

CHAI

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BY AVETIS CHARONEAN

It was a cold winter night. A fierce snow-storm was raging. So heavy and awful was the darkness that the inhabitants of the mountain village could not recall when last they had seen the sun and the clear sky. The wind seemed to issue from the very gulf of death. It roared woefully and ominously. It toyed with the snow like a demon at play. It touched everything with a killing breath. Men and animals froze; the whole village, with its huts, and its haystacks, and heaps of dung fuel, seemed to tremble and shiver. The world quivered with cold, or with fear.

The villagers stood in great awe of nature. Thunder and lightning, storm and tempest were not the harmless, aimless sports of nature. The peasant believes that these things come for a definite and sinister purpose, and there is cause indeed for him to tremble. It was lucky that to counteract the lightning there was the sign of the cross, and to counteract the blizzard there were stables for the animals, and warm sakhli, narrow compartments in the huts for the men.

"Woo-o-o-o!" the wind howled, and each time the fearful sound penetrated the house of the Melik-Sinahn, his guests, who sat on both sides of the sakhli, ceased talking, took their pipes from their mouths, looked at each other, and felt an inner need to move closer to one another.

"Snow and storm are good in their time—but this terrible snow-storm—what did it signify? No one dared to speak aloud the language of the formidable element, but they all well knew its meaning. It was the mighty song of fate, which the storm, the eternal wanderer, sings to every man. Into its song it gathers the world's suffering—the sighs and groans of the weak, the cries of the helpless, the tears of the unfortunate, the misery of the poor. The storm draws them all into its ethereal bosom, from the faintest heartrending whisper to the roar that shakes mountains. And oftentimes the storm rivets them to the highest peaks, or so the wide, cavernous darkness; but sometimes he releases them that they may descend and re-echo through the world, uttering lamentable threats, and announcing to frightened men the inexorable fate awaiting them.

So thought the terrified peasants in the sakhli. That is why for them the howling of the wind was a gruesome concert.

"Woo-o-o-o!" The wind grew still stronger, the roof of the sakhli crashed. Every now and then some one seemed to be stamping upon it. "It's Hades outside," said one of the men. "I couldn't want even my enemy to be on the mountain now."

"On the mountain?" said another. "Why, you wouldn't dare go into our garden! Don't you hear the voices? Heaven and earth have broken loose against each other."

Silence again. The door creaked heavily. Every now and then in the direction where, in the half darkness, appeared the figure of a man dressed in a shepherd's mantle, looking like a heap of snow. He must have been out in the snow-storm a long time.

"Good evening," he said, shaking off the thick layer of snow from his mantle.

"Good evening. Come right in. Poor Chai, you look like a piece of ice. Make room for Chai. Let him sit down."

"Yes, by Heaven, I am frozen," said the newcomer, stepping forward. "It's impossible to remain outdoors any longer. It seems as if the sky were tumbling down. What a storm! What a storm! I thought I'd get warm and then go out again."

The oil lamp burned peacefully above the fireside in a little dark opening. The dull flame wavered and trembled softly as if it, too, were afraid of the wind. Nevertheless, its faint light was sufficient to outline some of the faces underneath their thick lambskin caps. Some yellowish quivering rays fell upon the newcomer also. It was a peasant's face upon which a life of suffering had stamped the seal of ruggedness, and sorrow had nestled in the deep furrows of his firm skin. He was still a young man, but he seemed to have lived too much. Beneath his bushy mustache appeared lips firmly compressed, which lent a stubborn expression to his face. He was a stranger who had come to the village a short time ago, and, finding no other work, hired himself out as the village night-watchman.

"It was on such a night that our poor neighbor was lost," said the village magistrate, Gevo. "No wonder he perished."

"We warned him over and over again," said another.

"Fool!" exclaimed the Melik, while the wind piped shriller than ever. "can't you see that it was his fate? And who can argue with fate?"

"Who, indeed!" murmured the huddled peasants.

