

SHE MUSES ON HEAVEN

Golden streets? Well, maybe I don't know That I want golden streets, I'd think it

queer To see gold streets, or apples bending low On golden boughs, when Christmas

wasn't near. Music, perhaps-a homely kind of thing; Not choirs sounding solemnly and slow,

But hymns that folks can all join in and sing. Like "Praises to God, from whom all

blessings flow." And on a Sunday all the city'd ring With church bells calling every one to

Though I suppose there's always worshiping

And never time set for a service There. But it would be homelike, seems to me, To walk to church each morning at eleven

And hurry back because there's company (I s'pose you can have company in Heav en?). I'd want to, that I know, and if desires

Are just as much as granted with the wish. I'd keep right on, a-tending kitchen fires And fixing up a special company dish. I'd not enjoy to walk a golden street;

I'd rather live along a country lane And take my gold out in a field of wheat (I always think wheat's homey-like and plain).

I wouldn't ask to sail the jasper sea, Nor walk with angels on the starlit way; I'd just hope folks, plain folks, would talk

In the same casual, friendly sort of way, And lean upon my fence while I plant flowers

And train my crimson rambler on the gate With all eternity to fool away the hours, And never have to hurry when its late. I sometimes even dare to pray That He who knew Gethsemane

And loved the trees may stay some day And talk about my trees, with me.

IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE SAND squalid room.

tanceship with Mother Pretzel, and though almost everyone had heard of dia for a hundred years. her, and a number of rickshaws and ponies climbed the winding path to her house at odd hours, their owners seldom spoke of their visits; or, if they did, it was a low voice and with a laugh, half furtive, half sheep-

Someone had called her the "Witch I had no one to send. of Jakko," and the name clung to her. She told fortunes; not the ordinary affairs concerning dark women, journeys across the sea and unexpected legacies, but the future as it nor concealing never wrong, and as stories of her power spread quietly, more people climbed up the hill to see for themselves, and once having been, they went again, and Mother Pretzel told them month by month how they might avert evil, or find success.

She must have known more than half the official secrets of Simla, let alone how many others. When a man wants to know the future, he is usually communicative about his the better, and she refused to have a past, and she probably received queer confidences from high quarters. Luckily she had the gift of silence. It was whispered that a governor of a province had taken a fancy for

long walks around Jakko, unaccompanied by his A. D. C., and that members of council, generals and heads of departments were occasion-ally to be met with on the upper road make them sicklee." after dinner, and if encountered their

work, but she was clever, and in the main skillful, so that the frail silly women who went to her seldom came to any harm.

some time that I realized her significance. I was too hard-worked during the summer to have much time mation I determined to visit her norance and amazing knowledge. house in Jakko and form an opinion for myself as soon as I could.

At the end of October the "great ones" departed for Delhi, and by the middle of November the ice skating had begun, and what with paying farewell visits and mastering an outside edge, it was nearly Christmas before I saw Mother Pretzel, and then it was rather by her request than by my seeking. One evening when the first snow had come, and the skating was spoiled for the time, I sat in my study and watched the boughs of the deodar in my garden being slowly coated with white.

There was a knock on the door. and my chuprassy came in and told me that an old man wanted to see

"Chitthi laya hai? Has he brought a note?" I asked.

"Nay, Huzur, he says that his him.

I told him to bring the fellow in, and a minute later a grizzled old man in frayed clothes shuffled into the room.

lives in Jakko."

"What is your mem-sahib's name, and where does she live?" I asked. "Huzur," he answered, "she is the jadu wala mem, the old one, who

"Jadu mem" may be interpreted as "Magic Woman," and as I packed up my bag and looked out of the window, I reflected rather bitterly that the witch's victims always visited her on snowy nights.

our faces. The road wound up between the stark, black deodars, and there was no sign of life anywhere except the little chains of golden lights which circled below us, marking the main roads around the hill.

