

AT THE SULTAN'S COUCH

By Clinton Dangerfield

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The sultan rolled over on his couch of silk. As he faced his anxious attendants the glare in his eyes made them fall back as though he had struck them with the scimitar which always lay within his reach.

"Allah sent you all as a plague!" he said fiercely. "Here have I lain three mortal hours, and sleep comes not near mine eyes. Higher with the lights, fools! Can a man rest with shadows hanging over him?"

The lights shone more brilliantly, while the ruler's eyes searched jealously in every corner. Suddenly he sat up. "Fetch me that Christian page who was brought to the palace yesterday! I weary of the eternal sameness of your faces!"

The grand vizier, whose life was embittered beyond words by his master's liking for his presence, went himself to seek the boy, wondering as he went how much longer he could attend to affairs of state if he was expected to keep awake all night as well.

A velvet footed eunuch brought him quickly to the page's side. The boy slept peacefully, although the tears he shed in praying over the little cottage he called home were scarcely dry on his cheeks.

The vizier woke him, not ungenerously. Sooth to say, he felt some pity for this blue eyed lad, and moved by a kindly impulse, he helped the page to dress and took his hand as they hurried through the long, dimly lighted corridors.

The sultan still sat up, clutching his covering around him and reminding the vizier most unpleasantly of a sullen wild boar in his lair, solitary, miserable, but infinitely dangerous. The vizier shivered inwardly as he presented the page.

"Leave the boy alone with me!" growled his master. "Are you paralyzed, you sons of Idiocy, that you do not move when I speak?"

This last sentence cleared the room instantly, although the sultan had never been so nearly alone before.

His two gigantic guards, who slept at the foot of his bed, went last, their naked scimitars gleaming in their hands. The door closed noiselessly.

The page knelt quietly near the center of the room, the light from the swinging lamps full upon him. His eyes were resting undisturbedly on the sultan.

"Rise and come here!" growled the ruler hoarsely. The page rose, and, to the sultan's astonishment, he walked confidently to the couch and, seating himself on it, passed his slim, cool fingers over the ruler's brow.

"How very hot and uncomfortable you are!" he said thoughtfully. "You've almost got a fever, but your face is worst of all."

"What's the matter with my face?" demanded the sultan, considerably taken aback.

"It's quite wrinkled with trouble, just like father's is before mother smooths it away for him. This is the way she does it."

He was so small and the mighty ruler so large that he had to kneel on the coverings to reach his master's forehead, but his touch produced a remarkable effect. The sultan sank back on his pillows and lay quite still for nearly fifteen minutes, while the stroking went on.

Outside the door knelt the grand vizier, looking carefully through the keyhole, too amazed to report the result of his observations to the officers behind him.

"What makes you think trouble put those lines in my face?" asked the sultan.

"I don't know how I know it," said the page perplexedly, "but I do. You see, when they took me away from mother and brought me to the palace I thought you would be just perfectly happy. But you look like the old rug-maker near us did when the soldiers broke his loom to pieces."

The sultan grinned, his lip curling upward, after the fashion of a wolf. "Would that my vizier could hear these pay compliments! But my loom is not broken, and woe unto those who attempt it! Thou seest the splendor of my palace?"

"You have more things than any one could count," said the page reflectively. "What a good time your boys must have!"

The sultan scowled. His hair apparent was in the depths of a toad infested dungeon, while his other sons trembled daily for their heads. "I don't talk of them," he muttered. "Ungrateful hounds they are!" Then he added hastily, by way of changing the subject: "Your infidel sect clings to its holes, which it calls homes. Therefore, I suppose, your mother shrieked and screamed when they brought you away."

Two round, hot tears splashed down from the page's eyes upon his master's beard. The vizier distinctly saw them gleam in the light, though he could catch no word of the conversation. He looked to see the audacious boy's head neatly swept off with the curved scimitar, but the sultan merely lay still.

"She never screams," said the page quietly. "She told me it was God's will I should come here, else you could not have taken me. She said I would find people here more unhappy than she or I could ever be, and I must t-t-t-t-try for her sake to be good to them. I think I would better not talk of her, though. Are you feeling bet-

ter? You're not nearly so hot as you were."

"A weight grows on my lids," said the page determinedly. "You can't sleep while they are burning."

He was so quick in his movement that only a frantic lunge on the sultan's part enabled the latter to catch him while he was still in reach. Drawn roughly back, the page faced around and saw that beads of cold sweat stood out on the sultan's forehead; that he was ghastly white with terror.