"I don't believe in fate." This time the speaker was Chai, the stranger. The other inmates of the sakhli peered at him with mingled suspicion and anger, almost with fear. The rich and powerful Melik, he believed in fate; so did Magistrate Gevo, the notecar of the village; and the pastor, no matter what sermons he preached, he well knew he was a mere tool in the hands of fate. All were subject to the inevitable power and were afraid of it. Only poor little Chai did not believe in or fear it.

"No, I don't believe in fate," Chai repeated in a bolder tone, aware of the mocking glances turned upon him, "and I could prove to you in a few minutes I'm right, if I did not have to go out to make the round of the village."

"Say, stay," several voices cried eagerly. "Magistrate Gevo, tell him to stay. Nobody is going to rob the village on such a night as this."

At the magistrate's request, Chai seated himself again, all eyes still turned curiously upon him. "There were ten of us that year," Chai began. "All of us stark mad. We all carried fire in our breasts, a fire kindled by the same stroke of lightning. It burned and drew us close to one another. We all had one intrepid heart, and what a heart! It was a sea flooded over with pain, lowering with shame, a forest set on fire by the passion for revenge. For months we wandered about from field to field, and from wood to wood, from ravine to ravine. We drank water with the snakes, and got our snatches of rest on beds of stone."

"What could we do? Too long for us we swallowed dishonor; our patience and suffering had been long, but our enemy's iniquity, his shameless brutality, knew no bounds. It was impossible to live any longer; there was no more bread, and what there was could no longer be eaten;

it had turned into gall and poison. We abandoned everything—house and family, land and possessions; and, in order to cleanse our honor, each took a gun and withdrew into the mountains."

"It was good that way; we were free. Oh, when a man carries such injuries in his bosom, when his child has been killed and his old father disgraced, then there is nothing in the world to console him; nothing. His breast boils and seethes. It takes fire, tears are unable to quench its flames, comforting words are but mockery and scorn. But when he presses the barrel of his gun close, close to his bosom, when he sees himself spitting death upon the head of his blood-stained enemy, then, only then, does his heart grow cool, and he feels that he, too, has a lambskin cap on his head. He has re-acquired his honor."

"The Turks and Kurds called us conspirators, but the Armenians called us 'spirits of revenge.' Terror stalked before us, and behind us lay death. We and the eagles remained the sole rulers of the mountains. And we resembled each other a little, for we had the same way of pouncing upon our prey. We went everywhere, and many were the Turks and Kurds whose beastly greed and lust we stifled forever."

"One day, when we were on top of Sun Mountain, our provisions gave out. I was chosen to go out and forage. I knew the villages in the neighborhood, but whether they were still inhabited, or had been destroyed, I did not know. However, there was nothing for me to do but go and try. I left my nest in broad daylight, unarmed, even without a club. I hoped I would not meet the enemy, and if I should meet him I thought I might save myself by having no weapons about me; or, if I should not save myself, then it was evidently my fate. For a long time I met no one, and absolute silence prevailed. Then, suddenly, I saw a tall Kurd approaching, a Hornsdy, armed from head to foot."

"Good day, friend," I said carelessly.

"Good day, Armenian," answered the Kurd, stopping and looking at me. "I did not stop, but walked on. Though I felt that the Kurd was still standing there, following me with his eyes, I walked no faster, so

as not to arouse suspicion.

"Hey, Armenian, wait!" he cried. I stopped and looked back. "It's my fate," I thought. And, in truth, fate might have borne the aspect of this Kurd. The rifle on his shoulder, the simitar at his side, the dagger with its white ivory handle stuck in his girdle, a hideous face with ferocious eyes precisely like a wolf's.

"He walked up to me. "In these days," he said, "no Armenian would dare to appear in this place. You look suspicious to me."

"Kurd," I said, "the times are bad, but don't forget that we are neighbors. As a neighbor, I tell you I am from Chut. You know we're starving there, so I am going to Derdshan to buy some bread for my children. Let me go in peace."

"No Armenian, you can't fool me. You don't look straight."

"Kurd, you believe in a God, too. You see I have no weapons on me, and no knife in my pocket. And even if I turned into a wild beast, what could I do to hurt you? I beg of you, let me pass."

"Come along. Walk in front of me. I'll take you to the police captain."

