

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

The Sultan's Verses



By Tudor Jenks.

In a land so far to the east that it is very warm when the sun rises and quite chilly at sunset, a great Sultan died. His successor happened to be a nephew who lived at some distance—so far away, even from that distant land, that he wasn't at all intimate with the late Sultan. When he arrived at his capital he was conducted at once to the palace, and spent the first day or two in resting from his journey, and making the acquaintance of his courtiers, and buying becoming clothes. When the Sultan arose late on the third day, he had decided to begin his reign. So he sent for the old Vizier, to have a private conversation with him in the throne-room.

Both sat down cross-legged, in an attitude that would give American citizens the cramps, and the Sultan opened the little powwow thus:

"Silleh ben Rifraf, I think it is high time that I—that is, we—began our reign."

"Your will is the people's law," was Rifraf's safe answer, as he bowed like a china image.

"Yes. For instance, I have long desired to be a poet," said the Sultan, looking aimlessly at the ceiling.

"Oh, your Highness, what thought! what music! How exquisite your rhymes! Soul and roll—why, it's a perfect rhyme! I think you have chosen wisely indeed, if I may be permitted to praise without the suspicion of flattery."

"Then you really like the little lines?" asked the Sultan, with a smile—a peculiar smile.

"Like them? Why, they should be embroidered with gold thread on silken scarfs! Your Highness is right. You are a Poet. Let me attend to the petty business of governing, and you can give yourself entirely to the sublime art of composition."

"So be it," said the Sultan. "Until I notify you to the contrary, I will leave the reins in your hands. Now, as you will have plenty to attend to, will you kindly summon the Chief Treasurer as you go out? Thank you. Good morning!"

In a few minutes the Sultan heard the jingling of the golden curtain-rings, and beheld the face of the Chief Treasurer, a sedate and dignified man of middle age.

"Enter, Adhem el Shekels," said the Sultan, kindly, "and be seated. I would confer with you."

"My lord, the treasury is well supplied, and the

"Youth is the season for hope," and on he went, reading in a fine, declamatory voice, as if trying to bring out the best points in the verses.

"Your Highness, the lines are above praise," said the Treasurer. "I hardly know which part to praise most." (And that was true, for he hadn't paid very close attention.) "But I am sure your wisdom has led you aright. Your talents are far beyond my poor criticism. Let another be your Chief Critic; I am content to remain Treasurer."

"It shall be as you say," the Sultan agreed; "at least, for the present. And, as you go out, will you be kind enough to send us the—ah, what officer comes next to you in rank?"

"The Minister of Justice," answered the Treasurer; "yes, I will see that he comes at once."

"Well," remarked the page at the door, "the new Sultan certainly makes the officers happy! How they do grin when they come back!"

Stronger and stronger became the page's curiosity to know what it was that made all the courtiers so well satisfied with themselves.

Strangely enough, the page's curiosity was gratified most unexpectedly.

It was getting late, and the Sultan had seen all the prominent officials of the palace. At length he came

When this ceremony was over, Silleh ben Rifraf prostrated himself before the throne.

"Speak, Ben Rifraf," said the Sultan.

"Would your Majesty deign to inform his humble slaves what has caused the merited elevation of his favorite?" Ben Rifraf inquired.

"Most willingly," responded the Sultan. "I read my verses to this youth, and he has given upon them the wisest judgment of you all."

"But words cannot say more than we said," Ben Rifraf ventured to say. "Did we not praise your Highness's genius?"

"Of a truth you did," replied the Sultan. "Yet were the verses the veriest trash, as ye well knew."

"Most true, O Sultan," came the chorus from the whole court, for they saw the tide had turned.

"And courage to tell this truth was found only in my page, whom I have made Chief Councillor. Enough! The audience is at an end!"

Then, just before the band struck up an inspiring march, the voice of Ben Rifraf was heard reciting a well-known proverb, which in its original Arabic looks like a procession of earthworms, but which means in plain English, "After-wit is everybody's wit."

