



ONCE GIRL'S WAY

EDITH VEZOLLES DAVIS



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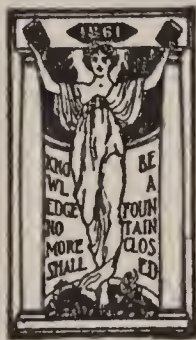
“WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?”—Page 55.

ONE GIRL'S WAY

BY

EDITH VEZOLLES DAVIS

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN GOSS



BOSTON

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ONE GIRL'S WAY

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To
MY SONS,
NORVIN AND READ

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ONE GIRL'S WAY

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CHAPTER I

A HOUSE DIVIDED

“ Now see here, Anise, wasn't that Namar Harjad, I just saw, dodging out the gate, as I came in? ”

Richard Lyman slammed the front door with more than customary force, tossed a heavy sweater and a stack of books upon the hall rack, and stood regarding his cousin, Anise Decard, now halfway up the curving staircase, with a sort of paternal severity.

“ Dodging? ” She turned with an aggrieved air. “ I don't think you could call it that, Dick. He walks with unusual dignity, I think. He's straight as a rod. ”

“ Yeh — ” agreed Dick, scornfully. “ No doubt, from carrying baskets of plaster cupids on his head, around the East Side, or rolls of carpets, or maybe jugs of water, back in Syria, when he was a kid. ”

“ You're guessing now, Dick, and — badly. ”

A stain of red was appearing under each of her blue eyes, and to hide the disconcerting flush which she knew would be a new cause for a continuance of Dick's lecture, she seated herself on the stairs, pulling off the blue sweater that brought out all the lovely sheen of her short golden hair.

"No, I'm not guessing! Rod Drake was telling some of the fellows that he saw this Namar person last spring when they were in New York. They were taking in the East Side — slumming, you know — and this Namar was peddling rugs from a push-cart."

"I don't believe it!" she flared, "but suppose he did? It's honest toil, and he's so — so —"

"Mysterious, I guess you mean." Dick hung over the newel-post and looked up at her with new severity. "You're just the person to be attracted to that kind, Anise. You believe in every one. You think that because you're everything that's all right, the whole world is the same. It's because you've never bucked up against any but your own sort. Living all your life on that Kentucky farm with Aunt Letty has given you the idea that all

people are alike. You'll find out that a college town is full of all sorts and conditions of beings. And this hash-slinging Namar, with his velvet eyes, his pearly teeth, and his suave manners, is right where he belongs — waiting on the rest of humanity. Can't you see he's naturally servile? The fellow's got absolutely no pride. He takes the jeers and the jests of the multitude without making the least attempt to punish their familiarity."

"That's just it, Dick! He's *above* the rest of the crowd. He's *too fine* to belittle himself with their coarseness."

"Don't fool yourself, Anise. His life is far from being an open book. It's these people who don't mix with the rest that will bear watching!"

"But how can he, when you all snub him? I think he's to be commended rather than censured. Just because he's working his way through, is no reason why — He can't help it if he hasn't —"

"Now you've got me all wrong, Anise. There's plenty of fellows doing the same thing. Fine fellows. You don't suppose it's because he's poor, that I'm objecting to him, do you?"

It's because he's different — foreign — queer. He's *not* like us. Let him make friends among his own kind."

He stood now, his hands in his pockets, his dark brows knit closely over stern grey eyes. "He's got to keep away from you, Anise, or there'll be trouble, and that's *that!*"

The red was in her cheeks again. Her full lips had tightened to a narrow line, but she showed no other sign of anger.

"Listen, Dick, I don't know whether or not I can make it all clear to you, but I'd like to try. It won't take long," she added, as he glanced hastily at his wrist watch.

"Well, I've got a little grinding to do," with a glance at the books flung so hastily on the rack. "I can't see why they make such a to-do over credits. You'd think they'd make a few allowances for team members. What would college be without good athletes?" he grumbled.

"That's one thing I want to mention, Dick," she said gently. "You seem to think that the only thing important about college life is staying on the team, belonging to the right fraternity or sorority, and mixing with the right crowd."

“ Sure, Anise, you’ve got the idea, but I didn’t think you saw things that way.”

“ I don’t, Dick. It’s you who see college life that way — you and Lucille.”

“ Lucille? She’s in for a lecture, too. She seems to get less brains as the days go by. She’s drifting into the wrong crowd. All they think of is having a good time. They’re soft, that crowd — out to do as little hard work as possible.”

He flung out both arms, stretching them to full length, looking complacently down at the muscle that swelled beneath his striped blazer sleeve, as he drew back a heavy fist to each shoulder.

“ They’re here, just because they don’t know what to do with their money, and they think it sounds cultured to the home town to be attending college. I’m going to put Dad wise to Lucille when he gets in. But I know just about what he’ll say. He’s too busy with his own affairs, and that’s what Aunt Dell’s here for — to look out for us. But you know how much influence Aunt Dell has on Lucille. She’s too fond of bridge parties and dancing, herself.”

“ But Aunt Dell’s so young,” said Anise in

defense. "I don't think she realizes that Lucille —" She stopped abruptly. She had no intention of criticizing Lucille.

"She doesn't —" Dick agreed. "And you don't, either — about this Namar."

"And you don't, either, Dick," she interrupted. "I was trying to tell you that it's my opinion we all want to get something entirely different out of our college life, and we can't see each other's point of view, because we're sort of blind. Do you remember that story in our reader, when we were children, about the three blind men, sitting beside the roadside when an elephant came along? Each took his turn at feeling the strange beast, and each reported a different verdict, because each had felt a different part of the elephant's anatomy."

"What's that got to do with college?" he asked, a bit impatiently, with another glance at his watch.

"Well, college is like the elephant, Dick, and we are like the blind men. To you, college means athletics, a chance for honor in the world of sports. To Lucille, it means an opportunity for more and better fun. To me —" She hesitated. "I don't know whether I can ex-

plain, or not, Dick, but it means something beside just learning, though I do want that. It means a chance to know people — people who are different. It means — ”

There was the sound of quick footsteps on the veranda, the hall door was flung open, and a girl, so similar in appearance to Dick that they might have been taken for twins, came hurriedly in, uttering a little cry of satisfaction at the sight of them.

“ Such luck! Was afraid I’d miss one, or both of you. I need some money, Dickey-bird, but I’m sure you haven’t enough, so no doubt Anise will make up the difference. It’s just fifteen, and Dad’ll be here in a day or so, so you won’t have to wait long.”

Dick turned a severe countenance upon his sister. “ I thought that ‘ Dickey-bird ’ stuff was out, long ago, Silly,” he said, “ but of course if you *will* keep it up, I’m willing to keep on with ‘ Silly,’ instead of Lucille, and I won’t confine myself to the family, either! ”

“ Sorry, big boy! It slipped out, by mistake. That’s always the way, when I want to be at my best. But youthful crimes have a way of cropping out to disconcert one, at times.

You know, dearie, I wouldn't do anything to embarrass you, especially since you've made the team — my big, strong hero!" She gazed upon him in unaffected admiration. "Now do I get that loan?" She turned to Anise with a coaxing smile. "You can spare a little, I'm sure, since you don't play bridge, or — or —"

"Say, look here, Lucille," Dick interposed. "You take Anise for a good thing. And as for me, I've just two dollars and I need that myself."

"That's what popularity does for one," Lucille complained. "I don't see why you need be so generous with the fellows, Dick. They're the ones who ought —"

"I haven't time to go into that, Lucille. Got to get my work done. The fellows are coming over to-night to work on signals. Sorry I can't accommodate you." He scooped up his books, and hastily climbed the stairs. At the top he stopped. "I'm warning you, Lucille. I think Dad ought to know the way you're carrying on, and I mean to tell him, when he comes."

"Yes, do, old Spartan! Now that you're on the team, you think we all ought to go in train-

ing, just because you are. Well, I'm going to have my fun as long as it's possible. We're only young once."

Dick was no longer listening. They heard the slam of his door, and the turning of his key, which meant that he would open it to no one, until he had mastered a certain amount of the next day's work. Dick was not a good student, but he did manage to keep his credits up enough to stay on the team, which was all that he deemed necessary. As Anise had said, to Dick, athletics was the prime attraction of college life.

"Another fond dream dissipated," Lucille remarked, with a shrug. "I suppose it's too much to expect of you?"

"Why, no, Lucille, I've hardly touched my allowance this month. Come up to my room and I'll give you a check."

"There's a nice cousin! What a refuge you are, in time of storm. Regular old rock of ages."

They started up the stairs together.

"There's the 'phone ringing. Guess it's for me. Be with you in a second." Lucille snatched the telephone up from the little table

on the stair landing, dismissing Anise with a nod.

In her room, Anise stood irresolutely against the closed door. Seldom did she enter without pausing to look about her. It was too perfect to be real. That was her impression of it on the day of her arrival. The ivory bed, with its garlands of mauve and green flowers, and matching silk spread; the dressing-table with its array of ivory and colored-glass containers; the long divan, with its cluster of vivid silk, satin, and velvet cushions; the wide windows with their mauve silk hangings and shorter curtains of ruffled Swiss, all contributed to the impression that the room had been intended for some fragile princess, not for Anise Decard, accustomed all her life to the rigid severity of her Aunt Letty Nelson's Kentucky farmhouse.

She had caught her breath that first day, and hurried to the window, to hide from Lucille's curious eyes, the mist which she felt thickening among her lashes. She hated herself for her weakness, but it was something she could not control. Always the sight of beauty, did that to her — the apple orchard, when its massed blossoms hung like pink-tinged clouds just

above the earth — the rolling acres of green that looked like thick velvet carpets from the attic window — the row of tall silver poplars along the roadside, that fluttered their leaves like the fans of geisha girls she had read of in tales of far-away Japan.

She would wonder then, if perhaps other people did not feel the same way. And she would watch her aunt, surreptitiously, out of the corner of her eye at times, when, the worst of the day's work over, they would sit for a while on the wide veranda to rest before the evening meal. But neither the vari-colored, fantastic pictures formed in the sky by the fading rays of the sun among the feathery clouds nor the grey mist creeping with stealthy eagerness over the willows along the creek, then up the pasture and across the garden, seemed to awaken in her aunt, the faintest spark of emotion.

But to-day, she was not thinking of the beauty of the room, she was wondering what her Aunt Letty would think of it all — this new life that was so soft to the senses and yet so hard in other ways. For in all her seventeen years, Anise had never been so uncertain of

herself. She was encountering an entirely new set of rules of conduct, and being consistently attracted and repelled by those things she had been warned against.

Her aunt had sketched for her, rather briefly, the various members of her Uncle Sidney Lyman's household. Sidney, Aunt Letty's brother, was rarely at home, his varied business interests keeping him constantly on the move, even taking him at times to foreign lands.

Aunt Della Mayes, Letty and Sidney's younger sister, had been widowed early in life, and was wealthy enough to indulge her love of travel constantly, but had sacrificed her own pleasure, somewhat, to look after Sidney's motherless son and daughter until such time as they no longer needed her.

Of Richard and Lucille, her aunt could tell her little, except that both were rather badly spoiled, especially Lucille. She was reluctant to say anything disparaging of their dead mother, but she hinted that Sidney's wife had been far too indulgent, Sidney's growing wealth being no doubt a prominent factor in the matter. They had lived mostly at fashionable watering places. Letty had begged more than once to

have the children for a visit, but their mother's plans included nothing so crude as a country farmhouse. Only once had Letty seen them, and that was when, on a visit to New York, she had stopped for a short time at the hotel where they were staying. She had grieved secretly over the artificiality of their life but had seemed unable to make their mother understand.

And then, to Anise's surprise, her aunt informed her that even Uncle Sidney's wealth could in no way compare to the fortune which Anise's parents had bequeathed her, though of course she was too young, as yet, to have the handling of it, or to know the details, but her aunt wanted her to keep the matter always in mind.

It was a long talk they had that night about money being a trust; the great responsibility connected with the right management of a big inheritance; the proper uses of wealth; how to acquire the ability to judge what is real and what is worthless, and the danger of becoming an easy mark for the shiftless and improvident.

It was all most bewildering to Anise. Heretofore, money had had no part in her life. Her

Aunt Letty had supplied all the things necessary through her day-school and high-school life. But now that she was to live at her Uncle Sidney's and attend college, she would have a monthly allowance, a sum so big to Anise, that she wondered what use she could possibly find for it.

She moved thoughtfully toward the little ivory desk between the windows and picked up the long mauve feather pen, then held it suspended over her check book. What would Aunt Letty think of Lucille's growing habit of borrowing and her way of forgetting to return occasional loans? She knew Lucille's allowance was even larger than her own. Was she encouraging her cousin, by being so willing to lend? Ought she remonstrate with Lucille? It was a distasteful thought, and she put it from her.

She heard Lucille coming along the hall, toward her room. She bent over the desk and dipped her pen into the ink. She wanted above all things to keep Lucille's regard, especially since Lucille's home had become her home.

CHAPTER II

MORE MISUNDERSTANDINGS

After a hasty glance at the check Anise gave her, Lucille stuffed it casually into the pocket of her red-and-black-striped skirt.

“I don’t see how I got along before you came, Anise, though, of course, Dick wasn’t such a tight-wad then. This getting on the team has gone to his head, I’m afraid. He’s getting decidedly snooty.”

“Oh, surely not, Lucille. Dick’s fine. You ought to be very proud of him, I think. So many never get the chance, and it *is* an honor — being on the team. It takes level heads, as well as strong bodies.”

Lucille gave her a long, appraising look. “You’ve been doing some heavy thinking, Anise. Don’t! It makes wrinkles. You’d better wander down to the music room to-night. Doris Grayson is going to show us some new steps she picked up at the Winter Garden when she was in New York last Saturday.”

“ I’m afraid I can’t, Lucille. I’ve got that thesis to write, and I’ve been having a hard time getting information. The librarian promised to find what she could, and I’ll have to go over and see if she succeeded.”

“ What’s your subject? I’ve got a pile left over from last year. If you can use any — ” She laughed. “ Don’t look so shocked, Anise. You don’t suppose all the students write their own essays, do you? They take help wherever they can find it. But of course — ” She started toward the door, with a toss of her head that intimated hurt dignity.

“ You don’t understand, Lucille,” Anise pleaded. “ I chose this subject because it was so intriguing. I’ve always wanted to know more about Oriental rugs. The East is such a fascinating place, to me, and the rugs — one reads so many interesting stories built around them — I was anxious to know more.”

“ That accounts then, I presume, for your absorbing interest in that yellow Harjad.”

“ Yellow? ”

“ Yes, in more ways than mere color.”

“ Oh, Lucille, surely you are mistaken! ”

“ I’m not. It was he, I know, who reported

to the Dean about our joy-ride last Tuesday night. He was selling peanuts and pop-corn on the ferry, as we went over."

"But how could he, when he works at Rosetti's restaurant?"

"Well, this was after eating-hours. Guess he does that on the side."

"But Lucille — you know that automobiles have been banned for the students, and besides, just because you happened to see him, that doesn't prove it was he who told."

"It comes close enough." She turned away from the door and seated herself on the edge of the divan. "We may as well have this out, right now, Anise. You've got to cease your interest in that Syrian, or Persian, or Greek, or whatever he is. I won't have the girls pointing out *my* cousin, on the campus with an East-Side rug-peddler. There was enough talk about him before Rod Drake sprang that little tale on the public. A girl with your connections simply *must* learn how to choose. With the future that's before you, you can't afford to mix with questionable people."

Anise had been trying without success to seize an opening in Lucille's hurried speech.

Now, she lifted her head with a gleam of hurt pride in her blue eyes. "I'm sorry, Lucille, if I've embarrassed you, but I don't think either you or Dick ought to choose my friends for me."

"But don't you see, Anise," in a conciliatory voice, "you're only a freshman, while Dick and I are sophs. We're both in a position to put you wise to a lot of things — things you'll thank us for later."

"Yes, I know," Anise assented, gently, "but, how can either of you know the kind of people who interest me?"

Lucille gave her another long, quiet look. "Maybe I'm wrong, but I thought these queer people you've been seen with, had been accidents; that you'd been thrown with them, in a way, and hadn't enough experience to know how to extricate yourself."

"What queer people do you mean, Lucille, beside Namar Harjad? I'll admit that he *is* different from the others, but I don't see why that need exclude him from my friendship."

"Why, that Dupont girl, for one. You surely know she was turned down by the Gammas?"

“ Suppose she was? I like her just as well as I did at first.”

“ But don't you see, Anise, that it'll hurt your standing to be seen with her? Your name's up now for membership, but if you keep on with the sort you've chosen for friends, you'll have as much chance of making the sorority, as — ”

“ Don't worry about that, Lucille. I told them to-day that I didn't care to belong.”

“ You — *what?* ” Lucille sat suddenly erect and stared wide-eyed at her cousin.

“ I don't care,” Anise went on. “ I don't think it's fair, the way they do. There was Anna Saunders. They rushed her to death. Made her think she was going to be taken in, and then they turned her down. Dropped her flat. They don't even see her when they meet her. I heard she cried and cried about it, and wanted to quit college because of it. Imagine a girl wanting to give up her college career because a few girls had made things so impossible for her. There are other girls, too, who've gone through the same thing. It's a horrid way to do.”

“ Well, it's what every one has to go through with, and if you do get in, you're fixed.”

“ I don't think the agony of knowing you might not make it is worth the honor of belonging, Lucille.”

“ But Anise, what'll you do? You won't have any friends worth while. You'll miss all the fun.”

“ I don't think so. Professor Litton and his wife have asked me to tea Sunday, and I'm to have dinner next Tuesday with the Dean and his wife. He was telling me how fond he'd been of my father.”

“ So you're going in for the literati, are you? Next thing we know, you'll be wearing horn-rimmed spectacles and writing poetry!”

She arose with an air that said quite plainly that she washed her hands of her cousin's affairs. “ I see there's no use in trying to advise you.”

“ It's kind of you, Lucille. You know I thank you. Both you and Dick have been splendid, but — ”

“ But you think you can paddle your own canoe, is that it? Well, so long. I'm running over to Claire's for her new records. They're hot. Come down if you change your mind,” she added, magnanimously, from the doorway.

It was nice of Lucille to be so interested in her, Anise reflected as she turned again to her desk.

“Anise, dear!” It was Aunt Della’s voice, calling from her room across the hall.

Anise arose hastily and hurried from the room, stopping only for a light tap before opening her aunt’s door.

“Have you time for a little chat, dear? There’s something I must say to you.” Her Aunt Della leaned on one elbow among the cushions of a gilt and rose-brocaded chaise lounge, and regarded Anise thoughtfully.

“Why, yes, Aunt Dell.”

A beautifully manicured hand indicated a footstool beside her.

Anise seated herself, marveling as she always did, in Aunt Della’s presence, at the difference in her two aunts, Della and Letty. Though sisters, there was no least trace of resemblance. Della looked far from the thirty-five years she guarded so carefully. She was tall and slender, with brown eyes that matched hair of a slightly darker hue, both hair and eyes throwing into instant relief, the soft, transparent skin and beautifully molded mouth and chin.

Anise admired her Aunt Della immensely, but it was not the kind of admiration she held for her Aunt Letty. It was a sort of surface admiration, like Aunt Della's beauty. Her admiration for her Aunt Letty was along quite another line. It went deeper. You didn't think so much about it, but it was always there, a feeling that you knew nothing could change.

Her aunt's hands were playing with the long silken tassels of one of the cushions, and she did not speak for a time. When she did, she rested two level brown eyes upon the girl before her.

"I'm getting a bit uneasy about you, Anise," she said. "I've been hearing things —"

Anise sighed. She suspected just what was coming.

"What things, Aunt Della?" she asked, returning her aunt's level gaze.

"You seem to have struck up an acquaintance with a rather impossible person, Anise. In fact, several of them, from what I hear."

Anise flung out both hands in a sudden gesture of impotence, and hurried to the window. Was there no one here to sympathize? Was there no one in this house who could understand? She caught her lower lip between her

teeth in a sudden agony of loneliness. They wanted to make her over, make her into the pattern of themselves, because they did not like her as she was! But she would not be changed — not in the way they wished.

“ I know we’re different, Anise — different from Letty, and the farm, but you know, dear, it was your parents’ wish that Sidney and I take you when you reached college age. They knew that Letty could give you the fundamentals of life, and perhaps the physical perfection that we in the city could not. But they knew, too, that you would need to learn the finer side of life — the culture that is so necessary to one of your position.”

Anise hurried now, to her aunt’s side, and dropped upon one knee.

“ Oh, I know, Aunt Della, that you all are trying to help me, but don’t you see, I *have* to be *myself*. I have to find the people, *I* need. Dick’s friends are right for Dick, no doubt, and Lucille’s for her, but — ”

“ I don’t agree with you there, dear, but at any rate, they have a certain standing. Don’t think, dear, that you are the only one I’ve had to lecture. Dick’s crowd is just as harmful to

him as Lucille's is to her, but I can't make either of them see it. I'm beginning to feel rather at a loss —" She seemed to have forgotten Anise, and was merely thinking her thoughts aloud.

The striking of the little gilt clock on the mantel aroused her.

"I wanted to suggest, Anise, that you let me teach you bridge. I'm having a few friends in this evening. Of course they're older, but it's rather a wise trick to stand in with older people — a trick Lucille refuses to consider. In spite of what the new generation says, the opinion of one's elders still counts."

"I'm sure you're right, Aunt Della, but I don't know one card from another, and I'm afraid —"

"It's time you did, then, Anise, for simply every one plays. You'll be out of everything, later, if you don't."

"I don't think I could ever care for it," reluctantly. "You see, there are so many other things to think about, and to do. With my class work, and — and —." She paused uncertainly.

"Oh, well, you needn't if you'd rather not."

She arose with a sigh. "But at least, Sidney must know I've done the best I could."