"The police captain! That would be dreadful. The police had been hunting for us a long time. 'Kurd don't take me to the police captain. I've nothing to fear, but I'll be late. My children are in an awful state; they're dying of hunger. For God's sake, Kurd, brother, neighbor, let me go!'"

"The Kurd remained inexorable. It's my fate, I thought, and with drooping head I walked in front of him. The superiority was all on his side—the gun on his shoulder, the poniard in his belt, the simitar at his side. What could I do with my two bare hands? It was certainly my fate, and so I walked on in advance of him without any thought of resistance."

"It was a beautiful day. The sun was bright, the sky clear, the mountains green. A crane soared up high in the air, free and bold. I don't know why, but, forgetting my plight, I began to watch the bird. Was it envy of its freedom, or was it something else that fascinated me? I do not know, but I kept looking at him. For a long time the crane soared in the air, then he suddenly swooped down upon a rock not far from us. He had seen a snake crawling there,

The snake writhed under the blow of the bird's wings, and hid its head beneath its coils.

"Both of us stood still. "You see," said the Kurd, "the Armenian is like a snake. He must be strangled."

"I did not answer, but kept looking. The crane struck the snake with its bill, and stepped across it. The snake made use of the interval trying to escape, but it had scarcely started when the terrible enemy was over its head. The snake again coiled itself together and hid its head."

"The Kurd was right. There was great similarity between the snake's fate and mine. The snake has also reached its destiny. It cannot escape any more," I thought. I even found some consolation in the idea.

"Gradually the crane grew bolder. His blows became more and more frequent. The snake still kept its head concealed, and continued to defend itself apparently very feebly."

"Suddenly, something remarkable occurred. The half-dead serpent, collecting all the remnant of its strength, made a final desperate effort, leaped and encircled the crane's long neck. In vain the bird tried to extricate itself from the deadly coil. He flapped his wings, prodded the ground with his bill, pulled backward and forward, rolled on the ground, and tried to rise again, to fly, to escape—in vain. The snake's desperate attack was terrible. Its coil drew tighter and tighter. At last, it was the bird which lay lifeless on the edge of the rocks. The snake glided away and disappeared."

"The Kurd was now silent. He looked at me. Our eyes met, and for a few seconds we were unable to turn our gaze from one another. Each of us endeavored to define what was in his opponent's mind. There was no doubt that the thoughts of each of us were terrible. So much we understood, so much we read in each other's eyes. I knew that the Kurd, angered by the snake's unexpected victory, had resolved to kill me. I read it in his eyes plainly, for his expression was now even more malicious than before. I knew the Kurds well."

"But my mind, too, began to work. The struggle between the snake and the crane had wrought a change in me also. I had never yet heard of a snake being able to strangle a crane. The crane is known to be the snake's

deadly enemy, the embodiment of fate.

"How was it that that day fate had not been fulfilled? Is it possible that God, who did not permit even so loathsome a creature as the snake to fall an unjust prey to the crane, would permit this Kurd, ten times more loathsome than the snake, to determine my destiny?"

"No, it is all a mistake about destiny, I thought. I must find a way of escape."

"And I began a long, silent deliberation with myself. I looked for a means of escape, but what could I find? I didn't even have a knife. At that moment, my eyes fell upon the Kurd's pretty poniard which was in his belt. Oh, if that poniard at least were in my hand!"

"Go on," cried the Kurd. "What are you stopping for?"

"I started. We descended into a ravine—a black hole, with no human soul around. The Kurd began to look about, his movements uneasy. He repeatedly took the gun from his shoulder, cannot be robbed of that right. I gradually slackened my pace. At any rate, I must not remain in front of the Kurd. That was dangerous."

"Quick! quick!" he urged. He was plainly trying to keep me ahead of him, while I was trying to keep alongside of him.

"We seemed to understand each other perfectly. We fought a silent battle for life and death, which was all the more terrible because of my treacherous nature."

"I stopped suddenly. I had to let my poniard slip from my hand. Without raising my head I observed his position from below. He stood erect at my right side; the white bill of the poniard shone from his belt. "Get done quick, Armenian," he said angrily, noticing my slowness.

