A CITY OF MYSTERY

Ancient Petra, In Arabia, Now In Ruins and Deserted.

LIVED IN EARLY BIBLE TIMES.

Then It Was Famous and Wealthy and a Place Where History Was Made—Its Curious Temples, Tombs and Dwellings Carved Out of Solid Rock.

The strangest city in the world is Petra, cut out of solid rock in a lonesome mountain valley in the Arabian desert. Once a rich city, it is now an abandoned ruin. It is so old that its origin is lost to history, but it was well known in early Bible times when the Edomites inhabited it, and about a century after the beginning of the Christian era it was conquered by the Romans. But a few centuries later it was abandoned by civilization, and for 1,500 years it lay forgotten by the world until the traveler Burckhardt rediscovered it in 1812.

So inaccessible is its situation, although it once lay on a trade route, that not more than fifty travelers are known to have visited it since Burckhardt's time.

No romancer ever conceived such a place. All around are barren mountains, rocky, wild and trackless. Beyond the mountains stretches the desert. A savage glen deepens into a long, narrow gorge with perpendicular walls one or two hundred feet in height. Following this ravine for two miles, the adventurous traveler suddenly finds himself at a kind of gateway in the rocks, like the entrance to a Roman amphitheater.

Here he is confronted by a temple cut in the rock, with the most exquisite Corinthian columns, and, entering the doorway, he finds himself in the heart of the hill, surrounded by subterranean architecture of the most elaborate beauty of form and workmanship. This is the so called khasneh, or treasury, supposed to have been built by the Roman emperor Hadrian, who visited Petra in the year 131 A. D. Although called a treasury, it was a temple devoted to Isis. No description of this strange building has ever excelled that given by Stephens, the first American traveler to see it:

"The whole temple, its columns, ornaments, porticoes and porches are cut out from and form a part of the solid rock, and this rock, at the foot of which the temple stands like a mere print, towers several hundred feet above, its face cut smooth to the very summit and the top remaining wild and unshapen, as nature made it. Neither the Coliseum at Rome, grand and interesting as it is, nor the ruins of the Acropolis at Athens nor the pyramids nor the mighty temples of the Nile are so often present to my memory."

But this is only an introduction to the marvels behind. The gorge opens out into a narrow valley some three miles in circumference, everywhere sunk deep beneath the inclosing mountains, and the walls of this valley are filled with the remains of other rock cut temples, tombs and dwelling places, in one place are the remains of an open air theater. Some of the structures cut in the face of the rock are several stories in height, while their architectural details excite the wondering admiration of the beholder.

Of course they gain immensely in the eyes of the surprised visitor by their situation and by the air of total abandonment which surrounds them. They are at various heights above the floor of the valley, and the uplifting of the eyes turned to study them adds to the impression of lonely majesty which they make upon them.

It is rare to meet any human being in the place. Sometimes a few Arabs are seen, but at night the voices of wolves, hyenas, owls and jackals may be heard, and occasionally one of these animals may be surprised lurking in the dark interior of an open tomb. Large venomous serpents are also sometimes met with.

It is not surprising that some visitors have applied to Petra, which has been supposed to be the Selah of the Bible, the curses uttered by the Hebrew prophets against the land of Idumea, such as these: "And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and rambles in the fortresses thereof, and it shall be a habitation for dragons and a court for owls," or, "Oh, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, that holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldst make the nest as high as the eagles I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord."—Garrett P. Serviss in New York Journal.

The House of Croy.

In France the noble family of Croy boasts of descent in direct line from Adam's third son, Seth. They say at the time of the deluge Noah took their family title deeds into the ark. At their chateau may be seen a picture of that event, wherein one of the drowning men waves a scroll above his head on which is inscribed, "Save the title deeds of the house of Croy."

No Highbrow.

Bacon—The giraffe is said to be the only animal in nature that is entirely dumb, not being able to express itself by any sound whatever. Egbert—It's just as well, for if it could speak it would talk over everybody's head.—Yonkers Statesman.

