LITERATURE.


Tunisia is still a tempting theme to Africanist-tourist. Hereabouts arose the name of the Dark Continent which, according to Suidas, was originated in a phrase-played upon by a son of Dido, Zanthe, Carthage and is found in this volume (p. 43) as "Feeka," portion of a Dawar or encampment. Hence the term extended to Numidia, the African Provinces, alias Propria, alias Veni, to Mauritania and Libya; and, finally, it stands now, for the whole quarter of the globe. It also begot a fine spurious family of legends and fables connected with an apocryphal Afrika, King of Al-Yaman. But, while we can explain Ulus (Al-thak = old town) and Carthage (Kharadht — new town), the origin of more ancient Tunis; the Tunis or Tunis of Polybius, Strabo, and others, is not to be found in Numidian (Berber). Yet the Tunis Levkos (Ville blanche) of Diodorus Siculus probably originated the modern title "White Burniss of the Prophet," who, by the by, never wore a "burniss."

Tunisia is exactly what it should be, and might borrow a motto out of immortal Boden: "From all historical and scientific illustration and useful details, all political discourses — and from all sound moral reflections these pages are thoroughly free." One author is an antiquary who has already printed professional papers upon Tunisia; and the other is a globe-trotter who loves to term himself — in his last letter to me he proposed voyage round South America between January and June. The two friends distinctly perceived the require-ment of the age — a copiously illustrated narrative, like Cameron's most valuable Across Africa, showing to the eye the sense of the most striking features of sundry popular tours. Their object was to produce a realistic journal, containing trustworthy information for readers and future travellers; and they described nothing they did not see. They eschewed padding, generalisations, and politics (especially the French, English, Scottish, and Egyptian Estates, and M. Roustan); and even in the illustrations they were careful to eschew fictions like the palm-trees which disfigure the pages of Bruce.

The text runs with a short sketch of Tunis, and follow the various trips by steamer, carriage and horse to Souss (Sisah), Sheitiha (Subayihu), Shibna, and Zanzur; by sea to Sfax, with an off-set to Al-Djem (Al-Jam) of the Coliseum, which is carefully described and figured in its true proportions with the main of fables for the southernmost part. The western section was via Bona, La Cala and Tabarka, with excursions inland to Bethenna and El-Kef; and the two embody the results of three tours in 1883-85. Readers will find much for curio-collifiers wherever they go, but some may be pleased with a few discursive notes upon the wanderings.

We (authors and critic) must agree to differ upon the use or misuse of the word "Arab" in the terms of Afrique, as the French term the Arabs, Moors, and Berbers of Egypt, Arabia, and Marocco. Hence the fondness of the "Arab" for his horse is no myth in Arabia; but it is among the negroes (p. 6); and the "Arab" is no more than a negro (p. 8) with his subject's in- juctions not to maltreat his beasts (p. 131); and the "Arab" does not muzzel the ox that treadeth out corn, while the Syrian Christian, the Berber, and the Algerian Mooslem do (p. 78). The disforested Sahara can recover its old fertility only by means of the extensive wells described by Ibn Khaldun in the early fifteenth century. The writers are wise in praising French civilisation, to which, like the encroachments of Russia in Central Asia, we add that the "luggage and the name of common humanity; yet it is pitiful to see that in Tunisia and else-where the mosques have not been opened with a strong hand, an innovation found so easy at holy Kayrawan. That England is "conspicuous by her absence," and has lost all influence where she was once so much respected (p. 103), is what we must expect from the growth of Liberal and Radical feeling at home. "Borghez or El-Babirah" (p. 14) is, I presume, for Lughes or Babirah, name of the valley. The "hand of Fatimah" (p. 24, with illustration on the title-page) is a peculiarly Tunisian superstition. The "hand of power," which originated in Egypt, and which is common throughout the Moslem world, has nothing to do with the lady; nor was the latter, as another tourist gravely informs us in "Chips," the mother of the Prophet. I have long ago explained the regs hung to trees (p. 36) as an old Polish practice which transfers sickness from the human to the vegetable. The following remarks of a French excursionist are commended to Europeans:

When I saw passing before my door women [of Sisah] so simple, so ingeniously natural in their quasi-nudity, I asked myself which was the less indecent, their extreme or that of the Parisian women, who exaggerate at one time and parts of their body, and at another wear tightly-fitting garments more unchaste than the nude itself." (p. 60).