We took a steep path to the left and came to a dark roof crouching between the trees which grew closely all round it, hiding the house from the road. There was one feeble light in the window, and as the bearer pulled open the door a curious deep voice cried: "Khaun hai? Who is

there?" "The Doctor Sahib, Huzur," said

the old man. I walked into a room which was almost dark; the only light percolated through a farther door which was The voice had come from that ajar. direction, so, stumbling against the furniture, I made for the door and knocked. The voice said, "Come in,"

and I obeyed. Straight in front of me, sitting up stiffly in bed, was an old woman. At first I was only conscious of two large dark eyes, deep-set, ringed with bister and lambent like the eyes of an animal in the dark.

"Doctor Sahib, I sent for you, for I am varree bad. Yess, I may die red or supreme indifference must in- years old to my grandparents, and out before the dawn."

She never moved, and her deep voice with its chee-chee accent seemed curiously big for so small a creature. For small she was, with tiny hands and feet like those of an Inshe must have a good deal of dark blood. Her little hawk nose was beautifully formed, with the nostrils set at a slant, and crouching in the bed, she reminded one of some delicate, fastidious bird of prev.

It was obvious that she was very ill, and before I did anything else I sent for the bearer to set about -ELIZABETH EVELYN MOORE warming the place. The fire had on the watch for slights and rebuffs, gone out, and the smoky kerosene- and when these came, as come they lamp was the only light in the bare,

There was a charboy and a few Nobody knew why she was called bits of rickety furniture, and little "Mother Pretzel," or when she had else except two things which immefirst come to Simla. She was as diately caught my eye. They were much of an institution as Brown of the theatre, or the Monkey Fakir of framed, and the shawl around Moth-Jakko. As a matter of fact very er Pretzel's shoulders which was of few people owned to an acquain- that fine weaving and embroidery such as no hands have made in In-

> It was a queer night. I was kept busy, as Mother Pretzel was undoubtedly "verree bad," and by the time I had done what I could, it was good French or Spanish family-but too late and snowing too heavily for Anglo-India, that ugly busybody, me to go home; also, I dared not soon disillusioned them, and despite leave her. She needed a nurse, but his unmistakable air of breeding, he

Mother Pretzel had pneumonia, and all night long she looked at me out of her enormous ink-black eyes, lying motionless except for her small hands, which beat restlessly on the really comes; and she told the stark dirty rezai (native quilt,) as if they truth, neither inventing good luck, were playing an imaginary tom-tom. There was a wicker cage hanging from the ceiling covered with a casional glimpse of the snows to help cloth, and towards morning a series him finish the book he was writing. of harsh chuckles, yawns and throat-

clearings emerged from it. Kindlee uncover the birdee," were the only words which came from the bed all night, and as I did as she asked me the mynah bird inside the his long slender body curled up in cage slanted his head and echoed my arm chair. her words mockingly.

Next day Mother Pretzel was a lit-

"Noa, noa!" she cried in her odd. deep voice. "I won't have any girl from Calcutta or Sanawar peeping round my things. If you bring such a one here, Doctor Sahib, she will be verree ill." She chuckled wickedly. "As ill as I am. You can make

I didn't know if she really intendpraises of starshine and night walks ed to carry out her threats, but I were overloud to be convincing. Their was doubtful if any nurse would wives went less often and more se- stay in that queer house, so I concretly, for the most part veiled and sented to give instructions to an in rickshaw, for Mother Pretzel did ayah in a dirty sari, who appeared not confine herself to fortune-telling from nowhere and was evidently acolyte at some of the witch's mys-I was civil surgeon of Simla for teries, for she seemed to know a fair five years, and occasionaly I came amount about nursing, and eventualacross what I suspected to be her ly, between the two of us, we pulled Mother Pretzel through pneumonia.

week in Simla, so naturally the ice skating was at an end, and as I had It was not till I had been in Simla few friends and very little to do, I found myself spending a couple of hours a day with Mother Pretzel. She had a curious fascination for me, for anything outside my rounds, but She was so strange a mixture of as I picked up odd scraps of infor- superstition and shrewdness, of ig-

> As she got better she would sit up in bed, swathed in her marvelous old court intrigues in Indian States; she gave me queer bits of information about Eastern drugs and the treatment of disease, and whispered sly Decameron, over which she would chuckle wickedly, while the mynah echoed her laughter.

