

WESTERN BARBARY:

ITS

WILD TRIBES AND SAVAGE ANIMALS.

BY

JOHN H. DRUMMOND HAY, Esq.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE journey, which forms the groundwork of this small volume, was undertaken for the purpose of procuring for Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, a barb of the purest blood from some of the breeders of horses in the region around Laraiche.

The Author, as the reader will perceive, was not so fortunate as to succeed in this object; but during the course of his expedition, short as it was, he saw such striking pictures of Arab life, and heard so many anecdotes illustrative of the peculiarities of character, customs, and manners in the various tribes, that he was tempted to commit them to writing.

Western Barbary possesses many points of interest, and has of late years been little explored by Europeans; but the Author has no intention, on the present occasion at least, to enter into any geographical or statistical details: his object in the following pages being merely to portray the character and manners of the wild tribes which inhabit this fertile but neglected country; and he has attempted to do this, not only by giving his own description of men and things, but by recording the wild and fanciful stories which were related to him by the Arab companions of his journey.

A residence of many years at Tangier, at which place his father is Her Majesty's Consul-general, enabled the Author to become perfectly familiar with the Mogrebbin dialect of the Arabic; and he passed many weeks with the rude sportsmen of the country in

their hunting expeditions into the interior. During these excursions he lived as they did, and became for the time one of their wild troop; and he thus acquired a considerable insight into their peculiarities of character.

The reader may perhaps be startled at the style, and the apparent admixture of fiction, in some of the stories given in this volume: but the Author can vouch for his having recorded with perfect accuracy and truth what was narrated to him. It would have been utterly impossible for him to have given a just idea of the feelings and tone of mind of the Moors, unless he had retained their romantic and exaggerated expressions; more especially, as with them, the most common occurrences of life are coloured with the highest tints of fancy; and every event is attributed to the direct interference either of the Supreme Being or of some tributary spirit.

In the habit also, which is universal amongst them, of relating long conversations with lions, boars, and hyænas, a Moorish sportsman scarcely considers that he is dealing in fiction; for, with him, every variety of sound which a wild animal utters is translateable into good Arabic.

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