"I lifted my head suddenly, snatched the poniard from his belt, and, before he had time to defend himself, I plunged it into his breast up to the very hilt. One piercing cry, then he tumbled to the ground. I was saved, and this is the poniard that saved me."

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Think Street Car and Interurban Fares Are Going Up—Cost Is High
Denver, Col., Aug. 19.—The possibility of higher street car and interurban fares for everybody in the country, as a result of the increased cost of materials used in traction operations was not scoffed at by officials of the local lines when they declared today that their operating expenses have gone up from 12 to 300 per cent in the last five years. The increased car fares would affect every street car and interurban system in the country, as all of them have experienced the same higher cost of doing business.
The company cited 12 American cities where increased fares have been demanded in the last two years. Toledo went back to the straight five cent fare from the three cent fare so long fought for. Cleveland restored the one cent charge for transfers. Several six cent city fares in Massachusetts towns were cited. A Massachusetts interurban company also was granted an increase.

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The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.
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LAWS OF OREGON AS APPLIED TO AUTOMOBILES
Compiled by
C. J. HOWARD and C. R. BISHOP

(From the Eugene Daily Guard.)
(Continued from last Saturday.)
another is turning into it from another or intersecting street. In all such cases there is no fixed regulation, and the rule of the common law prevails, requiring due care on the part of both. When an automobile coming out of one street turns sharply to the left hand, in other language "cuts the corner" the motorist fails in his duty, and is therefore guilty of negligence.
Running Over Pedestrians.—Pedestrians have a right to travel anywhere on a highway, and are not confined in the right to crosswalks. Persons driving automobiles along the road are liable if they do not take care so as to avoid driving against the foot passengers who are passing on the road. A man has a right to walk in the road if he pleases. It is a way for foot passengers, as well as for carriages. All persons have a right to walk in the road, and are entitled to the exercise of reasonable care on the part of those who drive automobiles on it. But pedestrians as well as all others are bound to exercise care according to circumstances and especially bound to look where they are going.
It is negligence for a foot traveler to attempt to cross the public thoroughfare ahead of vehicles of any kind, upon false calculations of the chances of injury. If such attempt be made and the calculations fail to the person's harm, he can have no address for injuries received in the mistaken effort. It is not the exercise of common or ordinary care on his part. When alighting from a street car, a person is not bound as a matter of law to look both ways; but he must look where he is going, and he must not walk blindly into danger. A driver of an automobile has the right to suppose that a person, whether on foot or in a vehicle, when duly warned in sufficient season, will not cross his path, or attempt to do so; but if he does make such attempt, it is the duty of the driver to do everything in his power to avoid an accident. When two automobiles are passing, it is the duty of each driver to look out for pedestrians suddenly appearing from behind the other automobile.
Persons Under Disabilities.—At times a greater degree of care is demanded of an operator of an automobile than at other times. Thus, if a person under obvious disability, such as old age, infirmity, lameness, drunkenness or the like is crossing the road, the duty of avoiding him is greater than if he were a person of ordinary capacity. Care and caution must be exercised in proportion to the apparent risk.
(Rabbit's Law Applied to Motor Vehicles, page 279.)
Children in the Street.—The rule of law is, that streets and highways are made for the use of all travelers, children as well as others. But in the case

quality than that of one who has not. If the speed was timed over a known or measured distance by a clock or other mechanical device in the possession of a person skilled in managing it, such evidence would have greater weight than that of a witness who spoke from impression only.
(Continued next Saturday.)

Blissful Depravity.
In a border southern town lives an elderly negro carpenter, who is locally distinguished for two things—the use of large words and his abiding fear of his wife, who is big, impressive and domineering. In this town a trio of young professional men keep bachelor quarters together.
"Boss," inquired the old man, in the midst of his work. "does you white gent'sme live heah in total depravity of the feminine sex?"
"We do," was the answer.
"From the bottom of his hen-pecked soul the old darkey fetched up a long, deep, sincere sigh.
"Well, sah," he said, "ef I wuz ez you is, I should suttinly remain so."
Saturday Evening Post.

