The mare was fresh now, and single-footed swiftly.

The two traveled close to the walls of Taza and skirted the city to the right, under the plaza, for the camp lay on the other side. Soon they came to the olive grove, and paused in the darkness of the dense foliage.

"No Christian will bother us here," said the old man. "They think that this place is full of bandits, for sometimes Riffians come down in the night."

"Tell me, uncle, what road I must take. It is long since I saw my home, and I have forgotten the way."

"Cross the railroad tracks, to the east of the station, and head directly north into the mountain. There is a plain which it will take you many hours to cross. Keep to the right of the French road, and to the right of the village of Mestassa, which is friendly

with the enemy. After a long ride, you will come to a region of small cedars, past Kiffan; and then to Aknul, where the French keep a strong force. Keep right, up the bed of the Bu Isli, to the crest. You will see below you the Vale of Ikaroen—"

"From there on I know the way!" said Ali the Jackal. In truth he did, for he had heard his uncles Mimun and Hamid describe this country countless times. If he could not find his way now, the fault would be, he admitted inwardly, his own.

The old man stretched his arm upward toward Ali the Jackal, and the latter bent over to kiss his hand.

"Take warning from me," said the ancient guide, "and remember that it is small comfort to be alive when brave men are lying dead. Be not the last one of your family; it is sweeter to die."

The mare was eager to run. Ali the Jackal spurred her mightily with his bare heels, and she leaped ahead. "If only Moha U Moha were with me," he said to himself, "he would admit, at last, that I have learned to sit on a horse." She galloped out of the olive grove and along a stretch of open country parallel to the track. After a short time Ali the Jackal turned her head, and she made straight for the dim line of the rails, leaping over them, and clearing the ditch at the far side. Ali the Jackal let her run until she was weary of it, and eased herself through the intermediary paces to a walk. After she had gone on in this way until her sides stopped heaving, he spurred her again; and by alternate galloping and walking covered what he knew to be a great distance.

At the break of dawn he looked about him for a cave, but found none. He proceeded anxiously until finally he came to a high, rough-walled sheepfold and led the mare into it. The walls of this enclosure sheltered himself and his mount from the gaze of anyone below them. Here he spent the day, as the other days of his flight had passed, sleeping in snatches of an hour at a time, and surveying the country lest he be discovered unawares. There was water in his bottle, and he gave most of it to the mare, knowing that he could easily refill it in the Bu Isli or in mountain springs after night had fallen.

Although he had passed Aknul, he could still see it lying below him to the left. On the near side of the stream a thick grove of olive trees cast their shade, and on the far side rose a two-storied house, flat-roofed and slitted for defense. This house had been whitewashed like a mosque, and behind it straggled the outlines of a new and more pretentious building. The French were erecting a Bureau there, and a sand line of prisoners, like the very line from which he had escaped, far to the south and east, crawled rapidly up the steep rise from the river bank. There was an Algerian with his stick, whacking the backs of the men as they topped the crest; and there stood a French officer by the cement moulds, pointing with a riding crop.

Ali the Jackal gazed eagerly at the bent outlines of the men, fearing to find Moh Umzien or others of his family among them. They were too distant for

him to be certain, but he could recognize no one, and for this he was very thankful.

The day passed without further event, and at dusk Ali the Jackal saw blue-robed mokhaznis, armed with cavalry rifles, leave the post to take up positions along the sides of the valley. One headed directly for the sheepfold, and Ali the Jackal drew his revolver and saw that it was cocked and loaded. The sentry halted, however, some distance from the hiding-place, and disposed himself comfortably on the ground. Ali the Jackal saddled his horse and made her ready for departure.

Being uncertain of the moon, and impatient now that he was for the first time in his own country, he crept out of the sheepfold before it was quite dark. He did this quietly, leading the mare, and the mokhazni did not turn around. He made his way cautiously down the slope to the bank of the Shawia, forded this, and commenced mounting the watercourse of the Bu Isli, far from the stream itself and well above the only house which stood by the stream. Leaving this somewhat behind, he climbed more rapidly, tugging at the bridle as he did so. The mare slipped; a small avalanche of loose shale slid down the almost perpendicular slope above which he was leading her. He hauled her up with all his strength, and dragged her along as quickly as possible. Below him now lay a sheer drop of a hundred feet.

A gobbet of lead splashed, with a ringing noise, on a rock just ahead of him, and a loud detonation fol-

lowed. Just at that moment the moon came out. For the fraction of a second Ali the Jackal turned to look, and saw three figures crouching outside the house, their rifles leveled at him. He drew back behind the mare, and braced himself against the stony wall.

"I can keep you no longer, you have carried me well," he said to the mare. Drawing his legs in and digging his toes into her flanks, he pushed with all the strength of his back and thighs. The mare sidled, slipped, and pawed sidewise at the edge with her hooves. Down she fell in a shower of earth, and a heavy thud told of her landing. Ali the Jackal fell on his back, and quickly turned to his belly. Peering cautiously over the edge, he saw her lying there, twisted and bleeding. "Nor shall they use you either!" he cried, and crawled to where he could put a bullet through her brain.

He peered around a shelter of rock and saw his assailants approaching; then he crouched and ran as fast as he was able. Ahead lay a wilderness of rocks and a steep, tortuous trail. Without the encumbrance of the mare he was confident that no one would catch him. He climbed for hours, and, certain that he was no longer followed, turned and sat panting on a stone of convenient height.

