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ABOVE RUBIES.

Shall I tell you a tale that was told to me
When the moon hung low in the west,
And the white lotus bloom in the hawthorn tree
Rifted blossoms upon my breast?
In the dusk and the hush of the twilight gray
We wandered, my lover and I,
Till we came to the tree, with its branch of May
And lingered its cool shade by.

"If a love that has lived since the years were
Were to come to you now," said he,
"And had you strayed away from your childhood's
Would you hear to trust it with me?
For I know a maiden fair, with a face like some gem
That circles your neck with their glow,
And whom your true warm love, your truest warmest
I must ever be willing you so.

"When I catch a warm gleam from your soft
I hold no more counsel than they;
For I know that your grave adores them which
As the world of the flowers that bloom
Then flash through the darkness and sunlight
of life,
Is no more than those jewels to me.
For none is more valued than they of "a wife,"
And I whispered "yes," under the tree.
—Price Pieton in Detroit Free Press.

ALI.

In the last years of the Eighth century there reigned in Bagdad the Caliph Abulfeda. Into the coffers of his predecessors the wealth of the east had been poured with a most unsparing hand, and the magnificent "City of the Enchantress" was not only the "Abode of Peace," but a splendid jewel in the Empire of the Faithful.

Of all the caliphs of this wonderful city save Almansor, its founder, no two had blessed or cursed the world with the same idea of what it was necessary that man should do to enjoy life in this world, and at death to be worthy of a place among the dark eyed damsels and beautiful youths of the gardens of Paradise.

The magnificent Almansour scattered his inestimable wealth in the greatest contrast with the miserliness and frugality of the mighty Omar; and the Haroun-el Raschid of Bagdad is vastly different from the Abbas, whose fanatic advance only the heaving waves of the Atlantic were able to hinder.

The Caliph Abulfeda had succeeded his father, whose desire to gather the gold of the then known world into Bagdad, without expending it for any purpose, had put the youthful prince to many disadvantages, and fostered in him the desire to do otherwise when he would succeed to the mantle of the prophet. Therefore when his own sons were choosing their ends or pleasures the Caliph Abulfeda was always ready to forward or indulge them.

Among the youngest of his many children was Ali. For years he had brooded over and planned on the idea of a wonderful edifice that he hoped in time to construct. Of all the magnificent structures it had been his privilege as a son of the Commander of the Faithful to see, none was in all things the perfection of which the young prince dreamed. Therefore, on the death of his father, the prince began the building of the long deferred happiness.

In time there arose on the banks of the river the most wonderful architectural dream that even that magic age and that wonderful city had produced. Yet to the prince it was unfinished; something was yet lacking to make it the abode of perfect pleasure.

One evening the prince was musing along one of the most magnificent of the curiously carved arcades of the palace when a voice called his name:

"Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda! Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda!"

The young prince glanced quickly around on all sides, but beheld no one except the silent sentinels on guard around the palace and the picturesque horsemen that, at a little distance, rode slowly back and forth as safeguards against approaching danger.

Again came the voice:

"Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda! Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda!"

Quick as a flash the prince drew the splendidly ornamented and equally splendidly tempered blade at his side and stood ready to face any opponent.

But it was unnecessary. Before him stood an old man, bowed and whitened by the sorrows and trials of many years. His dress and manner also distinguished him as belonging to some other period.

"Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda!" he began.

"I am," assented Prince Ali, scarcely knowing whether to cower up to his full height and answer with the pride he felt in his noble name, or acknowledge his inferiority before a higher power.

"I know you, I know you," answered the aged man. "I knew your honored father and your father's fathers, and"—a supernatural expression spreading over his visage—"and I stood side by side with the prophet himself in many a desperate fight with the enemies of the only true belief. But I wronged him. I did him an injustice, and therefore is my slumber in the tomb disturbed. When the Commander of the Faithful, or one of his children, has an earnest longing or desire, I, or some other who has wronged the prophet, is called from the tomb, in answer to their prayers.

"Prince Ali! son of Abulfeda! What is thy desire?"