THE DANCING LESSON



Here is a happy little one Who's having the best of fun Who wouldn't be in greatest glee To have a little fair girl Come in and teach her how to twirl With steps so light and airy?

To skip and dance and turn and twirl, And spin about in merry whirl, To slide And glide From side to side— Oh, wouldn't any one of you Be glad to have a lesson, too, From a "really truly" fairy?

THREE GOOD RECIPES.

By Marion Richardson.

HAPPY-DAY PUDDING.

3 Or more children (according to taste).
1 Skiful of Sun.
1 Lawn (must be fresh and green).
4 Trees (shady), fat ones preferred.
1 Nurse-maid (out of sight).
Take children and mix well with an armful of dolls, reins and rubber balls, 1 puppy, 1 tent, and 1 express wagon. When mixed, sprinkle all over with smiles and a pinch of unselfishness. Keep stirring until sundown. Then take children, put in separate, cool dark rooms, cover lightly, and leave until morning. Serve with mother's kiss.

RAINY-DAY PIE.

2 Plump little Girls (alive).
1 Attic.
1 Box Chocolates.
1 Large Trunk, with stuffing. (Improved by age.)
Garnish plump little girls with chocolates. Dip necks, heads and claws of same inside of trunk for hours and 30 minutes. If very red when taken out they are well done. Set by window to cool.

DESSERT FOR BOYS.

A fresh bunch of Boys.
1 Hot July Noon.
1 Shallow Duck-pond.
Peel boys. Cover half over with trunks—not tree trunks. Drop in lukewarm pond, and wash around till well soaked. Then put in hot sun to bake a brown. Serve as deserved.

Timmy Toole and Willie Wise.

By Louisa Fletcher Tarkington.
Said Timmy Toole, "I wish I knew As much as Willie Wise. He always has his 'rithmettic, And wins the spelling prize."

Said Willie Wise, "If I could play Base-ball like Timmy Toole, And win the tennis-match, I'd be The happiest boy in school!"



"ALLAH BE PRAISED!" CRIED THE SULTAN, "I HAVE FOUND A PEARL!"

The Vizier started so abruptly that his turban fell off, and then he, too, looked at the ceiling, until the Sultan should choose to go on.

"But, though that is all plain sailing," the Sultan went on again, "there is yet some difficulty. That is, to find a competent critic who will show me my faults and point out any little errors that may creep into my hasty lines. Now, if you yourself, Ben Rifraf, should prefer to undertake this responsible post, you can do so."

"My sovereign master," said Rifraf, hastily, "I am an old man. Let me care for the realm, for that trade I have long studied. I would prefer that another should become your Critic and Poetical Adviser—a younger man."

"So be it," answered the young Sultan; "but let me at least read to you one set of verses which I happen to find in my casket. I would like your judgment upon these lines before you betake yourself to your proper duties. Shall it be so?"

The Vizier saw by the look in the Sultan's eye that the request was a command, and he replied in Oriental phrase that he was most honored by the Sultan's condescension.

So the young Sultan drew out a roll of manuscript, and read as follows:

"Youth is the season for hope;
Hope begetteth the young;
Youth has the vigor to cope
With the woes that the singers have sung.

"Youth has the sparkle of mirth;
Laughter delighteth the soul;
Spring is the youth of the earth.
Merrily let carols roll!"

accounts straight—

"No doubt," interrupted the Sultan; "but I have more important matters—"

"More important—" the Treasurer began, so amazed that he forgot his manners.

"Verily," said the Sultan, overlooking the little breach of etiquette. "As the Vizier has no doubt informed you, I intend to devote my own time, for the present, to poetry. He told you so, did he not?"

"Something of the sort, your Highness," replied El Shekels, uneasily, hoping that the Sultan wouldn't ask him to repeat the Vizier's joking remarks. In fact, the Vizier had hinted that the young Sultan thought himself a genius.