"May the powers of evil consume thee!" he cried sharply to the boy. "Let the lamps alone! Don't you know, you Christian fool, that as soon as the dark flows round me it lays in wait for me and comes creeping nearer and nearer? Its face is broken and bloody, and its eyes are filmy. But the arms—the arms are so strong! They want to close round my throat closer and closer. They want to strangle me. Ah, I see its shadow now!"

The sultan's breath came in hoarse gasps. His eyes were big with horror. The page stood by him manfully, though he was woefully scared himself.

"How e-could anything pass the guards?" he stuttered, unable to keep all anxiety out of his voice.

"Guards!" hissed the sultan. "Who trusts the guards? Look at the Christian rulers, whose followers profess such milky doctrines of gentleness. How do they rest? But if Allah sent me power to know my true servants, to read their souls like a mirror, that would not save me from it. Through them it comes, and they cannot see it. My father died of it, died with no mark on him, and his father before him. Nothing but light keeps it away. I have not been in the accursed dark for twenty years."

"Oh!" said the page, with considerable relief in his voice. "I know what you mean now. Mother told me all about it." He quietly pushed his master back on the pillows, and while the sultan stared at him in open mouthed amazement he went on with absolute confidence.

"You see, it's fear you are afraid of. Fear stays in all kinds of places, and sometimes it looks like one thing and sometimes like another, according to the person. And it can come anywhere it likes."

"Thou hast it," muttered the sultan, listening gravely to the clear, childish voice.

"And it's a mistake to think light can always keep it away."

"So it is. How knowest thou that? By the beard of the prophet, even in the daylight I have seen!"

The page interrupted him with a calm unconsciousness which would have paralyzed the vizier.

"There's only one thing can keep it away, and that is—"

"What? May Allah speak through thee?"

"And that's just to believe it isn't there. You mustn't shake your head, I've tried it, and I know. As soon as you believe there's nothing to trouble you the thing just shrivels up and goes away. It can never come back until you choose to believe in it again."

The sultan's hand, red with the blood of his fellow beings, lay lightly on the page's arm. The sultan's tier eyes, which had seen unnumbered deeds which could blacken the infernal regions, looked as gently at the page as his own mother could have done.

"You may lower the lamps," said the ruler softly.

And he did not wince as the first darkness he had known for twenty years cast its healing shadows around his couch. The page crept up beside him and shared his pillow. They talked no longer. Outside in the passage the vizier rubbed his heavy lashes, astounded, and whispered eloquently with the guards. But the page heard only the peaceful breathing of his bed-fellow.

The sultan slept.

A Cold Snap in Illinois.
A cold snap is as bad as the fishing season for making lars. A West Alton man says that a citizen of that town threw a cupful of water at a cat one cold morning last winter. The water froze into a chunk of ice in the air, hit the cat on the head and broke its skull.

Then he told about a Flint Hill woman who left a lamp burning all night in the kitchen and when she tried to blow it out in the morning found the flame frozen hard. She broke it off and threw it into the woodshed, where later it thawed out and set the shed on fire.

As if those two were not enough, he winds up with the story of a St. Charles doctor who just before he started out on a drive took half a dozen good sized drinks of fine old bourbon. It was a cold night, and his breath was frozen into chunks. He put the chunks into a pail when he got home and thawed them out, and he had a quart of pretty fair whisky.—Alton Telegraph.

Building a Conductor.
During the rush hour the other afternoon a dignified man entered a well filled Market street car and tried to work his way in to secure a strap to hang from, but the conductor, who was collecting fares, blocked his progress.

"Step lively, there!" said the passenger.

"Were you speakin' to me?" asked the conductor, elevating his eyebrows.

"Certainly," replied the passenger.

WOMAN AND FASHION

A Pretty Blouse.

The illustration pictures a very smart blouse of black silk dotted with white. The middle of the front is trimmed with five stitched straps of the silk, alternating with groups of tiny tucks. The back has a plain pointed yoke, below which are tucks and strappings.



DOTTED BLACK SILK.

the same as in the front. The same idea is carried out on the bishop sleeves, which are finished with silk wristbands. The collar band is encircled with the tucks and adorned with a yellowish tulle lace cravat crossed in front and drawn through a buckle.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Not Much Change in Skirts.