She moved languidly toward the dressing-table where she regarded with sudden anxiety, a tiny spot on her chin, in the mirror before her. "You will promise, Anise, to be more careful after this, with whom you are seen? Really, my dear, a girl in your position can't be too careful. I don't relish being accused of neglecting my duty toward you."

"Oh, Aunt Della, you're *not!*" Anise cried. "It's wonderful, just being here, with you!"

Her aunt missed entirely, the glow of admiration in her niece's eyes, for she was still regarding critically her own image in the mirror before her.

"Well, run along, now, Anise. I want to rest a bit before dinner. Thank heavens, Sidney gets in soon," she sighed. "Really the responsibility is too much for an inexperienced person of my years."

Anise slipped out, softly, and returned to her own room. It was undoubtedly hard on Aunt Della, with three young people to look after, each of whom seemed to be pulling in a different direction. Well, at least, *she* would

try harder to please. She'd begin right now, on her next day's assignments, and if she hurried through dinner, perhaps she could finish her work in time to join Aunt Della's friends in the drawing-room. By watching the game for a time, she'd no doubt be able to pick up a few pointers, so that when she did have time to learn, she would at least know the rudiments. And perhaps, she could wait until to-morrow to see the librarian. Then, perhaps she might stop in the music-room for a few moments with Lucille's crowd. Lucille *had* been lovely to her in more ways than one. There was a very large-hearted quality about Lucille that Anise could not fail to approve of.

But her plans to try at least to fall in with the wishes of Lucille and her aunt, were not to be fulfilled.

Her work done, she was slipping into an evening frock of pale yellow, when Nora, the maid, knocked at her door, and at her summons, entered, her hands endeavoring to hide their excitement, one within the other, as she whispered in a voice, tense with emotion: "He's down in the library, Miss Anise! He was coming up the steps, while I was peeping through the glass

at the side of the door. I thought it was another of Miz Della's guests, or maybe one of the boys Mr. Richard was expecting. I'm glad now, I didn't wait for him to ring. I just opened the door softly, and when I seen who it was, I hurried him into the library. He's down there now, waiting for you!"

She paused for breath.

"But who is it, Dora? You haven't said who it is?" Anise begged to know, part of the maid's excitement communicating itself to her.

"I must say, I think it's a shame — with all his good looks!" Dora hurried on in a quick, indignant voice. "He oughta be in the movies, Miss Anise. Why don't you get him to try? He'd make as swell a sheik as Valentino, if —"

"Who *is* it you're talking about, Dora?" Anise demanded, a bit provoked at the maid's garrulity.

"It's that Namar Harjad, Miss Anise. I heard them laying you out about him. I just happened to be near — in the hall," she added, quickly. "It's a shame, Miss Anise, but honest, don't you think he oughta be in the movies? He'd make the grandest sheik!"

Namar Harjad in the library! What *would*

Aunt Della and Lucille and Dick say? She must get rid of him somehow, before they knew. She hurried from the room, giving a last hasty pat to her hair as she went.

CHAPTER III

THE MISFIT

Softly, she sped down the stairs and through the lower hall. From the music room came spasmodic bursts of song, intermingled with the pat of dancing feet, and subdued bursts of laughter. Lucille must have warned them of Aunt Della's guests in the drawing-room at the front of the hall, from which came the soft flip of cards and the hum of polite, carefully modulated voices. Dick, too, must have warned his friends, for the masculine voices rising at times in excited discussion from the morning-room beyond the stairway, were more restrained than usual.

It was with a little sigh of relief, that Anise realized that each was far too absorbed in her own affairs to pay the least attention to her.

She opened the library door with a certain sense of security against interruption, for there would be no need to risk hurting Namar Har-

jad by sending him away immediately. Unskilled as she was in the ways of politely extricating herself from uncomfortable situations, it did not occur to her to invent an excuse for not seeing him.

He turned from the row of bookcases, and bowed to her as she opened the door, and stood hesitant before advancing toward him.

“Pardon, if I intrude, but I thought perhaps I could help you.”

She moved toward him with a little smile, and nodded toward a chair under the lamp beside the hearth, seating herself on the davenport beside the long library table.

“How nice of you. In what way?” she gazed at him appraisingly for the first time since she had known him, trying to find some lack in his appearance for the cause of Lucille's and Dick's disapproval.

She knew, though, that it was not his appearance they objected to. They couldn't, she reflected. Even though his clothing was noticeably inexpensive, it was in good taste. With a little inward smile, she found herself agreeing with Dora's enthusiastic exclamations. Certainly Namar Harjad was handsome as any

“movie sheik,” more so than most, she admitted, for there was an aloof, quiet dignity about him, that set him apart from the heroes of the screen. One could not imagine him seeking notoriety of that description. He seemed almost shy, so reserved was his bearing, and yet there was about him a quality that suggested a carefully restrained force that would be difficult to subdue should anything occur to arouse that certain dormant something within him.

“I was in the library and overheard the librarian complaining to her assistant that she had been unable to find the information regarding Oriental rugs which you had asked for. I thought I might be able to assist you and that in return you could tell me something of the American farm.”

“Indeed I can,” she exclaimed, moving toward the table, where she took paper and pencils from the drawer. “Anything you want to know. I’ve lived all of my seventeen years on a farm in Kentucky.” She looked at him thoughtfully a moment, then burst into a soft laugh. “We ought to exchange subjects! Here we are, each trying to write about something he knows nothing of. But I suppose one

would never learn if one were interested only in the things one already knows. It's the things one doesn't know that hold so much appeal," and realized, then, that that was the principal reason for her interest in the youth before her.

She longed to question him, to have him confirm in some way her belief in him. But she would not. He must reveal himself, through their occasional school contacts, or as he chose. If his life was not an open book, as Dick had said, he must have some substantial reasons for his reticence. Certainly any one who bore himself with such dignity, whose eyes looked into one's with such simple sincerity, whose manners one could see were not mere artificial gestures, could in no way deserve to be treated with contempt.

She motioned him to draw up his chair, switching on the green-shaded table lamp, as she did so.

"We'll dispose of the farm first. I feel sure it will take but a few moments. The Oriental rugs will take more time, for I know absolutely nothing about them."

"I know as little, almost, about a real farm, though I did work one summer on a New Jersey

truck farm," he told her. "However, it was not, I believe, what one would consider a typical farm."

"Hardly," she agreed, then stood beside him, watching interestedly as he wrote carefully but swiftly the many things she told him. She could not help but marvel at the intelligence of his questions, considering that he knew so little of his subject. Certainly, his was no ordinary mind.

She longed, and yet dreaded to know more about him. In the face of the others' disapproval, it seemed unwise to continue their budding friendship, and yet she felt drawn to him in a way she had been to none of the other students. Was he merely one of the East Side's great horde of humanity, that fought for a foothold in this land of their adoption? An East-Side rug peddler. A New Jersey gardener's helper. Certainly nothing dishonorable about either. Still —

Neither seemed aware that they were spending more time on the subject of farm life, than they had planned to do.

Anise found herself telling him of her girlhood days at Aunt Letty's; of the ploughing

and planting; of the harvesting; of the orchards, bowed under their weight of ripening fruit; of the pastures filled with cattle and sheep, the great flocks of turkeys and chickens; of the disappointments and heartaches of their less fortunate neighbors when untimely rain ruined acre after acre of golden grain, or a long drought would dry up the crops and wells. She told of berry-pickings, of church picnics, of cemetery clearings, when every one for miles around came with his dinner and cleared the burying ground of weeds and high grass; of fox-hunting parties, of church socials, quiltings, maple-sugar parties in the cabin in the woods; of sleighing and coasting parties. She told of hog-killings, when the great fat hams and huge sausages were swung from the smoke-house roof to be cured for winter's use.

“It seems strange,” she said, when for a moment he sat silent, formulating perhaps his next question, “that you should be so interested in what most people consider so very commonplace.”

“Commonplace? When all of your great leaders — the great people of your land, have been born amid such surroundings?”

“Why do you say, my land?” she asked.
“Is it not *your* land, also?”

He looked at her, with, she thought, curiously sad eyes. “I was born in Syria. I have been in this country only a few years.”

“Syria?” and was appalled at her own ignorance of his country. She made a mental note that the very next day she would hunt up Syria on the map and find out something about it.

“But how could you be a Syrian, and yet speak such perfect English?”

“I was sent very young to England to be taught the language.”

Something within her grew strangely jubilant. He was not, then, the very ordinary person Dick and Lucille had declared him to be. The poor in Syria did not send their children to England to be taught English, of that much she was certain. The poor in the East, were very, very poor, indeed. There was no middle class, as in America.

He turned in his chair and regarded the little clock on the mantel in sudden dismay.

“I came to tell you of the rugs, and already it is time to depart. How can I absolve myself? I have taken your whole evening!”

She, too, was regarding the timepiece, disbelievingly, but before she could speak, the door was opened hastily, and Lucille, hurrying in, stopped in surprise, staring from one to the other with an expression of mounting displeasure.

“ I beg your pardon,” she said stiffly to Anise. “ I didn't know you were here, or that your friendship with this — person had progressed to such a degree. Don't let me disturb you. I came for my compact. I think I must have dropped it in here, before dinner.”

Lucille had moved toward the couch where she tossed the cushions about, then looked up with a quick smile of mischief at the crowd of girls filling the doorway. “ Come in, girls!”

“ I'll lend you mine, Lucille,” one of the girls offered. “ It's a shame to spoil such an interesting tête-à-tête. Who knows but that — ” her eyes wandered from Anise's flushed face to the other girls, alert now at the possibility of some unexpected fun.

Quite evidently they all shared Lucille's opinion of Namar.

Lucille nudged a girl with a ukelele strung about her neck with a broad red ribbon. “ Play

something appropriate to the occasion, can't you?" she demanded. "Why not, 'The Kashmiri Love Song —' you know — 'Pale hands I kissed beside the Shalomar', or, what's that thing Dad used to warble? Oh, yes! 'Maid of Athens, ere we part —'"

"Were you ever in Athens, Namar?" the girl plucking the ukelele's strings interrupted.

Then a wide-eyed, auburn-haired girl pushed through the smiling group demanding: "Do they really keep the women shut up, Namar, in your country, and not let them do anything but sit around and get fat?"

"Aw, don't you know harems are passé?" another remarked. "They went out with long skirts, didn't they, Namar. We were in Paris at the time. Besides, the men can't afford so many wives, now. The war ruined so many. That's why they come to America — to get away from the clutching hands." She paused uncertainly, then continued saucily: "After all, I bet there's something in that remark, isn't there, Namar? That's about all we encountered, the last time we were abroad — clutching hands — trying to get all we had, from bandits to beggars."

Her words brought a shamed blush to Anise's cheeks.

"You ought to be ashamed, Georgia Nevins! As though Namar is responsible for the whole of the East!"

"Keep out, Anise," Lucille warned. "You'll only make matters worse. I warned you, to-day, about —"

Namar was facing Lucille, and seemed entirely unconscious of the abuse aimed at him. "Have I, perhaps, made a mistake in coming —"

"You seem to have, Mr. Harjad," Lucille told him, with dignity.

"But this is Miss Decard's abiding-place, is it not?"

"Yes. Certainly."

"I was careful to make sure that my coming was quite the proper thing. Professor Seamans assured me —"

"It may be in line with Professor Seamans' ideas of what is correct, but hardly ours," she observed drily, still searching among the cushions for the missing compact.

"I am sorry, if I made a mistake. Why did you not enlighten me?" he questioned Anise.

“ You don’t understand,” she endeavored to explain, torn between sympathy for him, and loyalty to Lucille. “ Your coming here was quite all right — ”

“ I disagree with you, Anise.”

She turned in quick surprise to find Dick and his friends crowding behind the girls, into the room.

“ What’s wrong here, anyway? ” he demanded, looking from one to the other. “ Didn’t I warn you, Anise, that — ” ? He turned now to Harjad. “ Now see here,” he exclaimed, “ if you’re the cause of this rumpus, hadn’t you better clear out? ”

“ But, Dick! ” Anise besought him, “ he — ”

Dick ignored her. “ I’ve been intending to advise you to confine your attentions to the waitresses or kitchen help at Rosetti’s or some of the ferry’s patronage. Anise is hardly the person — ”

Anise saw a bewildered, hurt look coming into Namar’s eyes. She saw too, the muscles ripple under his coat sleeves, and his lower jaw moving under the tight skin of his cheeks. But his hands hung limp at his side. She read him

in a flash. He would have liked to knock Dick down, for his insolence, but he was too well reared for that.

In a sudden fury at Dick and the others for subjecting him to such indignity, she stamped her foot at them all, and flared: "You — you horrid snobs! I hate you all!"

"Why, Anise, dear!" It was Aunt Della's shocked voice. "Such language! And Lucille, and you, Dick! What can you mean by such an uproar, when you know I have guests? I beg of you to lower your voices and explain!"

But Anise was fighting back tears, too hurt and bewildered to know or care that Aunt Della's guests were now adding to the confusion that spread through the library door into the hall. Every one was talking at once, trying to find out just what was the cause of the disturbance.

Dick seemed utterly indifferent to the presence of his aunt and her guests.

"Where's your hat?" he inquired of the silent Namar.

Behind him a wall of youths applauded his action with wide grins, then one venturesome

spirit suggested: "Let's give him the *bum's rush!*"

There was a moment's pregnant silence, then a clamor of "Let's! Let's!", with increasing ardor.

Anise heard an ineffectual protest from Dick. "Aw, go slow, fellows! Really —"

But it had no effect. Some of the girls giggled, while others emitted horrified little squeals. Aunt Della raised her voice in righteous indignation.

"Will you children kindly remember where you are?"

But those behind Dick were pushing forward. Namar had no chance to recover his hat.

Anise made a frantic attempt to reach him, but was held back by a girl who whispered impishly: "It is the will of Allah! Let Allah's will be done!"

Aunt Della's guests backed hurriedly toward the drawing-room door, afraid to be too near, yet reluctant to miss the excitement.

Their aunt was protesting at the outrage, in a voice cold with fury, while Lucille endeavored to pacify her.

“ After all, Aunt Della, it is our home, and if Dick and I choose to evict this unwelcome caller, it is our privilege.”

They were rushing Namar before them toward the door, crying excitedly, “ Open the door! Open the door!” when before it could be reached, the door was opened from the outside, and their father, Sidney Lyman, entered, a suit-case in either hand.

CHAPTER IV

CONFIDENCES

The crowd of youths, urging Namar Harjad toward the door, came to a sharp stop, and a sudden hush fell upon the excited assembly. Sidney Lyman was gazing from one to the other in puzzled astonishment. His eyes traveled quickly from Dick to Lucille, then to the outraged eyes of his sister Della.

“What’s it all about?” he asked in level tones, his air of complete poise oddly in contrast to the excited faces about him.

“Just taking care of our little country cousin, Dad,” Lucille spoke up. “She hasn’t learned the ways of the big, wicked city, yet.”

“Anise?” His eyes sought her among the girls now retreating slowly toward the music-room. “I can’t imagine Anise creating such a disturbance.”

Dick spoke up, quickly. “It isn’t exactly her fault, Dad, though she shouldn’t have encouraged this — She simply didn’t under-

stand. However, he could hardly have failed to know he was overstepping himself, coming here without an invitation."

Anise struggling for composure, managed to say, "He came to help me with my thesis, and — and —"

"Really, Sidney," their aunt began, "Anise has, I'm afraid been very unwise, but that is no excuse for Dick and Lucille carrying on such high-handed proceedings. They seem to forget that I am their —"

Her brother held up a remonstrating hand. "This is hardly the time or place to go into that, Della, but it does seem that they owe this young man an apology."

The youths had loosened their hold upon Namar and had assumed an expression of disinterested unconcern, as though this was really no affair of theirs. All but Dick. He glowered upon the silent Namar.

"Apologize? Aw, Dad! Really — Can't you see — ?"

He snatched Namar's hat from the hands of a near-by youth and tossed it to him, as though that ended the matter.

Namar caught it deftly, and looking neither

to the right nor left, started toward the door, but was intercepted by Mr. Lyman.

“ Perhaps you will accept my apology instead? I am very sorry for what has occurred. Young people — ” he nodded his head in their direction, “ are sometimes a bit hasty. They form opinions quickly, and change them quickly. Perhaps, some day they will — ” He made no attempt to finish his sentence, but held out a conciliatory hand to the silent youth before him.

Anise, watching closely, saw the look of respect in her uncle’s eyes, and hurried toward him. She said no word, but her appealing smile begged Namar to be generous.

His face, hardened into a mask of immobility, softened at the older man’s words, and after a hesitant movement, he took the proffered hand, clasped it firmly, bowed, and with a last swift glance at Anise, he turned toward the door, opened it, and was gone.

Aunt Della was herding her guests back to the drawing-room, but she paused in the doorway.

“ You might have let me know you were coming to-night, Sidney,” she reproached her

brother; then added, "I'll speak to Dora about some supper for you."

"No, don't bother, Della. I dined on the Limited, but I wouldn't object to a cup of Anise's coffee and a little fruit. Since her friend has been so effectively disposed of, perhaps she'll not object to transferring her attentions to me."

"I'll be glad to, Uncle Sidney," she said, thankful for the chance to show her appreciation of his championship of Namar.

Lucille's friends had returned to the music-room, while Dick's were discussing the advisability of joining the girls or continuing their own interrupted program.

"Now tell me all about this affair, Anise," her Uncle demanded, as he poured cream into the cup of fragrant coffee she set before him.

She snapped off the current under the electric percolator, then seated herself in the tall chair across the polished mahogany table, noting happily his satisfied smile as he tested the heat of the liquid before him.

"There is little to tell," she returned, "except that he came here to help me with my thesis, and wanted me to help him with his. He knew I'd

been raised on a farm. He chose, 'The American Farm,' for his topic, while mine is 'Oriental Rugs.' "

"I see." He regarded her thoughtfully. "And as the personal columns of the newspapers would put it, you expected to learn from each other something to your mutual advantage?" His eyes twinkled humorously, though his face remained grave.

"That's it, exactly," she told him, seriously.

"But how did the fracas start, and why are Lucille and Dick so bitterly against this bold, bad, dark-skinned foreign-looking chap?"

There was no mistaking the laugh in his voice, and she laughed with him, relievedly.

"He's neither bold nor bad, Uncle Sidney," she said, gently. "But I suppose he is a foreigner, since he admitted it to me."

"He didn't admit anything else — of interest?"

"Except that he had worked on a truck farm in New Jersey. Dick said, though —" (she had no desire to be anything but honest) "that he had sold rugs from a push-cart on the East Side in New York City. Rod Drake saw him. And Lucille saw him selling peanuts

and pop-corn on the ferry. And every one knows that he works most of the time in Rossetti's restaurant."

"All in vivid contrast to his princely air," he commented.

"You noticed that?" she asked, quickly, leaning toward him.

"One could hardly miss it," he observed, eyeing her with new interest.

Anise felt curiously light-hearted, since he seemed to attach so little importance to Lucille's and Dick's estimate of Namar. She sat silent, for a time, toying with the fruit-knife among the peelings of a peach she had prepared for him.

"Is there anything more to be told?" he asked, setting his cup carefully into its saucer.

"I believe not. As Lucille says, I know absolutely nothing about him. He merely sits near me in class. He picked up some papers once for me, which I had dropped. Another time, I was caught in a shower down-town, and he brought me home under his umbrella. We've walked across the campus a few times together."

"And yet he's told you nothing of himself — of his people?"

She shook her head. "I've never let him think I was curious to know. After all, Uncle Sidney, does it matter?"

"Does *what* matter, Anise?"

"Why — why — things like belonging to the best families, and — How *can* a person help being born what he is, Uncle Sidney? It's what he makes of himself, I think, that counts, don't you?"

"It does, indeed, Anise." He gazed thoughtfully at the cluster of dark red dahlias that graced the center of the table.

"And, Uncle Sidney, don't you think that if you let people know you believe in them — that you think they mean to do all that they should, that they will really end by *being* that way?"

His heavy brows, so like Dick's and Lucille's, drew low over his eyes, and he reached for the tray of cigars she had moved toward him.

"You've got the right idea, Anise. It's what I've tried to do with Lucille and Dick. There's no reason why they shouldn't be representative young Americans, but I'm afraid I've hit a snag somewhere in my calculations. They certainly didn't do credit to my belief in them,

to-night, nor as representative Americans, either."

He looked, suddenly, so distressed that she hastened to reassure him. "But Uncle Sidney, both Dick and Lucille are fine! It's just that they seem to think I don't know how to judge people. Dick, you see, likes his athletic crowd and doesn't understand how others can't feel as he does. Lucille likes gayety, and thinks any one who doesn't, is making a mistake."

"And you?"

"I don't know. I like people — all kinds. I feel sorry for the ones who seem left out, Uncle Sidney, for the ones who must struggle for the things which come so easily to others. It is those who are not sure of themselves who need one's interest, don't you think? Lucille and Dick have so much, that they just don't realize there are some not so fortunate. Living at Aunt Letty's, I suppose, is what has made me think so much about other people. She was always helping some one, encouraging some one in something they wanted to do, but lacked enough courage."

"So you think this Namar Harjad needs encouragement?"

“ I don't know about that. He seems very capable of getting what he is seeking, but I do think he needs a little friendliness. No one pays the least attention to him. He seems so left out, so alone.” She was looking at him now with bright eyes. “ Don't you think, Uncle Sidney, that we ought to be kinder to him, because he is different — foreign? Since our country stands for all that is best, oughtn't we — ? ”

When she made no attempt to finish her sentence, he said: “ In a way, you are right, Anise. If America wants to keep her place in the sun, her citizens must at least know how to treat with courtesy the citizens of other countries. It's one of the things other countries are holding against us now. They call us crude, rude, and words much stronger. I'll have to take up this matter with Dick and Lucille. Dick seems to think that might makes right, while Lucille seems to think that money is the key to all life's joy.”

“ I don't believe Lucille cares so much about money, Uncle Sidney,” she tried to defend her absent cousin.

“ No, I realize she doesn't, or she wouldn't

throw it around as she does." He laughed, a bit ruefully.