Thou wilt give thyself relief if thou deest every act of this life as if it were the last.—Mark Antony.

HE THRUST GRIEF ASIDE.

Because He Was a Journalist, With a Duty to Perform.

Apropos of journalistic enthusiasm, Mr. Arnold Bennett furnishes a humorous illustration. He was twenty and a reporter for a small paper. An election had taken place in which his paper's candidate had been defeated and a brewer had won. His editor had given him instructions that if they lost he was to make fun of the brewer, and in any case to deliver his copy by 11 o'clock next morning. Mr. Bennett says:

"I attended the declaration of the poll, and as the elated brewer made his speech of ceremony in front of the town hall I observed that his hat was stove in and askew. I fastened on that detail and went to bed in meditation upon the facetious notes which I was to write early on the morrow. In the middle of the night I was wakened up. My venerable grandfather, who lived at the other end of the town, had been taken ill and was dying. As his eldest grandson, my presence at the final scene was indispensable. I went and talked in low tones with my elders.

"Nothing domestic could be permitted to interfere with my duty as a journalist.

"'I must write those facetious comments while my grandfather is dying!' This thought filled my brain. It seemed to me to be fine, splendid. I was intensely proud of being laid under a compulsion so startlingly dramatic. Could I manufacture jokes while my grandfather expired? Certainly. I was a journalist. And never since have I been so ardently a journalist as I was that night and morning. With a sense of the theatrical, I wrote my notes at dawn. They delicately excoriated the brewer.

"The curious thing is that my grandfather survived not only that, but several other fatal attacks."

WHAT IS STYLE?

It Is Difficult to Define Because It Is So Intangible.

What makes a woman stylish? Applied to dress, style is a curiously elusive quality, either to define or to acquire.

"A stylish garment!" we say of one made in the fashion of the day. But when we ask, "What is the style of the garment?" we are inquiring for a description that may be of this year's style, or last year's, or of the last century's. A dress may be "in style" so far as its material, cut and trimming go and yet not look stylish when worn, either because it is worn by the wrong person or in the wrong way.

"A stylish woman," we say of one dressed a la mode, and yet in the next breath we describe another woman as "good style," although she is not wearing the latest fabrics or newest cut and often is not herself beautiful.

Style is not a simple quality, but a compound one. "We say style," says an old writer, "of everything in which form or matter is conceived to be, in however slight degree, expressive of taste and sentiment." And it is taste and sentiment more than a specific mode that go to the making of style in dress—that intangible something so hard to define, so seldom acquired and so much desired because it is so widely admired.

The French word chic expresses, as Americans and English use it today, a good deal of what we have in mind when we say "stylish." It implies a certain knack in the selection and manner of wearing clothes. The meaning in French includes the idea of subtlety and finesse, and it is these qualities more than the ejatant (striking) effect that are suggested by the best dressed women, so often lacking in those of expensively dressed Americans.—Good Health.

Entirely Stopped.

It was at a big boxing show in Brooklyn that at the time for beginning the third round of one of the bouts the official master of ceremonies climbed through the ropes and from the center of the ring made this statement:

"Gentlemen, I wish to announce that in the last round Harry Pierce broke his hand and is compelled to stop. He is therefore unable to continue. And so he will not fight any more tonight."—Saturday Evening Post.

The First Oyster Eater.

The gluttonous Vitellius is reported to have eaten 1,000 oysters at a sitting. "He was a very valiant man who first ventured on eating of oysters," King James was wont to declare, a sentiment echoed by the poet Gay:

The man had sure a palate covered o'er
With brass or steel that on the rocky shore
First broke the oozy oyster's pearly coat
And risked the living morsel down his throat.

She Knew.

Clergyman—It is bad to lose a husband, madam, but I am sure that as he was such a good man he is happy where he is. Widow—Oh, but I know he isn't happy! Clergyman—Why? Widow—Because he said he could never be happy without me.—Indianapolis Star.

Advice From a Philosopher.