The prince thereupon began at the birth of his hope for the possession of an architectural wonder, and related all until its completion.

"I understand! I understand!" cried the old man, slowly beckoning the prince in silence. "You have exhausted your worldly knowledge in attempting to succeed to happiness, in gratifying your desire, and have failed! Is it not so I say?"

"It is," answered the prince, "and I now yearn for something beyond the power of man to accomplish or understand."

"Do it then as you desire," answered the aged father. "Behold this staff. Ali but from whence it came, nor discover the mystery to any living man, until I return for its possession."

The prince took the staff and looked it curiously over, but nothing extraordinary occurred. Seeing his expectancy the aged man continued:

"The followers of the good man Jesus, whom the Christians believe, and the worshipers of the stars and moon, and the elements, and other works and things of the one and only God—for there is but one God, and Mahomed is his prophet—have hinges beautiful to behold, yet far from the handiwork of the creator. To us is forbidden such images. Would you fill the structure you have built with such a wonderful mystery beyond the control than or understanding of mankind?"

"I would! I would!" exclaimed the prince, delighted with the suggestion.

"The power is in your hands," answered the strange visitor, and vanished.

For several minutes the prince stood as if awakened from a dream. But not long, for just at that moment a young girl, a favorite with the prince, came on tiptoe behind him. Somebody, as the soft breeze that scarce moved the dark hair that fell unconfined over her white shoulders, she crept up, and was about to clasp her small hands over his eyes, when the prince, seeing the shadow, and startled by the strange visitor who had just left him, wheeled suddenly around, and in doing so touched the hanging girl with his staff.

As a statue of the whitest marble, she stood before him.

As the prince stood wondering at the magic power of the apparently commonplace staff, a courier approached in all haste with a message from a distant province governed by a very dear friend of Prince Ali.

The breathless messenger fell on his face before the prince, and after obtaining after the manner of the day and recovering breath enough to speak, he begged the pardon of the prince for first exacting a promise of secrecy in regard to the matter upon which he had been sent, it being his master's special order.

In his anxiety the prince raised the hand that held the staff and placed it on the shoulder of the enchanted messenger, and he, too, was marble.

As the days went by the palace filled with strange images, and the possessor of the wonderful staff began to long for the supernatural domain. The possession of his gift began to be a weight, and each image added to the palace was a weight added to the burden of its ruler. Still the longed for visitor came not.

At last, when the prince was almost driven to madness, his strange visitor again appeared. "Before he could ask a question of the descendant of the great Mahomed the staff was thrust into his hands and he was prayed by the mystery of the great leader to restore to life the silent images that, instead of adorning, cast a gloom over the palace.

"Is that not beautiful?" asked the strange visitor, pointing to the figure of the mischievous girl favorite. "Look at the grace, the smile almost bursting into laughter."

"It is beautiful, most beautiful," answered the prince, "but her laugh would be no more beautiful than Ali."

"And that!" exclaimed the aged man. "Look how natural that courier is about to relate his message."

"Most natural, most natural," sighed the prince, "but the sapphire message is locked in that marble breast."

To several others the strange visitor drew the shrinking prince, and commented on the peculiar beauty of each. But the prince could not be diverted from the melancholy that possessed him.

"Take them away! Take them away!" exclaimed the prince. "Leave my palace as it was and I will be happy, perfectly happy!"

"Be it as you say," answered the aged man, "and profit by the lesson."

There was a slight rustle in the courts of the palace, and when it passed all was as it had been; even the strange visitor himself was gone.

The palace of Prince Ali of Bagdad stood for ages as it was erected, except this inscription over the main entrance:

ALI, SON OF ABULFEDA, TO THE PRINCES OF THE WORLD.

There is no palace where the happiness of a fellow creature is endangered; nor is there happiness in anything where there is either adding to or taking from the handiwork of the most High God.

—Donald R. MacGregor in New York News.

An Old Fashioned Luncheon.