The moon was still high, and below him he saw, over a series of smaller rises, the flat plain which he had the night before traversed. White it shone, barren and cold, and in contrast to it the tumbled heap of mountain on which he sat seemed warm and

friendly. He sat for some time nibbling a piece of bread from his scrip, part of the last remaining loaf given him by the old man whom he had met in the Gorge of Chekka.

Rising again, he felt his thighs tingle as he walked. For the first time in his long flight, he felt very weary. Perhaps it was because he was near the end of his journey, and the home which he had so long awaited lay before him, but he climbed onward, filled with an eagerness which years of expectation had kindled. After what seemed hours longer, he topped the crest, and looked down between his feet at a deep valley. This, he knew, was the Vale of Ikaroen; and he stood in silence gazing at the dark blur of the olive yard which ran the length of the stream, itself lighter and in places sparkling. Houses, built along the slopes above arable ground, stretched the length of the valley.

The old man had not said that Ikaroen still held out, hence Ali the Jackal thought it wiser to consider the valley submitted. There, far beneath him, squatting beside a large house with four roofs, was a tent — a round one, such as the French use. Outside the tent two horses were tethered.

There was no longer any question. Morning should find him halfway up the Noisy Mountain, whence all ahead of him would be free country. He descended obliquely, so that when he struck the level of the three brooks he would be above the region of houses.

Climbing downward was different from climbing

upward. It brought new muscles into play, and the old ones hung sore and flabby. Coming to a sheltered crevice lined with moss, he paused and looked at it longingly. "I will rest for a few minutes," he said to himself, and tumbled loosely into it.

When he awoke, the sun stood high overhead and was shining into his eyes, so that he turned his head quickly to avoid the glare. He looked at the shadows and judged it to be the hour of second morning prayer — about ten. He shook his head, and drew his fingers over his scalp. He stretched out his legs and rubbed them. They were stiff, but rested. Reaching into his scrip he found the rest of his bread, hard now and stale, but palatable to a hungry man. Greedily he munched it.

Peering over the lip of his shelter, he surveyed the valley below him. The olive trees, black in moonlight, now wore a rich hue of green; and the stubble in the maize terraces announced the completion of the harvest. The door of the nearest house opened and a flock of goats rushed out, with a small boy following them at a run, waving a stick. He headed his charges around and drove them to the river for water. Then he whacked them across it, and up on to the slope of the Scabhead. The house beside which the tent reposed lay farther down the valley.

"I will meet no one but goatherds," said Ali the Jackal to himself. "The men are away threshing."

He rose to his full height and stepped out of his soft resting-place. If anyone should pursue him he would make for the Noisy Mountain, and once there

would be in little danger. Besides, he doubted if those recently submitted would bother him unless some Frenchman or informant should be present.

Having crossed the three brooks near their confluence, he mounted the slope of the Noisy Mountain. Looking back from time to time, he saw no one following. Men were walking here and there about their work, and one was driving a pair of tethered mules about a stake, around and around, on a floor strewn with reaped barley. Far down, in front of the tent, he saw two men standing, one in a fez and blue cloak, and the other in French uniform. They mounted their horses and rode down the valley.

Ali the Jackal climbed higher and higher over the side of the Noisy Mountain. The blocks between which he threaded his way were large and the path steep and difficult. He was thankful that he no longer had the care of the horse, well as she had carried him.

The sun moved on past noon, and still Ali the Jackal climbed. Presently, however, he felt the slope flatten out beneath his feet, and saw the level surface of the pass ahead. He ran the last short stretch, and stood staring at the wild beauty stretched out before him. Directly ahead lay the Gorge of Tighza, a steep, tight-walled canyon, and beyond that a tangle of mountains like bony fingers clutching forward. Far ahead, like an upturned thumb, the Jebel Hamman thrust its brown nail into the sky, and even farther lay a thin veil of haze, which might be hiding the sea. Ali the Jackal stood watching in silence;

he touched his face with his hands and found his cheeks wet with tears.

On he marched, until at length he saw patches of cultivation, steep and stubbly, above him, and a house perched on a high turret of rock where only a skilled climber could reach it. On the roof of this house raisins were drying, and a small boy, clad in a ragged brown jellaba, was intently watching the newcomer from the shelter of a grape-basket.

The boy cried out in a shrill but penetrating voice, with his hands cupped over his lips, pointing down the valley. Then he disappeared, and a moment later was seen running along the steep and trackless slope, an old flintlock, longer than his own body, in his hand. Ali the Jackal watched him, fascinated by the youth's sure-footedness and dexterity. For some reason he felt no fear, although he knew that he made a fine target for sniping. The boy disappeared around one of the frequent turns in the valley, and Ali the Jackal walked forward as carelessly as possible. Rounding the bend, he saw the muzzle of the flintlock pointing directly at him, and looked down the shiny interior of a smooth-bored barrel which the sun was lighting.

Ali the Jackal held his hands widespread from his sides, and laughed.

"There is no god saving God, and Mohammed is the messenger of God. God is most great!" he recited, pronouncing the Arabic words with a strong Riffian accent.