He was scrutinizing her closely now. "I believe you're thinner, Anise? Studying too hard, or is it because Dick and Lucille are making things too impossible for you?"

She looked up, startled. "Oh, you mustn't think that! They've both been very kind. It's just that everything is different here, and I'm puzzled —"

"About what?"

"About what to do. I want to be agreeable —"

"But each one expects you to do his way? Is that it?"

She nodded. "We all seem to be going in different directions," she tried to explain, "and no one seems to understand the other."

"Something like the international situation," he laughed. "All the nations crying for peace and understanding, yet each insisting on going its own way and viewing its neighbor through its own narrow vision."

He arose from his chair and rested a kindly hand on her shoulder, as she stood beside him. "Well, you and I understand each other a little

better, at any rate, don't we? I wish I might have as good luck with Lucille and Dick. Run along, now, and get your beauty sleep."

He saw she was seeking courage to ask something, and so he said: "Don't be afraid, Anise, to ask anything of me."

"It's about Namar Harjad, Uncle. Must I refuse to know him? It'll be so hard —"

He puffed thoughtfully at his cigar, then stood regarding it sternly. He was remembering with an inward qualm, a certain letter from his sister Letty, in which she said:

"Dearly as I love Anise, I can't help but feel that it is only fair to you to warn you of her weaknesses, so that you may understand and guard her carefully. Her's is a very impulsive nature, and, coupled with her idealistic views, it is just the right combination to lead her into deep water. She simply doesn't see danger or harm in any one. She is one of those persons who have to learn by experience. If you knew how hard I've tried to make her more practical! You will keep an eye on her, Sidney? You know how dearly I love her — I could not bear to have anything happen — I want her to keep her ideals, but —. Try to make her realize that the world is as full of evil as of good, and that she *must* be careful."

He gazed thoughtfully down into the eager face of his niece. Had he taken the wrong course in sympathizing with her, or should he have tried to make her realize the danger in too impulsive friendships? This Syrian youth, now — with his splendid physique, his handsome countenance, his air of complete self-possession, to say nothing of that indefinable quality of the unknown that lingers about those of another race — could it be that danger lay in his direction, or was Anise merely interested because the others resented so emphatically his presence among them? That was it, certainly. Why worry, since the incident was closed. But he would keep his eyes open. He was glad Letty had warned him. Without doubt she understood Anise far better than either he or Della.

Her eyes were still questioning him.

“ I don't believe you'll be called upon to make a decision in the matter, Anise.”

“ But I see him every day, Uncle Sidney! ”

“ You won't after this. We're leaving for Europe on the twenty-fourth, but don't tell the others, to-night. I'm tired, and I feel sure the news will create something of a stir.”

CHAPTER V

A PEACE (?) CONFERENCE

It was not until toward the end of dinner, the next day, that Sidney Lyman made the announcement which he had predicted to Anise would cause something of a stir.

There had been no time that morning for more than a few hasty words with each, for both Dick and Lucille overslept and had time for only a brief nibble at the appetizing breakfast of which the other members of the family had partaken.

Dinner was always the one leisurely meal in the Lyman household, and was even more so on the occasions of Mr. Lyman's homecoming, for in spite of his limited time with his children, he took a deep interest in all that concerned them. He was perhaps a more indulgent parent than he realized, but the fact that they were almost wholly without parental guidance, softened him, to a certain extent. He grieved considerably over the fact that it was possible

for him to be so little with them, and consoled himself, as best he could, with the thought that he had done everything possible for them that a man could do under the circumstances. Before her death, his wife had indicated the schools in which she wished them educated, and he had been very faithful in carrying out her wishes. Della had very generously looked after Lucille during vacation periods, taking her with her to whatever summer resort she was patronizing. Dick's vacations were spent in first one boys' camp and then another. Their father managed to put in from a few days to a few weeks with each of them, whenever the opportunity presented itself.

His visits with them always left him strangely puzzled. Just what the trouble with them was, he could not definitely say. They seemed over-developed in some ways, and under-developed in others. He contrasted his own boyhood, with its simple pleasures and considerable hardships, with the easy, carefully guarded life of Dick and Lucille. He knew it was futile to dwell on such thoughts. Life in this generation was far softer in every way than the one he had known, and he knew that science was doing its

best to make it still softer for each coming generation. It was useless to long for those conflicts with hardship for his own children. But he realized that though life would be easier for them in many ways, it would be far more complex in others than to those of his generation.

With the awakening of a universal conscience, and the hint of a coming brotherhood among the nations, it would be upon the youths of the land that the future's great responsibilities would fall; responsibilities far greater than those which had fallen to past generations.

He regretted the necessity of going against the wishes of his wife, but his travels in foreign lands, the past few years, and his contact with new forces, both political and economical, since her death, had so broadened his vision, that he felt no disloyalty toward her when he chose a Middle-Western college for his children, instead of the exclusive schools of higher education she had selected. And since, in a moment of pique, Lucille had declared that they had never had a *home*, where they could live like other people, he had decided that he would see, too, that they had just that. And so Della

came, and presided over the big, luxuriously furnished house he bought for them, not far from the University which he confidently hoped would school them in all the things they had so far lacked.

But in this, too, he was to be disappointed. His visits home revealed that the something he had sought for them still eluded him. As Anise had tried to explain to him, each seemed pulling in the opposite direction. There was a lack of sympathy, an artificiality in their relations with each other that left him bewildered. He had hoped that with the coming of Anise there might be some change. But in this he was disappointed. He felt that Anise, too, was as bewildered as he. He knew instinctively that she was not fitting in, either with Dick's friends or with Lucille's, and he read in her silence and withdrawal from them, a hurt loneliness, that he was incapable of handling.

When events transpired which resulted in his presence being imperative in certain foreign fields, it was with a new sense of relief that he returned to his children, for he believed at last, that he had found a solution to his problem. He would take them with him. It would give

him the chance he had always longed for — the chance to know his children better and find out if possible, the real trend of their lives.

As he told Anise, he expected some sort of outburst, but hardly the howl of consternation which Dick let loose, or the shrill protestations of Lucille, that she couldn't, really couldn't leave the gang just now.

Dick's chair clattered backward to the floor, as he swung to his feet.

“Why, Dad! Don't you know I've just made the team! Don't you realize what it'll mean if I leave now!”

Dora's startled face appeared through an aperture in the pantry door, then she hurried in, picking up the overturned chair and replacing it softly.

“Lose a year's fun!” wailed Lucille, “just to wander round amid a lot of mildewed ruins and babbling foreigners! I guess not, Dad! Why can't we stay here with Aunt Della! Everything's been going so perfectly lovely!”

“So it seemed, last night,” her father observed, drily. “To tell the truth, Lucille, I think we've imposed enough on Della. Of course she loves you children, but it's not right

to let her give up her life for ours. She's had several tempting invitations to winter in Florida and the Bermudas and I know she wants to go."

"Why, Sidney," his sister interposed. "I had no intention of going. I must say, in all truth, that it *is* a little difficult here, at times, but then Lucille and Dick, and Anise, will always have first place —"

"Yes, I know," he assured her, gravely, "but I've made up my mind. A year of travel, will, I am sure, be equally as beneficial as a year of college."

"But, Dad!" Dick was glowering now into the artistic concoction of fruits and whipped cream Dora had placed before him. "You don't know what it means — to me — Dad! Why all the fellows I buddy with now, will be a year ahead, and there may be better men, next year, for the team, and I won't stand a chance of making it. I'll get soft, Dad, playing around like that."

"There's no need of getting soft, Dick. You'll find gyms wherever we go, or nearly so. At least you can always exercise."

"But what about me, Dad?" Lucille begged

plaintively. "Couldn't I stay here? Get a room in the dorm? Think of the prom and all the other things I'll miss." She reached hastily for a wisp of handkerchief tucked under the strap of her wrist-watch.

"I'm afraid you'll have to make the best of the situation, Lucille. You'll find plenty of excitement on shipboard. You'll meet quite a number, I'll guarantee, who'll help you to forget your friends here."

"Well, of course, if you mean to let us play around Paris, or the Riviera, but you always go to such stick-in-the-mud places."

Anise, watching and listening quietly at the other end of the table, saw their father's brows lower, and his lips narrow into a straight line.

"I'm not taking you for the fun I'm expecting you to find, Lucille. I'm hoping you will gain something that will be of service to you the rest of your life — a broader viewpoint, perhaps, or perhaps only a strengthening of some of your better instincts."

"Well, I suppose there's no use then in attending any more classes," said Lucille, brightening visibly at the thought.

"I'll see Dean Hendricks to-night and make

the explanations," her father said. "You girls will have your hands full getting ready, since we leave in three days."

"But you haven't said *where* we are going," Lucille reminded him, plunging her spoon into her dessert.

"Syria is our objective, but —"

"Syria? Ye gods!" groaned Dick. He threw out his hands in a helpless gesture. "Will you tell me, Dad," he pleaded, pathetically, "what good *Syria* could possibly do *me*?"

"Don't be selfish, Dick," Lucille admonished, brightening mischievously at the thought which had come to her. "There are some to whom the mystic East breathes enchantment." Her gaze drooped toward Anise. "At least, our cousin here will be able to learn at its source the art of Oriental rug-weaving."

She sat erect now, wide-eyed with mischief. "Wouldn't it be too thrilling if Anise, and this Harjad, who knows so much about them, should open up a shop some day. Our wealthiest women, you know, are going into business these days," she assured her cousin gravely.

Anise laughed. "I'm afraid I'm not in-

clined toward business, Lucille. The selling of rugs would never appeal to me, though I should not object to owning one — a real one — a prayer rug, perhaps. There's a glamour about them — perhaps because they are considered so sacred, or perhaps because real ones are so rare — that appeals to me."

Dick looked at her with awakening interest. "Well, Anise, at least we'll see that you get one that is real. It may be the means of an adventure of some sort. These Easterners cling so tightly to their sacred objects. I've read, too, how they fake some of their rugs, dip them in saffron or glycerine to age them."

"Too bad, Namar Harjad can't be one of our party, since he's such an authority on the subject," Lucille drawled, with another mischievous glance in Anise's direction.

"Forget him," Dick muttered irritably. "I bet that bird's responsible for Dad's taking us on this trip. If it hadn't been for that row last night —"

"Well, no, Dick," his father interposed. "My plans were made before leaving Washington. The row, as you call it, merely confirmed my suspicions that my children needed

me as much as I needed them. This trip will help us all to become better acquainted, I hope."

"Aw, Dad," he made a last pathetic plea, "honest, I'll do anything you say, if you let me off this time. It'll simply ruin my life —"

"I'm sorry, Dick, but my decision has been made."

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS

The three days which intervened between Mr. Lyman's announcement, and their departure, were days filled to the brim with excitement. Anise alone seemed the only cool member of the family, with the exception, perhaps, of Mr. Lyman. He, however, was both receiving and sending a constant stream of telegrams, cablegrams, special-delivery letters, and long-distance calls.

Dick was holding post-mortems for his ruined career, at unexpected intervals. There was a continual stream of sad-eyed youths come either to cheer him with hopeful predictions of what he would do next year on the team, or to wallow with him in his misery.

Lucille was tearing in and out, stopping only long enough to slip into a different frock for the next farewell party, she was being honored with, or else directing Dora as to the unwrapping and repacking of the many boxes and bundles with which her room was now littered.

Aunt Della fluttered about them all, advising, admonishing and complaining at times of the fearful disorder, and again soothing and gentle-voiced when Lucille and Dick clashed in one of their customary arguments.

“You'd think it was her honeymoon she was preparing for,” Dick grumbled, as he fell over two hatboxes and a smart new traveling-bag just inside the front door.

“Well, that's something no one would suspect of you, from the looks of that face you carry around,” Lucille retorted, airily skipping around the clutter Dick complained of, and swinging the front door shut behind her.

“It's *my* face, isn't it? If you don't like it — ”

But Lucille was beyond hearing.

“Dick!” Aunt Della pleaded, “do try to make these last few hours at home pleasant for your father. He's doing so much for you.”

“Much? Huh!” snorted Dick.

“Well, I think myself it's a bit unwise, his taking the girls into those uncivilized countries. There's no knowing what might happen. One reads of so many terrible things in these foreign places.”

Dick snorted again. "Aw, Aunt Della! With two men like Dad and me, I'd like to see any one get rough." He flung out an arm, looking lovingly down upon it as he flexed the muscles back and forth, then with a benign glance for her woman's timidity, he swung out the door.

She sighed, then called to Dora to come and carry Lucille's things upstairs.

"It's really absurd, the things she is buying for this trip," speaking her thoughts aloud. "The child seems to think it will be one continuous party."

Anise, coming out of the library with a book under her arm, paused.

"Can I help you with these, Aunt Della?"

"Yes, if you've nothing to do. Dora must be in the attic or basement, though what's keeping her, I can't imagine. She never seems to be about when one really needs her. Surely, Anise," she went on, "you haven't time to read when you've all your packing to do."

"But I've finished it, Aunt Della. I'm taking only my simplest things. Aunt Letty said once that plain dark clothes are best for traveling. My school things will do, I think."

“ Well, of course Letty would tell you the sensible thing to do. I hope, though, that you've put in a few evening frocks. You'll be asked to a number of smart affairs, I'm sure. Your uncle has some very interesting social connections in the capitals of Europe. And there'll be dances on shipboard — ”

“ I dance so little, Aunt Della, and — ”

Her aunt turned to her a bit impatiently. “ Heavens, Anise! You talk like an old maid — if such a thing exists these days. I hope you'll not go poking off into corners, with a book, and forget that you're just the right age to get a little joy out of life. My! Between you, and Lucille, and Dick! I've never known three such conflicting personalities. If Sidney succeeds in his hopes of reconciling you three to each other's company on this trip, and gets any pleasure out of it for himself, it will exceed my fondest expectations.”

Anise made no response. She gathered together a number of packages from the hall table and proceeded thoughtfully up the stairs. Aunt Della's words had struck a spark in her emotions that she was unprepared for. The realization of her uncle's problem came to her

with greater significance, now. She seemed to feel his masculine inability to understand and guide his children in the paths he would have them follow. And it came to her, that instead of helping to bring Lucille and Dick into a closer bond, she had perhaps widened the gulf between them. Without doubt, then, her coming here had added to her uncle's burden. She thought speculatively of withdrawing entirely; of either returning to Aunt Letty's or insisting on remaining and finishing the college term.

Lucille's packages having been deposited on her already heaped-up bed, Anise went slowly to her own room. She moved thoughtfully toward the window and stood looking out across roofs and tree-tops toward the buildings of the University in their setting of great trees. She saw nothing of the beauty of the flaming maples, oaks, and beeches, their summer green splotted now with great red and yellow daubs from autumn's lavish brush.

She was experiencing her first spell of real loneliness. She felt, too, beyond a doubt, that in this new world of Lucille's and Dick's she would never find real understanding, real companionship. But she would not be unfair to

them. She believed that both had honestly tried to make her at home with them. It was just that she did not fit in. Perhaps, though, they were as much at sea as to how to make her feel at ease with them as she was to understand them.

Yes, she decided, it would be better if they went on without her. Her presence would no doubt retard their companionship with their father. She would go now and speak to her uncle. Then she remembered that she had just seen him leaving the house.

She stood forlornly looking down at the passing motors and pedestrians on the far side of the avenue. A tear trickled down one cheek, but she did not know it. She was alone in a world so full of people. She knew that she was dangerously near self-pity, but that she must not give way to it. There were any number of lonely people in the world. Why, the University was filled with lonely boys and girls, some, like herself, who had neither father nor mother, but who had, in addition, the handicap of having to earn their living while trying to get an education.

There was Namar Harjad, for instance.

Half the world between him and his country, and doubly handicapped because of the lack of sympathy between him and the other students. His race, his ignorance of the fundamentals of life in America, set him apart from the others. And yet, he seemed to feel no bitterness in his loneliness. He appeared wholly absorbed in his own affairs, unconscious of the difference between himself and those who passed him by. If she stayed here, she meant at least to try to get others to befriend him.

But the thought of staying was not a pleasant one. She was more eager for the trip with her uncle and cousins than she had at first realized. Just the thought of giving it up left an ache somewhere in the region of her heart. She told herself that, after all, she could not disrupt the plans made for her by her parents, so long ago. They had put her into Uncle Sidney's hands until such time as she no longer needed a guardian. If it was his wish that she accompany them, there was nothing for her to do but comply. It would only make things more difficult for him, now, if she insisted on being left behind. He had been so kind, so sympathetic, so interested in her, since her coming here, that

she felt that she would rather bear anything than to grieve him, or interfere with his plans in any way.

She knew, suddenly, that above all things, she wanted to belong here; to belong to Uncle Sidney, and Lucille, and Dick. She wanted them to like her; she wanted them to love her; she wanted them to *need* her, so badly that they could not give her up, not for anything. Where was it she had read that good always triumphs? To believe in the ultimate good. That was the way — the way to happiness. She would try; try her hardest to believe that in time, she could fill the position with them that she longed to fill. If one tried hard enough, surely nothing but good could result.

“ Miss Anise! ” It was Dora's voice, from the doorway.

Anise turned swiftly, startled out of her unhappy reverie.

“ I knocked, but you didn't hear. Miz Della said you were in your room. ”

Her face was alight with eagerness and her hands were twisting excitedly at the edge of her white apron.

“ Oh, Miss Anise! ” she exclaimed. “ It's

that Namar Harjad. I just thought I'd better come and tell you."

Anise moved instinctively toward the mirror for a hasty glance, anxious to assure herself that her recent emotions had left no trace upon her countenance.

"Is he here?" she asked, wondering why he should come again to the house where he had received such an unsympathetic welcome.

"Now, Miss Anise —" Her tone was distinctively aggrieved. "You don't s'pose he'd run the risk of being treated like 'dirt' again, do you?"

"Why, Dora!"

"Well, Miss Anise, it's so, and you know it. I just wanted to tell you, he's been walking past the house, up and down, up and down. Once I thought he was gonna come up the steps, but he didn't. He took a letter out of his pocket, and I thought sure then, from the way he looked at it, and looked in here, that it was for you. I guess he got too discouraged, thinking about the other night, to try and see you again. I guess he missed seeing you at lectures and's been wondering. Oh, Miss Anise, ain't it a shame, you got to go away right now, just when —"

“ Why, Dora — ”

“ And say, Miss Anise, is this here desert country you're going to, is it the Sarah Desert where all them men sheiks live, that steals all the good-looking American girls what tries to cross it? Honest, Miss Anise, ain't you all afraid to go running off to those heathen countries? Me, I'm glad I can stay in this country.”

“ I'm afraid you've been seeing too many movies, Dora. The Sahara desert is in Africa, and I doubt if we'll go there. You mustn't believe all you see on the screen, Dora, nor yet all the things you read. You've got to make allowances for people's imagination. Of course, there have been some who have had exciting experiences in such places, but I've an idea that our visit will be very tame, compared to the heroines of the screen.”

“ Well, you will be careful, won't you, Miss Anise? ” She was edging nearer the door. “ You see, I hate awful bad to see you go. There's something awful human about you, Miss Anise. You treat people like they had some feelin's, like you knew that down underneath, everybody is pretty much the same.”

“ Why, Dora! ” Anise held out an eager

hand and grasped hers. “Of course, we’re all the same, underneath. It’s just that some of us have a few more advantages than others, and some of us are born in ease, while others seem to have all the hardships.”

“That’s what I always say. Some are just born right into all the good things, and don’t have nothing to worry over.”

“Not exactly, Dora. Their lives may be easy in some respects, but — Why, Dora! You don’t think any one can go through life without trouble, do you?”

“Well, I guess there’s some that makes their own trouble, but you ain’t that kind, Miss Anise. You’re just too nice, and good. There’s Miz Della calling. I’ve got to go — ”

A little glow of pleasure lighted Anise’s eyes, and a tiny smile played at intervals about her lips, the rest of the evening. Dora’s words had given her the confidence she needed. They held out hope for the ultimate success of her plan — the plan to earn for herself a place in the hearts of her uncle and cousins.

CHAPTER VII

DEPARTURE

In the thrill of approaching departure, Anise had no time to indulge in further thoughts of self. The last of her own packing was done. A tearful Lucille, however, was having difficulty in deciding just what to take and what to leave behind, since her father, learning of her extensive preparations, had insisted that just half of what she was planning on would be more than sufficient. Anise, hesitatingly offering her services, was surprised at the eagerness with which they were accepted.

“I’m simply exhausted!” Lucille panted, flinging herself into a chair, already filled with a fluffy heap of rainbow-hued lingerie, her lower lip protruding in a petulant curve, and her smouldering eyes half hidden under the brown mop of hair that had flung itself forward at her hurried movement.

“You’ll crush those things,” Anise cautioned

her, gently. She guessed correctly that Lucille's tears were perilously near the surface.

“Let them crush! They'll not be half so crushed as I am! I simply don't know what to take and what to leave. Dad's such an old bear! As though he knows what a girl ought to wear! I bet Aunt Della or Dick has been talking. I don't see why they think it's part of their duty to criticize my every action. Dick's far from being a paragon, if you ask me. And I bet, right now, he's got more luggage than I have. I bet anything he's even taking his football regalia in case he needs to impress some native over there with his importance. I never saw any one quite so full of conceit as Dick. You'd think he was old Atlas himself, and that the earth would go hurtling off into space if it wasn't for his mighty efforts to hold it in place. He gloats over his strength as a Samson might. I hope the East takes it out of him.”

She seemed to have forgotten the disorder about her and the necessity for action. She slumped even lower in her chair and studied the tips of each patent slipper, extended full-length before her.

“But, Lucille,” Anise endeavored to bring

her back to reality. "We're leaving at two, and it's nearly ten-thirty now. Hadn't we better hurry?"

"You can put in anything you choose!" Lucille told her, with a shrug of her shoulders now half buried in wisps of clinging silk and georgette. "I'm simply fed up with trying to please Dad. Everything I do is wrong. You might run down, though, and ask him to come up and superintend the job."