The description of "native music" (p. 68, 69) is sensibly and unprejudiced: "We listened after the first shock of surprise, with delight, to their music, to determine whether the voice or the instrument afforded the greater satisfaction.

The eponymous market (p. 93) will be wholly changed by the discoveries of the Austrian Saracens, who now points the coquetas from cuttings like potatoes.

The dancing of the Tunisian ballerina, mostly Jewesses whose morals are here abominable, stands out sharply described (p. 111). Of "Kairouan," I would note that the name is an Arabic corruption of the Persian Kair-o-wan, a caravan, and was given by Al-Oekab, who, planting his lance, cried: "Here is your Kairouan," meaning entrepot, or place d'armes. "Khaouik" (p. 116), which we find in the Arabic Nights (viii. 330), is not a place but a tumulus or a shrine (p. 119), but a direction of prayer; nor is the Grand Mutfi an "archbishop as it were" (p. 121), but a chief doctor of the law while "Sidi-Selah" (p. 124) should be Sidi-Sheh — my lord, the Companions of the Prophet. There is some mistake about the Arabs conquering Subayihu "in the first year of the Hogirah." Hostilities with Western Africa began under Caliph Osman in A.H. 23 or 24; and the tale of Gregorius the Patriarch, by which he speaks of Arabs called king and his daughter, deserves repeating. After her father was killed she fell to the lot of a barbarous Badawi from Kubdi, near Al-Madinah, who placed her horse upon a camel and carried it away singing: "O maid of Yourajir, afoot thou shall fare."

"What saith the dog?" she asked; and when answered, the gallant girl threw herself from the horse and broke her neck.

The bronze cock on the Kasra monument (p. 147), which was "so near heaven that, if nature had given it a voice, it would have compelled by its morning song all the gods to rise early," is akin to more than one marvellous fowl in the Arabian Nights. We have (p. 164) an admirable description of those sunset effects which are rivalled in The Cape and in The Brazil:

"Every point of the compass seemed abased, and hill and mountain caught up the reflected peculiarities of the glorious phenomenon was that in the west the colours were the least intense."

The notices of the Khomsiyer (yug, Khroun-imer), who were found, politically, so useful and of their country (chap. xxvii) will repay readers; and the discoveries of the long lost and lately recovered quaries of the old Numidian marble, giallo antico and rose-coloured varieties (p. 194), are particularly interesting. And news from the lively Lady M. Wortley Montagu (p. 199) shows that her corset was held by the Adríanopolitans to be a vertu-gardin. Upon the snipping of the Badawi for good luck, a custom dating from Biblical days, and well known to the English
"savvy," a long note might be written for the benefit of "folklorists." I would not derive Gouletta or Goletta, port of Tunis, from "Halck al-Wad"—gullet of the valley (pp. 209, 203)—but from the corrupt Neo-Latin "Gouletta" of gola, Latin gola and French gousset.

Of the Glossary, let me observe that it matters little to the general how the traveller transliterates his Arabic, provided he keep to the same system, or no system; the Arabist will at last understand it, and the non-Arabist will not. But if he aim at correctness he ought at least to learn the alphabet; at all events, he should not spell the same word in different ways, as Djemaa in the text (p. 118) and Jemaa in the glossary, when the right reading is Jemâl. Also, it is unwise to use the mistaken French ou when we have the English o, as Zouliûa (p. 122) for Zouliûa. Mr. Ashbee forgets that he sent his (fossil) ear to be revivified; but neither M. Pascal de Gayangos (p. 4) nor I encountered such corruptions as "Oust" for "Wassit," the middle, and "Medresen" for "Madrasah." The negative bibliography is truly valuable and gives weight to the volume. The seventy-six pages begin with an introductory note enumerating the books used by the authors and naming a score as necessary for the traveller. Then comes a catalogue raisonne in which every work, important or unimportant, is mentioned with more or less of detail. This is followed by (a) notes and notices of anonymous productions; by (b) publications on the Barbary States; by (c) notices of books on Tunis; by (d) lists of maps; by (e) views and by (f) pictures. Like a certain pen, it is a boon and blessing to men; and it is worthily forwards what Prince Hassan did for Egypt and Sir R. Lambert Playfair for Algeria. Mr. Robert Brown, Y may note, promises the same for Morocco, and his work will supplant the defective sketches of M.M. Renou and De Martinière. Finally, reference is made by an index giving alphabetically the names, ancient and modern, of towns, rivers, lake, mountain, etc., mentioned in the diary.