"Don't move a step farther," cried the boy, in the language of the country; and it delighted Ali the

Jackal, who had gone so many years without once hearing it.

"I am the guest of God," he said.

"You come from Ikaroen, and from the French," said the boy, "and your clothes are foreign. You are a spy."

Ali the Jackal threw back his head and laughed.

"Did you ever hear of Abd el Mumen?" he asked.

"Perhaps."

"Did you ever hear of Malim Hamidu, the maker of rifles and knapper of flints, who brought the first water mill to the Vale of Iherrushen?"

"Perhaps."

"Did you ever hear of Amar the Scabhead, who fed the Jebally students on the rump of their own mule?"

The lips of the boy, seen around the edge of the rock, smiled.

"Perhaps," he said with a laugh.

"Or of Mimun, who shot three men on Aid el Kebir?"

The smile ended.

"Yes. I have heard of him."

"Or of Ali the Yellow-haired, who robbed the bank of the English and the palace of the Sultan of Pimps?"

The small head nodded quickly, and the boy's eyes opened wide.

"Then I am his son. I am Ali the Jackal, the cousin of Moh Umzien."

The tip of the rifle rose, and the boy stepped from behind his rock.

"Follow me, Ali the Jackal, and I will lead you to the mosque. The boys will gather eggs, almonds, and loaves of bread, and the big men will slaughter a goat."

"You people are no longer angry with the Ulad Abd el Mumen?"

"Not very, for the Christians are all around us and we must unite."

The two walked down the trail into the ever-widening valley, and houses could be seen below. A man was walking up the trail, a Mauser in his hand, and the boy shouted at him: —

"Ho, Haddu — see whom I am leading! It is Ali the Jackal, Moh Umzien's cousin!"

The man sheltered his brow with one hand, and gazed upward. He stared at the two for a moment, and ran toward them. He drew up panting, and flung both arms about Ali the Jackal, kissing him on the forehead.

"I have heard many tales of you," he said, "how you traveled to the land of the Christians and slew many of them by guile. Come down to the olive yard, down to the mosque, and you will be fed. Not every day does a man like you climb down the gorge of Tighza into Tiddest."

The boy ran ahead of them, shouting as he went, until soon he had disappeared from sight, and his piping voice grew fainter. The houses were closer together now, and terraces frequent. Soon they saw lying before them a rich grove of olive trees, set high over the bank of the stream, and beyond, a white

patch of water where the Tighza and Bayu joined forces over the pebbles to rush onward down the bed of the Nekor into the sea. To the left, high over the olive yard, a gaunt, white mosque was stenciled against the sky, and to the right stood the Rock of the Ogress, high and serene, gazing at her companion peak on the other side of the stream. On the ankles of the Ogress squatted the low mosque of Bukkeish, and from it issued a company of men clad in jellabas of black and of brown, yellow-turbaned men, with faces shaven but for short mustaches of red, brown, or yellow.

The men joined Ali the Jackal and thronged about him, smiting him on the back and laughing, and asking him facetious questions. Boys scurried about with baskets, collecting almonds from roof to roof, and raisins, and all manner of food. A man climbed the bank, dragging a fat goat by the horns, as it dug its hooves into the clay and stiffened its back. Ali the Jackal, sitting under an olive tree, looked about him at the ring of expectant faces.

"It is still daylight," he said, "and I have yet to see my home. If you will let me go I will find Moh Umzien, and will come back here later to feast with you."

While pronouncing his cousin's name he scanned the faces keenly. Several changed from jovial to serious and back again, and others were quickly turned one side.

"What's the matter?" he cried. "Is Moh Umzien dead?"

"No, no!" a chorus of voices assured him. "He is all right; there is nothing the matter with him."

"You will see him soon," an older man said.

"Stay here to-night, and you can go home in the morning. You are here for good now; there is no leaving. You will be in the Vale of Iherrushen all the rest of your life. You cannot go."

All were talking at once. Ali the Jackal could see that to leave them would be a breach of hospitality, and might create trouble. He was angry at himself that he had not entered the Vale of Iherrushen from its head; but that would have been much more difficult, in view of the position of the French. He peered longingly around the edge of the crowd toward the place where the course of the Bayu entered the pebbly bottom of Tiddest. That was where Abd el Mumen had turned to march upstream, and Ali the Jackal longed to follow without further delay in his ancestor's path.

As he looked, he saw something flicker past the wall of the bend and draw back. Then a head appeared, drew back slightly, and was followed by a body. The man looked strange, yet familiar. He approached with a fantastic gait, half leap and half shuffle. One leg was broken and twisted at the thigh, and much shorter than its mate. A long cane, held in gnarled fingers, the skin drawn white over the knuckles, yielded support.

Ali the Jackal looked up at the face. It was worn and drawn, and the short hair over it was streaked with white. The brown eyes gleamed in great joy,

and the contorted features showed a sudden pleasure masking deep-seated grief. It was Moh Umzien.

"Ali!" he cried, "Ali!" He rushed forward, flinging his staff from him and falling into his cousin's arms. Ali the Jackal held the quivering body tightly, and kissed the seared, sweat-soaked forehead. He lowered Moh Umzien gently to the ground, and seated him in a comfortable position. The men around them grew silent, and drew back in embarrassment.

