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**The Tabriz Carpet**

And Its Wonderful Secret

By **CLARISSA MACKIE**

The three young men gazed over the beautiful, silky carpet from Tabriz. John Fleming had spread it on the floor of his studio, and his two friends sat cross legged in the middle of its rich expanse while John pointed out its remarkable pattern.

"It's exactly as Billy translated from the old Persian manuscript," said John excitedly. "Here is the body of the mosque. All these little squares are the prayer rugs of the worshippers. Here in the niche facing the east is the altar. This mixture of peacock tints represents the altar itself, and beneath the altar, so the manuscript says, lie buried these famous emeralds of the great shah."

"Who has been dust these 200 years," solemnly added Billy Blake.

"Peace to his ashes," piously concluded Tom Pike. "By the way, John,



LEAN FINGERS GRIPPED HIS THROAT AND CHOKED HIM INTO SILENCE.

what is your idea about discovering these emeralds? You've claimed that the purchase of this rug was only the first step toward making the three of us rich. We've put all our available coin into it. What next?"

"Well, the manuscript says that this famous rug is a replica of the floor of the rose mosque in Tabriz. Unfortunately, there is much discussion as to which of the modern mosques was built upon the old foundation and flooring of the ancient rose mosque. Now that we have the floor plan it is my suggestion that we take the rug to Tabriz with us, and when we find the mosque floor plan that matches up with it, why, we will find some way to burrow down and get those jewels. We'll have to pay something to the government, I suppose."

"Suppose we fail. We will be out our money and the trip we planned."

"Be a sport," said Tom disgustedly. "If we win we can take holidays and holidays. John, I'm with you. When do we sail?"

"The 23d—Prince Joachim," said John promptly.

"Engage my passage, too," groaned Billy.

"Done," said John Fleming, rolling up the rug. "Now, you chaps, clear out I've got a lot to do in the next three days."

Fourteen days later the three friends and the Tabriz carpet landed in the Persian city and put up at a very different hotel. John Fleming had gained for himself the reputation of being eccentric, for he traveled nowhere without a rolled and strapped steamer rug in his hand. He even appeared at the captain's table with it during the passage, and his plea that he needed it for a foot rest was not entirely acceptable to his table companions.

They did not know that carefully sewed between two steamer rugs was the carpet from Tabriz.

The morning after their arrival in the city they set forth on their search for the rose mosque, whose identity had been lost in many a pillaging and sacking of the city by infidels. Somewhere in the street of Sweet Incense was a rebuilt mosque whose floor would correspond with the pattern of the Tabriz carpet.

It was not until the second day that they stood in a small mosque wedged in between dark gray buildings. John Fleming did not unroll his rug. It was not necessary, for even to the unsteady eyes of Billy Blake and Tom Pike the floor of the edifice was similar in arrangement to that of the silky rug. As they stood there gazing, John Fleming pointing here and there through the gloom, there became visible, through the wear of centuries and the pressure of countless feet, traces of the beautiful marble floor. The altar, which might once have been that famous gem of peacock coloring, had been in a later day of restoration overlaid with gold leaf, but it was there.

Vain Regrets.

"What do you do when you arrive home late and find your wife sitting up waiting for you?"

"Wish I hadn't gone home."—Boston Transcript.

Her Finish.

"I see her finish, all right."

"Shouldn't wonder. She's certainly laid the cosmetics on thick."—Boston Transcript.

"Beneath that, eh?" muttered Billy Blake, drawing a long breath.

"I think so," said John proudly.

"What's your plan now?" growled Tom.

"You two slide out, while I remain behind. I can conceal myself in one of the anterooms until dusk. Then you two return with tools, and I'll let you in. We can remove the altar in a jiffy and have the treasure out and away in no time."

"How about the guard? Isn't there some kind of a watchman on duty here?"

"Hardly. The priests have trouble enough in rounding up the sinners in the daytime. No danger of the rascals haunting the mosque at night. Most of them are drinking sweet coffee in some cafe until morning."

"Very well, John. Pick out your hiding place. Tom and I will go now. There, behind that carved screen in the corner. So long, old chap."

When John Fleming had dodged behind his screen and the footsteps of his friends had died away on the stone floor he saw a shaft of golden light pierce the gloom of the mosque and then vanish. He knew that the door had opened and closed behind the forms of his friends.

Hours passed. People came and went, and John Fleming directed his place was crowded. A priest went into the tower, and far below in his place of concealment Fleming heard the whining musical chant of the muezzin call to prayer.

After that all was quiet. He was entirely alone.

When it was dark, the thick, velvety blackness of an Asiatic night, he stepped softly to the outer door and, opening it gently, glided softly.

A dark figure glided toward him. Lean fingers gripped his throat and choked him into silence. He struggled and tried to cry out, but he was powerless in the grip of a giant.

He was borne back into the mosque, and far away from the entrance in a tiny niche he was set down, and his captor produced a vile smelling oil lantern.

Then it was that Fleming saw his captor was a tall, fanatical looking individual, with a wisp of dirty green silk wound around his disordered head.

"Come to the altar!" hissed the man in French. "You will show me and I will dig for the emeralds of the great shah." He pressed the blade of a knife suggestively against Fleming's throat, and there was nothing to do save to obey.

With ill grace John Fleming consented and, going to the altar, directed its removal as well as the displacement of the great block of stone upon which it stood.

Together they worked in silence, using the rough tools the man had brought with him. When the altar had been removed from its bed of cement they pried up the stone slab beneath it and found nothing but a solid bed of cement.