"You know he's busy, Lucille," Anise softly reproved her.

Appraisingly, her gaze wandered over the piles of clothing on bed, chairs, and divan.

She looked up to find their Aunt Della standing in the doorway.

Lucille flung out both arms in a dramatic gesture.

"Well, Aunt Della, I guess you and Dick are satisfied, now that I've got to leave half my things." She sniffed pathetically. "I shouldn't think you'd want your own family going around looking like frumps."

Their aunt surveyed the disorder, then her eyes rested on Lucille.

"You've been having too much excitement,

Lucille, these last two days," she said, quietly. "Run and take a hot tub, and then jump into my bed. I'll have Dora bring you a glass of hot milk and draw the shades. You can sleep until luncheon. Anise and I will look after this."

Lucille rose with a distinctly relieved air and moved toward the door, where she paused. "I didn't mean to be horrid, Aunt Della. I know you're right. I'm worn to a frazzle. Just put in anything at all. It's immaterial to me what I wear. I'll not see any of my friends, and I'm sure I sha'n't care *what* strangers think. Dad's friends are bound to be dubs, if they're anything like the places he intends to visit."

"Paris is hardly considered a 'dub' place, and I know he means to stop there for a time. Perhaps you'll be able to pick up a few of the extravagancies that you have to leave behind. It's much more sensible, Lucille, than being burdened with things you may possibly not need."

Lucille shrugged disinterestedly. "Well, put in anything you like. I guess, after all, your taste is about as good as any one's."

“ I hope so, Lucille. At least I believe you'll approve of my taste in this.” She took from her pocket a blue-velvet box and held it out toward her niece.

Wide-eyed, and alert with anticipation, Lucille swung about and took the box into her own hands.

“ Ah, Aunt Della! It's beautiful! I've coveted this sapphire pin ever since I saw it in Kendall's window months ago. I've looked at it and looked at it, but I never could save enough money to buy it, myself!” She moved to the window, holding it up to the light, her face glowing with pleasure.

“ Just a little parting gift, dear. I wanted you to have something to remind you that Aunt Della is thinking of you and hoping — that — that — your trip will be more pleasant than you anticipate.”

She turned toward Anise who had been bending speculatively over a row of satin slippers, but now stood beside Lucille.

“ Anise doesn't seem to care much for jewelry. I thought, though, that she might like these lapis lazuli beads. They match her eyes so beautifully.”

“ Oh, Aunt Della! They’re lovely!” But her pleased smile was more a response to the gentle gaze of her aunt, than for the gift.

She held the beads lovingly between her two hands, letting the light play about their loveliness, then moving toward the dressing-table, she slipped them about her neck. They did match her eyes. She was not vain, but she was feminine enough to be pleased with anything that enhanced her appearance. Her Aunt Letty had instilled into her, long ago, the emptiness of mere beauty, but she had also explained to her that to look one’s best was not a sign of vanity. Rather, a slovenly person was the result of a slovenly mind. One owed it to one’s self to take the best of care of what nature had given to one.

“ Well, run along, Lucille,” her aunt admonished. “ You need every minute of rest you can get.” Then she turned with a sigh to the disorder about her.

Lucille stopped long enough to give her aunt another hug. “ I guess we don’t any of us half appreciate you, Aunt Della. We’re such a selfish bunch, Dick and I, and — yes, Father! It’s just selfishness, his wanting us to go trail-

ing half-way round the world with him. I can't see what fun he expects to get out of it."

"Maybe it isn't fun he's looking for, Lucille. Some day, when you're a parent, perhaps you'll understand."

"Of course you'd take his part, being his sister," Lucille pouted.

"I hope that can be said of you, some day. It mystifies me, how much you and Dick find to disagree over."

"Oh, Dick — !" Lucille said, contemptuously. "He'll never hold a candle to Dad! He's too stuck on himself."

"He's young. But, do run along, Lucille, we'll never get through!"

"Well, thanks again, for the pin. It's simply gorgeous, and I'm perfectly wild about it." With a little wave of a slender hand, she was gone.

"Now, Anise, we'll have to work fast. Really, I had no idea Lucille had so many frivolous clothes. For a girl of her age, it's —" She did not finish her sentence, but stood looking thoughtfully at the row of slippers that had engaged Anise's attention. "She hasn't a sensible pair of shoes in the whole lot." She

paused, thoughtfully. "Sidney's going downtown for a few minutes. Suppose, dear, you go along with him. You can exchange these two pair of beige satins that haven't been worn, for something in leather with sensible heels. I *could* have them send over several pairs and we could make a better selection perhaps, but deliveries are so uncertain, and we've so little time. Just get something as near as possible like those you have on."

Anise was glad of the chance for a few moments alone with her uncle. She was eager to know more of the itinerary of their journey. Neither Dick nor Lucille had seemed interested enough to ask for details beyond that first night's discussion, but Anise, to whom the trip meant the realization of many dreams, was filled with a growing curiosity as to what awaited them on the other side of the Atlantic. She had an idea that their route would not be the prescribed course of most tourists' parties. And though she was anxious to see and learn of all the famous historical and natural beauties of the old world, still she was hoping for a sight of some of those secluded, little-known places which the hardened traveler revels in; out-of-

the-way beauty spots which the casual traveler misses entirely.

But her uncle seemed too preoccupied with his thoughts to be aware of her longing to talk. He drove carefully, intent on the business of successfully avoiding traffic jams, and to her hesitant attempts at conversation, he responded briefly, and with such a preoccupied air that she soon gave up the attempt.

Her errand accomplished, she waited in the car in front of the office building where her uncle was attending to the business which had brought him in town.

It was getting on toward noon. More than one group of students passed her on their way to lunch-room or boarding-house for the noon meal. She knew few of them well enough to greet them with more than a reserved smile, or a slight lifting of the hand. Thinking how little her departure would mean to that small army of young people she was leaving behind, in the halls of learning, there was perhaps not one, she realized, who regretted her departure, and she was conscious again, of that dull ache of loneliness which had assailed her the previous day. She tried to imagine Lucille's and Dick's

emotions at having to part with the swarm of young people who apparently meant so much to them. And thinking thus, she came, in a way, to understand better their reluctance to give up their present plan of life.

Short as had been her own college experience, she was certain that there was not one of her own sex who would actually miss her. Of course, there was Namar Harjad. She believed that, in a way, he might regret her going. He alone, out of the many she had met, seemed to look upon life as she did. He seemed to reflect in a way, her own reserve, her own dignity; a dignity that held off those bright, gay types that fluttered about Lucille. He seemed, too, to have, in spite of his aloof bearing, an eagerness to see, to do, and to absorb all that went on about him. It was as though he stood on a pinnacle, yet looking down eagerly at all that went on about him, greedy lest he miss a glimpse of what lay about.

She wished she might have seen him, before leaving, if only to tell him of her departure. It seemed strange that she should actually be going to his country — a country which to her might have been non-existent, for all the interest it

had ever held for her. She thought of the resolve she had made to find out something about it. In the hurry of preparations for departure, the matter had been forgotten.

If only she could see him now, ask him the names of some books that would help her to a better knowledge of his land!

She looked at her watch. Ten minutes to twelve. Rosetti's, where he waited on table was a block away. He would be busy — too busy for even a few words. Still, she might order a cup of tea and a sandwich. Anything for an excuse to say a few words. Besides, she wanted him to know that she was still interested in him, that Lucille's and Dick's treatment of him had in no way affected her interest, unless perhaps to increase it. And certain that he was the only one of her college acquaintances who might miss her, or regret her going, she felt that at least she was entitled to the pleasure of saying farewell.

Her decision had no sooner been made than her uncle appeared, coming through the revolving door of the office building.

“Have you grown tired of waiting, Anise?”

He looked at his watch, pursed his mouth,

then hurried to the far side of the car and slipped in under the wheel.

“ I asked Della to have luncheon at twelve, and we’ve only ten minutes to get there. We’ll miss our train if we’re not careful.”

With a sigh, Anise settled herself beside him.

There was evidently no time for bidding Namar Harjad farewell. It saddened her to think that it would be at least another year before she would see him again. And so much could happen in a year. She might, in fact, never see him again. Who can count on what the future holds? The unexpectedness of this trip abroad was only proof that one could never tell what was coming next.

Well, she did not mean to quarrel with fate. She had set herself a task, that would in itself, keep her wholly occupied. If she could help in any way to bring Lucille, Dick, and her uncle into closer sympathy with each other, and at the same time, make them love her, she had as much as she could do, without wasting her time and thoughts over what could not be helped, or on what lay behind her.

And thinking of all the many, no doubt, unexpected thrills and pleasures that lay in wait

for her, she was certain that her unfortunate friendship with Namar Harjad was a thing of the past, a something to lay away between the lavender-scented layers of one's half-forgotten memories.

CHAPTER VIII

TOWARD THE BECKONING EAST

To dismiss Namar Harjad from her thoughts was one thing, to forget him entirely was quite another. To be sure, Anise had little difficulty in putting him out of her mind during their frantic rush to reach the boat before it sailed without them.

In New York, her uncle had more business to attend to. Lucille, emphatically declaring that she would not sail with them unless she had a new sport coat and hat to match, had made a hurried round of the most exclusive shops. Her indifference to the assortment of wearing apparel which Anise and her aunt had packed for her was gone. Her wardrobe for the coming trip absorbed her wholly. With their arrival in New York, and the brief glimpses they had of Fifth Avenue's enticing displays of feminine apparel, all her natural luxury-loving instincts were rearoused.

And so it had been a mad scramble to reach

the pier. Lucille, triumphant in the possession of a very swagger sport coat and hat, ignored completely Dick's disgruntled attitude because of his father's leniency in humoring her, and he prophesied over and over that she would be the cause of their missing the boat.

Their father, an anxious frown on his brow, alternately glancing at his watch, and then through the taxi window at the traffic jam in which they seemed hopelessly wedged, made no response to Dick's gloomy utterances.

Even Anise, trying to remain unperturbed, found it almost impossible. The city, with its nerve-racking noises, its unending crowds of people, pushing and jostling in a seemingly endless scramble, its overpoweringly lofty buildings, its rush and roar, in no way tended to restore her equanimity. Lucille had been especially unreasonable ever since leaving home, and both she and Dick had seemed to exult in throwing barbed remarks at each other, regardless of time or place. Anise's attempts at peacemaking had been without visible results.

On shipboard, she told herself, things would be better, that is, if they ever reached it. It looked very uncertain.

They did reach it; just a few minutes before the gangplank was withdrawn.

Anise, standing beside her uncle, thrilled to the depths at the sights and sounds about her. The awe-inspiring view of the receding shore, its crowded piers slowly merging into the indistinguishable gray that was the city's background, which became in time only a blur on the horizon, left her with a feeling that she was but a very insignificant part of this great universe.

"Well, Anise, are you and Dad going to stand here all night?" Lucille was beside her. "Come and see my things! Our stateroom's so crowded I could hardly get in the door!" Her eyes shining with pleasure, and an excited flush on her cheeks, she grasped Anise by the arm, and hurried her toward the companionway.

"We'll see you later, Dad!" she called back to her father, who stood conversing with another passenger. "There are at least two dozen notes, flowers all over the place, enough fruit and candy to last a month, and a stack of books and magazines. The old crowd sure did well by me. I wasn't expecting anything like it, though of course I knew there'd be something."

Lucille had not exaggerated. Anise liter-

ally gasped at the array of floral offerings which filled the tiny stateroom. She gave Lucille a timid hug and a smile of genuine admiration.

“It must be wonderful, Lucille, to have so many friends, and to have them love you so much.”

To her surprise, Lucille's gayety seemed to drop away from her.

“Love me?” she said, as she flicked open one of the magazines with its photographs of stage and movie stars in soft sepia on highly glazed paper.

Anise looked at her in puzzled silence, then, as Lucille said nothing, she ventured. “Why should they have sent you all these,” with a wave of her hand, “if they don't care for you — very much?”

“You've got a lot to learn, Anise. Sometimes I wonder what's to become of you. Dick and I will surely have our hands full, if we manage to keep you intact until you reach the age of discretion. Your superb faith in the kindness of the world, and its generous motives, is rather appalling.”

“But, Lucille — ”

“Listen, Anise. There's a reason behind each

one of these gifts, and not one of them has anything to do with love!"

Anise turned from the huge basket of American Beauties in which her nose had been buried.

"Surely, Lucille —"

"No, I'm not mistaken. To each of them, I represent the answer to their prayers. Some of them are merely showing their gratitude for my helping them to make the Gammas. Some of them are wild about 'our hero', Dick, and flatter *me* with the attentions they're afraid to bestow on him. Some of them hope to make our crowd. Some owe me for a lot of parties and other things."

"But you seem to get so much pleasure out of it, Lucille, and —"

"Certainly I do. Popularity means a lot to me, but I'm honest enough to know that it doesn't come of its own accord. I'm simply in a position to help a lot of them in different ways, and that's the reason they're so devoted."

"Maybe they care more than you think they do, Lucille."

"Yes, maybe! Just wait and see how things are when we get back. Their attentions will have been switched to some one who has filled

my place with them. I'll be a back number, especially if Dick isn't on the team next year. And who knows what'll happen in a year?" she added, gloomily.

"Maybe you'll not want their devotion, then, Lucille, unless it really counts for something."

"Yes, maybe the moon is made of green cheese," scornfully. "Ideals may be all right for you, Anise, but you'll soon find out how far you'll get on them." She was plucking petulantly at the yellow petals of a huge chrysanthemum that leaned toward her from a basket on the little writing-table, then scattering the yellow petals indifferently to the rug, she reached for a row of embossed leather books on the far side of it.

"They're for you. Dean Hendricks and his wife sent them. Nice of them. I opened it by mistake. Sorry."

Anise took them eagerly into her arms. They were indeed an unexpected treat. Aunt Letty was the only one she had thought of who might have sent a parting gift, but she knew that her aunt had scarcely had time to receive her letter telling of their hurried departure.

"And here's a letter. Dad gave it to me at

the hotel this morning to give to you, but I forgot it. It was in his mail." Lucille pushed aside her own pile of opened correspondence and brought to light a somewhat soiled envelope of cheap white paper. She looked it over curiously, then handed it to her cousin with a little smile of amusement. "I'm going up on deck. It's too stuffy in here. Come along when you've finished, and tell us about it. I'm sure Dad and Dick will find it as amusing as it looks."

The tone of her voice more than her words, brought a flush of embarrassment to Anise's cheeks. She stood regarding the bulky envelope, wondering from whom it could have come, yet in no seeming hurry to learn.

When she did open it, she noted with relief Dora's name at the end. As she seated herself before the writing-table, she acknowledged to herself that she had been fearfully afraid that it might have come from Namar Harjad. Just why she had thought so, she could hardly have told. Perhaps it was the gleam of mischief in Lucille's eyes, or her own curiosity about the letter which Dora had said he held in his hands as he had strolled before the house that day.

She admitted to herself, that she would have

liked to have some word from him, if only to make sure that he knew of their hasty departure. She was glad, indeed, though, that this was not from him. She would have been distinctly disappointed, for Namar Harjad, she believed, would never have sent her such a forlorn-looking missive.

Turning to the first page, she read:

“DEAR MISS ANISE:

I just had to write and tell you again how much I thank you for the check. Of course I thanked you the day you left, but you didn't know then, just how much kick the whole family was going to get out of it, too. Pop you know's always been wanting that old accordian in Liebshut's second-hand store. Well, I got it for him. You oughta seen him and the kids when he played it. He could, too. I mean, play it. The kids got the roller skates they been wanting for over a year, and Mom got that new patent medicine she's been wanting to try for her kidneys. And me — well, I took in three shows on a stretch, Miss Anise. One, was one of them high society pictures about two women and their husbands getting mixed up. One was about a poor girl giving up everything to take care of a crippled brother, that was awful mean to her, but she got her man in the end, which I was sure she would. Gee, Miss Anise, it was sad

in the end, but awful sweet. When the brother dies, I mean. The other, was one of them sheik pictures, which brings me to why I'm writing you, principally. I want you to be awful careful. The sheik in this picture wasn't a bit good, in spite of his good looks. He was a regular old devil, which makes me think that after all, maybe I had this Namar Harjad wrong, especially since he's lit out from here, without telling nobody where he's went. Yes'm, it's the gospel truth. I got it straight from my cousin who's got a girl friend who's sister goes with the young gentleman that delivers ice to this here boarding-house where Namar Harjad had a room. And thinking about how he paraded up and down before the house, the day before you went away, and about what funny ideas these foreigners have about some things, and about you having so much money, and no mother or father to look after you, made me think you oughta be awful careful. There's no telling, Miss Anise. He might be following you, and he might have a lot of friends, some of them dark men that wears white kimonos and ride on white horses on the desert with long curved knives and black mustaches and beards, all hairy you know, with white rags tied around their heads like I wear to clean in to keep the dirt off of my hair. There's no telling but what he might have a lot of them waiting over there on his desert to capture you and keep you till your uncle gives him a lot of money. Or maybe — Well,

I guess I oughtn't to scare you too much, Miss Anise. I just wanted to make sure you're awful careful in them heathen countries, and to be on the lookout for this Namar Harjad so he don't put nothin over on you.

Well, I guess I better stop, since I used up all of Benny's school tablet on this.

Benny and Lil's having a fight about which one's gonna mail this to you, so I said one could carry it to the box and the other'n drop it in, that is if there's anything left of it.

They're just crazy about you, Miss Anise, even though they never seen you. It's on account of the skates, I guess. Kids is like that. Course I told them a lot about you, too.

Well, I hope you'll have a nice visit, and don't meet with no sheiks.

Yours truly,
DORA GIMBLE.

P. S. Miss Della told me the address of the hotel in New York where you're gonna be before you get the boat. She's leaving for Florida to-morrow, but she got me a place with a friend of hern. It sure pays to try and please people, especially when you haft to, don't it? "

The thoughtful expression which had been on Anise's face as she started reading slowly gave place to one of amusement. But as she read of Namar Harjad's departure, her face became

grave again. That he, too, should leave at the same time they left *was* a coincidence. But again, the smiles quirked the corners of her mouth and spread into a hearty laugh. Dora was delicious! Dora, with her insatiable craving for romance, her over-developed imagination!

Still smiling to herself, she went in search of Lucille, leaving the letter behind. She did not believe either Lucille, her uncle or Dick would be in the least interested in its contents when they learned it was from Dora.

Lucille had evidently forgotten it entirely, for she made no further mention of it. She was too excited, and too wholly absorbed in seeing all that was to be seen, and enjoying all that was to be enjoyed of their first night on shipboard.

Anise, too, had no thought for anything but her new and exciting surroundings. The luxurious salons with their gleaming mirrors and floors reflecting their equally luxurious furnishings, as well as the lavish apparel of the women; the ship's officers in their immaculate uniforms, the flowers, the music, the laughter, all succeeded in banishing from her mind everything but the glamour of her new surroundings.

Dick and her uncle, in conventional black and white, were as attentive as either she or Lucille could wish. For the first time in her life, she was pleased with the thought of growing up, and she felt sure that, contrary to her expectations, the process was to be an amazingly delightful one. And for the first time since she had been with them, they seemed in perfect harmony with each other. Her uncle's face seemed to reflect a sort of suppressed pride, as he made them acquainted with certain of his friends.

Lucille was undoubtedly in one of her best moods. She was radiant in a flame chiffon, with slippers of gold brocade, and whirled an ostrich fan of matching flame, its curling fronds tipped with gold.

"Quite too mature for a schoolgirl," Anise heard a woman behind her whisper to a companion.

She knew the woman was speaking of Lucille, for since her entrance all eyes had been held by her every move. Perhaps it was this fact which had acted as a tonic to Lucille's better impulses. She was delightfully docile to any and all of her father's suggestions, and to Dick,

who hovered between her and Anise, she was all that a loving sister could be. Never before had Anise seen her so sweetly radiant.

Anise, in soft yellow crêpe that seemed a counterpart of her golden hair, was content to follow where Lucille led. She had no ambition to achieve the popularity which seemed to mean so much to her cousin.

As she watched Lucille and Dick laughing together as they danced, she wondered if, after all, her uncle had not been needlessly alarmed about his children. To the eye, they appeared a very devoted brother and sister. If only they would continue as they were at present, what a delightful trip this would be.

CHAPTER IX

AT SEA

Anise's hopes for the peaceful continuance of their voyage were not to be realized. Morning revealed a Lucille who tossed and moaned with alarming intensity.

“ I'm dying, Anise! I know I'm dying. Oh, my head! Oh, oh! ”

Anise, murmuring sympathetic assurance of immediate aid, hurried into dressing-gown and slippers.

“ Surely not, Lucille. Why, you were perfectly well, last night. One doesn't — ”

“ Well, I'm sick now! I know I'm going to die! ”

“ Of course you're not! ” Anise soothed, then stood uncertainly looking down upon her. “ Shall I call the stewardess and send for Uncle Sidney? Maybe Dick's up, and he'll get the doctor. ”

“ Don't be such an idiot! Oh, oh! Can't you see I'm seasick! Yes, be sure to call Dick! ”

It's as good as he wants — to know I'm seasick! He wanted to bet I would be. He knows I've a delicate system." She sat up and looked fiercely at her cousin.

Anise was alarmed at the pasty color of her skin, and the dark circles under her eyes. "Let me get Uncle Sidney, Lucille," she coaxed. "He'll know what to do."

"Not if Dick — has to know." She swayed backward and buried her face into the pillows. "It's just my luck," she moaned, "just when I thought I was going to have a good time."

"Lots of people get seasick, Lucille."

"What — other people get, doesn't concern me! It's what I get, that does! Dick will simply gloat! Anise Decard, if you tell him — !"

"I won't, if you'd rather I wouldn't. But won't they think it strange, if you don't go up?"