Ali the Jackal felt of his cousin's leg carefully, fingering the place where it had been broken and shortened.

"They blew me up on the Wergha," panted Moh Umzien, "while we were tipping over some of their tanks."

"Not very bad," said Ali the Jackal. "You are alive, and you can still hold a gun. You don't need to walk any more, for we are in the last free place on earth. There is no place to go to, is there?"

"No, no place to go, now that you have come."

"When you have rested, we will go to our own houses," said Ali the Jackal.

A tumult of dissent arose from the crowd of Tiddest men.

"No! Stay here, both of you — you are both our guests! You can go back in the morning."

Moh Umzien looked at Ali the Jackal. The latter faced those eager to be their hosts, and said, "We will rest a while and then go on. You may come up with us, if you like, and we will entertain you, or else we will come back soon, some other time."

The men talked together for several minutes. At length the preceptor of the mosque, a tall man with a flowing white beard, addressed the cousins.

"Rest here and feed until dusk. Then you can go on to your own places."

"Good," said Ali the Jackal. "You are our friends."

The goat, transformed into cubes of meat, was stewing in a pot with onions and olive oil, and the savor rose and spread. Fresh loaves arrived, thin and sweetened, and a pot of honey and butter. The cousins ate, and summoned the more prominent of their hosts to eat with them. After several refusals, the preceptor and two sons of Bukkeish joined them.

First came the bread with its honey and butter, and then almonds and raisins, and dried figs, and last the stew, and Ali the Jackal found that he was truly hungry. When finally he and Moh Umzien had licked the grease from their fingers and washed their hands over a tin basin, and after they had drunk three cups of tea each, they arose, thanked their hosts, and departed. Ali the Jackal held his cousin under the shoulder to ease his walking, but the latter protested and threw off his hand.

"I still have one leg," he cried, "and a stick. When the other is shot from under me, then you can carry me to my hole in the earth!"

The crowd followed them to the bend, and then, falling back, left them to walk up the valley alone in the gathering mist of evening. They walked on the far side of the stream bed, for the water was

gurgling low over the pebbles, and awaited the rains of October to swell it until it should be swift and full between its banks, carrying down in its ardor small trees and clods of earth.

On either side the mountains rose steeply, and deep creases, flaky of surface and brown, had been carved by the momentary rush of torrents. Up on the sides grew low bushes of juniper, and beyond them small cedars, while the dark limbs of fir clothed the highest reaches near the crests. Moh Umzien, trying to keep Ali the Jackal from slackening his pace to suit his own crippled gait, swung and sweated onward.

"There is no hurry," said Ali the Jackal. "Remember that I have never been here before, and I want to see things slowly and well."

At this Moh Umzien lessened his exertions, and pointed out each rock in the way upward, each bush, behind which men had hidden or been killed, in the turbulent days of his childhood and of their ancestors. Ali the Jackal gazed at the valley intently in the oncoming dimness of night. The orange glow at the head of the valley had faded to a dull yellow, and the edges of the colored patch of sky were creeping nearer and nearer the horizon. The valley was less wooded than he had thought; but then many houses had been built, broken, and burnt, and built again. Much wood had been needed for shoring up irrigation ditches and leading them around rocks and across the stream.

Although a grim valley, rock-girt and steep, it

looked more real to him than the flowery, cedar-carpeted glades of the Middle Atlas. Although different from what he had fancied, it held no disappointment. Rough earth and rock, fast-tumbling water, and knotty-trunked, low-lying trees — these things suited the Ulad Abd el Mumen and the uncertain, ever-changing existence through which they had fought to remain alive.

Presently they came to the spot where the Bayu, from the left, leapt through canyon walls and flowed noisily to join the gentler water of Iherrushen. Before them stood terraces filled with the stubble of maize, and beyond a long, two-storied house, which stretched out to the left and on to the reaches of the slope behind.

"That is our grandfather's house," said Moh Umzien, pointing to it with a twisted finger. "In it two sieges have been held — the one when I was very small, before we went to Fez, and the other one after I returned. No one lives in it now, for it is cold, but to-night it shall be opened."

"Where do you live?" asked Ali the Jackal.

Moh Umzien waved his hand to the right. "Up there, in my father's house. I put a new roof on it, and it is warm and tight."

On the slope to which Moh Umzien had pointed stood a dozen smaller houses, with battered walls showing evidence of rebuilding, and new, sloping roofs.

They turned again to the house by the river, for smoke was rising from the courtyard, and twisting in

the small wind, uncertain of its upward path. A sudden eddy of air blew it downward and toward the cousins, and Ali the Jackal could smell that it was of juniper, and sweet.

"It is the last night of the Aid el Kebir," said Moh Umzien.

"What!" cried Ali the Jackal. "In my flight I have lost track of the days."

"Probably the Beni Mguild among whom you sojourned were also unaware," said Moh Umzien.

"They knew the days of feasting and of fasting only through me, and I had to keep my own count."

"Many people will want to see you to-night," said Moh Umzien. "We have opened the big house and warmed it, so that there will be more room."

The two walked through the open door of the courtyard and into a room to the left. It was low-ceiled — for a second-story chamber, used for drying fruit and for defense, had been built above it. This was the first and only two-storied house in the Vale of Iherrushen; and when Malim Hamidu had built it, the old men sitting in the mosque had shaken their beards gravely and foreseen trouble. No good, said they, would come from a change in the manner of house-building. And much evil had indeed followed, but whether from this or for other reasons remained a matter of opinion.