There will not be much alteration in skirts. The skirt tight fitting over the hips, with the fullness at the back, tucked or plaited, is so becoming that it would be folly to change it. In stuffs of moderate thickness it will not be trimmed, but in flimsy fabrics flounces and frills may be indulged in. Two tier skirts are going to make a gallant stand for popularity, but it is to be doubted whether they will attain it, for they are not becoming save to the very tall, as they cut the smaller woman ruthlessly in half and, if she happens to be wearing a large hat, give her a ridiculously top heavy appearance.

Box Plaits Again.

A smart tailor costume from a celebrated house in Paris is of navy blue serge. The bolero is of yellow cloth, braided with black and white to have the effect of a small round sailor collar, and it fastens in front with a soft black necktie. The skirt is box plaited all around and finished at the bottom by three tucks. The blouse designed to be worn with this costume is of cream silk made with large plaits in the front and trimmed with the same braid used for the bolero. Another serge skirt designed by the same house is laid in plaits lengthwise, the plaits falling open at the feet.

Flowers With White Toilets.

With the growing fancy for white govtas the advice of a woman florist as to what flowers go well with white toilets becomes of interest. Jack roses or any flowers of heavy shade she declares incongruous. Violets are not out of keeping, the American Beauty rose is not inharmonious, but the most picturesque blossom to go with a white gown is the President Carnot rose.

The Latest in Hats.

Hats come first in the new styles. The fashionable Parisienne changes her headgear at the first echo of spring. As to the shapes, the new millinery is characterized by decided diversity; there is something for each type of



A FINE FASHION HAT.

face. This generally are still broad and low, but the brims are bent in all sorts of original curves and graceful undulations, and the results are novel, smart and becoming.

The lovely creation shown in the illustration is in many shades of gray, panne, chiffon and satin. The top is a mass of small pink flowers and little green leaves.—Philadelphia Times.

Not Necessarily Expensive.

The Gainsborough must be large and of good shape. Its crown must be of moderate height and its brim broad, so that it can be bent or molded, turned or twisted. The rest is comparatively simple, for the Gainsborough can be trimmed with odds and ends that would look out of place upon another hat.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

The National Health Service.

The Perkins bill, now pending in congress, seeks to extend the scope and enlarge the facilities of the marine hospital service. It calls for a change of name, provides for a proper status for the officers and also asks that the laboratory work of the service be brought into relation with the scientific work of the war, navy and agricultural departments.

The marine hospital service has outgrown its name, and the designation of the "United States health service" suggested in the Perkins bill is entirely consistent with its work and aims. The latter term would lend a dignity commensurate with the duties of the organization, which are in fact to safeguard the health of the nation. The change of name would not imply a change of functions, but rather an enlargement of them. The treatment of seamen, the management of epidemics, the medical inspection of immigrants and the publication of sanitary reports and statistics would continue to be functions of the United States health service, but under the bill its efficiency would be greatly increased.

One of the most important results would be co-operation between national and state authorities in matters relating to the public health. Every year has made apparent the necessity for closer union and more harmonious work. This is especially manifest in the handling of epidemic diseases, which do not respect state lines and which need a centralized authority to direct the control.

There is no branch of the public service more important than that of guarding the public health, and no one familiar with the administration of quarantine regulations and the means taken to prevent the spread of epidemics, with the skill and courage displayed in fighting yellow fever, cholera and other scourges, can fail to appreciate the good work done by the marine hospital service. It ought not to be handicapped for lack of facilities and legalized prerogatives.

Empire Builders at Odds.

The fact that the name of Joseph Chamberlain does not appear in the list of trustees under the will of Cecil Rhodes while that of Lord Rosebery heads it occasions some comment in London. In this connection it is recalled that when Mr. Chamberlain entered the colonial office there was a struggle between Mr. Rhodes and himself for supremacy in South African policy. Mr. Rhodes, with his imperious will, forced the hands of one colonial secretary after another and retained the mastery of the situation. When Mr. Chamberlain entered the office, he determined to have the "empire builder" understand that there could be but one cock of the walk in Downing street, and the result was an estrangement between the men who have had more to do than all others in shaping the recent British policy in South Africa.

Upon one point they were, however, agreed, and that was in the extension of British empire over the continent of Africa. What would have been the result if they had worked more in harmony to that end is a matter of speculation.

The statement that Lord Rosebery is going to South Africa to study the situation there with the view of submitting his impressions to the king is significant. Lord Rosebery is a close friend of King Edward, and his visit to South Africa would be in the nature of a personal representative of the British sovereign. What he may be able to accomplish, of course, remains to be seen, though taken in connection with the visit to South Africa of Lord Wolseley, also a close friend of the king, Lord Rosebery's journey gives hope that peace may be effected. It is well known that King Edward is extremely anxious that the war shall be ended before his coronation, and to this end it would appear that efforts are being directed.

