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CHAPTER L

tached itself from the surrounding em-broidery and flew viciously at Meryon's head. He heard Terah's voice raised - * * however, there's no fathoming in warning, and saw two black mount the mysteries of oriental-diplomacy. tains at the verge of a desolate plain,

ray of sunlight from the east window rested on it-by which token he knew It was about nine o'clock.

The room in which he lay was beau

tiful and—as the bedchamber of a modern young American-singular.

Lofty and of good size, it was rather narrow for its length. Polished marble of tender hues paved the floor, the central part of which was depressed several inches below the ends, and in a basin in the depression leaped and fell the slender-jet of a fountain. A high dado glowed with oriental tiles colored like fading sunsets, and the walls above were hung with tapestries stained as with crushed roses and violets. Higher still was a wide border of dark brown wood exquisitely carved, and above this the four windows, a foot high by four times that width. Silks of mellow tone draped the ceiling.

Along three sides of the south end of the chamber extended a broad divan part of which served Meryon as a bed Here and there about this dim, lovely room stood vases of wrought bronze and fine porcelain. Within reach of his arm was a triple gong on a carved wood stand, with a hammer hanging by a silken cord. Meryon struck thrice upon this graceful instrument, and three soft notes of an octave's interval tingled on the air. As they subsided the portiere was pushed open, and a graceful figure entered, bearing a tray with coffee, cakes and cigarettes.

Had the figure been fully draped, you would have taken it for that of a girl, so refined and beautiful were the aquiline features and the shaggy cloud of soot-black, fine-spun hair, which fell on the shoulders. But the supple body, naked from the waist up, was that of a boy of twelve or fourteen, tawny as fine bronze. Girt round his loins was a skirt of dark blue gossamer stuff, with silver lines running through it and a silver fringe, and about his neck double necklace of delicate silver links hung half way down his breast. Black as night were the great eyes which met Meryon's blue ones, and radiant the smile of greeting which revealed his

The ensuing dialogue, though carried on in an oriental tongue, shall for the sake of uniformity be here given in the

English equivalent. The top of the morning to you, Ebal, my beauty!" said the American. Meryon laughed. "That's all right, blue eyes wandered from his work as

"You're a sight for sore eyes! Did any one ever tell you that you look sur-Meryon awoke with the issue of an priningly like the divine Princess Interesting dream in doubt. Terah had Terah-God bless her! Maybe only an admitted that she loved him; the prince artist who has painted your portrait had seemed disposed to hear reason; as often as I have could see it in your but just then the purple and gold her- present rig; but put on one of her delic beron which formed the central dresses and anyone would know it device of his highness' state banner do-

"Honored lord," murmured the boy,

sundered from each other by a rugged in a tone of half frightened remondefile. The sun was setting behind the strance, but smiling still. He knelt and placed the tray upon the divan be-He yawned and glanced at the long side his master. Then taking a cigarsilver chain by which a lamp of piercest ette from the enameled box on the tray brass depended from the ceiling. A he put it daintily between his lips and



Tenuah Sent You The."

inhaled a single whiff of fragrant smoke, he handed it to Meryon with a with the complacency of one who knows his east and likes it.

"I don't know whether this is most then to Ebal: "What news have you Romance lingers in this old world yet, brought me, you rascal? What of the rose who makes cabbages of all other roses-the star that makes a brass kettle of the sun? Have you brought me nothing from her?"

Now, Ebal thought Meryon a wonderful and worshipful being, but as a from catching a rapturous impression. Give us ten minutes' start, and 'they'll born oriental he was frightened by the of her dusky grace and glorious eyes. have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth audacity of his passion for the young Fat old Hatipha, with pendent cheeks princess. From a fold of his girdle he flapping, bustled up in vast perturba-took a small rosebud, such as grew on tion and whipped the princess out of the gardens of Saadi or of Omar, and the infidel's sight as fast as he could. presented it to the other as if it were a But Senuah, following, threw over her fragile explosive.

you and to say that the lion must beware of the pitfall which the hunter digs in his path. That means Hatipha, the head eunuch-how I hate the old beast?" he added, lowering his voice to

a whisper.

and Senuah is our confidante because been stealing a thousand glances at the she's your sister and the princess' fa- back part of the shop! Again, from a vorite maid—and there's no one to take | meshrebic-screened window (chartered | in sprang Ebal, evidently in a fright. her place. But I can hold my tongue when I see fit. And when the time comes"-here he bestowed upon the outh a wink of great significance. "I'll take you along with us to America and make your fortune. Well, now, be off, my beauty, and leave me to drink my coffee and meditate!"