"You can tell them I'm tired from dancing so much last night, and that I'll take my meals here — meals, ugh! Tell them I want to finish a book. Oh, tell them anything! Oh, Anise, I'm dying! Oh, oh!"

Anise, uncertain just what to do, contented herself with bathing Lucille's face and hands with ice-water, and when at last her cousin lay

back, with eyes closed, she moved toward the door. She peeped out into the passage, hoping for a glimpse of some one who might render some real assistance to her cousin.

She looked squarely into the eyes of Dick who was coming down the passageway toward their door.

“ Hello! ” he exclaimed. “ Was just wondering if you girls didn't want a stroll on deck before breakfast. Give you a better appetite, and pep you up for the games.”

“ Why — why, yes — of course, but — but — ”, slowly withdrawing her head through the opened door.

“ Oh, I see! ” with a grave glance at the fluttering ends of her satin kimono that showed through the doorway. “ Well, slide into something, quick, and I'll wait here. And tell Lucille some of her new friends have been asking for her. That'll get her out in a hurry,” he added, in an undertone.

“ But Lucille — can't — isn't getting up — yet. She — ”

“ Shut the door! ” Lucille hissed from the bed. “ Don't stand there, and — ”

“ Why, Sis! What's wrong? ” The toe of

his shoe had edged itself between door and jamb, so that Anise found it impossible to obey Lucille's command.

"You sound rather peeved about something!" Dick's eyes were twinkling with mischief and a note of glee sounded in his next words. "It can't be, Sis? Honest, it can't be that our little sister is seasick, after all her boasting?"

"Boasting? It's you who do enough for the whole family! Get away from that door, Anise. If he sticks his head in again, he's going to feel this slipper on it."

"Boudoir- or dancing-slipper?" Dick inquired laconically. "I certainly don't intend having my eyes put out with one of those spike-heeled affairs you wore last night."

"You'll find out which, to your sorrow, if you don't get away from that door!" Lucille threatened. "Just wait, Dick Lyman, I'll get even with you. Oh, Anise! Make him go! Oh, oh —"

"Please, Dick. Can't you see she's really ill?"

Dick grinned at her. "She'll live through it, and who knows but that we'll be next, since

it's begun to blow so. I wouldn't let it worry me, though, Anise," he advised, as he swung about. "If you can get away from her —" he nodded toward the stairway.

But Anise had closed the door. She was beginning to feel slightly dizzy, and the queer slant of the floor, and the dashing green spray showing through the porthole in no way helped her to regain her former equilibrium.

All that day she and Lucille spent in their stateroom. Both were too ill to be concerned over the rough weather which the ship had encountered, or to wonder whether or not Dick had succumbed to the general malady. Mr. Lyman's sympathy and concern for them, and his prediction that by the next day they would both be feeling quite fit again, took the edge off their suffering.

They looked at each other in speculative silence the next morning, when they awoke, and then broke into a joint laugh of relief.

"Well, we weathered the storm pretty well, didn't we? But wait until I get something on that Dick!" Lucille exulted, as she slipped into the new sport coat, preparatory to an early stroll on deck. "I'll surely make him smart!"

She was not long in finding the opening she sought. Late that afternoon, Anise and her uncle, in a sheltered corner of the boat deck were stretched out in their steamer-chairs, she with one of the leather-bound volumes of Shakespere that had been Dean and Mrs. Hendrick's gift, and her uncle with a very uninteresting-looking book on economics. They looked up to see Lucille hurrying toward them.

"Dad!" she exclaimed breathlessly, when she reached them. "I wish you'd please do something about Dick! He'll utterly disgrace us if he keeps on. He ought to be muzzled! No wonder the English consider Americans such bores!"

Her father had risen and had drawn her deck chair close to his own. "Sit down, Lucille, and try to speak lower. There's no need of taking the whole ship into your confidence."

Lucille flung herself into the chair, irritably kicking aside the rug.

Her father stooped, folded it carefully, and spread it over her.

"It's cooler than you think, Lucille. You don't want to take cold."

She disregarded his concern for her.

“ He’s down there in the lounge with that English captain I danced with the other night! ” There was no lightening of her aggrieved expression. “ That Van Doran boy, and those two Oxford students with the monocles. Really Dad — ! ” She leaned back, breathlessly, apparently overcome at Dick’s conduct.

“ Just what did he say, Lucille? ” her father asked softly.

“ Why — why — he was boasting about America being the greatest nation on earth! He was simply insufferable! It’s a wonder to me they didn’t take him out and pitch him overboard! As though we can compare with European countries, — in — culture — in art — in learning. Oh, Dad! He made me ashamed to think I *was* an American. They were so — so superior to him. They just didn’t argue at all. They just listened to his bragging about all our great men and about the natural wonders of our country, and about our wealth and about our winning their war for them! Oh, Dad! Can’t you do something to suppress him, before he — ”

“ Are you sure, Lucille, that you’re not exaggerating? ” he asked, eyeing her sternly.

“Surely Dick knows better than that. I thought he was sport enough —”

Anise moved uneasily, with the intention of slipping away, but her uncle reached out a detaining hand. “Stay here, Anise, there’s Dick now. I want you to hear what I have to say.”

Dick was strolling toward them, looking singularly at ease with himself and the world. The breeze lifted his usually sleek dark hair and tossed it awry. He looked all that the term, “good sport,” implied.

“About time for tea, isn’t it?” he asked, coming to a halt beside them, and looking down questioningly on them from his superior height. “What’s wrong, Sis; you seem slightly miffed about something?”

Lucille met his gaze with flashing eyes and a contemptuous twist of her lips.

“Sit down, Dick,” his father interposed, before Lucille could speak. “I want to have a talk with you.”

“It’ll be a pleasure, Dad,” Dick assured him, swinging his chair about, and planting it beside his father. “It isn’t often you honor us so. We’ve hardly reached the stage, I guess, when we can fully appreciate the pearls of wis-

dom that your lofty brain delights in. Rather Chinese, that — what? — as Reggie would put it.”

“ Reggie — yes! ” burst forth Lucille. “ You’ve queered me with him, and — ”

“ I’ll do the talking this time, if you please, Lucille. ”

Silenced by a new note of sternness in their father’s voice, they sat, their eyes on him.

“ I’m wondering if any of you have the slightest idea about the business that has called me abroad? ”

“ How could we have, Dad, since you’ve never thought fit to confide in us? ” Dick reproached him, in a gentle voice.

“ I’ve always looked upon you as children, but I’m beginning to realize that it is time to make confidants of you. ”

“ You’re right, there, Dad! Our minds may not be developed to the extent of yours, but we’re all there, just the same, and we’d rather be with you, than against you. Team work — ah! ” He beamed upon them all, but his glance lingered on Lucille, as though he were a bit uncertain of her.

She read his look correctly, and promptly

turned a shoulder toward him, though she refrained from any further show of displeasure.

Their father regarded them thoughtfully. "I don't believe I can go into the matter very deeply at present, but I can at least give you some idea of the situation. You know, of course, that for years, I've been connected with several firms doing business in foreign countries. You know, too, that my experience in those fields led to my present connection with the Department of Commerce." He paused, as though seeking in his mind the simplest manner in which to present the situation. "Since the war, our country has had to scramble to hold on to her foreign trade. Naturally, with the other countries again able to look to their own interests, we have competition which we did not have a few years ago. That, however, is their privilege, as well as ours — to sell to whom they can, but it also has made us see that we must find new methods of approach, new fields for our various manufactures. In fact, we must create demands that have hitherto not existed. But like all good salesmen, we do not want to sell by depreciating our rival salesman's goods or his company. In other words, we want

to keep friends with our competitors, which means, simply, that we cannot afford to antagonize *any* country on the globe, to push our own trade interests."

"Fat chance any of them would have, getting the best of us, even if they did try it!" Dick interrupted. "I guess America —"

"Right there you're wrong, Dick. America has already been hurt, badly, in the very interests she can least afford to lose. And strange to say, it is her own citizens, mostly, who have been the cause of the trouble."

"They ought to be deported then, or locked up."

"But how would you like such treatment?"

"Me? What have I got to do with it?"

"Lucille has just been telling us of your boasting before some of our English friends."

"Boasting?" With a reproachful glance at his sister, then to his father: "Surely, Dad, you know me better than that! You didn't expect me to swallow everything I heard about Europe without letting them know that America was on the map, too, did you? So that's what's the matter with Sis, is it?" turning again to her.



“SO THAT’S WHAT’S THE MATTER WITH SIS, IS IT?”

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Lucille started to retort, but her father interrupted quickly, "It really is a commendable sentiment, Dick, being proud of your own country. A person who is without pride in his own land is lacking in the fundamental principle of living. But to have pride in it, and then to boast of it, is quite another thing."

"But I didn't boast! Really Dad, I thought I was being very diplomatic about it all. Why these chaps think —"

His father lifted a remonstrating hand. "On the whole, Dick, your attitude is perhaps no worse than the manner in which some belittle America. Lucille, here, seemed quite disturbed at the thought that we could possess the culture of the old world, or produce as excellent art, or vie with them in historical settings. To be sure, our world is newer, but it was founded by men whose ideals and courage have had no equal. It was founded for the purpose of providing a haven for those who would worship the Almighty as they believed His Son meant them to do. It was founded on Christianity, the religion His Son had taught, the religion of brotherly love." He paused, then said, slowly and significantly, "And that

precept, is the only one, I believe, on which America has a chance to stay in her place in the sun — the place in which she now rests.”

Something of Mr. Lyman's earnestness had communicated itself to Dick and Lucille. They sat quietly, their eyes on him, making no attempt to interrupt. Their father had never talked to them in such a manner before. After a time, they stirred restlessly, as though they hardly knew whether to treat his confidence in the serious manner in which it was delivered, or to laugh it off with a witticism of some sort.

Anise had listened with growing interest. Somehow each word he uttered seemed to find a haven in her own mind. Although she was not conscious of having thought such things, she knew that she agreed with all he said.

“It's like this, Dick. If you had sprung from a line of very illustrious forbears, say, great statesmen, orators, writers, artists, well, those eminent in any of the many things that make men considered great by those of lesser talents, I'm sure you would not think of bragging of your ancestors.”

“But I didn't *brag*, Dad!” Dick protested again.

His father ignored the interruption.

“ You would want to stand on your own feet. You would try your hardest to do something that would win for you some individual glory. And so it does not become you to brag (Dick threw out his hands in a gesture of impotence) of America, for, after all, you are not in any way responsible for what she has achieved. You were only fortunate to have been born one of her citizens. So, if you would be of some real assistance to her, put a curb on your tongue and see if you cannot help to better the relations between your beloved country and those whose friendship means so much to her.”

He took out his handkerchief and dabbed at his forehead. Anise suspected, with an inner smile, that he was a bit embarrassed.

He was. Never before had he been so in earnest with his own children. Never before had the necessity arisen for such a conversation.

She saw that they were all more or less dazed by the seriousness of his words, and at a loss to continue the conversation. So it was, with a sense of relieving the strain, that she motioned toward a man who stood by the companionway beckoning to Dick.

“One of your new friends, Dick,” she said.

He was out of his chair like a shot and Anise suspected just how relieved he was at the interruption.

“Wants to show me the string of polo ponies he’s taking to England,” he apologized, as he hurried away.

Lucille murmuring that she thought they’d left the lectures on Americanism behind at the University, strolled off, leaving Anise and Mr. Lyman to resume their reading.

Anise, however, found it hard to concentrate, her mind being too filled with the new thoughts born of their recent conversation. She noticed, too, that her uncle’s attention strayed constantly from his book, and after a time, he arose and wandered away.

She had just reached the conclusion that she, too, might as well give up trying to read, when she saw Dick and Lucille hurrying toward her, their bearing betraying the fact that they were bringing momentous news.

CHAPTER X

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

“What’s the trouble?” she asked. “You two look as though we’d run into a submarine or something!”

“Submarine? Huh! Well, maybe that’s as good a name for him as any. He certainly doesn’t seem to work in the open!” Dick had halted before her chair and stood looking down upon her with folded arms.

Anise raised a mystified countenance. “Him? Of whom are you speaking, Dick? And why look at me with such a scowl?”

“Now see here, Anise, I want the truth! Did you know anything about this bird following us?”

“Bird? You don’t mean the gulls, do you?”

“Don’t try to be funny! I mean Namar Harjad!”

“Namar Harjad! Following us? Why, Dick! What do you mean?”

“I mean just what I say! I’m asking you

if you know anything about it? He's here on this boat!"

She drew herself up with an air of injured pride. "Really, Dick, I don't think you have any right to talk to me like that!"

"If you weren't such a trusting little goose —!" Lucille put in.

"Goose? Just because I defended him from a bunch of —" She started to say, "snobs," but caught herself in time. If she meant to make them love her, she must guard her tongue more carefully.

"But, Dick, you know what your father was just saying about brotherly love, and about keeping friends with all the nations. He represents —" She turned hopefully to Lucille, who with a shrug of her shoulders strolled away, evidently no longer interested.

"You don't suppose he could possibly count in the scheme of things, do you? And as for this brotherly love business Dad spoke of, it may be all right for nations, but it's hardly advisable for individuals."

"But Dick, it's as your father said. It's what *His* Son taught." She raised her eyes to the unbroken stretch of blue sky, then lowered

them to the far horizon, where the green of ocean was dissolved in the blue. "The trouble is, Dick, few of us have the courage to do it."

"Aw, say, Anise, it doesn't mean making personal friends of all the down-and-outs."

"We can treat them as though they were human, Dick. They have hearts to feel with, and minds to think with, just as we have, and who knows what a little sympathy or friendliness might mean to them. And this Namar Harjad. He had courage enough to go after the education he wanted. And as for making a friend of him — learning is supposed to be the biggest factor in drawing people together. At least, we'd be on a common level there. His mind seemed to me extraordinarily alert, far above that of most of the other students."

She knew that she was angering Dick by her stubborn championship of Namar Harjad. She really hadn't intended to go into the matter so deeply, but since he and Lucille insisted on making such a to-do about him, she'd stick to her position. After all, she did feel sorry for him.

Dick made a deprecating gesture with one hand. "You talk like a college professor,

Anise. Since we've left all that behind, I'd like to forget it entirely. But whether you like it or not, I'm going to keep my eye on you. There's something queer about the way this Namar took to you from the first, and the way he left his precious education unfinished at the very moment we did, and this finding him on the very boat we're sailing on."

"But I don't think there's any need for our being rude to him, if he's on this boat," she pleaded, hopefully.

"Don't worry, you'll not meet him. He's playing valet to Freddy Selwyn's polo ponies."

"Dick!"

"It's the truth, and I want to tell you right now you need not become concerned over the welfare of Freddy's ponies! Stay away from down there!"

"Dick!" she protested, in a hurt voice. "As though I —"

"Aw, Anise," he endeavored to apologize. "Don't you see, it's for your own sake? You don't know anything at all about that fellow's antecedents, and neither does any one. Freddy took him on because one of his men got sick at the last minute, and this Namar knew horses.

But it looks queer," he reiterated, "that he'd be sailing on our boat!"

"I'll say it does!"

Lucille had come up behind Anise's chair, and had evidently overheard her brother's last remark. She, too, stood now before Anise, looking down upon her with a slightly embarrassed air.

"I know just what you'll think of me, Anise, when I tell you that I've just been reading your letter?"

"My letter? What letter?" Anise questioned.

"The one Dad gave me for you the day we sailed. Dora's letter to you."

Anise smiled reassuringly. "Oh, that's all right, Lucille. I meant to show it to you, but I really thought you wouldn't be interested." She smiled reminiscently.

"What's Dora's letter got to do with what I was saying about Harjad, Sis?" Dick asked impatiently.

Lucille seated herself with an air of importance.

"Well; you see, I was pretty sure that letter was from Harjad. It looked just his style.

And when I found out he was here on this boat, I began to get suspicious. It looked mighty strange to me, his leaving the University just when we did. So I slipped down to our room and turned things upside down until I found that letter. I want to say, though, Anise," she apologized, "that it wasn't mere curiosity. It's because I realize so seriously my duty toward you. You're such a —"

"And you found out the letter was from Dora, instead of him, huh?" Dick inquired. "A lot of right you've got to be reading Anise's letters. I hope she told Anise just what she thought of you. It would serve you right for snooping!"

"She didn't even mention my name!" Lucille informed him, with a little moué. "But it seems that she, too, is concerned about Harjad. She's got an idea he's a real sheik and he's tracking Anise till he gets her where he can nab her and hold her for a ransom!" she ended, triumphantly.

"By George!" Dick exploded. "Well, Dora's not so dumb as I thought! It takes your hired help to get the low-down on your friends. I bet she knows more about him than we do!"

“ Why, Dick! ” Anise laughed aloud.

“ It’s nothing to laugh about! ” severely.

“ But it is! ” she exclaimed. “ It’s just some of the wild ideas that Dora has gotten from seeing too many movies. It’s utterly ridiculous. Why, if Uncle Sidney heard that, he’d surely think you were both too immature for any further confidence of his.”

“ I didn’t say Dora was right, did I? ” Dick demanded. “ She’s only made me realize that this bird is really up to something! ” He lowered his voice cautiously. “ But you needn’t either of you say anything to Dad about it. If there’s any sleuthing to do, I guess I’m capable of handling it. Can I depend on you, Lucille? ” His eyes held an anxious glow, and Anise knew just how well he appreciated the fact that he was to a considerable extent in Lucille’s hands, especially if he were proven in error of his judgment of the youth in question.

“ On condition that you’ll quit bragging about being an American. I’ve had a time trying to undo the mischief you’ve already done.”

“ I didn’t brag! But have it your way,” magnanimously. “ After all, I guess those chaps know what’s what, by this time.”

“Don't flatter yourself that you impressed them any, except unfavorably, my dear brother,” Lucille retorted, and before he could speak again, she said, “Well, I'm going down for a little nap, before it's time to dress for dinner. Coming along, Anise?”

“I believe not, Lucille,” Anise reached for her book which lay beside her chair.

But Dick retrieved it for her and presented it with a solemn mien. “Guess I'll wander down to the gym and do a few setting-up exercises. Got to keep in trim. Who knows how many desperadoes I'll have to vanquish before we get you safely back into the States.”

She gave him an amused smile, which died immediately he had moved away, then she sat, her book forgotten, staring before her. She was conscious again, of that old sense of loneliness. That Dick and Lucille should persist in their unkind thoughts of Namar Harjad, seemed to her more than unreasonable. They were surely taking the wrong course in their attempt to make her forget him. She could not help but feel sorry for him. He had been one among so many who not only misunderstood him, but made no attempt at understanding him;

nor cared to do so. Perhaps it was that very reason which had caused him to give up his struggle for knowledge. Perhaps, in spite of his indifferent, aloof air, he, too, was hungering for sympathy, or the companionship of some of those hundreds of youths who passed him so blithely by. Perhaps memories of his old land were too overpowering to hold him longer in this strange unfriendly country, and even lack of the necessary funds could not keep him longer, where his going would make not a ripple in the smooth surface of the lives of those about him.

She built up a beautiful series of possible events that might have influenced him in his present course, and in all of them, he was the same alluring figure — a youth suffering from loneliness and misunderstanding, the two things which she herself had suffered from since leaving her Aunt Letty.

But she did not mean to dwell on that thought in connection with herself, for since her determination to become so necessary to her cousins that they would find it impossible to live without her, she meant to let no thoughts of self-pity find lodgment in her mind. She

had been considerably puzzled, though, as to just how to go about her new campaign. Neither of them seemed to note her new gentleness toward them, or to notice her efforts at promoting a lasting peace between them.

Suddenly she sat up, flung her rug aside, and moved toward the ship's railing. She could think better with her eyes on the foam-capped waves, away from the curious glances of those who passed and repassed her end of the ship. The thought which had come to her was rather staggering. If Dick and Lucille really believed her in actual danger from Namar Harjad, wouldn't the fact that they had joined forces to protect her from him help in her plan of drawing them closer together? Why hadn't she thought of it sooner? Even though Namar's part in the affair was so wholly innocent, he might be the means of drawing Lucille and Dick into a closer bond. She felt fairly certain that once they had landed, Namar Harjad would vanish entirely. Still, at intervals, she might lead them in a roundabout fashion to think that he was following them. She might point out some one who slightly resembled him. She might even intimate a certain

uneasiness, whenever left alone by either of them, and she could, with the necessary cunning, make them realize just how she depended upon them for protection. She found herself smiling mischievously at the thought of the innocent deception she meant to play upon them, and wondered what Namar would think, did he know the rôle she had laid out for him.

“It’s for a good cause,” she said to herself, “and he’ll never know the difference. I’m sure he’s too concerned with his own troubles to give any thought to us.”

CHAPTER XI

LENGTHENING SHADOWS

In the bustle of landing, Anise had little time for further thoughts of Namar, or of her plot against Lucille and Dick. They were to go on to London for a brief stay, thence to Dover and across the Channel to France. They had spent their last afternoon on shipboard in discussing the various attractions along the route Mr. Lyman had chosen.

But at London, he informed them with an abstracted air, over their morning coffee and rolls, that to his regret he would not be able to accompany them on the sight-seeing trip about the city, which they had planned. So the young people, Baedeker in hand, spent a week wandering rather aimlessly about the museums, the gardens, the Parliament buildings, the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and the various other places of interest in which London abounds. Through it all, Dick affected a very bored air, assumed, Anise believed,

more to tease Lucille, than through lack of interest in the sights. Anise tried in vain to keep peace between them.

Altogether, it was a rather unsatisfactory period and Anise was relieved when her uncle announced at luncheon one day that they were leaving for Paris immediately, where they would spend but a day before going on to Marseilles, where they would embark for Beirut. Certain things had happened that would make his presence in Damascus imperative.

“But we can't see Paris in a day!” Lucille complained, “and how can I go home and tell them I didn't even get a glimpse of Montmartre?”

“It's no place for a girl,” Dick observed, severely.

“Is that so!”