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First Conference of Catholic Social and Charitable Workers Opens Today

New York, Aug. 19.—The first conference of Catholic social and charitable workers ever held, opened here today.
Rt. Rev. P. J. Muldoon, Bishop of Rockford, Ill., chairman of the social service commission of the American Federation of Catholic societies; Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Shanahan, of Washington, president of the Catholic charity conference of the United States; Sir Joseph Frey, K. S. G., president of the German Roman Catholic Central Verein, and John Paul Chew, president of the Catholic Press association of the United States, called the conference.
This conference preceded the fifteenth annual convention of the American Federation of Catholic societies, which starts here tomorrow and continues until August 23. The week is known as "Catholic Week in New York."
Twenty thousand Catholics were expected to attend from all parts of the United States. Fifteen hundred delegates will attend, representing three million members and, indirectly, 13 million other Catholics in the United States.
The speakers for tomorrow include Cardinal O'Connell, Bishop James A. McFaul, of Trenton; Governor Whitman, of New York, and John Whalen, national president of the organization. The business session of the convention will consider divorce, social reform, censorship of moving pictures, the Catholic theatre movement and other reforms.
Rev. Philip Gordon, of Winnebago, Neb., one of the Indian Catholic priests in the United States, will represent the Catholic Indian Bureau.

Some Odd Things

London, Aug. 19.—A noted professor declares the phenomenal position attained by labor during the war will mean the extinction of the middle classes.
Paris, Aug. 19.—French red tape reached its highest efficiency when a Portuguese man contributed 5,000 francs to the fund for war munitions received a statement for 25 francs required on all moneys they receive.
St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 19.—Minnesota saved \$224,811 by carrying its own insurance on state institutions for three years, according to records compiled by H. D. Werks, state insurance commissioner, today.
McGregor, Iowa, Aug. 19.—Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal church here have a close monopoly of the first class angle worm supply of this locality and they have forbidden any digging in the church yard—that being the scene of the monopoly—on Saturday or Sunday, in the hope that those who can't fish will come to church.
Nantasket, Mass., Aug. 19.—Shark fighters armed with long knives accompanied the two long distance swimmers,

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Charles Toth, of Boston, and Henry Sullivan, of Lowell, when they struck out from here on a 40-mile swimming race across Massachusetts bay to Providence today. This is one of the longest races ever staged. The shark fighters are keeping searchlights constantly playing on the swimmers.

Cincinnati, Ohio, Aug. 19.—Herman Laubis, aged 29, who runs a St. Louis elevator when he's not swimming, and who never has lost a distance race of over five miles in his career, is here today to compete for the silver trophy in the annual Ohio river swim. Laubis holds the U. S. 10 mile championship, western five mile, and every western A. A. T. title from 200 yards to the mile. He has been swimming for four years. Bud Goodwin, Chicago; Tom Horrocks, Pittsburg, and Halpin Burke, of St. Louis, also will swim.

First War Game of the Atlantic Fleet Begins Off Newport Tomorrow

Newport, R. I., Aug. 19.—Hasty preparations were being completed by the Atlantic reserve fleet today for the defense of the coast line against an enemy attack tomorrow. Battleships, destroyers, mine layers, submarines and

Fleet trains are at their posts and set to repel the invasion.
At the first peep of Sunday morning's dawn the Atlantic fleet will attack and attempt to effect a landing with its theoretical army of invasion. It will be the first of this year's war games, worked out by the war college.

The problem is: The reserve fleet, in command of Rear Admiral J. H. Helm, with the destroyer flotilla, will defend the approach to the vital parts of the coast from an attack by the present Atlantic fleet, with the submarines as auxiliaries. Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight will act as umpire on the new super-dreadnaught Pennsylvania. Particular stress will be laid upon the value of battle cruisers as an attacking force against a slower but heavier armored defending squadron. The radius of action will be about that of last year's.

"You say you are a pacifist?"
"Yes," replied the indignant person, "and let me tell you sir—"
"Hold on a minute!"
"Well!"
"If you are pacifist, don't shake your fist at me!"

Willie — Ma, may I have Tommy Wilson over to our house to play Saturday?
Mother — No, you make altogether too much noise. You'd better go over to his house and play.

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