Then it was that the fanatical priest flew madly at John Fleming and would have killed him had he not been the swifter of the two and managed to outrun his enemy in the dark corners of the mosque. Happily at this moment Billy Blake and Tom Pike appeared, and while John Fleming snatched up his precious roll of rugs they covered his escape to the street and followed him to the hotel.

"Dished!" said Billy Blake, disgustedly thumping the bundle of rugs.

"Say anything you like; I'll take it all!" groaned John, sitting on the edge of his lumpy bed in great despair.

Tom Pike, who said little, but in his slow and cautious way did much thinking, removed his pipe from his lips and dragged out his suitcase.

"I've got inside information that the emeralds of the great shah will be in America when we get there," he said mysteriously. "If you want to be in at the finish come with me and catch the next steamer for home."

It was significant of the subdued mood of the two younger enthusiastic treasure seekers that they merely followed his suggestion.

During the homeward voyage John Fleming did not display the same solicitous care concerning the Tabriz carpet. For him it had lost its value.

When they landed in New York Tom Pike showed signs of excitement.

"Fellows," he said cautiously, "soon as we're through the customs get a taxi and beat it to John's studio."

Two hours later three excited young men flung themselves from a taxicab and dashed up the stairs to Fleming's studio. Once there, they locked the door and opened wide the closed windows.

"Well, Tom, what is it?" demanded Fleming and Blake in the same breath.

"Unroll your precious rug," said the silent one.

They obeyed, spreading the silky oblong on the dusty floor.

"Find the peacock altar," went on Tom.

"Here it is," said John, his finger on the rich mass of color.

"Take your knife and dig there, John, and I reckon you'll find the emeralds! That's my interpretation of the manuscript."

Ten minutes later three awed young men sat back on their heels and gazed at a handful of large, uncut emeralds which they had released from the carefully tied knots of the peacock threads of the rug.

It was quite true. Beneath the skillfully woven pattern of the altar of the rose mosque the great shah had hidden his jewels. It had remained for Tom Pike to discover them.

**AN EXPENSIVE ROAD.**

Highway Through Mountains of Norway 3,715 Feet Above Sea Level. In some parts of the United States the geographical conditions make the building and maintenance of good roads almost an impossibility. To construct a good highway through certain sections of the mountains is a stupendous task. But in many sections even short stretches of roads have been built at an enormous outlay of money.

One of the most difficult roads to build—one that perhaps cost as much as any other in the world—was constructed through the deep July snow



ROAD ON DYROSKARD PASS, NORWAY.

drifts upon Dyroskard pass, in Norway. This road is 3,715 feet above the level of the sea, and the workmen were compelled to dig through snow, soil and rock in order to make it passable.

In certain sections of the United States roads have been built through the mountains, but in most instances they are poor and impassable, especially in severe weather.

The roads in the mountains of North Carolina are perhaps the poorest, but are being improved. This section is sparsely populated, and the inhabitants are no longer willing to put up with the poor roads and live shut up in the great mountains, frequently having every approach to the nearest town cut off by absolutely impassable roads.

**INDIANA IN THE LEAD.**

Hoodier State Has More Miles of Improved Roads Than Any Other.

Rhode Island may have fewer square miles than any of her sister states; but, according to the Good Roads Year Book, she is the only state in the Union whose improved roads amount to half of her total roads. Delaware, her closest rival for smallness, has only 6 miles of improved roads.

Massachusetts presses her tiny neighbor in this respect by making a showing of 49 per cent of her roads improved. Naturally other states try to discount this primacy of Rhode Island. An Indiana Journal accounts for it on the ground that the state is in reality nothing but Providence and Newport and their suburbs.

It then disposes of Massachusetts by the remark that, except for some hills through which only state roads run, that commonwealth is practically one big town. This process of elimination leaves Indiana at the top in the percentage of improved roads. But the Hoodier State already has honor enough in the fact that it possesses more miles of improved roads than any other state, although its 25,000 miles exceed Ohio's supply of improved highways by only a few hundred miles. These two states are far ahead of the rest. Next to them come New York, with 15,000 miles; Washington, with 12,000; Wisconsin and Kentucky, with 10,000 each.—New York Evening Post.

**A New Road Material.**

With a view of obtaining a road surface which will give a better resistance to automobile traffic, experiments are being made again in France with a roadbed material consisting of an intimate mixture of "iron straw" or iron in the shape of a wiry or fibrous mass. Such as is commonly used for cleaning and scraping purposes in this country. Such material is called "ferro-cement," and it appears that tests as to its fitness for road surfaces are giving good results. But iron is not the usual kind found in commerce, being prepared specially for the purpose by suitable machines of appropriate design. It is claimed that the resulting material will not be an overexpensive one.—Scientific American.

**Highbrows.**

Will Irwin, the magazine writer, is credited with the invention of the word "highbrow." It was coined to express a blend of "snob" and "academic." He first used it when, as a reporter, he had occasion to describe the proceedings of societies who talked of the betterment of the drama. He thinks that the word will be assimilated by the dictionaries.

**Cheerful.**

Professor of Chemistry—If anything should go wrong in this experiment, which is a particularly dangerous one, we and the laboratory with us might be blown sky high. Come closer, gentlemen, so that you may be better able to follow me without difficulty.—London Telegraph.

**Bad Oversight.**

"Why these pouts?"

"Look at this press notice!" stormed the actress.

"The critic speaks highly of your genius."

"And never mentions my gowns."—Washington Herald.

**Two Ways.**

"Be mine" is the proper form when proposing to a girl because you love her. "Be my mine" is all right if she's rich, but slur the pronoun carefully.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

**Wifely Cheer.**

"I haven't a pull with any one," said the unsuccessful man.

"Oh, yes, you have, dear," said his wife encouragingly, "with the fool killer."—Life.

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