To conclude. The great lesson of the book appears to be that Tunisia is still a mine and a museum in prose of Roman and pre-Roman (necadragile) value. It will supply epigraphs and architectural studies equally valuable to literature. Above ground much has been described and figured; but the earth has hardly been scratched, and great discoveries await the free use of spade and pick-axe. However, despite, the French "Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments" building progress; the Arabs are carrying off sculptured stones, a railway is levelling all obstructions to its line, engineers are destroying bridges, and the upper part of the Numidian mausoleum was pulled down to secure a Liby-African inscription. Before many years have elapsed the discoverer's task will, it is to be feared, be much simplified.

Richard P. Burton.

**Partial Portraits.** By Henry James. (Macmillan.)

Gosse says somewhere in the course of his Conversations, as reported by Eckerman—1

The office of criticism is thus educational in the true etymological sense of the word. It does not in the way of putting something into us than of drawing something out of us; it may give us new impressions from the outside, but it makes us ready for the impressions we have long ago received at first hand. We read Mr. Henry James's essays on two great writers whom we have lost within the last few years—Emerson and George Eliot—and in the mere general matter of the thought we find, as we might expect, that is now; but, in the manner and form of the thinking, the re-statement of the familiar, how much there is that is illuminating and instructive. When, for example, he says of Emerson that "life had never Tried, he looked at anything but the soul," or of George Eliot that "nothing is finer in her genius than the combination of her love of general truth and love of the special case," we feel, not that we have received some novel truth, but that a very important impression previously held in solution has been beautifully crystallised, and so converted into portable intellectual property. Mr. James has the happy gift of being able thus to add to our own experiences and interpreting ourselves to ourselves, not merely in an essay, a paragraph, or even in a sentence, but in a brief phrase, or, it may be, a happily-found illuminating word. When he speaks of "the high, vertical moral light" he puts into that single word a vertical "a mass of interpretative thought which might have been spread over a page without giving us any feeling of undue diffuseness. The word is, indeed, a condensed metaphor. Others have noticed the want of light and shade—"is, the want of light, he says of this—"in Emerson's writing. Mr. John Morley, expressing his sense of the deficiency in the phraseology of Puritanism, has spoken of Emerson as wanting in "the sense of sin"; he, on the other hand, has a word, which is not merely a word but a fact, having the grip which belongs to any vividly pictorial expression of a thought. We see Emerson walking in a world where the source of light and the dark is the man himself and directly above every object upon which he gazes, and how can he see or speak of shadows which are never cast? I might give other examples, for they are numerous, of a like happy use of a single word, but such use is only the most striking manifestation of that quality of compactness of expression by which Mr. James's work is so eminently distinguished. In one place he speaks of George Eliot's style as "baggy." I do not think that the epithet is quite just, for I believe it will generally be found that even in the sentences of George Eliot which at first give us an impression of undue verbal amplitude the thought has a like amplitude—it fills out the words and does not permit them really to bag. Still, it is, I submit, that the mistake, if it be one, is natural: it is not a jugement sauvage, for George Eliot's was one of those large utterances which are apt to lapse into bagginess should the thought fail to correspond with the shape it has from insensibly creases. Bagginess, is, however, the last quality which even the most superficial and insensible critic would predicate of