With an inward sigh, Anise saw that sparks would soon begin to fly between the two, and that she must intervene if the day was not to be ruined. Only the night before, she had confided to Lucille, that perhaps she and Dick were right in their surmise that Harjad's movements did appear strange. She had seen a person before their hotel, as they entered, who

she had at first thought was Namar. She had been very positive, however, in making Lucille understand that it was not really he. She had merely seen a resemblance between the two.

Now, she deliberately cast a half-frightened glance over her shoulder, then hitched her chair nearer to Dick, at the same time sending an appealing glance in Lucille's direction.

Lucille questioned her with raised eyebrows, and let her gaze travel toward a table by the door, where a group of four men were engaged in consuming their morning repast.

Their meaning exchange of glances was lost on Mr. Lyman. He was dividing his attention between his coffee and his mail.

"It's the man I saw last night," Anise whispered. "I thought, at first, that it was Namar."

"Sssh," warned Dick, with a glance in his father's direction, then in a sibilant whisper, "no, it's not Harjad. Now don't get nervous, Anise. I guess Lucille and I did wrong in saying what we did. We didn't mean to frighten you. It's just that we want you to be careful, and to keep your eyes open."

She gave him a nod, and a glance from inno-

cent eyes that said plainer than words just how much she appreciated his care of her.

Lucille, seemingly assured that all was well again, turned to her father. "But what about Cannes, and Nice? You promised us a stay on the Riviera. And there's Rome, and Venice. I hear there's a lot of swanky Americans in both places. I did want to take a ride on the Grand Canal under the stars, with one of those handsome Venetian gondoliers, warbling, *à la* Caruso."

"You would," said Dick, then added in a fierce undertone, "haven't we got enough on our hands with this bird, Harjad, without getting mixed up with any Venetian gondoliers?"

"I'm sorry, Lucille." Her father had roused himself from his abstraction. "Business before pleasure, you know. I had thought we'd take in the sights in a leisurely fashion, as we went along, but we'll have to postpone that until our return trip. After all, I believe it is a better plan. With this business off my hands, my mind, as well as my time will be wholly at your disposal."

"Don't worry, Dad," Dick consoled him. "She'll bear up under her disappointment."

Besides there's plenty to see, as we go along, and all these old palaces, and libraries, and art academies and statues and what-nots will still be standing when we return, unless I miss my guess."

Anise was conscious of a very guilty feeling as she left the hotel between Dick and Lucille. Her uncle had gone ahead and was directing the porter as to the stowing of their luggage on top of the bus.

"I'll not do it again," she said to herself. "It's not fair to Namar in the first place. It's being deliberately deceitful. I'll have to find some other way of distracting their attention from each other's failings."

She found that, after all, there was no need to go on with the deception, for in Paris, to their amazement, they really did come face to face with him.

They had left Mr. Lyman at the Hotel de Ville, where his morning would be consumed in a conference with certain important looking personages. Lucille, Dick, and Anise were strolling along the Quai trying to decide just how they would spend the morning hours.

"Let's get a taxi and drive around. We

ought to have a general view of the city before trying to take in the details," Dick suggested.

For once Lucille had no objection to make, and Dick hailed an approaching cab. But as it drew to a stop along the curb, the three of them stood staring in astonishment at the driver who had jumped out to open the door for them. It was Namar Harjad.

He was holding it open, an immobile, unseeing expression on his slender, dark face.

For a moment they stood, uncertainly, staring from him to the door, held so invitingly open. Then with an air of detachment, Dick took each girl by the arm and turned her about.

"We've changed our minds," he said, in a slightly apologetic tone. "It's too fine a day to be cooped up in a cab."

Neither of the three turned again, but they heard the door slam, and in a moment the car had passed them, its driver looking neither to the right or left.

There was something more than uneasiness in the eyes of Lucille and Dick as they met in a quick interchange of glances.

"It's more than mere coincidence, this meeting him again," Dick asserted. His grip on

Anise's arm tightened. Lucille, too, edged a bit closer to her cousin.

"There's no telling where he might have taken us, once he got us in that taxi," Lucille remarked.

"I don't know but that we'd better take her back to the hotel," Dick observed, after a thoughtful silence.

"I've just been thinking that," Lucille agreed, "and, after all, just sitting in the lobby, in a place like this, is interesting."

Anise knew not what to think or say. This new protective attitude of Dick's and Lucille's was very flattering, aside from the fact that it was bringing out the best in both their natures. But it did not seem fair to let them continue to imagine her to be in danger from Harjad. Even though he seemed to fit so well into the pattern of their suspicions, she was certain it was only chance that had put him there. She felt a little ashamed that she had not greeted him with at least a nod of recognition, but she had been so surprised by the encounter, and Dick had whirled her about so quickly that there had scarcely been a chance for more than a fleeting glance.

Now, she told herself, the thing for her to do was to try to allay Dick's and Lucille's suspicions. She even considered the advisability of confessing her own little plot against them, but she was afraid that might prove disastrous.

She felt certain that chance would not repeat its trick of putting Harjad again in their path. But all along the way to Marseilles, she knew that both Dick and Lucille were on the lookout for any one resembling him.

At Marseilles, new orders were awaiting Mr. Lyman. They were to proceed first to Naples, from there to Palermo, Sicily, thence through the Strait of Messina, across the Ionian Sea to Athens, and then to Beirut, and on to Damascus.

They had a day of waiting in Marseilles until their ship was ready to sail, but they had no trouble in spending the intervening hours. They wandered among shops filled to overflowing with a colorful array of products from all parts of the East. Dick and Lucille, who were beginning to complain of the growing heat, took only a listless interest in the teeming life about them, but Anise, eager to see every phase of these lands so different from her own, missed

nothing. Even the peddlers fascinated her, though they spoke a patois unknown to her, and she had considerable difficulty in discouraging their attempts to persuade her to purchase things for which she could find no possible use. She did allow herself to be persuaded into buying a very beautiful Spanish shawl, its fringe as long as her arm, though Lucille insisted that she could buy one in New York for half the price asked.

But in spite of Dick's indifference to his surroundings, and his listlessness, Anise noted that his eyes scrutinized every one that happened to be near them.

"You're missing all the fun, Dick," she said to him, as she watched a group of urchins scrambling for the fruit from an overturned cart. "I've been thinking things over, and I'm sure I'm not in any danger. If I thought there was the least possibility of such a thing as you and Lucille imagine, I'd insist on Uncle Sidney knowing. I surely have no desire to figure in any of the thrilling episodes in which the movies abound. As some of our slangy fellow-students back home would say, 'Snap out of it!' Look there at the harbor, that line of ships

against the rose of the sky? Isn't it fascinating to think of the voyages they have made, of the cargoes they have brought from all parts of the world; of the strange peoples they have bartered with? Oh, Dick! Let's make the most of this trip! Think of all that's before us instead of the foolish fears inspired by a movie-mad maid!"

She smiled up at him, and patted his arm coaxingly. "I know Uncle Sidney is anxious for you both to enjoy this trip! Why, some people would give half their lifetime to be in our shoes."

But Dick's gloom did not lift. "I wish I had your way of looking at things, Anise," he said. "Of course I may be wrong about our being followed, but I don't think so. It may be only coincidence. If we come across him again, I think we'd better let Dad in on this business, though it wouldn't do much good. He's so full of his affairs that I believe we could all be kidnapped right before his eyes, and he wouldn't even see what was happening. He's blind as a bat, about some things."

Again she smiled at him, and watched Lucille who had wandered on ahead and had stopped be-

fore an array of beaten-brass utensils on the narrow sidewalk.

“ If — if, anything *should* happen to you — Anise, why — ”

She looked at him now, in swift surprise.

He did not meet her eyes, but kicked at a pebble that lay in his path.

She took his arm with a motherly gesture. “ Why, Dick — you mustn't — ! You're making yourself unhappy for no reason at all, except an imaginary one! ” She could say no more, but something within her sang, for surely Dick wouldn't be quite so concerned unless he did care — a great deal more than she thought.

Lucille had turned and was beckoning impatiently to them.

They quickened their pace.

“ It's Harjad! ” she exclaimed, excitedly under her breath, as they came up to her. “ He's peddling fish. There he goes, down that side street. He just came up from the wharf and when he saw me he turned down that way! ”

Dick stood, staring at the figure who was now mingling with the motley crowd, which filled the narrow way to the left of them.

“ Will you tell me, ” he implored, “ how that

bird managed to get here so soon? We haven't wasted any time since we left Paris except those short stops at Briare and Nimes." His voice was deep with disgust.

"Perhaps he drove down," Lucille suggested. "But selling fish! His is surely a versatile nature — rugs, hash-slinger, pop-corn and peanut vender, groom, taxi-driver, and now fishmonger! Ugh!" She turned to Anise. "And to think you were considering him for a friend! It only goes to prove that you do need Dick and me, badly."

Anise smiled to herself. "Just the reverse of what I've been thinking," she said to herself a little ruefully, then brightened at the thought that perhaps both she and Lucille were right. Perhaps they needed each other more than either guessed. It was a comforting thought, though she could not believe that Lucille and Dick were right in their estimate of Namar Harjad. Yet even though he were a fishmonger, there was no reason why he could not have ideals and try to live up to them — if he chose.

If there were only some way in which she could prove her belief in him! Dick's and Lucille's protective attitude was becoming a bit

tiresome and their conscious superiority in the matter of experience was even more so.

But she saw no way in which to prove her point, for they had surely seen Namar Harjad for the last time. Coincidence could go no farther.

CHAPTER XII

WHERE EXTREMES MEET

“ Kipling can say what he wants to about, ‘ East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,’ but I’ll eat my hat, if East and West don’t seem to meet pretty neatly in this burg! ” Dick remarked.

He and Anise were standing on the balcony of the little French pension, where they were staying, watching with absorbing interest the street scene below. In the various ports in which they had tarried before coming to Damascus they had witnessed many such scenes, but to Anise, there was always something new and fascinating to behold; such a medley of races; such a conglomeration of colors and beings. There were men, seemingly from all parts of the globe. Such an indescribable mixture! Arabian merchants strolled beside Moslem mullahs in flowing, snowy-white robes and turbans. Fierce-looking Bedouins from the desert brought to Anise’s mind the memory of Dora’s

letter, and her warning against possible sheiks. French soldiers in blue uniforms, very erect and severe-looking, swung past in groups and pairs. There were Jews, despised of all races, humble and soft-eyed, mixing imperturbably with the throng that contained ferocious-looking tribesmen, their soft hats pulled at a rakish angle over dark, fierce eyes. There were Hindoos, Persians, Armenians, Greeks, and many at whose nationality Anise could only guess.

The women were even more interesting than the men. They were of all kinds; languorous, alluring-eyed women of the East, who were covered entirely by the most gorgeous silken robes; bold-eyed dancing girls, in voluminous many-hued skirts, whose silver anklets tinkled enticingly as they walked. There were European women, with their air of self-confidence, and pale faces in striking contrast to the dark skin of the others.

Then, as they stood, silent, too interested in the scene before them to think of anything else, there came the sound of bells. They had heard it many times before, but always it brought to Anise a little thrill of awe. From the minaret on the Mosque at the end of the street, the

Muezzin's cry came; calling the faithful to prayer. "*Allah eekber! Allah eekber! —*"

Anise repeated the words under her breath: "God is great, and God is good. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet."

But the words in English did not hold the same fascination for her as the Muezzin's Arabic. She tried to follow him in the Arabic, but gave up the attempt with a little sigh.

In silence, they stood, looking down on the now kneeling throng. Then Anise whispered: "Isn't it wonderful, Dick, how they reverence their Allah? Can you imagine Americans doing such a thing? Picture Fifth Avenue stopping long enough for that!" She motioned toward the worshippers.

"You surely wouldn't want them to?"

"I don't think it would hurt any of us to take our religion a bit more seriously," she returned. "Of course, I wouldn't want America like the East, and yet — there's quite a bit we might learn from them, I imagine."

"You're wrong there, Anise. Why, if it wasn't for what America's done for them — Say, listen here, I've kept still about as long as

I can. Everywhere we've been, I've listened to you and Lucille and Dad, raving about the wonders of these old civilizations, from Marseilles to Beirut. Italian art and sculpture, wasn't it, in Naples? In Athens, Greek temples, gods and goddesses. I'm not saying that those things are not interesting, but why waste so much time and thought on what is past? It's the future that's important, and right now, we ought to be back in America learning something that'll help *our* country."

"But that's just why Uncle Sidney brought us, so that we could learn about *other* countries, in such a way, that it *would* help our own!" Anise triumphed.

"A fat chance these birds have got of teaching us much!" Dick retorted. "Why, I haven't seen a place yet, since we left home, that can come up to America. It's Americans who are back of all the forward movements here, just the same as in other places. Look at that American University we saw in Beirut, and that Mission school where that youngster worked you for your lapis lazuli beads! Hasn't America given — ?"

"Worked me? Why Dick! I gave them to

her! I wanted her to have them. If you could have seen her eyes when she looked at them — ”

“ Yeh, I know! All these Syrians have got the same soft, appealing-looking eyes! If I stay here very long, it'll just break my heart, looking into 'em, they're that sad, and pathetic-looking.”

“ But, Dick,” she laughed, “ I just couldn't resist her, when she came up to me and asked if she could please just touch them! I'm sure Aunt Della won't mind. She'd have done the same thing. After all, it was more an exchange of gifts, for she ran after us as we were leaving and thrust that piece of tapestry into my hands. I didn't want to take it, but the matron insisted that the child would be hurt, and she would think I did not like her gift.”

Dick shrugged, as though he would dismiss the matter, but Anise hurried on.

“ If you'd only have gone with us, and heard the pathetic stories of some of those children, Dick, before they came to the Mission.”

“ I'm glad I was wise enough to stay away. Some of them might have taken a heavy longing for my watch, my scarf-pin, or who knows what? ”

“ You’d like me to think you’re terribly hard-hearted, wouldn’t you? ” she teased, “ but I happen to know about the donation you sent by Uncle Sidney. ”

He had the grace to look confused, then remarked with an air of indifference: “ I guess most of us in America don’t realize just what these Missions are up against, or we’d be more generous. It’s a good thing we brought you along, Anise. At least, Lucille and I don’t have a chance to be quite so selfish as we would have been. ”

“ But what have I to do with *your* generosity, Dick? ” she wanted to know, quick to disclaim any credit she did not deserve.

“ I happened to overhear you asking Dad, as you went down the stairs, how much you ought to give. ”

“ And that was why you called him back, ” Anise remarked. “ Really, Dick, I do not deserve the least credit. It was because of Aunt Letty’s letter that we went there. She wanted some first-hand information about the school, so she could pass it on to their Missionary society at the next meeting. I mean to give her that piece of tapestry the little Syrian girl gave

me. I can just see those women now, gloating over it and wondering about the pattern. It's so different from anything I've ever seen. The matron said the child treasured it a great deal. It was the only thing she brought with her, when she came to the school. Such a difference between the girls here and those in America. Ours think it dreadful to be sent away to school, while these love the school so that they dread to be sent back to their homes. I suppose it's because girls lead such a restricted life here."

Dick had evidently been listening indifferently, for he stifled a yawn and announced that if he meant to finish that typing he had promised to do for his father, he'd better get at it. "Say, but this climate is fierce. I don't know how much longer I can stand it." He took out his handkerchief, and mopped his forehead languidly, then stepped through the arched doorway into the passage that led to his room.

Anise paid no heed, either to his remark or his going. Ever since they had neared the equator, Dick had persistently bewailed the heat and his increasing lethargy. The others had accepted it indifferently, meeting his complaints with a quiet silence. It did no good to dwell on

such discomforts. It was one of the things to be borne along with the insects, the dust, the smells, the beggars, the medley of unfamiliar languages and unfamiliar sights and sounds.

The rasping wail of a phonograph from an opened door of the cafe across the way, sent forth a beseeching exhortation to the passing throng:

“To let the rest of the world go by.”

And what a strange, motley world it was, Anise reflected. It appeared from her present glimpse of it, a hopeless, indistinguishable maze of intricate paths that wound and rewound unintelligibly upon themselves. Was there really some meaning to this conglomerate mass of individuals? Was there some plan back of this seemingly hopeless tangle of conflicting human endeavor?

If one could have but a hint. Her eyes lifted to the distant sky, the same serene blue sky that had for centuries overhung this ancient city — this city where Saul of Tarsus had seen the Light.

Dreamily, she gazed over the sprawling roofs about her. Her mind seemed to have lost con-

tact with the present, and was back again among the memories of her girlhood — those quiet Sabbath afternoons when she sat on the veranda, her attention wavering between the poetic softness of Aunt Letty's voice as she read from her favorite Book, and the drone of insects, as they fluttered about the vines on the porch, teasing her with their silent suggestions that she follow them in their flittings.

Her thoughts came in a disconnected stream — “sweet as the cedars of Lebanon —” They were off there, beyond the sand dunes. “As far as the east is from the west —” It seemed incredible that she should really be here, in this strange, old country, the country which God had seen fit to use as the background for that mighty drama which was to live and relive through the ages — the life and death of His Son.

Strange, that in the country of its inception, so few results from His teaching were apparent, except as Dick had said. Was America the way for these descendants of that old race, who knowing, yet had not known how to use the knowledge that was theirs?

And she remembered Namar Harjad. Per-

haps he had the vision to see. Perhaps he knew that in America lay all hope for the future. Why, then, had he not stayed there? Surely this land could in no way hold the opportunities for him which America held. Had America disappointed him? Had he found it as some of the other nations said, cold, grasping, unsympathetic, proud of its power, indifferent to everything but its own welfare?

Some slight movement among the passers-by distracted her attention. She watched this group and that, the gesticulating, voluble salutations of some, in comparison with the quiet undemonstrative manner of others. Idly, she noted a figure detach itself from the shadows of the doorway opposite her. Just another beggar, she thought, indifferently, and would have allowed her gaze to travel past him, when something in his manner held her. True, he was in rags, a mere handful, none too cleanly, gathered about him, and straggling down about feet unprotected from the grime of the roadway. But something in the lift of the turbaned head, the carriage of the shoulders, awakened a sense of familiarity in Anise's mind.

He was lounging now, against the wall, and

seemed equally as indifferent to the gaze of those who passed and repassed, as he did to the searching gaze of the girl on the balcony.

She leaned forward now, over the balcony's edge, eager to confirm her suspicions.

It was Namar Harjad! But in rags! Apparently a common beggar!

Her concentrated gaze seemed to have awakened him to the fact that he was the object of unusual scrutiny, for he looked about him quizzically, across toward the pension and then up to the balcony where Anise leaned over the railing.

To her surprise, he showed no sign of embarrassment. It was quite evident, also, that he recognized her, for he bowed slightly, though no change of expression was evident in his passive gaze. It was as though they had met many times before, under just such circumstances, and in his mind there was cause for neither surprise nor embarrassment. He was moving away, when without realizing what she did, she lifted a hand, indicating that she wished him to wait.

“ I'm going to find out, once and for all! ” she said to herself, a bit defiantly, as she sped

along the passage, past Dick's door, where the clacking typewriter indicated that he was hard at work, down the stairs, and through the group that lingered about the doorway.

“Namar Harjad wouldn't hurt a flea! But there's a reason for his appearing in such a garb, and I mean to get at the bottom of it! Besides, they wouldn't dare offend any one in Uncle Sidney's party. These people know his connections!” She didn't specify who “they” were.

But when she had crossed the narrow street and stood beside him, she knew that it would be impossible to question him. He would have to tell her of his own accord, and that, she soon saw, he did not mean to do.

He shook the hand she extended, then dropped it gently, without a word.

She tried several times to find the words that would open the way to his confidence, but without success.

“It seems strange,” she said, at last, “to meet like this, so far from home.”

“It does, indeed,” he assented, gravely.

“We came away, so suddenly,” she tried to apologize. “I wanted to tell you —”

When she did not go on, he said, “It was the

same with me," but he offered no explanation as to the why of his departure.

She noted that he seemed thinner and that he looked tired — inexpressibly tired, she decided, after another glance at him.

He made no attempt to speak further. She knew that she ought not to be standing there, that at any moment Lucille might awaken from her siesta and see her from their window, but she felt that she could not leave him without knowing something more about him.

"Your country —" she floundered, in an attempt to find words that would lead him to speak of himself. "It is different —"

"It is, indeed," he assented. "Very different from America."

She longed to know, and yet dreaded to ask him just what he thought of America. She was afraid that America had not treated him as he had expected to be treated.

He shifted his weight from one foot to the other, and she saw that he seemed eager to depart. If only she could find out something about him, but she knew he had no intention of satisfying her curiosity. She was suddenly overcome by embarrassment. How could she

think that he was still interested in her? Certainly he gave no sign of it, now. In fact, he appeared exceedingly anxious to be off. In detaining him, she had been guilty of one of those childish impulses that Aunt Letty used to warn her against.

What would Dick and Lucille say, if they knew?

And looking again at the sorry spectacle before her, she wondered if perhaps they might not be partly correct in their opinion of him. If so, she had certainly done a very unwise thing in attracting his attention to themselves.

With a murmured apology, that she must not keep him, and that the others would wonder what had become of her, she gave him a nod of dismissal, thankful that he seemed as eager as she to terminate their encounter.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE BAZAARS OF DAMASCUS

Anise spent a rather restless night, for she was conscious throughout her fitful sleep of a certain degree of disloyalty toward Dick and Lucille in having attracted Namar's attention to herself.

She knew just exactly how they would react to the news that she had again seen him, and if they knew he had been lounging in the shadowy doorway opposite their own, they would have new cause to believe that there was some real purpose actuating his movements.

She tried not to think how they would look upon her impulsive move. She knew that both of them were greatly relieved that they had seen nothing more of him since leaving Marseilles, and if they saw him now, in the disreputable outfit in which he had appeared before her, they would have new cause for alarm. Believing what they did of him, his appearance

now would only confirm their earlier suspicions that he was up to some mischief.