A unique luncheon was given recently in Brooklyn—nothing less, indeed, than an old fashioned one. "You are to come at 12, bring your work, and stay until 6," dictated the hostess, and at noon sharply the twenty women hidden duly appeared, all but two, with their sewing. Bonnets were doffed and a real visit was entered upon. The luncheon was a delicious one, and was served without a too arbitrary following of the course style—an agreeable medium, indeed, between no courses and "all plates," as the country man explained his first French restaurant dinner.

When the guests returned to the parlor, instead of the brief standing round before leave taking, which characterizes the modern fashionable luncheon, chairs were easily drawn into groups, needles and thimbles came out, and though, as one who was there confessed, no serious amount of work was accomplished, the pleasure and sociability of the afternoon were pronounced, as the company included some of Brooklyn's representative women, and the hostess in prominent in more than one circle.—Her Point of View in New York Times.

Two Pretty English Words.

"There are some queer things about words when you come to know them intimately," said Dr. Cones, stroking his long, light beard reflectively. "Now, one would naturally conclude that words of fifteen or twenty syllables, such as transcontinentalmorghosous, the name of a muscle at the root of the tongue, and dacrycystoadenophlegmatomy, the name of a surgical operation on the tear duct of the eye, would be most difficult for the lexicographer to manage. Nothing could be farther from the fact. The most difficult words we have to define are those of two and three letters. The truth is, the same people, they are so simple that there is nothing by which you can readily describe them."—Chicago Post.

An Exclusive Family.

Mrs. Furnished—What! Invite the Dotsons girls to our party! Why, my dear, their father is in trade. He keeps a shop.

Mrs. Furnished—I know, sir, but he is awfully unknown. He never advertises and doesn't have to serve a customer more a week.—New York Weekly.

Connecting Links.

From time immemorial we have been connected in one way or another to beasts of fools. Disagreeable consequences are mentioned of discovering one kind of fool according to his folly, and of refrashing to discover another kind. Yet in spite of the general prejudice there is a variety of fool which is expected to mirror most of the Christian virtues. He is supposed to be absolutely good natured under ridicule, and never justly resentful. When attacked he is expected to smile with his innocence, and join in the general laugh.

Though he be by nature a modest man, he must bear with equanimity the vexes of finding himself suddenly dragged into public notice, with the eyes of a score or more of people turned on him at once.

He must be self sacrificing, willing to yield his own dignity for the amusement of others. If he but round ill usage by a word of remonstrance he receives contempt as a crusty bear and a disturber of merriment.

This species of fool is born on the morning of April First, and like certain summer insects has a brief existence of one day. If his general insensibility to ridicule, his meekness under abuse and his unfailing good temper should continue in the same measure throughout the year, one might call him a miracle. As it usually happens, however, he is content with a brief exercise of such virtues, and the temporary title of April fool.—Youth's Companion.

Reserved.

Even the kindest hearted of us sometimes say things that without explanation sound rather queer.

It was one of the best of women who said to her husband, "What a pity it is that none of our neighbors is sick now!"

"Why?" was the surprised query.

"Because if they were I could send them some of this nice jelly," was the complacent answer.—Youth's Companion.

Rebuked.

Sho—Do you think it will snow hard, professor?

He—Madam, it may hail. It never snows hard.—American Grocer.

An estimable clergyman of the Episcopal church noticing many of his congregation remaining sitting during the singing of the "Te Deum," and that others would sit down during its progress, they were requested by him to rise while the "Te Deum" was sung, and to "continue rising until its close."

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24-inch Tan and Gray Mohair Delinge at 10c per yard.
Double width Colored Algiers at 10½c, worth 25c.
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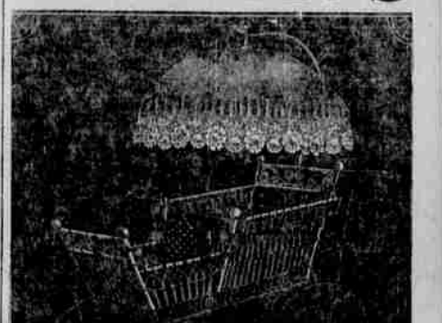

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