

## AT DAWN

A Poem

by **OWEN MERTON**  
 Written in Algeria  
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Only in the morning does the master repose —  
 The shepherds lead off the flocks — The women  
 milk the ewes and the goats, make coffee, and  
 the flat cakes of bread — then they grind the grain.

The arab passes his time talking to men in the tents.  
 He tells old stories, they have a fruitful imagination,  
 they have such a thirst for news that they will  
 invent it if there is none.

Many of them go in for debaucheries. They go  
 after the wives of the neighbors. If a  
 jealous husband is afraid of his neighbor  
 he shifts his camp.

When camp is struck the women fold the tents  
 and load them on the camels. The man rides  
 his horse, the women follow the camels, with  
 the flocks — the dogs keeping an eye on all.