A little wayside sermon by Brother Clio Harper:

"Cut out extravagant speech. If the undertakers got all the otherwise healthy folks who 'were just tickled to death' the cemeteries would have to be enlarged."—Atlanta Constitution.

The Geography of Efficiency.

Definition of a successful business: A small body of well dressed men entirely surrounded by stenographers.—New York Sun.

CLAIMED THE SHIP

Maro Thought He Was Eligible to Command a Cruiser.

AN OLD TIME NAVAL PRANK.

The Shabby Trick That Was Played Upon a Patriotic Greek Boilermaker by Some of Uncle Sam's Sailors With Whom He Had Shipped.

"A number of years ago the cruiser on which I was serving shipped a boilermaker while we were on the Mediterranean station," said a retired petty officer of the navy. "Our former boilermaker's time expired while we were at Gibraltar, and as he was not in good physical shape he wasn't re-enlisted, but took his discharge and returned to the United States by mail steamer. So the ship was shy a boilermaker, a very important and necessary petty officer down below in the engineer's department, and when the ship pulled into Naples harbor the chief engineer went ashore to see if he couldn't dig up a boilermaker.

"There was a clause in the enlistment regulations permitting commanding officers to ship necessary men on foreign stations in short handed emergencies. The chief engineer brought back to the ship a Greek named Charlie Maro. The man couldn't speak any English to speak of, but he was a good man at the boilermaking business, and he was duly shipped aboard of us for three years. He was a wild, hairy looking lot, Maro was, and he got a good deal of a laugh at the hands of the crew, especially the younger fellows, from the time he first came over the side.

"Maro thought that there wasn't any other country on the map except Greece, and after he got hold of enough English to make himself understood he used to take some of the young apprentice boys up into the eyes of the ship and tell them, with many gesticulations and furious words, of the different kinds of tar Greece could knock out of Turkey.

"The ship was around on the Pacific station when the war broke out between Greece and Turkey. When the news of the outbreak of the war got to Maro, our boilermaker, he nearly had heart disease and a whole lot of other sudden things from pure excitement. He just couldn't hold himself in, he looked so tickled.

"'Da Greek man willa bim, bim, bim, da Taurks man,' was Charlie Maro's way of putting it, and he didn't see that the Turk had a ghost of a show. All hands forward encouraged him in the belief. They all acquiesced in expressing the belief to Maro that Greece would simply eat Turkey up. Then a bo'sun's mate who knew how to crack the most impossible jokes with a face as solemn and wooden as an Indian's took Charlie in hand and told him some things. He told Maro that the United States was so much in sympathy with Greece in the struggle with Turkey that the navy department had decided to turn over all of the ships of the American navy to Greek commanders.

"'Here's a chance for you, Maro,' the bo'sun's mate told Maro. 'You just want to work your edge. Here you are already shipped on this cruiser, and it's dollars to doughnuts that if you ask for the command of this ship in order to take her over to Greece to mix it up with the Turks you'll get it hands down. Better try it on.'

"That idea impressed Maro a heap. He asked the bo'sun's mate whom he'd have to apply to to get command of the cruiser.

"'Why, to the commanding officer, of course,' was the reply.

Maro was tremendously important for a day or so while he let this huge idea grow within him, and he bullied the men detailed to work with him down below in the boiler room a good deal. The bo'sun's mate kept working him up to it, and finally Maro appeared on deck one morning togged out in his very best mustering suit of bluejacket clothes and went up to the officer of the deck and asked permission to see the commanding officer at the mast. The officer of the deck was rather surprised to see the man all done up in his mustering togs when all hands were at work; but, as he is obliged to do when an enlisted man requests permission to see the commanding officer, he sent word to the skipper, who soon emerged from his cabin and appeared at the stick.

"'Well, my man?' said the skipper to Maro, who stood bolt upright and saluted with a flourish.

"'Sare,' said Maro to the skipper, 'I hav-a da honor to her-a-by taka da command of-a da ship.'

"'Hey?' said the commanding officer, putting his hand to his ear and looking as if he hadn't heard aright.

