

was half broken through. A giant stone hung imminent, half-way fallen. All day we waited for the rain to stop falling in the place "where it never fell."

Night came, and the blizzard redoubled its violence; but the shelter allowed us a little sleep until the mud dissolved, and the roof became a sieve. The rest of the night was a shower-bath.

In the morning there was no great sign of improvement. I had to kick the camel-driver into action and chase the camels with my own fair feet. He had a million excuses for not going on, all on a level. "The camels would catch cold." Good from the man who had left them all night in the rain! "They

It was better on the mountain-side. Near the top of the pass we perceived our men following, as the lesser of two evils. I was sorry, in a way; it would have been a fine adventure to worry through to Sidi Khaled with those two brutes and a daft Davie!

It was just at the top that I said, without any apparent reason, "The storm's over." My disciple did his Thomas act. There was no opening in the furious grey heaven; the wind raged and the rain poured. But I stuck to it; I had felt the first contention of the south wind in a momentary lull. And I was right—as I always am.

(If my readers want modesty, they must pay for it at separate higher rates.)

The descent of the pass was far from easy. The "road" crosses and recrosses the bed of the river as often as it can; sometimes even follows the course.

And this stream was a furious spate, slippery and dangerous for men, impassable for members of the Alpine Club, and almost impassable for camels. It was nearly nightfall before we left the gorge, and a barren plain confronted us.

It was useless to struggle on much further. The rain still poured; the desert stood six inches deep in water. The hills were a mass of snow.

(We heard afterwards that many houses had been washed away at Ouled Djellal in this unprecedented storm. Traffic was interrupted by snow on the East Algerian Railway, and the Maréchal Bugéaud was forty hours late at Marseilles, having had to beat up under the lee of the Spanish shore for shelter.)

So I picked out a good big tree by the stream, and we pitched camp.

We had little hope of lighting a fire; but there is in the desert a certain impermeable grass, and by using this as a starter we got it going. No sooner had the blaze sprung up, filling the night with golden showers, than the envious stars determined to rival the display. Every cloud disappeared as by magic. But the fire remained the popular favourite!

All night I toiled to dry myself and my clothes, refreshing the old Adam with coffee, potted pheasant, and Garibaldi biscuits at not infrequent intervals.

The morning was ecstasy. The light came over the sand, wave upon wave of grey. The desert was dry. There was no water in the stream, save in rare pools. We struck camp early.

We glanced up at the path which we had travelled; the ranges still glowed with unaccustomed snow; from the north-west the wind still struggled fitfully to assert its dominion; but we, with joy and praise in our hearts, turned our glad faces, singing, to the assurgent sun.

—ALEISTER CROWLEY



Love Among the Scorpions: A Dancing Girl of the Sahara

would slip." "They would die." "They were too hungry." From the man who hadn't brought food for them! "They were tired"—and so on. But I got the party off at last, and came in a couple of hours to a tomb with a coffin in it. There they sat down, and refused to stir. I simply took no notice. My disciple took one camel and I took the other and went off. We left them in the tomb, grouching.

Steering by map and compass, I judged a good pass through the next range of mountains, and made for it. The flat desert was standing in water; and the streams were difficult for the camels, who hate water as much as disciples do.