Two candles, set on the sills of miniature shuttered windows, cast a yellowish light upon the shiny, clay-slipped walls. In one corner a brazier burned, and from a kettle set on top of it flowed a thin ribbon

of steam. Behind the brazier, dressed in yellow cotton, squatted a woman, her face white and soft-featured and her hair little darker than her dress. She was looking toward the doorway when the two entered, for she had heard her husband's familiar shuffle from afar.

"This is Hadisha, my wife," said Moh Umzien.

Hadisha arose, smoothed out her skirt, and approached Ali the Jackal, bending slightly over. Grasping his large hand in hers, she kissed the back of it, and, walking backward to her place, again sat down.

Another form appeared in the doorway, that of a youth who had grown too fast — thin, angular, and gangling. His beardless face, sallow-skinned, bore an expression of great serenity.

"This is Mohend, the son of Si Alush the Schoolmaster," said Moh Umzien.

"Are you Ali the Jackal?" asked the boy, his mouth open in wonder.

"Yes. Where is your father? Is he still alive?"

The boy closed his mouth, and his expression changed.

"The French killed him on the Wergha."

"That is where my leg was broken," said Moh Umzien. "If Si Alush had been alive to set it, you would not see me crawling about like a scorpion today."

Others of the Ulad Abd el Mumen entered, until the sides of the room were lined with men and women, leaning against the walls. They were a pathetic lot.

Ragged, and hollow-cheeked, the dozen who had gathered to meet their kinsman seemed a pitiful vestige of the hundred or more broad men and well-filled women of Malim Hamidu's day. There was Zughdud the Skinny, who worked for Moh Umzien, and others who had formerly been of small account. Yet theirs was the only valley which the Christians had not yet taken, and the hearty ones who had died before them would have paid them honor could they have watched their survivors from afar.

They drank their tea, making loud sucking noises with their mouths, and the warmth livened them and loosened their tongues. They talked lightly of things in the valley, but with no real spirit. All were relieved when they heard a song flowing down the path outside, growing louder and louder as it approached them. It was the song of Tiguisas, telling of the slaughter of the Spaniards as they landed in boats on the sandy Ghomaran shore. Two of the men, who had borne arms in the battle, wept as they heard it.

The song died suddenly in the courtyard, and a great scuffling arose, and many whispered directions. Then eight boys entered, carrying wooden bowls, and passed these around the company. Men reached in their scrips, and brought out coins of copper and small pieces of silver. There was little money left in the valley, but the schoolboys must have their share for feasting, and the schoolmaster be paid.

When the money had been collected and poured into a small leather bag, the boys squatted in the middle of the floor and sang the song of Abd el

Krim's army, which had become the Riffian national anthem. There were many verses, in the dialects of many tribes. Some told of the slaughter of the Spaniards under Silvestre at Anual, and others of the march of the Riffians to Melilla, and the flight of the Spaniards into the sea. Others told of the exploits of men present, particularly of Moh Umzien, and thus Ali the Jackal learned for the first time that his cousin had stolen through the French lines to Algeria and brought back forty of his comrades to fight under Abd el Krim. Then he heard several verses telling of his own deeds in France, many of which were imaginary.

Ali the Jackal was very tired. Now that he had ended his journey, now that he had returned to his own people and seen his own valley, the tension of days and nights of riding, running, and hiding overcame him. The heavy meal he had eaten at Tiddest, and the stuffy heat of the room, all did their work. When Moh Umzien looked at his cousin at the end of the verses, Ali the Jackal had slumped down against the bottom of the wall, and was sleeping.

XXIII

THE THIRD FATIMA

THE next morning Ali the Jackal and Moh Umzien sat in the main room of the large house by the river, discussing things in general.

"Why is there no fighting now, if you have n't submitted?" asked Ali the Jackal.

"First a column of the Legion came through here," said Moh Umzien. "They came up the Nekor into Tiddest, and the men played a trick on them there, rolling hand grenades under the flaps of the tents. Then the soldiers ran up this valley, and those that were not killed came to my house, and invoked hospitality. I could not refuse them, and next morning led them out of the valley. Then a column came down from Bured, and we shot at them with machine-guns from the caves over the stream. Many were killed, and they turned back. Now they are waiting to see what we will do next. We cannot move in any direction, but they too are unwilling to try us again."

"How are your rifles?"

"We have plenty; but they are mostly Mausers, and most of our ammunition is for French guns. We could do with Mauser cartridges or French rifles, one

or the other; but the French guns would be better, for our Mausers are old and worn, and do not shoot very straight. A man has to get used to each gun before he can hit anything with it at a distance."

"That will be cared for later," said Ali the Jackal.

The talk went on. Finally Moh Umzien laid a hand on his cousin's leg, and said, "You are getting older now, and it is time you took a wife."

"Are there many good girls left, good workers, and strong, and pleasing to look at?"

"There are three women for every man. You can marry four, if you wish, but the trouble is with children. If you beget too many, then the French will take them, and their lives will be dull and painful until death."