"'Da ship,' repeated Maro. 'For-a da navee of-a Hellas—de Greeka navee—I hava da honor to taka da command.'

"All hands among the enlisted men were up on the to'gallant fo'c'sle taking the thing in, and they broke into a roar that you could have heard five cable lengths' distance. Maro heard it and, suspecting that his confidence had been abused, got red and flabbergasted. He suddenly bolted for the engine room hatch and made his way below, and it took three marines to drag him aft to the sick bay, where the surgeon, at the skipper's command, gave Maro a half hour's examination as to his sanity. Maro was game enough to decline to give the name of the enlisted man who had told him he was eligible for the command of the ship upon its being 'turned into the navy of Greece,' but the thrashing he gave that bo'sun's mate when he got him 'on the beach' was certainly savage."

RAVAGES OF A RIVER.

Amazing Amount of Material Washed Away by the Mississippi.

It is estimated that the rivers of the earth carry 6,500 cubic miles of water to the sea every year. If the reader can even imagine a column of water ten miles square and reaching sixty-five miles skyward he will get a fair idea of the tremendous work that the sun and the winds have to do in pumping up this water out of the sea and carrying it over the earth. Perhaps a third of this is expended on the landed area of the earth.

Imagine a falls half a mile high and as large as 10,000 Niagaras tearing away at the continents every day and wresting material from them and transporting it to the sea. This represents the work of the running waters. The Mississippi river alone carries more than a million tons of material to the gulf of Mexico every day. It would require nearly 1,700 dirt trains, such as were used at Panama, to move each day's deposits that the Mississippi brings to the gulf.

The total bulk of material removed annually from the Mississippi valley into the gulf through the Mississippi river is greater than the total amount of material removed from the Panama canal, as it stands today, by the French and the Americans. In view of this fact, the statement of General Goethals, the builder of the Panama canal, that the man who attacks the task of deepening the Mississippi river will have the biggest engineering job ever undertaken by man, indeed becomes significant.

How rapidly the Mississippi is carrying forward the task of changing the shore line of Louisiana is revealed by the fact that it is building a mile of Louisiana territory into the gulf every seventeen years. Its delta, assuming that a delta begins at the first point where a break occurs and river water escapes to the sea, is now more than 200 miles long. This territory, which has been entirely built up by the river, now contains nearly 12,000 square miles, making it equal in size to the state of Maryland. For every 1,500 pounds of water that the Mississippi carries to the sea it carries one pound of material, either solid or in solution. It carries down to the sea nearly eight times as much material as the Nile, whose alluvial burdens have enriched Egypt for thousands of years.—John Oliver La Gorce in National Geographic Magazine.

No Cause For Alarm.

Amos Drover, a young eastern preacher who was staying at a clergy house, was in the habit of retiring to his room for an hour or more each day to practice pulpit oratory. At such times he filled the house with sounds of fervor and pathos and emptied it of almost everything else. A well known bishop happened to be visiting a friend in this house one day when the budding orator was holding forth. "Gracious me!" exclaimed the bishop, starting up in assumed terror. "Pray, what might that be?" "Sit down, bishop," his friend replied. "That's only young Drover practicing what he preaches!"

Mirrors and Sunshine.

Many persons do not know that sunshine is destructive to mirrors and produces that milky appearance which cannot be got rid of. When a mirror is being washed the water should not be allowed to get close to the edges, for often it will leak under, giving a mottled effect and ruining the glass. Hand mirrors should be placed where the sun will not strike them, and the cleaning pastes that they are polished with should not be too moist, for there are often tiny spaces that will admit a liquid, and after this happens the mirror's usefulness will soon end.

Moisture in Wood.

Experts in wood technology have perfected instruments that measure the amount of moisture in wood and thus have given to lumbermen information of the utmost value to them, since it has saved them many thousands of dollars in freight charges. According to one writer 1,000 pounds of green lumber fresh from the saw and cut from green logs contains from 400 to 500 pounds of water. Nearly all fresh cut wood is at least one-third water. Some woods contain twice as much water as others.