An Italian organ grinder arrested in New York the other day for begging on the streets is much offended because he was compelled to pay a fine of \$5, though he had at the time about \$200 on his person and confessed that he had \$12,000 salted away in a bank in Rome, besides lately having sent \$2,000 to his daughter in Italy, who is going to marry a count. The organ grinder, who is sixty, says he will retire from "business," having created a competency. He thinks a man should retire at sixty. In this respect he takes the high ground held by some eminent economists and philanthropists.

A cable dispatch from Nice reports the capture of a one hundred and four foot whale near that place, the first ever seen in the Mediterranean. Apparently the seaside resort press agent has struck the Riviera. He is to be commended, however, for refraining from the introduction of the ancient sea serpent.

And now the hostilities open between the man who wants to have a garden and his neighbor who keeps chickens.

Miss Stone has been captured again. Major Pond is the bold brigand who did the trick this time.

TEARING UP.

MOVERS getting ready for the coming fit. Hustling in the dwellings which they soon will quit. Long and late they're working. Often there's a sigh, For but little progress Meets the weary eye.

Tearing up the carpets, Gouging out the tacks— Work that's very trying In the arms and backs. Taking down the curtains And the parts complex— Task that's sorely testing Muscles of the necks.

Rolling up spare bedding, Tying up spare chairs, Often wildly rushing Up and down the stairs, Taking down the pictures, Brushing off the dust; Now and then there's breakage, Causing much disgust.

Packing up the dishes, Now and then a crash— Finest piece of china Quickly gone to smash. Clearing out the drawers, Throwing things away— Ribbons, cards and trinkets That have had their day.

Nailing up the boxes In which goods are packed; Oft a thumb or finger Fearfully is whacked. Working on till midnight, Rest for hours but few; Up again at daybreak, Finding more to do.

Movers getting ready For the coming fit Day and night must hustle, And they're strictly "it." No more time for folly, No more time for play; They must have things ready For the moving day. —Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Hard to Please

"Do the new neighbors annoy you as much by borrowing as their predecessors did?" asked Mr. Blykins.

"No," answered his wife; "they haven't run over to borrow a thing. I never saw anybody quite so haughty and unso-called."—Washington Star.

Her Excellent Reason.

"But why do you persist in worrying?" demanded the easy going man.

"In the hope of making you worry a little," answered the good woman.

After the Savings.

"They try all kinds of dodges on you in a boarding house," said the man who had had fifteen years' experience, "and it is seldom you find a landlady who hasn't got a card up her sleeve. My present one has good rooms and a good table, but at the beginning of winter she began turning the gas off in the daytime. I happened to want to use it one day to heat my shaving water, and a little later I spoke to her about it."

"Mrs. Tompkins," I said, "I see you have the gas turned off in the daytime."

"Yes, sir," she replied. "I have been figuring it out, and do you know how much you save per month by the move?"

"I can't say."

"You save just one cent a month."

"Do I? Well, then, I shall surely turn it off every day for the next year and save a whole shilling!"

Not Carelessly Chosen.

"Why did you select that man as a candidate?" asked the henchman. "He doesn't know anything about politics."

"That's why I selected him," answered the boss. "He'll be a great deal easier to put out of office if he doesn't be good."—Washington Star.

The Changing Season.

Mrs. Hatterson—What! You've had fourteen cooks in three months!

Mrs. Catterson—Yes, and I didn't please any of them.—Life.

Regrets.

Mr. Monk—They say beauty is but skin deep.

Miss Hippo—Well, with me ugliness is but skin deep. I am sure if I didn't have this thick skin I'd be much better looking.—Chicago News.

He Had.

"Haven't you any occupation?" asked the woman at the kitchen door after listening to his tale of woe.

"Yes, madam," responded Tuffold Knutt. "I'm a hunter."

"A hunter? Of what?"

"Grub, madam!"

Thousands Have Kidney Trouble and Don't Know It.

How To Find Out.
Fill a bottle or common glass with your water and let it stand twenty-four hours; a sediment or settling indicates an unhealthy condition of the kidneys; if it stains your glass it is evidence of kidney trouble; too frequent desire to pass it or pain in the back is also convincing proof that the kidneys and bladder are out of order.

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