

**University Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdallah**  
**Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Dhar al Mahraz**

Department of English

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**Ben Haddu at the Banqueting House in Whitehall, 1682**

1681-2. 11<sup>th</sup> January. I saw the audience of the Morocco Ambassador, his retinue not numerous. He was received in the Banqueting-house, both their Majesties being present. He came up to the throne without making any sort of reverence, not bowing his head, or body. He spake by a renegado Englishman, for whose safe return there was a promise. They were all clad in the Moorish habit, cassocks of coloured cloth, or silk, with buttons and loops, over this an *alhaga*, or white woollen mantle, so large as to wrap both head and body, a sash, or small turban, naked legged and armed, but with leather socks like the Turks, rich scymitar, and large calico sleeved shirts. The Ambassador had a string of pearls oddly woven in his turban. I fancy the old Roman habit was little different as to the mantle and naked limbs. He was a handsome person, well-featured, of a wise look, subtle, and extremely civil. Their presents were lions and ostriches for their errand about a peace at Tangier. But the concourse and tumult of the people was intolerable, so as the officers could keep no order, which these strangers were astonished at at first, there being nothing so regular, exact, and performed with such silence, as is on all these public occasions of their country, and indeed over all the Turkish dominions.

***The Morocco Arabs At The Victoria Theatre.***

Leaping, vaulting, and posturing, and other dangerous exhibitions of this kind, have usurped the regular-built drama at the Victoria Theatre, where a troop of Morocco Arabs are now performing, whose feats are nightly received with shouts of surprised delight. The performers are twelve in number, "chequered in bulk 88 in brains," from maturity to boyhood: the majority are stoutly framed, but two or three are slightly made; and all have extraordinary suppleness of frame and limb. Their feats include leaps akin to flying, national dances, and evolutions of the "impossible" order. They vault over a line of twelve persons with as much facility as Gulliver cleared the bills of Lilliput; and their double summersets are apparently as easy as those of the shafts of a windmill: indeed, they resemble so many "serial machines". But, probably, their most surprising feat is that of forming a column or pyramid of four piled up, as in the engraving, the stoutest and the tallest occupying the place of the base; besides which, he bears another Arab around his waist, and one upon each shoulder, whilst the topmost figure can touch the proscenium curtain. We assure the reader that their entire performances are worthy the attention of all who woo the wonderful.

Previously to their arrival in this country, this troop performed for some time at the Cirque-Olympique, at Paris; and a French journalist observes of their pyramid feat: "They have built pyramids of stone, of granite, of marble, and I know not what; but it was reserved for our age to build pyramids of human flesh and blood. The base, as you see, consists of feet in flesh and bone, the entresol has the shoulders for its reel; and so on, the second, and the third story; the Cirque-Olympique alone arresting the height of the building."

***The Illustrated London News* June 24, 1843**

## Emily Shareefa of Wazzan *My Life Story*

“Would the marriage take place?” was a question asked by many in Tangier during the early part of the winter of 1872-73. All doubts were set at rest by a notice posted at the British Consulate—the publication of the banns, in fact. My father and mother had accompanied me from England, also my future husband’s friend and secretary, who went with me to London to obtain my parents’ consent to my marriage with the Shareef of Wazan. It was a difficult matter, and family opposition was strong on all sides. On 15<sup>th</sup> January 1873, two public notaries (natives) waited on my father at the Hotel. Most unwillingly he gave his final consent, and the contract, which I had drawn up, was accepted by the notaries on behalf of the Shareef: the only question put to me was whether my father was my representative in the present instance. I replied in the affirmative, and the deed being executed, I was now the Shareef’s wife in Mohammedan law. He was much amused when I told him that such might be the case, but I had not yet obtained a husband.

The 17<sup>th</sup> January 1873 was a lovely morning. Very early my father came into my room, and made a last appeal to me, telling me that, if I wished to retract even then, many friends were ready to help me to get on board a vessel then in the Bay, and a disguise could be easily obtained. His arguments, however, were futile; I said that I had made a promise and was quite prepared to fulfil it, let the issue be for my future happiness or otherwise. I put on my riding habit of dark blue cloth, a hat of semi-brigand shape, with a long white ostrich feather. The feather rested on my hair, which by the Shareef’s express desire was allowed to fall loose down my back and was tied with a knot of red ribbon, the Moorish national colour. The ribbon had been sent to me by my future husband. I had told him it was not customary to wear the hair dressed in that way, but I had to give way, and after all what did it matter, if I pleased him? At the door of the Hotel, a handsome chestnut horse, with three “white stockings” and a white face, awaited me, also a brand-new saddle and bridle *à l’Anglaise*, a red saddle-cloth edged with two-inch gold lace, a riding-whip mounted in silver, and a spur, gifts from the Shareef.

After receiving the congratulations of the company, my husband escorted me to the Hotel, and, leaving me to change into the costume I should wear at the wedding breakfast, went off to mosque for his devotions, as it happened to be Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath. He told me he would return in half-an-hour.

When I rode out for the first time after my marriage, people crowded round the mounting-stone to kiss my husband’s hand or garments, pushing by me to do so, whereupon the Shareef said, through his secretary, that whoever ignored me must ignore him. For thirty-seven years that remonstrance has been effective.

Who, then, was this man who has fascinated me? I used to meet him coming from town, or returning to the mountain, where I was staying with friends, and at length I learnt that it was the Grand Shareef of Wazan, but that did not convey much to me. I made a closer acquaintance at some musical soirées, which he attended. I certainly thought I liked him, he was so different from the few other Moors I had met, but the idea of marriage never crossed my mind; in fact, until he proposed, I did not realise that he contemplated doing so. Thanking him for the honour, I refused on the ground of religion, and also because although I admired him, admiration was not love—of the kind that should end in partnership for life. He gave me a month to reconsider my decision, and started for Wazan to attend the marriage of his two sons. His absence taught me that I really cared for him more than I had thought, and such being the case I made further inquiries. A Consul-General, a great friend of the Shareef’s, told me who he was and of his European predilections; how he was determined to marry a European, and had even divorced his Mohammedan wives to attain that end. I learned that the Shareef was a lineal descendant of the Prophet Mohammed—in fact in a more direct line than the reigning Sultan of Morocco, and that his social position admitted his taking a European wife, to which may be added that the Koran acknowledged such unions. It was not until I had persuaded myself that life would be impossible without him, that I made these personal inquiries, for I had no one to make them for me.