

The Young Man of the Bridge

By DOROTHEA HALE

In Constantinople there has always been, since its conquest by the Turks, a miscellaneous population. Persians, Greeks, races of western and southern Europe are mingled together, besides Moors from northern Africa. Some of these peoples form colonies among themselves and continue the customs of their native countries. Consequently there are a great many queer customs in Constantinople.

Among these customs perhaps the strangest is betrothal and marriage among the Moors. There is no such thing as a courtship among them. Marriages are arranged by contract between the parents of the groom and the bride, who do not see each other until they are married. Yet the human heart in these people beats the same as among other races. It may be well for a bride if she has not met some man to whom she has given her heart, for, fancy free, she may fall in love with her husband or at least become attached to him as is natural between those who live and bring up children together. But woe to the young girl who has seen the man who has inspired her with a grand passion.

The marriage ceremony among these people is also peculiar, as will appear in the case of a young Moorish girl called Ayxa, who was betrothed to a young man named Muley Abdul by her parents, but who had fallen in love with a young man she had seen but once. The young, especially girls on the threshold of womanhood, are prone to succumb before a single glance of a man who captivates their fancy, and southern races are more liable to this than colder blooded peoples of the north. Ayxa in crossing that such frequented bridge uniting two parts of Constantinople, stopped to look down over the side into the water. While doing so she uncovered her face, since there was no man below to see it. Presently turning her eyes aside she saw a young man also leaning over the side, but instead of looking into the water he was gazing at her. She saw the love-light in his eyes and unconsciously returned it.

Covering her face, she pursued her way. But from that moment she was changed. Her young and excitable being saw in all about her that face alone. At least it was all that excited a response in her. Indeed, it became a part, the greater part, of her being. It was at this time that negotiations were entered upon for her marriage with Muley Abdul. When she heard of them she had not met the young man on the bridge, and they did not especially interest her—that is, they were not repulsive to her. After the meeting they became a horror to her. But she could do nothing to prevent the union that awaited her. She had met the young man of the bridge but once, and even if she had seen him often and they had become lovers it would not have made any difference. She would have married the man provided for her and that without having seen him.

The arrangements for the marriage having been completed, the parents of the bride and the groom, who were both Moors, prepared for the wedding, to be celebrated in Tangier or Tripoli. Ayxa, as was the custom, was to be carried to her husband at night. The street in the Moorish quarter through which the bride would pass was lined with persons to see her pass. She was at home with her father and mother and the woman who had nursed her from babyhood. Languidly she bade her parents goodby and left them, going with her nurse, who in accordance with the ceremony was to conduct her to her husband.

And now comes the strangest part of this strange custom. The nurse left the house, carrying a box which contained the bride, placed it on a mule standing before the door, then led the animal down the street. Moving slowly to the sounds of wailing music, the old woman, the mule and the bride within the box proceeded on their way to the home of the groom. As they passed house after house friends emerged to salute the bride.

None knew the feelings of Ayxa, for she had not confided them even to her mother. What desperate resolve was in her fierce Moorish bosom she kept hidden there. A bride who had loved another, on her way to an unknown husband, had been found at the door of his house dead in the box that enclosed her, by her own hand. Indeed there were those along the route who, remembering this, shuddered lest the casing concealed a corpse. But nearly all were as loud in their congratulations as if Ayxa was going to the bosom of her choice.

At last the home of the groom was reached. He was not at the door to receive her, but waited for her within. When a living bride stepped from the box there were those in the throng who breathed a sigh of relief.

Ayxa was conducted by her mother-in-law to the room where her husband awaited her. There she was left to enter alone. She was expected to advance toward him and throw herself at his feet. Instead of doing so she

stopped short and fixed her gaze upon him. Then she sank upon the floor in a swoon.

In a few moments she revived to find herself in the arms of the man she had married. He was looking down upon her with love and delight in his eyes. He was the young man she had met on the bridge.

ASPIRATION.

O thou great arbiter of life and death,
Nature's immortal unmaterialism,
Whose all prolific beam late called me forth
From darkness—teeming darkness where I lay,
The worm's inferior and in rank beneath
The dust I tread on—high to bear my brow,
To drink the spirit of the golden day
And triumph in existence, and could know
No motive but my bliss, and hast ordained
A rise in blessing, with the patriarch's joy,
Thy call I follow to the land unknown,
I trust in thee and know in whom I trust,
Or life or death is equal; neither weighs—
All light in this: Oh, let me live to thee!
—Edward Young.

ROUND THE WORLD

Des Moines has no building inspector, but may soon create the office.

The famous Latakia tobacco crop averages only 350 tons a year.

New York has within its city boundaries 85,000 vacant acres of land.

Manufacturers are seeking a substitute for glass which will not be brittle.

Wages in Belgium are lower generally than in any other European country.

Porto Ricans are displacing bull drawn carts on great estates by automobiles.

The demand for their hides in South Africa is met by hatching alligators in incubators.

Evangelist Billy Sunday says the last genuine religious revival in the United States was that of 1857.

India's latest great irrigation project is the Niri Right Bank canal, in Bombay presidency. It cost \$8,500,000.

A hospital for women will be established in south London because of at least a supposed demand that women want women doctors.

There are now New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia marketing clubs, the last to be organized being those of Philadelphia.

Motormen of the traction system of the English city of Birmingham receive cash bonuses when they avoid accidents due to negligence.

Old Epiphany Baptist church, Philadelphia, long a landmark, is to be demolished to make way for an apartment house to cost \$1,000,000.