"I am not worrying about that," said Ali the Jackal. "The French may take them, but they will let them go again later. The French are not the only Christians in the world, and they have their own troubles. The Germans may fight them again, and win. The English, the Americans, or any of the other Christians may become angry with the French and attack them. They may take this whole country from them."

"That would be just as bad, in all likelihood," said Moh Umzien.

"I do not think so. Under the others we would have a much better chance. They would understand us better. And at any rate, if the French have trouble elsewhere, we can rise against them, and throw them out. Also, we can cast out the Spanish, who

can do nothing alone. I am not afraid of children. I may not live to see it, but some day the Christians will be finished. As soon as we learn their ways, we can defeat them with their own weapons. The Christians are like a piece of fir wood, soggy with resin. It flares up with great light and heat, but soon dies down and its ashes grow cold. We are like oak, we burn slowly, but for a much longer time. Our coals glow dimly all night, and in the morning flame up again with a little fanning. I have waited many years for a wife to bear me children. Now that the time is come I should like to know who there is."

"It is hard to name them all," replied Moh Umzien. "There is Fettush, the daughter of Si Alush—"

"Is she sallow like her brother?"

"Somewhat."

"Then name someone else."

"There are three different Fatimas—"

"Three Fatimas! How am I to tell them apart?"

"The first one is tall, and dark of hair, and very good at weaving."

"How is her face?"

"All right. Like the rest."

"And the second?"

"She is quite fair, but a little too fat."

"Then how about the third?"

"The third one? You wouldn't want to marry her. No one else has."

"What's the matter, has she been caught with men?"

"No, not that." Moh Umzien grew slightly embarrassed.

"Then what is it?"

"Well, it is nothing she did herself. When she was born, her father had been dead over a year, and her mother had not married again. Her mother left her here, and went to Fez, where many Riffians have visited her since."

"Is that all that is wrong? What does she look like?"

"She is the best of them, in looks, and she is a good dancer. And she is very shy with men. But you would n't want her. Everyone would make fun of you."

"Don't forget," said Ali the Jackal, "that my beginnings were not very good either. I know my own father, there is no question of that. But my mother was nothing to boast about in the company of men. I have lived with the Braber, and I myself like them. They are brave, hearty people, but their minds do not work like those of Riffians. What they think is good we think is bad, and what we think is good, they think is foolish. Which of us is right lies between the hands of God to tell."

"At any rate," said Moh Umzien, "you cannot decide from my words alone. When it begins to get dusky out, you and I can sit by the bank of the river, talking. You can see them all when they come down to fill their water jugs for the night."

Ali the Jackal stood up. "I think that I will walk up the valley to its head," he said. "I should like to

look at it in daylight, and there are three villages that I have not yet seen. Also I may take a glance at the position of the French."

"I would go with you," said Moh Umzien, "only I would slow your pace."

"There is no hurry," answered Ali the Jackal, "but it is better for you to stay here. You have things to do, and the walk would tire you too much. Save your strength. I will be here with you for the rest of my life."

"That may be a dozen years, or it may be but a day," said Moh Umzien.

"However long it is, or however short, it will be a good one," answered Ali the Jackal; and he stooped to keep his head from hitting the lintel as he left.

He forded the stream where it was shallow, pulling the skirts of his jellaba up over his thighs. On the other side, he took the path that leads below the houses of Beni Tadmut, and up over the bank past the olive press. Then he walked on between high, flowering oleander bushes, until he saw the white mosque of Mukudem gleaming on the other side. It was a bright, blue day, and the sun gave forth a pleasing warmth. The earth, ploughed for the second sowing, smelled rich and sweet.

In front of him, perched on the side of a hill, stood the houses of Tarosht, appearing and disappearing as the path twisted. Rounding one of the bends, he saw a woman approach him, leading a small, red bull by a rope around its horns. The woman was neither large nor small, and her body, under the gown of yel-

low which hung almost to her ankles, seemed pleasantly filled and ripe. A broad red belt encircled her waist, and her bare arms were soft and rounded. As she came closer, Ali the Jackal could see that her hair was brown, and her eyes the color of honey.

When she drew nearer, lowering her chin on the collar of her dress, Ali the Jackal did not move from the path.

"Peace be upon you," he said.

"And upon you the peace; but let me by. I must get this bull home."

"No harm unto you. Why are you in a hurry? It is still early in the morning."

"If you don't let me by I will tell the council that you annoyed me on the path."

"I 'm not afraid of the council; but I should think that you would be afraid of the bull."

"No, he 's a gentle one. He knows me."

"What have you been doing with him?"

The girl blushed. "Freshening a cow up at Tarosht," she said.

"That is a good day's work. You must be tired. Sit down a while and rest."

"Not on the path."

"Where then?"

The girl looked up at him and kept her eyes fixed on his face. Presently she smiled, and said, "That 's for you to say."

"I have n't been here long enough to find the best places," he replied; "but how about the vineyard behind the mosque?"

"It is as good as any place," she replied, lowering her head again.

"Will you be there, at dusk?"

"Perhaps."

The girl tugged on her rope, and tried to push past him.

"What 's your name?"

"Fatima. Now let me go, or I won't be there."

"Not the third Fatima?"

"I don't know what you mean. There are many Fatimas in the valley. If I am the third in one night and a day, then you won't see me."