Although Mother Pretzel and I talked of many things, two subjects we studiously avoided: her own past which she never mentioned, and her trade of fortune-telling; of the lat- theme. ter we spoke only once. It was when I came to see her professionally for

"Doctor Sahib, you have been verery day and care for me. Some time Mother Pretzel will make a repay. ment for you-but now if you like I will see, and tell your life for you. Many sahibs came here to me for that, and some pay much monee, but added: "I'm sorry; I had no right to for you, Doctor Sahib, I will tell for imagine you thought that. But I'm turned to me. Oah, yess'—she gave an eldritch laugh-"I will tell for love." "Aha-for love, for love!" the

mynah shrieked, and hopped across the table to peck at my fingers. horror of fortune-telling. I suppose, having had more than my share of unhappiness, I dread to be told that willy-

lowing him. It was freezing cold, er to want to hear of misfortune the one has made me want to discuss with a wind from the ice-fields be- from her. I thanked her, and then the other." He sat down again, and yond the Shall blowing the snow in hesitated. She seemed to understand stared into the fire, speaking jerkily: for she put out her little hand and patted my arm.

"No matter, Doctor Sahib. I shall not tell. But I will give this gift." And she pressed into my hand the Mogul painting which I had so often looked at as I came into the room.

triculous care. I was touched by her gift, and knowing how lonely she was during damnable thing of all? I can never the winter, when most of her clien- marry. I can't ask a woman I love telle were away, I made a point of to be the wife of a coolie woman's

full of jewel-colored figures and cur-

going to see her as often as I could. Naturally I went less during the summer when my work claimed all my time, but I saw her once or twice hurt me. During all the years of during the season, and frequently our friendship he never had spoken during the winter. The following of his parentage before. year my friend Nevison came to Simla, and the events occurred through which I learned all there know much about my father, except him. was to know of Mother Pretzel.

liberately—when two men have been forting. Oh, he came of decent not see clearly. Do not fear; some the only sahibs in a place for three stock, I knew, so decent that they day you will be rich." uninterrupted years, an attitude to would never mention him. wards each other of friendship, hatevitably ensue. For me the three they brought me up. It was good of years of Kilapur had been years of them—they were a strait-laced old contentment and healing, after a pair, a clergyman of the old school great sorrow. Nevison's dreamy, and his prime wife—and you can half bitter idealism was the exact imagine how bitterly reticent they antithesis of my own outlook on life, were about my father's disgrace. dian woman, and though her skin and, as is so often the case with was yellowishly fair, I judged that fundamentally different natures, we fundamentally different natures, we for his name was never mentioned, found an immense sympathy grow- and of my mother I knew even less.

> his silences, his pride and his knowledge of unusual subjects repelled the ently is other people's opinion of cheerful type of man which predominates in the service. Then again, in a bad lot—and low caste. those days he suffered from a perverted sensitiveness, he was always must to everyone who differs from the run of his fellow men, he suffered

> over them keenly.
>
> There was no doubt of his having dark blood in his veins, and that all in their will? Were there no papers the world over carries with it a certain stigma. Otherwise he was all that a man should be-intellectual, amusing, with a decidedly ironic sense of humor and the most courteous of manners in the world. This courtliness, combined with a certain dignity and the darkness of his hair was labeled "Country," and though society received him, it was with reservations.