Recent official figures placed the number of sheep in Australia and New Zealand in excess of 117,000,000, the greatest number in eighteen years.

An American sewing machine company has opened eight schools in China, in which the natives are taught to embroider with silk by machinery.

Dr. H. S. Frost, superintendent of Boston's Hospital For the Insane, reports great success in the use of warm water baths in calming violent patients.

New York authorities are starting a campaign for a stricter law to govern and restrict the sale of cocaine. The present law is too feeble to check the traffic.

Germany's area devoted to vine culture reached its maximum, 297,037 acres, in 1906 and has since decreased by 27,900. The vintage varies greatly from year to year.

A shadowless drafting table invented by a Wisconsin man is made of plate glass, lighted from below by electric lamps, which also quickly dry ink used on drawings.

The record for submergence is claimed by the Italian navy, as one of its submarine boats recently remained under water with twenty men on board for twenty-four hours.

On the back of each seat of a new London theater there will be coin in the slot telephones to enable persons with defective hearing to listen to what is being said on the stage.

The National Poultry association has been organized in Havana, with branches all over the island, for the purpose of promoting the breeding of all kinds of poultry on a large scale.

The price of fresh salmon in Germany is about 44 cents a pound in the spring and reaches double that figure at other times. Canned smoked salmon is preferred to the fresh canned fish.

Minute measurements of ball bearings on the axles of a New Jersey trolley car that has traveled about 150,000 miles in four years showed that they had resisted abrasion almost perfectly.

Parties sent out by the French government to explore the Sahara desert have reported that the obstacles in the

way of building a railroad across the waste of sand are not so great as was supposed.

Captain Louis C. Platau of St. Louis has 150 practical inventions to his credit in the patent office at Washington. His latest is a turbine engine which he expects to revolutionize transportation by land and sea.

Deck benches that have been installed on the steamers of one transatlantic line can be converted into life rafts to carry six persons by raising lower portions to a level with the seats, where they lock automatically.

The popular belief that the Panama railroad was constructed at a cost of one life for every railroad tie is a gross exaggeration. There are 140,000 ties, and in the five years of its construction a total of 7,000 laborers were employed.

All our coffee must be purchased outside of this country. But this does not deter the American public from using 870,000,000 pounds of it every year, or nine and one-quarter pounds for each man, woman and child in the country.

Now that Lassa has succumbed to the advance of the globe trotter what is the most inaccessible place in the world outside the polar regions? The London Post answers the oasis of Kufra, in the Sahara desert, the home of the Semsi.

Algiers is said to have the largest European population of any city in Africa. Johannesburg comes next, then Oran. Will the class in geography kindly locate the latter town, with its 100,000 Europeans, without referring to the atlas?

Several Malay boatmen who hooked a man eating crocodile dragged it by ropes along the river bank for two hours, keeping its mouth open to solicit aims from villagers. A sum of nearly £2 in small coin, thrown into the crocodile's mouth, was shared after it had been killed and cut open.

THE BEST COMPANION.

I want for companion a dog or a boy or a person who has the virtues of dogs and boys—transparency, good nature, curiosity, open sense and a nameless quality that is akin to trees and the inarticulate forces of nature. With him you are alone and yet have company, you are free, you feel no disturbing element. The influences of nature stream through him and around him. He is a good conductor of the subtle fluid.—John Burroughs.

POETICAL FEATS.

Difficult Rimes Had No Terrors For Browning or Byron.

Poets may be baffled in their search for rimes, but it takes a great deal to baffle the doggerel rimester. Charles II. offered a reward for a rime to "porringer." The reward was claimed with the following marriage announcement:

The Duke of York a daughter had,
He gave the Prince of Orange her.
So now your majesty will see
I've found a rime for porringer.

Browning's perpetrations in rime are probably unique in English poetry. Here is a couplet from "Sordello" which no minor poet would dare to print for fear of blasting his reputation:

Chirrup the contumacious grasshopper;
Rustles the lizard and the cushats chirre.
In the same poem he rimes "sulky" with "mulet," "flag" with "quag," "abhors" with "valvassors." But he reached the climax surely in the couplet:

You trample our beds of ranunculus,
And you "Tommy-make-room-for-your-un-cle" us.

The worthy and reverend author of the "Ingoldsby Legends" was fond of such rimes as:

A long yellow pinafore
Hangs down each chin afore,
or such riming gymnastics as:

At Tappington, now, I could look in the Gazetteer,
But I'm out on a viet, and nobody has it here.

Yet in these enormities he was only parodying Byron, who wrote:
Ye lords of India intellectual
Confess if they had not bespoken you all.

Some Satisfaction.

The Hon. Mrs. Robert Hamilton in her biography of her father, the late Lord Wolverhampton, says that in his home his orders were always stern and peremptory, but no one was more surprised than he was when they were obeyed.

One day he detected one of his daughters making a statement in which she rather exaggerated the facts.

"You are one of the most inaccurate women that was ever created," he told her.

"Well," was the cheerful reply, "I am glad to be a masterpiece in some department of creation."

The Tower of Babel.

Do you realize that 4,000 years after the most wonderful of all towers was built by the ancients (according to the Book of Genesis about 2400 B. C.), its seven stages still rise high above the plains near the site of Babel? Until a few years ago it had been known as the Mound of the Birs Nimrud, when Sir Henry Rawlinson discovered in one of the stages the inscribed cylinders which made the identification possible.

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