"That is just my way of talking," replied Ali the Jackal with a laugh. "I must know, when I go to talk with your father about the marriage price, which Fatima you are."

"My father died long ago. It is my uncle who has charge of me. I will tell you later who he is, if I like you well enough. Let me by, at once!"

"Then you are the third Fatima. Don't keep me waiting, for I don't like green grapes."

Ali the Jackal stepped aside and let the girl lead her bull past. He wandered up the valley to its head, walking very slowly, and then down again.

When dusk came, Moh Umzien sat by the river bank alone until it was quite dark, and the ground grew cold beneath him. Then he arose painfully, leaning on his cane, and hobbled into his house.

XXIV

A DESIGN LIKE LEAVES

EARLY next afternoon, Moh Umzien and Ali the Jackal were sitting on the ground in front of Moh Umzien's house. The sun beat brightly upon them; but they did not move into the shade, for Moh Umzien's blood was thin and his limbs filled with an endless chill, and Ali the Jackal wished to be with him.

"We need more rifles, to go with the ammunition you captured," said Ali the Jackal.

Moh Umzien looked at his cousin strangely.

"You got into trouble once, looking for rifles, and your father before you," he said. "We will use what we have, if they come down the valley. That will be sufficient."

The two sat in silence for some time. Ali the Jackal was chewing on the end of a piece of straw. Finally he arose, and tightened his belt.

"I am going to borrow your cow," he said.

"You can borrow anything I have without asking," replied Moh Umzien. "But what do you want her for? She is skinny, and her milk is thin."

"All the better," replied Ali the Jackal. "Don't

ask questions. Your cow will come back safely, and I with it."

Ali the Jackal entered the house, and led the cow out of her sunken pit at the end of the main room. Taking two old jellabas from the loft, he slung these over her back, and lashed a two-handled pot on one side with a rope. He cinched her under the belly. Undressing, he put on an old shirt, trousers, and a jellaba of Moh Umzien's, and a yellow turban. Thus attired, he led the cow out to where Moh Umzien was sitting.

"I think you are foolish," said the latter.

"Perhaps I am; but I can't help it," replied Ali the Jackal.

Up the valley he walked, with the cow plodding behind him. Women paused by the stream, and small boys loitered behind their goats, watching him. Up past Mukudem he walked, and crossed the brook of Argiwen below Tarosht. As he dragged the cow through Tarosht and Bisnes the dogs snapped at his heels, and he had difficulty beating them off with his stick. He was unarmed.

Higher and higher yet he climbed, until he came to the pass above Telmest, and paused to let the cow catch her breath. Ahead of him lay Temjunt in its high, broad valley, the houses scattered far apart. Beyond it, on the flat land, he knew to be Bured, the headquarters of the French. As he looked into the distance and saw the dry, craggy hills and grassless flat land, he knew that he could not reach Bured in time for his plans. Then he turned to the right, and on

top of a lofty hill saw tents and wooden shacks rising among the bushes. This was the hill of Bu Zineb. The French had an outpost there. "This," said Ali the Jackal, "is better."

It was sunset when he reached the flank of the hill, for he walked slowly. When he came to the first sentry, squatting in the shade of a bush, dusk was creeping westward over the far-flung horizon.

The sentry was an Arab. Looking past him into the camp, Ali the Jackal saw that the force was composed of Tirailleurs and men of the Foreign Legion. It was the Sixth Tirailleurs; he gazed with anxiety for familiar faces, and with great relief recognized none.

"Halt!" cried the Arab, pointing a gun at Ali the Jackal's belly.

"I do not speak Arabic," intoned Ali the Jackal slowly.

"You don't speak Arabic? You ignorant animal! You Riffians are filthy pigs!"

Ali the Jackal looked up in stupid inquiry.

"What?" he asked.

"Never mind that! You will find out soon enough! Come along!"

The Arab seized him by the shoulder, and ran his hands over his clothing for weapons. He also searched his scrip, and found nothing of importance. Jerking him along roughly, he led him to the Bureau, the cow stumbling behind. The Bureau was a tin roof surrounded on three sides by roughly thatched branches. In it an officer sat at a plank table, sipping a tall drink through a straw. The officer was

quite fat, and the handkerchief about his neck was soaked.

"Who are you?" he barked at Ali the Jackal, without taking the straw from his lips.

"He speaks only Riffian," said the sentry.

"Call the interpreter!"

The sentry shouted and soon a man appeared, in French uniform. He was a small man, with blue eyes and reddish hair. He addressed Ali in the language of the Algerian Kabyles, which is comprehensible to Riffians.

"What is your name?" the man asked.

"Ali."

"Ali what?"

"Ali the son of Ali."

"Where do you live?"

"Down there."

Ali the Jackal pointed with a thumb toward the Vale of Iherrushen.

"What are you doing with that cow?"

Ali the Jackal shrugged his shoulders, and simulated a foolish expression.

"I don't like those men down there," he said. "They won't submit, and make fun of me because I want to. I have n't done any fighting. What good does it do?"

"Why did you bring the cow?"

"She was all I had. They took everything else from me." Ali the Jackal began counting on his fingers, "Fifteen goats, ten hens, two roosters—"

"Enough! We don't care what they took from

you, you big ox! Go back with the Tirailleurs, and if you are any good we will give you a gun when we go down there to make the valley submit."