She was beginning to realize with increasing certainty the potentialities for evil that existed in this strange old city, with its commingling of races and creeds. In fact, she had had plenty of time since leaving home to take note of the many apparently undesirable citizens that filled the various places they had visited. She knew, though, that no one country seemed to have a monopoly on the others in that respect. To tell the truth, she had had less chance to know of such conditions in her own country than in those they had visited.

And though she realized acutely the uncertain atmosphere of this old city that was the background of Namar Harjad, she was not conscious of any fear for her own safety. All fears were lost in speculation about him whose actions and demeanor held so much of mystery. But knowing her cousins' feelings in the matter, she was certain that should she give them the least hint of his presence here, that Dick would no doubt bring the matter to his father's attention, as he had threatened to do if Namar again crossed their path. Even though he were able

to prove his innocence of any charge they might make against him, his apparent poverty would be against him.

There was but one thing to do, and that was to say nothing about having seen and talked to him.

Morning, however, increased her dilemma, for looking down through the narrow barred window of her and Lucille's bedroom, into the courtyard below, she saw him busily at work clearing its cobbled expanse of the previous day's rubbish.

She watched him thoughtfully, for a time, then turned away with a sigh. It could not be long now, she thought, sadly, before Dick and Lucille would see him.

But in this she was mistaken. Dick was ill. Just a touch of malaria, his father said, but he was certainly not fit to be one of their party to the Tulul-ef-Safa, which they had planned to visit that day.

Dick, however, insisted that they go without him. He had not been enthusiastic about the trip, anyway. The endless stretches of sand and sun were anything but pleasant to him.

With a little catch in her voice, Anise sug-

gested that she stay behind with Dick. With Lucille out of the way, and Dick confined to his room, perhaps she might have an opportunity to speak again to Namar, to find out something more about him.

Lucille, however, seemed tempted to give up the excursion, also. Indifferent as she had appeared to Dick's complaints about the heat, she now displayed a concern that surprised Anise.

"I don't know but that I'd better stay and let Dad go on alone," she said, as they left Dick's room, together. "It's the first time the poor old boy has been ill, as far back as I can remember, and he's so worried because he has a little temperature."

"But Uncle Sidney will be disappointed if you don't go, and there's really so little one can do," Anise said.

Lucille brightened perceptibly. "I know that, but we may be away for several days — and —" Again her face clouded.

"Why, Lucille! There's nothing serious about malaria. It's just that one runs a little temperature, sleeps a great deal, and hasn't any energy."

"Yes, but in this heathen place —" she

flared, then turned away with a little catch in her breath. "Dick's always been so well — and strong — and so proud of his physique, and now —"

Anise stood, silent, puzzled at this Lucille who was grieving over the loss of those qualities in her brother which she had always ridiculed. She stopped for a moment, in the corridor, to say a few words to Cecile, one of the maids, and when she reached their room, Lucille seemed to have regained her former poise, for she was taking a last satisfying look into the mirror at her linen-clad figure in its shining boots and panama hat pulled at a rakish angle over one eye.

"I'm sure you're right, Anise," she said. "He'll be top-hole in a few days. Besides, I've got to have action. I've stood about as much of this inactivity as I can. And Dad is counting on me. I'm sure you'll see that Dick is comfortable."

Anise was saved the necessity of a reply, for which she was exceedingly thankful.

"There are our ships of the desert, now!" Lucille exclaimed, with a hasty glance into the courtyard below at the camels which their guide

was belaboring volubly in an unintelligible jargon.

“ I do hate to leave you and Dick, Anise,” her uncle told her, as she stood with them later, in the courtyard, waiting for the guide to finish stowing their luggage on one of the camels. “ But it can't be helped. Madame Petot has promised to take the best of care of you both. In a few more days, I expect to finish up this business, then perhaps we'll find some real amusement for you youngsters. I've a number of friends here, both English and French, who will be more than pleased to take you all under their wing, and show you the sights. You'll not be lonely? ” He tilted her chin with a forefinger and smiled down into her eyes.

“ Come on, Dad! ” Lucille called, moving eagerly toward the waiting camels.

He turned away then, and Anise was conscious of a sense of relief as she watched them disappear down the narrow street. At least Namar would be safe from Lucille's and Dick's suspicions for a few days, and in the meantime — who knew? Perhaps she might be successful in her desire to learn something satisfying about him; perhaps she might be able to help

him, since he seemed so obviously in need of assistance.

But she saw no further sign of him about the place, though she wandered upstairs and down and stood for long minutes staring through first one narrow window and then another, into the street and courtyard.

So much depended on her proving her faith in him, and yet under present circumstances, how was it possible? And how could she proceed, without being disloyal to her cousins? It was a puzzling thought.

But she must win their respect, as well as their love. She must prove to them that she was right in her belief regarding him.

The sweet, cool air of early morning had given way to that intense, unbroken wave of heat which presses like a stifling hand over the city at midday, before she came to a decision.

Dick had alternately dozed and grumbled at the lethargy that was making life unendurable for him.

She read to him for a time, though she could not have told afterward what it was she had been reading. Her mind was wholly engrossed with the problem of Namar Harjad. She was

exceedingly relieved when, toward late afternoon, Dick fell in to a deep, heavy sleep.

Madame Petot, the plump, ruddy-faced wife of Pierre Petot, the proprietor, had been in and out all day, solicitously anxious that everything possible be done for Dick's comfort. Now, Anise knew, she would be busy in the kitchen with preparations for dinner.

Madame looked up from her mixing-bowl in surprise.

“The fellow who swept out the courtyard this morning? But I know nothing of heem. He wanted to earn a bit of breakfast. You know Pierre Petot — so soft-hearted!” An expressive shrug indicated her own disgust of the situation. “But why, Meese Aneese, should you be interested in theese beggars?” with a light of interest coming into her round black eyes. “They are here to-day and gone to-morrow.”

But Anise did not care to take Madame Petot into her confidence.

“I thought — perhaps — I could help him,” she stammered.

“You'll soon tire of that,” Madame informed her, pushing with the back of one hand, at a

wisp of gray hair that had strayed down across her wrinkled forehead, "for always there are beggars crying for baksheesh. One gets hardened."

Anise was moving away when Madame called to her. "Since Mr. Richard is sleeping so well, why do you not go with Pierre to the bazaars. I have seen, all day, how lonely you have been. The sights will amuse you. Pierre will take good care of you."

Anise's eyes lighted with pleasure, but she spoke hesitantly: "You are sure it will be all right, to leave Dick?"

"I, myself, will look out for him," Madame assured her. "Run now, and get your hat, since Pierre is leaving at once."

In a little glow of excitement Anise left the pension with Monsieur Petot, for this rotund, jolly-faced little Frenchman reminded Anise more of a small boy out in search of adventure than a staid, respectable innkeeper whose thoughts, she knew, were dwelling on the price of certain purchases he meant to make.

She was glad to get away from the depressing thoughts that had filled her, and lost nothing of the strange sights about them. She had

difficulty though in keeping pace with Monsieur. Stout as he was, his feet seemed scarcely to touch the pavements, and she watched him anxiously several times as he teetered perilously forward on his toes, in his excited bargaining with certain obdurate individuals. Once, she thought she saw Namar before the display of a breadseller who had been calling on Allah to send him a customer. She decided she must be mistaken, but a few moments later, when she saw the same figure lounging before a display of Oriental rugs, she knew that it was he.

With a quick glance at Monsieur, who was chatting volubly and dramatically with a group of his compatriots, she moved toward Namar.

She greeted him with a quiet smile, but there were two bright red spots on each cheek, and an excited glint in her blue eyes. Her fingers toyed with the narrow belt of her blue linen frock.

He showed no surprise at seeing her, merely looking gravely upon her as she said, a bit breathlessly: "You remember that once you promised to tell me about Oriental rugs? I'd like to buy one — a prayer rug, perhaps; one that is very old, if possible."

She thought she saw a flicker of pleasure in his eyes, but it was gone almost immediately.

“I would consider it a great privilege to help in your search,” he said. “Unless one knows — There are a great many fakirs — in my country,” he said.

“But surely —” She glanced toward the beautiful rugs behind him.

“It may take time to find what you want,” he said, with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

“It is not easy to pick up a treasure without a long search, yet there is a chance that we may find what you want, if you will come with me.” He nodded ahead.

“But these — ?” she exclaimed, indicating the array. “Do you not sell them?”

“No. I have nothing to do with these.” He spoke severely. “They are but clever imitations.”

“But Monsieur Petot —” she hesitated, and looked swiftly in the direction from whence she had come.

Monsieur Petot was nowhere to be seen.

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “I wonder now — where he could have gone?” Swiftly she scanned the throng in each direction.

"You have lost your protector?"

"He seems to have lost me," she laughed ruefully, "and isn't aware of the fact." Then her laugh was replaced by a worried frown. How would she find the way back, through that maze of narrow crooked streets?

"There is no need to be alarmed," he assured her gravely. "I will be glad to accompany you to your pension. But perhaps you might like to see the rug I have in mind?"

Still scanning anxiously the crowded way for some sign of Monsieur Petot, she answered irresolutely. "Would it take long to see this rug you speak of?"

"No."

Now, of course, was the chance for which she had longed. She must make the most of it.

"I cannot be away very long. Dick is ill, and Lucille and Uncle Sidney have gone to the Tulul-ef-Safa, so I —"

"Then come this way."

Out of the corner of her eye, she noted, as he moved along beside her, that he seemed to have lost that confident, erect bearing that had been his in America. His face seemed drawn, almost haggard, and there was a troubled, baffled



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look in his eyes that made her wonder. He seemed to have forgotten her presence beside him, for he moved along silently, and made no attempt at conversation.

It was the hour when all of Damascus swarms its streets, when the call to prayer from the city's two hundred mosques, brings a reverent populace in prostration before its unseen Deity. It came now, from the mosque at the end of their street, ringing out above the noise and confusion about them.

Anise took advantage of the pause in the confusion to ask softly, " You do not worship as the other Moslems, Namar? "

" No." He said it quietly, but something in the tone told her he did not care to be questioned.

" But you are Mohammedan? " For the first time she deliberately ignored his apparent desire not to speak.

" It is the faith of my people."

The kneeling throng had risen, and were moving along again through the Street called Straight, with its barred windows high above the heads of the pedestrians, and roofed over to keep out the fierce heat of the sun.

They moved along in silence for a time, Anise so interested in the sights about her that she had almost forgotten that she had lost Monsieur and that Namar was not her original escort.

They were threading their way through the narrow, dimly lighted labyrinth of alleyways and passages of the bazaar. The arched roofs shut off the light, so that the way seemed like a tunnel that might have led to the cave of the Forty Thieves, with its colorful, conglomerate loot.

Namar, she thought idly, might have been Ali Baba himself, in the picturesque garb which covered him.

She paused before a bookseller's tiny shop — a mere hole in the wall, as were all the shops along the way, but so packed with merchandise that there seemed no space left for the owner who squatted just inside the doorway.

“I'd love to have a copy of the Koran,” she said, as she picked up an aged volume and turned over its yellowed leaves. It would make such a wonderful gift for Aunt Letty.”

But Namar, with scant ceremony took it hastily from her, replaced it on the pile of books,

and with an imperative gesture indicated that she must not linger there.

She was a little indignant, as well as mystified at his action.

“Surely they’re for sale, aren’t they?” she questioned with a dignity meant to be chilling.

“Not to Christians!” His words were sharply abrupt, as though that ended the matter entirely.

She was still a bit hurt at what she considered his rudeness, and she wanted proof that he must have had some reason for it.

“But they sell other things to Christians,” she said.

“Yes,” he returned, “and some sell copies of the Koran, but not that fellow. He is very devout. You must remember that this is not America. Damascus is a Mohammedan city. The Mohammedans hate Christians.”

She had heard that before, but it had had little weight with her. Now, it assumed a new significance.

Namar Harjad was of the faith that hated Christians.

In America she would not have believed such a thing of him, but looking at him now, in the

tattered, disreputable dress of a beggar, against the alluring, mysterious background of this city out of the Arabian Nights, she had a feeling that anything he might do or say, would not surprise her. Nothing would have surprised her, here. That little wizened man they had just passed, might be a genie, holding some beautiful Moorish maiden prisoner in that huge earthen jar with the flamingoes in flight on its sides. She was half inclined to turn back and barter with him for the magic incantation that would free the maiden from his power.

She was fast falling under the spell of the exotic array about her. Its ever present glamour, its strange, unfamiliar, alluring sights and sounds, all deadened her mind to any danger that might exist for her. She tried to arouse herself, to concentrate on the things she wished to learn of Namar Harjad. Rugs seemed just now of little importance compared to the mystery of his presence here — the mystery of his beggar's attire. She must learn something more about him, now that she had the chance.

But she could not think. The din of the bazaar confused her, the snarl of the camels, the crack of whips, the bray of mules, the bells, the

shouts, the cries of the merchants, the pleadings of the beggars for, "Baksheesh! baksheesh!" and the ceaseless shuffle of myriad feet all contributed to deaden her mind, and prevent coherent thought.

She followed him in a sort of fascinated indifference.

A file of camels heavily laden with merchandise, crowded them to the wall. They might easily have been crushed. She had not noticed the danger until she felt his sudden grasp upon her arm, and his hurried movement, startled her back to a realization of her surroundings.

She looked at him now, anxiously. They had come a long way. They had passed more than one tiny shop, crowded to overflowing with colorful heaps of rugs and tapestries, but at not one of them had he given a glance.

He was so silent, so unbending and indifferent to those about them. She was becoming uneasy. Again and again, she stole a glance at his stern profile. Had she done a mad thing after all, in putting her trust in this youth of whom she knew almost nothing; whose race and breeding were so unlike her own?

Mohammedans hate Christians. She remembered his words with a sudden foreboding. Did he mean her harm, after all? Were Dick and Lucille right in their judgment of him?

CHAPTER XIV

PRAYER RUGS AND PREDICTIONS

Deliberately, she stopped before an unusually beautiful display of Oriental rugs, over which a smiling Turk in a red fez, presided.

“Surely,” she said, in a voice she tried to make very firm, “there is something here. Oh, look at that beauty there!” She lifted a small rug that lay on top of a pile and held it so that she might see it better in the dim light that encompassed them.

The owner’s smile widened engagingly, and urged upon her a closer inspection of the rug. “So old —” he began.

But Namar shook his head, in a short, quick gesture of dismissal, and refused to be impressed with the merchant’s protestations. The clasped hands, and eyes rolled to heaven, as though calling on Allah to witness his sincerity, left him adamant.

“Just another good fake,” he muttered swiftly to Anise. “We are wasting time.”

Although she turned away from the display, she made no attempt to fall into their former hurried pace.

“The fellow I was hoping to find, will be gone, if we do not hurry,” he urged her, a certain impatience in his voice. “He is not a regular merchant. Only when he has something really good does he come here. Let us hurry.”

She stopped quite still, and looked at him. She realized anew that his appearance would not have inspired confidence in any one. Was he speaking the truth?

She would make one more attempt to get him to speak of himself. She laid a gentle hand on his arm.

“Tell me, Namar, why it is you do not worship as the other Moslems?”

He did not meet her eyes, and his face became an expressionless mask which she could not penetrate.

“There is no God.” He said it as one who repeats a phrase that has no meaning.

She stared at him now, uncertain of what to do or say, uncertain of whether to be sorry for him, or to be afraid of him. Then she remembered the rug.

“ Are you sure, Namar, that this rug we have just seen, is not really old? ”

Into his eyes there crept a strange glint.

“ I know, Miss Decard, for my father has in his house, the first and only rug, made in this design. It was a gift to one of my mother’s household, by the Persian sovereign, centuries ago. It has been handed down from generation to generation until it reached my mother. When she became the bride of my father, she left Persia and came to Damascus, and the prayer rug came with her. It was guarded carefully, but there were a few who saw it, and tried to copy it. Always, though, there was some difference in the pattern.”

Anise listened with growing amazement. Never had he made such a long speech before. She scarcely grasped the import of his words, so interested was she in the unusual play of expression that crossed his face. She could have sworn that there was pride, that fought with humility; love that gave way to hatred, and courage that battled with despair.

With growing excitement, she realized that at last he meant to tell her something of himself, and that her belief in him was to be con-

firmed. She had been right, she told herself exultingly. He was not an ordinary beggar. At least, his father was the possessor of an exceedingly precious prayer rug. Now, now was her chance! If she offered to buy it — tried to bargain with him for it, perhaps he would be impelled to confide his difficulties to her.

“What — that is — how much would your father take for his rug?”

They were moving slowly along, now. She could not see his expression, but something in his manner caused her to feel a vague misgiving. Most certainly she had offended him. She remembered that the prayer rug of an Oriental is his most cherished possession, and one that had been in the family for generations, must be especially prized.

He seemed not to have heard her question, for he stalked beside her, wrapped in a gloomy silence.

She longed to ask him if it would be possible to see this rug he spoke of, and pondered for a moment, the advisability of such a question.

She saw that it was growing late. No longer were the crowds about them so dense. She wondered what Dick would think if he knew she

was with Namar in this strange, barbaric place. She must return to the pension without further delay.

She realized with a sigh that there was little chance of her solving the enigma of Namar Harjad. He was as far removed from her, in many ways, as the East is from the West. Looking at him now, she remembered, with a little tremor of fear, Dick's and Lucille's suspicions. All trace of softness had vanished from his countenance. He seemed suddenly to her, to embody all those qualities most to be feared in a strange race — a race that hated Christians.

She touched his arm with a quick decisive gesture.

“ I believe, after all,” she said, “ that I'll take the imitation rug we were looking at.”

Yes, she decided, she must have the rug. Even though it were only a copy of a very old rug, it was beautiful. She could see the pattern in her mind, the lovely soft colors, aged, perhaps by artificial means, but nevertheless lovely. There was something about it, strangely familiar. And then she remembered. It was the same design as the piece of tapestry which

the child in the Mission School had insisted on giving her. She found herself explaining to Namar. The two matched so nicely. She must have that rug!

She looked at him in sudden alarm. He seemed strangely disturbed, and there was no mistaking the fact that he was struggling with some overpowering emotion. Quite distinctly, she saw his chest heave and the knuckles of his hands whiten as they gripped his folded arms.

She was beginning to know actual fear. What could be the reason for this strange display of emotion? Was he provoked because she refused to fall in with the plans he had made, and because in this public place he dared not force her to accompany him farther? She turned back the way they had come, wondering anxiously just how she could manage to elude him. She did not look again in his direction, but she knew that he walked just a step behind her.

The rug was gone, and gone, too, was the vender. But she had no chance to voice the disappointment which she felt. She was confronted suddenly by the fat, red-faced little figure of Monsieur Petot.

“ Ah, Meese Aneese!” he exclaimed, his round face radiating a relieved smile. “ Such distractment! To vanish so, without one word! Veree anxious, have I been! You alone, in this place, and not knowing the way to return!”

“ But I have not been alone,” she sought to reassure him, so relieved at his presence, that her fear of her companion was melting away. “ He has been helping me find a prayer rug.” She glanced at Namar, but he stood in an impassive silence, apparently absorbed in thought.

“ Pay heem hees fee, then, for his services, and let us return,” Monsieur advised. “ Dinner will be over, and there is young lamb with mint sauce. Ah!” The tip of his pink tongue protruded from between his full red lips, and one hand lingered affectionately on his round stomach.

Namar drew himself up with a haughty gesture. There was no mistaking the fact that he meant to accept nothing from her.

“ Shall I tell the fellow to hold the rug until you can come, or perhaps you would like him to bring it to the Pension?”

Monsieur Petot was shaking his head and making signs to her behind Namar’s broad back.

"I am a little undecided," she told him. "After all, there is no hurry. We shall be here possibly for some time, and there seems to be quite a lot of beautiful rugs. I don't know that I should feel right about owning anything so sacred as a really ancient prayer rug."

She did not mean to let him guess how uneasy she had been, and how immensely relieved she was to find Monsieur Petot.

He made no reply, merely bowed and was soon lost to sight.

She honestly could not have told whether she was relieved or sorry to see him go.

"That fellah, now," Monsieur Petot remarked, "he seems like a good one, but one never knows. These Mohammedans are a crafty lot. One cannot put too much confidence in them, for all their love in Allah."

She felt that, on the whole, he was right, though she could not believe that there was any real harm in Namar, for any one of the many arched doorways of the narrow dimly lighted streets might have been a trap, had he wanted one.

Reflecting on how she had confided to him that her uncle and Lucille were out of the city,

and that Dick was ill at the Pension, she reasoned that such an opportunity would have been just what he wanted, had he intended any harm toward her. True, it may have been the unexpected appearance of Monsieur Petot, that had spoiled his plans, for there had been that unaccountable display of emotion when she had insisted on turning back to purchase the imitation rug. Whether it was anger, at the miscarriage of his plans, or irritability because of his fear of missing the vender who would perhaps pay him a handsome commission for finding him a customer, she could not tell. Certainly his countenance had given evidence that he was struggling to suppress an agitation that did not fit the occasion.

Yes, she told herself, Lucille and Dick were undoubtedly right to a certain extent. It would be better to have nothing further to do with this strange youth. She would cease thinking of him, entirely. At least she would try. One couldn't do more than try.

Reared as he had been, to hate Christians, and professing as he had done, but a short time previous, that he did not believe in God, he was not, she reasoned, one in whom to place one's

confidence. Anything might be expected of such a person.

Lucille's and Dick's suspicions did not seem so fantastic as they had. She had no intention, however, of taking them into her confidence in the matter. The less said to them about Namar Harjad, the better.

Though her excursion with him in the bazaars had been another bit of impulsive folly, she had returned in perfect safety. But she would not repeat the occurrence. She was not a coward, but she realized that discretion is by far the better part of valor.

She found Dick awake and fretting at her absence. He had evidently not been informed of her visit to the bazaars, even though Madame had promised so faithfully to give him the best of her attention.

To please Dick, Anise chose for the evening one of her prettiest frocks, a delicate green georgette, with insets of cream lace at neck and hem. He liked her in pale green with a touch of apricot to match her cheeks. He had told her so more than once.