But I may help my lord to dress later?" asked Ebal, reluctantly retiring from the fascinating presence. When I'm ready I'll hit the gong There - Allah - II-Allah Bismillah! Clear out!"

As Ebal vanished with a smile and a sigh, Meryon fell upon the bud with amorous ranture. It fared badly, as buds are apt to do, in the cause of love, After smelling and kissing it till it looked as if ruined by premature dissipation, the lover ended by devouring , petals, callx and all, as if by incorporating it with his budily subscance to mystically bind to his own the soul of his beloved. Then he drank his coffee and took counsel with himself.

fortune that made him more than in-dependent of the world. He had right and visit the confectioner, or to a capital full-length portrait of his host. because, for sooth, the street sive behoof. The prince was not only kissed ravenously through the lattice at all times accessible to him without work, and, when at last the debate ceremony, but could not get enough of with Senuah came to an end, folded enter of interest. This was all very |-paradoxical as it may seem-it

But algs for insatiable human nature to furnish her with another! and malicious fate! One day towing to a concatentation of accidents which orient, and under the shadow as it were cannot here be detailed) he met face to of the bow-string, was this love affair face and unpremeditatedly the only carried on, until this very morning of daughter of the prince, Terah the beau- the rosebud. How was it to end? Ah, lit it at the silver spirit lamp. Having tiful. It was all up with him in a mo- how indeed! ment; and her oriental fancy seems to have been no less captivated by the charming obeisance and he accepted it fresh complexion, handsome features der the noses of her father and the They loved each other at the first intention, as surgeons say, just as young like Aladdin's palace or a glorified people used to do in the golden prime Turkish bath," said he to himself; and of the good Haroun Alraschid. Ah!

as we shall see! Meryon had the tact to cover his face with his hands, and the presence of princess replaced her veil not so hastily as to prevent a quick, artist glance shoulder an arch glance which in "I know nothing myself, mighty lord America would have passed for a wink -but Senuah said I was to give this to of sympathetic intelligence. Mischief

Then followed intrigue. One afternoon the back part of the booth of ination. Musreddin, the jewel-merchant, contained a new apprentice, with huge turban and voluminous drapery, whose

kissing it. "Don't you be scared. I'm during the half hour she chaffered with pot-bellied old nondescript like that-I looking out for you; and I'm wiser than the jeweler over the price of a ring—guess not! I'll go down and interview a thousand such old mules as Hatipha. which, on the other hand, she would Musreddin as quick as I can get my I talk openly to you because I love you. never have looked at twice, had she not



He Met Face to Face the Only Daughte of the Prince.

for the purpose), who glowed invisi-He was an American artist in search | ble and impassioned while Terah, her of the beautiful, whose devotion to his divine countenace not ten inches from art was proved by his possessing a his, debated interminably with Senuah brought good letters of introduction to the left to the silk mercer's; while Hatithe prince of this little kingdom, and pha, the unsuspicious, stood in the had confirmed his welcome by painting shadow hard-by, with mind at ease Great favor was his; a suite of rooms in empty. Empty !-- and all the while the palace, and servants for his exclu- Terah's soft finger tips were being his society. During his two months' themselves about a love-note designed sojourn he had made a lot of valuable in the most gloriously extravagant studies, in many of which Ebal in all terms! No name was signed to that poses and costumes, or with no costume | note, but perhaps the princess didn't save his own boyish beauty, was the thenceforth wear it in her bosom until worn out, and means had to be devised

"No doubt," Meryon said to himself, "eloping with an oriental princess un and red hair of the occidental stranger. head cunich isn't the easiest thing in the world-I never said it was! But a bonanza like that is worth a risk. The boldest way is the best; bribe Musredof the good Haroun Alraschid. Ah! din again; wait with the horses at the back door in the alley; she comes in to buy a new ring; frightful row in the street at the front between two cameldrivers; Hatipha mounts guard at the mind to look through his fingers. The front door; Terah slips into a rear room and a suit of boy's clothes and so out at the back, mounts, and we're off young Lochinvar! That's the gramme. Sorry to play such a game on the poor old prince, but that is the fault of the oriental system-and oh, my soul! what an armful of heaven she

> He caught up a pillow and vicariously pressed Terah to his heart. Like other lovers he was sometimes constrained to wreak himself on his imag-

> "I quite pity Hatinha, too," he said, when he came to himself, "but in the bright lexicon of my youth there's no such a word as getting bested by any

clothes on."

He reached for the gong, but ere he could strike it the curtains parted and [To Be Continued.]

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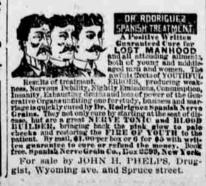
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