I had not seen Nevison for a couple of years, and his letter announcing his intention of coming to stay n air and an oc and needed mounts The evening he came I was called out to see a case, and so was not there to welcome him, but when I came home I found him in my study, and it was a pleasant thing to see

"This is good," he said, as he shook my hand, "and equally so is that," he added, as we walked over to the window and watched the crimson as I took my hat off, she chuckled light fade from the hills, leaving gaily and came forward. "Aha, the them steel-colored in the twilight.

during the years in which I had not a friend too. Come in, there is too seen him; he was going a little gray over the temples, and the dark, fine was wrinkled; he had always looked trailing frilled skirts which swept expensive a work unless he was willgrained skin round his gray eyes have taken his forty for much more

than forty-five. That night we sat over the fire after dinner, and he talked to me of the air was stale. his book. It was three-quarters finished, and he had put his whole soul into it, living and thinking of noth- first out of those lambent, penetrating else. Now all he wanted was quiet and cool air and freedom in which to acomplish the delicate process of correction and elimination. The pine logs hissed and crackled, ed to Nevison. We had four feet of snow that lighting up his sallow, charming face and animated hands. He leaned for- slender yellow hand. ward as he continued to describe the main idea of the book.

It was a history of the Moguls, not of the great emperors, but of those princelings who succeeded Aurangzeb, the stock of Timur which

He presented not the dry bones of history, but rather the decomposing shawl, and talk for hours, emphasiz- flesh of an empire shrouded in rich ing her speech with quick gestures silk. He described it all—the crumb-which were purely Indian. She told ling splendor, the court intrigue and silk. He described it all—the crumbme endless tales of the forgotten the gradual fall of a great dynasty. was amazed, not only by the brilliance of the conception, but by Nevison's amazing knowledge of detail. He made the court life of those scribed the follies, pleasures and ideas of that age with such extra"Noa, noa; when you come to this Do not be worrying. It is arl writstories of harems with a flavor of the days move before my eyes. He deordinary fidelity that it was almost as if he had inherited memories from

some former incarnation. "Well, what do you think of it?" he said, when he had outlined the laming by the door.

"I think it's even greater than you you can perfect it, it'll be as great a book as Tod's Rajasthan. It is lion's share. Mother Pretzel was mem-sahib is very ill, and prays that ree good to me. I am good-for-noth-the Doctor Sahib will come with ing old ladee, but you come here evaluation in the strangely gay, and I was glad to see amazing to me that you should have strangely gay, and I was glad to see such insight into mentality of the that she and Nevison appeared to such insight into mentality of the that she and Nevison appeared to mackintoshes. well-born Indian-

"You mean, when I may be the son of a coolie woman," he interrupted me, with a sneer, and then, catching sight of my face, he repented, and sore, sore about everything. It's damnable "

He flung himself out of his chair and began to walk up and down. "Forgive me. I didn't mean to

"I'm tired—I don't mean physically, but mentally. What I need-

look after you and not let you think too much.' He was overwrought, and I wanted

It was an exquisite piece of work, him to go to bed without further a seventeenth-century hunting-scene, discussion. But he wouldn't stir. "No, doctor," he insisted. "You marry. I can't ask a woman I love ly resonant voice.

> He dropped his head between his monee the work will be failing." hands, and the bitterness in his voice

"But you don't know-" I said. "That's just it-I don't. I don't that he was a blackguard and died I write the words "my friend" de- in jail-a fact which is hardly com-

"I was sent home when I was two

"I never learned what caused it, My grandfather had me taken away ing up between us.

Nevison is a man of few friends; from her by a fellow clergyman, and to judge by myself and what apparme, she was an Indian and probably

"There's the rub. I may be the descendant of a line of sweepers. It makes me sick. I don't suppose my father married her-I gathered from the silences of his family that matrimony would hardly have appealed to him.

"Did the old people mention him

"Absolutely nothing. My parents died within a week of each other of influenza, while I was abroad. There was no money, so I drifted out here into the Salt Department. Back to my country. The call of 'home,' I suppose." He laid he was horribly moved. and skin, often gave strangers the impression that he belonged to some good French or Spanish family—but "It's good of you to bother about "It's good of you to bother about such a son of Hagar."

I was very busy during the following week, and Nevison worked hard at his book, which seemed to be progressing well. One afternoon I happened to be free, and I suggested that a walk would be pleasant.