"And then what?"

"You will get your land back. Perhaps we will make you sheikh. You are stupid enough for the job."

The officer was still sipping his drink. He seemed satisfied to let the interpreter do all the business. The sentry led Ali the Jackal and his cow to a bare spot and bade him sit down. He milked his cow, amid much laughter, into the two-handled pot. When he had drunk the small quantity of milk, he failed to wipe the cream from his beard and mustaches. This caused further merriment, and he grinned vacantly.

Night came; guards were changed; and the men disposed themselves, some to drink and play cards, others to sleep. Nearest him squatted a group of five German Legionaries, playing cards by the light of a lantern. Six others lay on their sides watching them. Ali the Jackal sat just within the range of illumination. Between them and his cow they had stacked their rifles. The Germans looked at him queerly from time to time, and he knew that they were discussing him in their own language. Each time that he saw their eyes move in his direction, he made silly faces.

Presently one of them gestured to him to join them, and he arose awkwardly and walked over. One of them had brought out a bottle of anisette, and was

passing it around, cautioning each of his fellows not to drink too much. When the bottle had come back to its owner, he passed it to Ali the Jackal.

Ali the Jackal sniffed at the open neck of the bottle, and made a sour face, shaking his head. The Germans laughed. The owner of the bottle seized Ali the Jackal by the cheeks, and thrust the bottle into his mouth. Some of the fiery liquid entered his throat. He coughed, sputtered, and spat the anisette out.

"No good! No good!" he cried in Riffian, and the owner of the bottle laughed more. He was already partly drunk, and he held his stomach as he rocked back and forth in mirth. Opening his own mouth, he finished the contents of the bottle.

One by one the Legionaries lay down in the blankets and went to sleep, while Ali the Jackal watched them. Soon he too lay down, and pretended to doze. After several hours he saw a sentry come into the circle of lantern light, and shake a drunken Legionary by the shoulder.

The latter grumbled, arose, and took his rifle from the stack. Then he stumbled past the officer's tent and down the hill. Ali the Jackal listened for his footsteps, to make sure which way he had gone. When the first sentry had gone and all was silent, Ali the Jackal reached over for the lantern, lifted the glass, and blew out the flame. It was now completely dark. Not a star shone, and the moon was not in the sky. The night had grown cloudy.

Ali the Jackal crawled over to the stack of rifles,

and laid them carefully on the ground in a row. He groped about for his cow, and unlashed the two jellabas. Crawling back, he wrapped five rifles in each jellaba, and tied the two packs to the cow's back, one on either side of her bony spine. The pot he left on the ground.

Arising carefully, he led the cow around the sleeping Germans, and toward the officer's tent. As he passed it, the cow struck her hoof on a stone, which rang.

"Who is there?" came a voice from the tent, in French.

"Sentinel, changing the guard," replied Ali the Jackal.

"Get on, and don't make so much noise," grumbled the officer.

Ali the Jackal turned and climbed downhill in the direction taken by the drunken German. He walked very carefully, trying hard to make no noise. Soon he heard heavy breathing in front of him, and led the cow around the spot from which it came.

As Ali the Jackal climbed the pass over Telmest, dawn was breaking, and when he set foot on the lip of the divide, he could see the red ball of the sun rising out of the valley. A faint light, made uncertain in the thin haze of early day, suffused the narrow watercourse. There lay the houses of Telmest, slumbering, and below them, on a bend to the right, the roofs of Tarosht.

When the cow was rested, he tugged on the lead rope and guided her downward. She was heavy-

laden, yet she did not stumble. Down through Telmest he walked, and dogs barked and shutters were flung open. Turbanless heads peered out at him in wonder. Shouts arose from some — "Ho, Ali the Jackal!" followed by loud laughter.

He rounded the corner of Tarosht, and here people were out and abroad. A crowd surrounded him, jesting and laughing. "Here are our guns!" they cried. "Walking down the valley on the back of a cow! Truly the old days have returned! Ho, Ali the Jackal!"

He waded the brook of Argiwen, and the cow's hooves sank deep in the loose sand at the crossing. On the other side he saw a familiar yellow dress, and a smiling face. Behind marched the bull.

"How is the third Fatima?" he questioned.

The girl laughed, and said, "With your cow and my bull, we will raise a large herd — but not if you break her back with rifles."

"Spare your bull too," said Ali the Jackal.

He passed by the gleaming white mosque of Mukudem, which stood on the other side; and a company of old men arose as they saw him. One of them fired off a flintlock, and the dogs up and down the valley began barking. Down he came, to the houses of the Beni Tadmut, and the crowd grew larger.

Then he climbed the slight rise in the path which led to Moh Umzien's house. There stood his cousin in the doorway, leaning on his stick. Tears stood in the corners of his eyes, and his wrinkled cheeks were moist.

"Ho, Ali the Jackal!" he said, laughing.

"It took me a long time — about nine or ten years," said Ali the Jackal. "My father died doing it before me. There are only ten of them; but that's better than nothing."

He untied the ropes on the cow's back; and the rifles, rolling out of their jellabas, were caught by eager hands before they touched the ground. Holding one of them up by the stock, Ali the Jackal stroked the smooth surface with his finger, saying: —

"Some day, perhaps, I will have this one inlaid in silver, in a design like leaves."