Thoughtless.

Artist—There you are, sir. I've painted you a full line of ancestors, and I'll warrant you that no one will know they are not genuine. This is your father, that's your grandfather, this your great-grandfather and—

Mr. Newrich—Hold on! Great heavens, man, you've made my great-grandfather a much younger looking man than I am!—Puck.

TALISMAN OF THE CELTS.

Romance of the Lia Fail, a Curious Piece of Stone.

In every strongly Irish newspaper, either in America or in Ireland, there is the oft repeated threat: "Wait until we recover the Lia Fail. Then Ireland will become a republic." And the readers have asked again and again: "What is the Lia Fail? Where is it, and what is its magic power?" Those who remember the Fenian fiasco, some years ago, will recall the battlecry of the troops, "Ho, for the Lia Fail!" The recovery of this Celtic talisman, however, would involve something more than a victory over some outlying province of Great Britain, for it is a part of the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. It is a curious piece of stone, a little more than two feet long, and is said to be the identical stone on which Jacob rested his head when he had his marvelous dream. It was taken to Ireland, according to tradition, before the Christian era, and its removal from that island meant the death of liberty and independence to the Celt.

After a century of possession it was conveyed to the Ionian islands, to be used in a coronation ceremony, and was never recovered. The kings of Scotland seized and held it as their mascot. By Edward I. it was carried to London among the spoils of war when the Scottish kingdom began to totter. The son of Edward attempted to restore the stone to the Scotch, but already it had taken such hold on the superstition of the English that they feared for their country, and a mob prevented its restoration.—Exchange.

Warning Him.

"My dear, I can give you a satisfactory explanation of my delay in getting home this evening."

"You may have an explanation, Henry, but I can tell you in advance that it won't be satisfactory."—Detroit Free Press.

Might Be Worse.

Maiden Aunt (to little nephew on a visit)—You're not getting homesick, Willie? Little Boy—Oh, no, auntie. It's even duller at home.—London Opinion.

Sound Advice.

If you are in the habit of being an innocent bystander take treatment for your innocence or cease bystanding.—Judge.

Thrill of Being Wet.

There is something rudimentary and fundamental about having water splashed down upon one and getting completely and deliciously wet—not damp, not moist, but wet, wringing wet. You yourself when a child never enjoyed anything so much as your first drenching in an unforeseen and unavoidable rainstorm—the thrill of being wet, the cool drive of the water on your nose, into your sleeves and down your neck, and the joyous slush of soaked, water logged boots. Even the tedium of being rubbed with alcohol, bundled up and warned you would catch your death did not diminish the event. You voted it better than the time you fell off the boat dock; it lasted longer.—Atlantic.

Criticism Implied.

"He doesn't like my cooking," sobbed the three months bride, a tear on her long lashes. "I just know he doesn't. So there!"

"What makes you think so?" her mother asked. "Has he said he doesn't like your cooking?"

"No-no-o," stammered the bride.

"Nonsense, child. It's just your imagination. I felt there was no basis"—

"There is a basis," the bride insisted tearfully. "I had been cooking the loveliest things for him for about two weeks, and then he told me he had decided to become a raw food faddist. Bo-hoo-o-oo!"—Judge.

Dr. Johnson's Homeliness.

Samuel Johnson was himself—and this is a quality rarely found in "plain" men—under no illusion as to his personal appearance. Dr. Burney tells us that on one occasion while Miss Burney was examining his portrait he peeped over her shoulder and, with a ludicrous half laugh, exclaimed: "Ah, ha, Sam Johnson! I see thee—and an ugly dog thou art!"—London Times.

Force of Habit.

"The idea of that upstart talking back as he did to a society favorite! And they do say he was one time only a butler."

"Maybe that is why he was so quick to answer the bells."—Baltimore American.

All Alike.

The following entry appears in the "visitors' book" of a hotel in Germany: "The living here is good, plain and substantial. So is the waitress."

If you stay up nights you can't keep up daytimes.—Judge.

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