We climbed to the top of Jakko, lonelee.' and suddenly I remembered Mother wrote that he had four months' leave, her, and he was immensely amused age had been like a blow on an old we should call on the old lady on our way home. As we came in sight he would come again. of the crouching, dark roof of Mother Pretzel's house, I heard the myn-

ah say: "Kahaun hai? Who is there?" His cry roused Mother Pretzel, and her little odd figure appeared at the

door. "Khaun hai? Who is it?" Then, as I took my hat off, she chuckled Doctor Sahib; that is verree good, Nevison had not changed much not to be forgotten. Yess, yess, and much light here."

the fashion of the 'eighties, with long old for his age, but one would not after her and upset the mynah, who came fussing behind. After the briliant sunshine outside, the little room seemed dark and gloomy, and

"Now I can see you both," said Mother Pretzel. She stared at me

ing eyes. "Atcha," she smiled. "You are the same, a man who is always kindlee, and always sad." Then she turn- I asked her to use her influence, and "What is his name? she asked, pointing at him with her

I told her. She said it over slowly two or three times, and I noticed that the fingers of her hand, which was still raised, trembled very slightly. There was a long minute during which they looked at each other. India had sapped of strength and Nevison was completely, charmingly at his ease, in a situation which a Eurasian fortune-teller and purwould have made most men, even the very self-possessed, a little uncomfortable.

> "Do not grieve for what has been," she said dreamily. "It was all written, and you can never rub it out." ed away quickly and clapped her

hands. "But now you gentlemen must take refreshment. Cups of tea you old one's house so seldom it would ten.' be a great shame to refuse her entertainments. Bring tea," she commanded the bearer, as he stood sa-

The tea came, strong and served in battered tin cups, and there with the mynah, giving him the have taken a great liking for each They laughed and joked, and other. finally Nevison said:

my fortune, Mother Pretzel?" She looked up as he spoke, and bed, and she motioned us to sit urned to me. "The Doctor Sahib down.

will not like that!" "Oh, nonsense!" he laughed, and waved my protests aside. 'I insist." Mother Pretzel walked over to a rickety chest of drawers which stood start talking about my eternal feud in a corner of the room, and brought very slow pulse.

from her everything European, she temperatures, Doctor Sahib, and to made a gesture and squatted native bring out drugs and arl. It is my fashion on the floor, pouring the fine sand into a pool and smoothing it When an Indian, or one so near flat with her small, delicate hands, the Indian as Mother Pretzel, makes

squares and characters on the sand, and stared in front of her all the was watching my face; he undertime, her great black eyes filling her face. I watched the pupils contract to pin-points as she said the names veting horses, with every detail of must let me have my say tonight. I of the seven spirits. Then, when dress and caparison drawn with me- can't shut up all this bitterness any she had finished the invocation and longer—and I know you'll under- dropped her eyes and looked at the stand. Don't you see that's the most sand. There was a pause before she began to speak in her deep, curious-

"You have need of much monee for a great work; without that "That's true enough," said Nevi-"I don't suppose any publisher

will take the book. But there's no

money, Mother Pretzel, nor ever like-

ly to be, as far as I can see. She held up her hand to silence "But the monee will come by death in a veree strange way. That I can-

As she saw the amused incredulity on his face, she turned to me. "Doctor Sahib, you know how wise

am. Do not let him laugh." "I'm not laughing, Mother Pretzel." He leaned forward, and as an idea crossed his mind. I saw a look of intentness come into his grav eyes. "Now, of the Past-what do you see of my past, of-of my par-

entage?" he asked. There was silence again. Then, to my amazement, I saw the little crouching figure become suddenly rigid, her face darkened and grew livid, that dead, grayish color which in an Indian denotes deep fear or emotion. Her lips moved, and I caught a whisper, not of clipped

Eurasion English, but Utah: "The name—and the eyes, like water. Aie, what blindness." She swayed, stared at Nevison, and then her exquisite hands, grown suddenly predatory, clawlike, swept out and violently erased the signs, scattering the sand over our feet. "I shall not tell you. Noa, noa, I

shall not say."