"I suspected as much," said the Sultan. "And you were surprised, perhaps?"

"Your Highness is the ruler," responded the Treasurer, politely; "but I was surprised, I admit. And, to tell the truth, if you will pardon me for saying so, I must say that, as a rule, there isn't much money to be made in poetry. I speak simply as a treasurer, your Highness, not as a critic."

"But I wish your opinion as a critic," the Sultan answered. "The question of providing funds I shall leave to you, for the present, unless I should appoint you to the new office I mean to create—that of Chief Critic and Poetical Adviser."

"Your Highness is most gracious; but, if it be your wish I prefer to remain Treasurer."

"As you please," the Sultan replied. "But meanwhile I happen to have in my casket a copy of verses that I have just completed. If you can spare the time, we shall be glad to have your opinion of them."

So, drawing forth the precious manuscript, the Sultan began,



IN FACT, THE VIZIER HAD HINTED THAT THE YOUNG SULTAN THOUGHT HIMSELF A GENIUS

to the doorway, and found the page sitting in attendance on rather a thin and hard cushion.

"Why, my boy," said the Sultan, kindly, "you must be worn out. Have you been there all day?"

"All day, your Majesty," the page replied respectfully; "and since your Majesty asks me—I am a little tired."

"Come in," said the Sultan, holding aside the curtain. "You shall rest awhile."

"What—with your Majesty, in the throne-room?" the boy exclaimed in amazement.

"Certainly. No one need know," answered the Sultan, kindly. "Are you afraid of me?"

"No, your Majesty," said the page, for the Sultan smiled very cordially; and the page entered the throne-room.

"Be seated," said the Sultan; "I command it!" he added, as the boy hesitated. So the page sat down upon a soft, silk cushion.

"I have been writing some verses," said the Sultan, as he bade the boy help himself to the delicious fruits and loaves, "and while you refresh yourself I should like to read them to you."

So, while the boy enjoyed the fruits and loaves, the Sultan, for the twentieth time at least, read aloud his precious lines on youth.

When he had finished, he turned to the page, saying: "Now I should like your opinion of the poem."

"But, your Highness, I am too young to criticize your verses," replied the page, uneasily.

"All nonsense," answered the Sultan, but pleasantly enough. "I see you have an opinion. I desire you to express it freely. Nay, more than that, I command you to do so."

"I must obey, then," said the page, looking very serious. "But if I should incur your Majesty's displeasure, may I beg that you will visit your wrath upon me alone? I have a mother and sister who are dependent upon me—"

"They shall be cared for," said the Sultan, in a solemn tone, "if the need arises. But you make me suspect that my lines do not meet with your approval."

"On your own head be it, Commander of the Faithful!" exclaimed the unhappy page. "By the Prophet, as I promised my mother that I would tell truth, the lines are the veriest trash and nonsense! They mean nothing. They do not even sound sensible. They are as unmusical as the braying of a lost donkey! There! I have said the truth. A man dies but once! Remember, then, your words."

"Allah be praised!" cried the Sultan, "I have found a pearl! And all the men of my court declared the lines perfect, beyond praise! Now have I found the honest man I sought!"

"But, your Majesty," stammered the astonished page, "I am no more than a boy!"

"Enough!" said the Sultan. "The years will find you wisdom as well as age; but honesty comes not even with long ages if the seed be not already planted. Say not a word."

The Sultan clapped his hands, directed all the courtiers to be summoned, and in their presence appointed the page Chief Councillor and Grand High Vizier of the Realm for life, at the same time investing him with the order of the Golden Sunburst of the East, and a whole row of smaller decorations of different colors.

I know a very ancient game
Now see if you can guess.
Its name begins with C H E
And ends with double S.

THE horseman, the parson,
The king and his wife,
All went to battle
And fought for dear life.
The dwarfs ran ahead,
But the king was afraid
And back of his castle
He prudently stayed.
Till a horseman came jumping
Right over the house,
And caught the poor king
In a trap like a mouse.