The mynah shriled the words after her, and she got up, looking very old, shrunken and gray.

Nevison said nothing. He picked up his hat and stick, and I could see "What is there to pay?" he asked. turning to go.

The old woman ran forward and caught at his coat, looking up at him rather pitifully. "I will take nothing, no, not a pice from you, not a single pice. Do not

be angree, there is no need for sadness. I will tell some day. Please to come again and see me. I am veree Nevison's trouble was dark on him. with me was very welcome. He Pretzel. I began to tell him about Her refusal to speak of his parent

> eyes, and he promised Mother Pretzel We walked down the path, and at the turn I looked back and saw her

little wizened figure standing at the Nevison shut himself into his room to write that evening, and neither of us spoke much at dinner. He was as good as his word and often climbed the hill to Mother Pretzel's tum-

ble-down house, and as the result of his visits a great friendship grew up between them. The rains were nearly over, and his book had come back from the She wore rusty black clothes of publisher. It was, as he had expect-

ed, impossible to publish so large and ing to put down \$800 himself. He was bitter and wretched, feeling that his years of toil had been fruitless, and in his maddening pride he would not consent to borrow from me. Finally, in desperation, I went to

Mother Pretzel. Nevison had confided in her, and before the book was sent to the publishers I knew she had helped him, giving him details of Mogul court life and ceremonials. persuade him to be more reasonable. It was ridiculous of him to refuse a loan from me, who had known him so well and for so long. Looking on things now, I realize

how odd it was that we two men should have been so deeply influenced by that little disreputable creature. For disreputable she undoubtedly was, in the eyes of the worldveyor of illicit drugs. And yet, I went to her for advice on a subject which I never should have mentioned to anyone else.

"It was written in the sand, on that first day," she said, as we sat As she ceased speaking, she turn- in her dingy room, filled with the sour smell of the mynah's food. "Doctor Sahib, do not say one word more to Mr. Nevison, and wait patientlee. I must think of many

> Three days later, as we sat over the fire after dinner, there was a knock at the door and Gulam Mohammed, the bearer, came in. "Huzur, the jadu mem-sahib's ser-

vant has come. The mem is ill, and realize it to be," I answered. "If were Indian sweets which we shared prays that both the sahibs will go to her house." "I wonder why she wants us both,"

said Nevison, as we put on our

She was lying in bed, looking smaller than ever, with her great eyes shining like lamps on either side "Well, when are you going to tell of her little hawk nose. There were broken chairs on each side of the

> "Mother Pretzel," I said, "Mr. Nevison had better wait in the next room while you tell me what is the matter with you." I took her clawlike hand. It was icy-cold, with a

It was growing dark, and we set I shall suffer again. I could forsee nilly I must talk to you. I think of feet. She motioned us to sit in two that I should go soon. Tonight is an off, the old man leading, and myself no happiness, and I had too much nothing else—except my book—and chairs close to the door opening on auspiciouslee good time, and tonight the veranda. Then, as if she cast I will go out. It is no good to take When an Indian, or one so near "What you need, my son," I said while she murmured something, I lightly, "is a comfortable wife, who'll suppose a charm, under her breath. With a pointed stick she drew over and over again. It is the will to live that preserves life. Nevison stood at once, and with his quick, tender impulsiveness he took the old woman's hands, and his voice shook

a little as he said: "Why won't you live, Mother Pretzel? Why do you want to leave us?" She patted his sleeve. "For the young, living is good, but for the old, death he is better. Sit down, Doctor Sahib. I have many things to say, and there is not veree long.' The bird hopped up and down rest-

lessly at the head of the bed, and outside, the night was very stil. "How shall I know where to begin? My mind thinks veree stupidlee, and my speech is slow. Doctor Sahib, you think I am a Kiranee, a half-caste. Noa, noa, you are wrong." She struggled up on her pillows and sat erect. "I am Sitara Bebum, the daughter of the King of Oudh, of the line of Akbar Padishah

the Great.' She slipped back, and lay watch-

ing our faces. "Kindlee give me water. I have so much to tell." Her words came with difficulty, and then an idea struck her. She smiled. "I will not speak Angreji, it is so uglee. I will speak my own way."

When she had sipped the water she spoke again, but in the beautiful slow phrases of court Urdu, which is half Persian and the loveliest in the East.

Sometimes her mind wandered. She told us irrelevant incidents of her youth, and as she remembered the past a great dignity came to her, so that we felt as if we were subjects watching by the bed of a queen. "It was long ago-when my people had been banished from Nucklao after the madness of the Black Year. and we dwelt in the house by the river, in the city of Calcutta. There, in the hot season, was I born of my mother, Badamo, the third daughter of the Nawab of Murshidabad, and the third wife of King of Oudh.

"Being born upon a Wednesday, I was named Sitara, daughter of the stars, and at the casting of the horoscope it was foretold that I should be given strange wisdom. Yea, I could see the paths of life, and from the age of five years the ladies of the household would bid me blacken the palms of my hands and stare into them, seeing the answers to their questions as it were in a mirror. Also I had knowledge of births and deaths and the rulings of the stars, and I could see into men's minds and watch the shuttle of their thoughts

weaving. "It was soon known amongst the ladies of many households that I was possessed of these gifts, but though they were eager enough to by what he was pleased to call my wound. But nevertheless, his charming, haunting smile came into his to take me as a daughter-in-law. betrothed and unsought, and there was a shame laid upon our house. My father spoke harsh words to me,

and the ladies of the house reproach-

ed me, wherefore I was unhappy and my heart was heavy. 'It was our custom in the hot season to drive in a carriage at the time of sunset, when there was some breeze to stir the curtains which shut out prying eyes from the carriage windows. For I was purdah nashin in those days, Doctor Sahib, and they would have slain you slowly if they had found you seated as you are now. And I was very fair. Did they not call me Gulab-dill, Heart's Rose?"

She laughed softly to herself.

Yea, in the cool of the evening I drove with my women, and Eblis, the Evil One, sent a swift gust of wind which snatched at the purdah, and blew it away so that it flew like a white crane into the trees, leaving me shameless and unveiled. Ave. shameless, for I never covered my face with my chudder. I was bewitched, staring into the eyes of one who stood an arm's length from the carriage door. A sahib, tall and grayeyed, with a sword at his side. He smiled on me, as I on him, but we said no word. Then one of the women cast a garment over the window and bade the saice drive on.

"Two days later Huneefa the mudwadeen (go-between) came to the house bringing rich stuffs from Benares, and whilst the trader waited below she praised his wares, knowing she would be given money on all that she sold. My mother Badamo was there, and my aunt Ameena, and my sister Miriam, she who was to be married on the twelfth day of that month. She was four years younger than I, and she mocked me, calling me 'ill-omened.'

"Then they all reproached me," saying that I was accursed and no would ever take me-and I man should die barren and unwed. So they said. Then, laughing among themselves, they made Huneefa undo the bales, and decked themselves in the saris and golden cloths which she had brought. But I turned my face to the wall and wept, for I was unloved and accursed. Then Huneefa made pretense of showing me a waistcoat of woven silver, came to my side and said, speaking low:

'Do not weep, Bergum Sahiba, for there is one more valiant than Rustum himself, who is not blind, having seen the daughter of the stars. He bade me bring you this.' She dropped at my feet a letter sewn into a square of silk. All through two nights I had lain sleepless, thinking of the gray eyes and the smile of the Feringee—the white man. "I was afraid-I dared not touch

the letter. "'Do not fear, Begum Sahiba,' she whispered. 'He is mad with love. Did he not seek me out and fill my hands with silver, bidding me find a letter-writer to whom he could say

sweet words, not knowing how to (Continued on page 3, Col. 3)