She liked the thought of pleasing him. It eased the guilty feeling she had because she did

not mean to tell him of meeting Namar in the bazaars.

She had their dinner brought to his room and spread upon a small table by the long narrow window. Dick lounged indolently in a big chair on one side, while she sat opposite, eagerly attentive to his wants. She exerted herself to make the meal as enjoyable as it was appetizing, for Madame Petot seemed to outdo herself with each successive meal which they ate under her roof.

Dick seemed neither to note her festive attire, nor the culinary art of his landlady. He ate fitfully, in a gloom that did not lift. She plunged into an animated resumé of the most interesting and unusual of their experiences since leaving America, and raced ahead, in glowing anticipation of the treats yet in store for them.

Dick's monosyllabic comments were not encouraging, and after a time, she, too, subsided into a thoughtful silence.

Later, when they were settled on the housetop, where all Damascus spends its nights, he said, "I can't help but think that Dad made a mistake in leaving you here, Anise."

“ But, Dick! You wouldn't have liked being left alone — ill, in a strange place like this! ”

He raised a languid hand to protest against the persistence of a band of mosquitoes that buzzed about his head.

“ I can't get that Namar Harjad out of my mind, Anise.”

She gave a guilty start and wondered what he would say if she told him, that she, too, was in the same predicament. She kept silence, merely sitting a little more tensely in her chair and opening and closing, with quick, hurried gestures, the wide fan she held.

“ I've got a hunch, Anise, that he'll turn up again, soon,” he went on, apparently indifferent to the fact that she had not replied to his comment. “ And now that Dad and Lucille are out of the way, and I'm practically laid up, it seems to me, he's got just the opportunity he's been waiting for.”

“ Now, Dick,” she pleaded, “ you're letting your imagination create a lot of unnecessary trouble for you. You're making out a case against him, simply because he had the misfortune to cross our path a few times while returning to his own land. You'll have to find

better proof than that of his duplicity before you can convince me that he is a bad character.”

“ I haven’t any proof! That’s just it! ” exclaimed Dick. “ It’s intuition entirely. But I want you to promise me this, Anise, that you’ll not leave the pension with any one, for any reason, until Dad returns.”

She sent him an amused smile that belied entirely her own uneasiness regarding Namar and the enigma of his appearance here in such apparently destitute circumstances. It did not fit in with the Namar she had known in America, the Namar who had been so eager for knowledge that he would humble himself to the lowliest tasks to gain his end — the Namar who had been sent to England by his father, to learn the English language. Why should he have given up all that he was attaining in America to return here to a beggarly existence? No matter how unsatisfactory were her own attempts to solve the puzzle, she could not convince herself that Dick’s intuitions were any nearer the truth.

He leaned toward her, looking earnestly down upon her. “ You haven’t promised, Anise.”

“ Of course I promise, Dick,” she said, with

an attempt at lightness, yet distinctly conscious of the fact that she was not playing fair. She knew that she ought to tell him of seeing Namar again, and of her experience with him that day.

They sat silent for a time, each busy with their own train of thought.

“Do you know, Anise,” he said, after a time, “I simply can't get rid of the idea that there is some reason for the way this fellow has come into our lives.” His dark head resting on the high back of his chair was outlined against the pale depths of the sky.

“What do you mean, Dick?” she asked, held by an unusual quality in his voice.

“I hardly know, myself, Anise, that's why I'm so upset about him. I've tried not to think that he means harm to you, and yet it seems to me, that he's to influence us, somehow through you.”

She murmured an unintelligible sound, a sort of crooning note, that blended into the sleepy coo of some pigeons from a near-by housetop.

He continued softly, yet with an increasing eagerness, as though it were a relief to put into words, thoughts that had troubled him for a

long time. "When you came to us, Anise," he said, "I couldn't help but think that it was a mistake. I couldn't see how you were going to fit in. I don't know what you've done — but somehow I can't imagine how we could do without you, now. If anything *should* happen —"

"Don't, Dick," she begged, "there's nothing going to happen. You exaggerate the danger because you're ill."

"It's being ill that makes me realize the danger, Anise. I've felt this coming on, for a long time. It seems to me that it was sent me for some special reason."

"Dick!" she protested. "You're getting morbid."

"I'm not. I was merely going to say that perhaps it's the best thing that could happen to *me*. When I look back, I can see just how insufferable I must have been to Lucille, boasting about my physique, etc. If I ever get my strength back, again, I mean to be more modest about it. After all, it's as Dad said, coming over on the boat. Those who have something to boast of, don't do it. I can see now, why Lucille always treated me like the blight of her life."

"Lucille is like you, in a way, Dick," Anise

answered him. "She hides her real feelings under a gay exterior, just as you hide yours under a rather bravado air." She stopped short; a little uncertain whether or not she ought to continue.

"Yes," he said, "I've been suspecting it for some time. She's always pretended that Dad meant nothing in her young life, except a sort of perpetual bank roll, and now look at the way she tags after him, and hangs on everything he says."

Anise's eyes were bright, as she put in. "I've been thinking that, myself, Dick, and you don't know how glad I am. I know that Uncle Sidney would give all he has to be real pals with you and Lucille. It's just that life hasn't given him the opportunity until now."

He sat up straight, and looked at her. "Well, I guess the least we can do is to give him his wish. At any rate, I'll quit knocking these foreign places he's so wrapped up in. But," he added, with a sigh. "I'd give a lot to be back in America. And I'd give still more," with emphasis, "to be certain we won't run into that Harjad person again, but I've got a feeling that I won't get my wish."

CHAPTER XV

THE PLOT THICKENS

Dick insisted on breakfasting, the next morning, in the dining-room. He felt decidedly better, he said, and Anise noted with relief the absence of any sign of fever. Madame Petot's expression, as she gazed in their direction, also helped to reassure her. She knew that there were malignant forms of malaria. She could not bear to think of Dick seriously ill. The doctor had said it was but a slight touch, and now it seemed that he was right. Dick, with his great build and splendid health, would be able to throw it off entirely in a few days. Surely he was wrong in his belief that there was some meaning back of his illness. She threw off the unwelcome thought, and gave her attention to the tempting repast before them. Dick, however, made only a pretense of eating. He barely tasted the omelette, a golden fluffy mound, on squares of delicately browned toast, the luscious apricots, or the delicious figs in their spiced amber syrup.

“ We might take a stroll after a while,” he said, as they left the room together, “ but I think I’ll lie down a bit, first. Didn’t get much sleep last night, listening to the mosquito symphony orchestra on the netting over my bed.”

Madame Petot, who was lingering near the door, beckoned to Anise with a nod of her head. Dick sauntered out, and Anise could hear him mounting the stairs to his room.

“ So much better, he looks this morning! But malaria’s a treacherous thing, sometimes. A long time, he has been trying to pretend there was nothing wrong, but I know the signs! And there’s something else, Meese Aneese. That fellow, now, that you were asking about the other day. Back again he came this morning looking for work. I just wanted to warn you. He is strong. Let him work. Alms may be all right for those who are crippled or old, but for a young fellow like heem — ” She shook her head, emphatically.

“ He is here, now? ” Anise asked, more to be saying something, than through any desire to know more about him, for she had intended to put him definitely from her thoughts, especially since her talk the night before with Dick.

“Yes.” Madam Petot nodded toward the kitchen. “A fast worker, he is. Not many are so willing. He more than earns his food. I just thought I’d tell you, for I’m sure there are many who need help far worse than heem.”

With a murmured, “Thank you,” Anise strolled toward Madame’s little parlor, which had been turned over to her guests. Idly she glanced through first one magazine and then another. It was impossible to concentrate on the subject matter. Namar here at the pension, again. Dick would surely learn of it before long.

She flung down her magazine and moved toward the window, where she stared disinterestedly at the morning parade of passersby. She heard again Dick’s words of the night before: “I can’t get rid of the idea that there is some reason for the way this fellow has come into our lives — it seems to me, that he’s to influence us, somehow through you.” Were Dick’s words a portent, or were they merely the result of his lowered vitality, and the idle hours he was forced to endure?

With a little gesture of disgust, she turned toward the door.

“ I'll be getting morbid, myself, if I do much more thinking along this line! ” she told herself, as she moved toward the staircase. She would write some letters. Anything to put Namar Harjad out of her mind.

But in the corridor which led to her room, she came upon him, down upon his knees, busily scrubbing its already spotless floor. Madame Petot believed firmly in cleanliness being next to godliness.

She watched him thoughtfully, as he scrambled to his feet and moved his bucket so that she might pass, and smiled to herself at the thought that there might be danger to her from this tall, muscular youth, who in spite of his lowly occupation stood so straight and dignified before her — almost as though he were greeting her on the college campus where she had first known him.

His eyes met hers in a calm, direct gaze. “ I have been wondering, Miss Decard, if you would let me see the piece of tapestry you spoke of yesterday.”

“ The tapestry? ” She was thinking more of him and his new occupation, than of what he was saying.

“ Yes. You mentioned having a piece of tapestry which was woven in the same pattern as that rug we saw — the one I told you was but a clever fake.”

“ Oh, yes,” she agreed. “ It was because the two matched so nicely, that I wanted the rug! And you want to see it? ”

“ If you would be so kind.”

“ Why, yes — certainly,” motioning toward her door. “ It is on the wall.”

“ Could you not bring it here? ” he asked, a certain hesitation in his voice.

“ But it is tacked to the wall. You will have to come,” nodding again toward her door.

Surely there could be no harm in permitting him to see the tapestry. With a hospitable gesture she opened her door and nodded toward it, moving to one side as he hesitated on the threshold.

The room had been Madame Petot's own private one, which she had vacated for the two girls, and in a niche between the windows was a tiny altar, with an array of candles, crucifix and images of saints, for Madame was very devout. To Anise, the space over the altar had seemed to call for just the lovely colors which

the tapestry held, and so she had had Monsieur tack it just there.

“There!” she exclaimed, “isn't it beautiful?” nodding toward it. “And it is the same pattern as that rug we saw. I do wish we could find that merchant —” and then she stopped short, for she remembered that she must have nothing more to do with him. Even now — why — but surely no one would have refused such a request.

He made no reply, but stood staring, while she watched him curiously.

He seemed to have forgotten her, and the fact that he was staying much longer than was necessary.

Uneasily, she moved toward one of the windows, wondering how best to intimate that she thought he had better go.

The tinkle of Dick's bell startled her. She cast an appealing glance toward the silent figure, staring at the tapestry, apparently lost in thought, and then hurried to the door.

Service was not one of the outstanding features of the pension. One simply called from the stair-head to the hallway below, and if any one happened to be about, one's wants were at

once satisfied. Otherwise, one went in search of the desired article or need. The Petots made no pretense of running an up-to-date establishment. Good food and clean lodgings were the prime requisites of existence they believed, and certainly there was an abundance of both. It was the fame of Madame Petot's cuisine that had brought them to her.

It was with a smile of benevolence that she had placed the little bell on Dick's bedside table.

"As a special favor," she had announced. "When one is ill — ah — Monsieur Dick has only to ring, and —"

But Monsieur Dick had rung a number of times without results, and so Anise had taken it upon herself to answer his calls.

"Tell them to fix me up some fresh lemonade, will you please, Anise," he begged, as she opened his door. "It's the only thing that isn't utterly tasteless."

"You won't mind waiting a bit, will you, Dick?" she returned. "Monsieur Petot has not returned from the market, and you know how they buy — just enough for one day at a time. I doubt if there's a lemon on the place just now. But I'll go and see."

She hurried back to her own room. She must get rid of Namar at once. Dick might become impatient at any moment, and go in search of his lemonade. They might meet on the stairs or in the hallway. She was exceedingly anxious that their meeting be postponed as long as possible, though she believed now it was inevitable, since Namar had been put to work inside the establishment.

He was standing as she had left him. She thought he looked surprised as she reëntered the room, as though he had not noticed her absence.

“You are most kind to —” Bowing, he turned toward the door, and without finishing his sentence, passed through.

She stood immobile, staring at the half-opened door through which he had passed, hopeful that he would be able to finish his task before Dick discovered him.

Then remembering Dick's request, she went in search of the lemonade, passing in silence the busy figure at the end of the corridor.

Dick was so much better, late that evening, that they went for a short stroll, but it was a very quiet one, indeed. Both seemed preoccu-

pieced with their own thoughts, nor did either notice the other's abstraction.

All day, Anise had puzzled over the request of Namar. Why should he wish to see the piece of tapestry? Did he think that it, too, was only a cheap piece of workmanship, and as worthless as the rug he had called a fake? Why, too, had he not made some explanation as to the reason for his interest in it? He had merely asked to see it, and had made no comment, merely a brief word of thanks.

She was relieved and glad when her uncle and Lucille returned, for now there would be little chance to ponder upon the unanswerable riddle of Namar Harjad.

Lucille was filled to overflowing with vitality. They had met friends while returning to Damascus — American friends, and now that her father's business affairs were practically settled, and it had become known among his confreres that he had both a very charming daughter and niece and an equally interesting young son, there was the prospect of some real gayety ahead.

She fairly bubbled over with animation. She hugged Dick with an exaggerated display of

affection, but Anise could see beneath the pretended lightness, a real relief over her brother's improved condition.

They were in their room, idling away the time before dressing for dinner.

"I'm invited to-night, to a little dinner party, Mrs. Lafon is having. Her very tall cousin, Jerry Lafon, an excruciatingly formal person, with a very blasé air, is calling for me. Can you imagine any one of that stripe playing up to me?"

Anise gave her an indulgent smile. "You rather fancy yourself as an empty-headed bit of fluff, don't you, Lucille? If you ask me, I'd say it's not so very hard to see beneath your shell."

"Well, I like that, Anise Decard!" she exclaimed with a pretense of anger, and flinging an armful of garments she had taken from her bag into an untidy heap upon her bed.

"It's a sort of armor, Lucille, that you wear to protect your real self, isn't it?"

Lucille swung about and stared at her cousin lying full length across her own bed.

"You've become a most observing person, all of a sudden. Not going in for psycho-analysis, are you?"

“Not exactly. It’s only that I think you’re making a mistake to cover up your real goodness of heart. You’re cutting yourself off from so much real happiness.”

“Will you kindly tell me what this is the prelude to, or is it the result of being left alone with a sick cousin?”

“It *is* Dick, Lucille,” she said, gently. “This illness of his, slight though it is, has changed him. He’s had quite a lot of time to think — and I believe it’s done him good, in a way. Won’t you leave off your armor after this, when you’re with him? He’s more fond of you than you can guess.”

Lucille’s eyes were very bright, as she regarded her cousin, and once, during Anise’s little speech, she drew in her breath sharply, but she made no answer to Anise’s appeal, only flung away toward the tiny chest of drawers and yanked one of them open with a vicious gesture.

“I haven’t a decent rag to wear, to-night!” she bemoaned. “Everything is crumpled and rumped beyond recognition. I’d look like a drowned mermaid in this green chiffon. My flame georgette is utterly ruined. This black

lace makes me look like a lost shadow, and this — ”

“If there’s anything I can lend you— ” Anise began.

“ Oh, will you, really? I’ve just been wishing for that Spanish shawl you bought in Marseilles. One doesn’t need a frock if you know how to drape them, and they’re all the rage now in America. I’ve got those garnet earrings, and that high carved comb, if I can just manage to make this bob look dignified.”

“ But, Lucille, it makes you look so much older,” Anise protested, as she watched her cousin try the effect of the high comb against her severely arranged hair.

“ Well, who cares? That Lafon chap isn’t just out of kindergarten himself.”

It was a very beautiful, radiant Lucille that flashed down the stairs a little later. She might almost have been mistaken for a real senorita, ready for her first bull-fight. She did pucker her lips into a momentary pout when her father very quietly announced that he would accompany them to the Lafons’ hotel and call for her later. Damascus was not America, though things were on the whole very serene at present.

Lucille's high spirits were still in evidence the next morning. She gave them a glowing account, over the breakfast table, of the previous evening's happenings, and Anise noted with pleasure that she divided her attention equally between her father and Dick, and that her manner held a new note of softness.

There was no sign of it, however, an hour later, when, returning to their room after breakfast, Anise found her in the midst of a dismantled dresser and trunk.

“ My sapphire bar pin that Aunt Della gave me, is gone! I've hunted through everything I have, and it isn't here! It's been stolen! ”

CHAPTER XVI

TROUBLED DAYS

“ Stolen? Oh, surely not! ” Anise protested.
“ When did you wear it last? ”

“ I don’t remember, but it was here when I left for the Tulul-ef-Safa. I had intended giving it to Monsieur Petot to put in the safe, but Dick’s illness upset me so — ”

“ Was it here last night? ”

“ I can’t say. I didn’t think to look. I was too concerned with what I was to wear to the Lafons’.”

“ It’s surely here, somewhere,” Anise insisted, her eyes traveling from trunk trays to the open dresser drawers.

But a systematic search through the belongings of both girls, revealed no trace of the missing pin. Drawers, boxes, trays, and every piece of furniture in the room was examined. Clothing was shaken out and searched, but with no results.

“ I can’t think it was any one from the out-

side," Lucille said, moving toward the high barred window. "It would take a slim Jim, sure enough, to get through those bars. I hate to say it, but it must have been some one in the house. I've seen Cecile's eyes lingering longingly over it more than once."

"Oh, Lucille, you surely won't let them think you suspect her?" Anise, stooping over the disarray of wearing apparel she had been searching, raised startled eyes to her cousin. "I've heard Madame tell so many that Cecile is like a daughter to them. They have had her so long. It would hurt them dreadfully, if she were accused of such a thing."

"Will you please make a suggestion, then? It was here when I left. It was either taken while I was away, some time during last night, or while we were breakfasting this morning."

"But our door was locked during the night, and no one could get through those windows."

"Exactly! Then it was either taken this morning, or during my absence. It's a pretty clear case against Cecile, it seems to me, since no one enters our rooms but her."

Anise stood as if suddenly turned to stone, and a slow flush mounted to her cheeks. She

dropped the box of gloves she had lifted from a drawer, with a little clatter into a tray that held a miscellaneous collection of beads, earrings, bangles, and slipper buckles.

“What’s wrong,” Lucille inquired, bestowing a wondering look upon her cousin. “I hope you’ll forgive me, but you look guilty enough to have been the thief, yourself.”

The smile she had expected to bring to Anise’s face, did not materialize, and she regarded her now, with growing wonder.

Anise did not meet her eyes. She toyed abstractedly with a string of crystal beads that lay under her hands.

“Anise Decard! I do believe you know something about that pin!”

“I don’t know — anything about — the pin,” Anise returned, haltingly, “but —”

“But — what?” Lucille demanded, when her cousin made no attempt to finish her sentence.

Anise turned toward her now, with an appealing gesture. “Believe me, Lucille,” she pleaded, “Cecile didn’t take it. I’m sure we’ll find it, if we search carefully.”

Lucille was regarding her now, with snapping

eyes. She flung back the lock of hair that had a habit of falling forward over one eye, and looked searchingly at her cousin.

“ You may as well come right out and say you’re trying to shield some one. You’ve seen some one here — ”

Anise moved toward the window and stood looking down into the street. If only she might see Namar and ask — But, no, she couldn’t ask him a thing like that. He wouldn’t have taken Lucille’s pin. But Cecile must not be accused — Cecile with her eager, worshipful eyes, her willingness to please any and all of them. Yet how could she save Cecile without exposing Namar? She remembered with a little shiver how she had left him here, while she answered Dick’s bell. He might very easily have opened a drawer, or lifted the lid of Lucille’s trunk, which she had left unlocked, and taken the pin. But he had not, she said over and over, to herself. He had not taken it. Of that she was very sure.

“ You can tell me what you know, Anise,” Lucille was saying in level tones, “ or I’ll go straight to Dad and let him investigate this. I don’t intend to lose Aunt Della’s gift in such

a fashion." She started toward the door, but Anise was beside her, clutching her arm.

"Don't you see, Lucille," she begged, "it couldn't have been either of them! They wouldn't do such a contemptible thing as steal your pin. Cecile is such a —"

"*Either* of them?" Lucille interrogated. "Just who do you mean was here, beside Cecile?"

"Why Namar — Namar Harjad. But he wouldn't take your pin, Lucille. I'm sure of that," Anise hurried breathlessly on, unmindful of the growing amazement on her cousin's face.

"Are you crazy, Anise Decard, or are you merely dreaming? Any one would think that Namar Harjad had been here in this room!"

"That's just it, Lucille, he was. But only for a moment. He wanted to see the tapestry."

"Now, I know you're out of your mind, Anise! Do you mean to say that you have seen him here in Damascus, without telling Dick and me, and that you actually let him come in here!"

Anise nodded miserably.

"And just when we were feeling so relieved

because we thought he had disappeared for good!"

Anise explained hurriedly. She told of seeing him before the house, and then in the courtyard and of her trip to the bazaars with Monsieur Petot and her meeting Namar and of their search for a rug. But she did not tell of her uneasiness while with him, nor of her relief in finding Monsieur. She did tell, though, of his changed appearance, and reiterated over and over, her belief in him in spite of her inability to find some reason for his strange actions, and his disreputable appearance. She told then, of finding him scrubbing the corridor and his request to see the tapestry, and how she had left him a few moments to answer Dick's ring.

"Now, let me tell you the answer!" Lucille said grimly, when she had finished. "It only proves that he's up to some mischief. The nerve of him, coming here! We can be glad, I guess, if we escape with only the loss of a pin. It's my opinion that he wants to find out the lay of the land."

"He really didn't want to come in," Anise insisted, "but the tapestry was on the wall and —"

“Merely a pretense. If you hadn't let him, he would have found some other way to get in. Dick's got to know about this, at once. Come on, you can tell him better than I.” She caught Anise by the hand, and hurried her across the hall to Dick's room.

He listened in a gloomy silence, his eyes resting on Anise in reproachful apprehension.

“It's just what I've been expecting,” he announced, when for the second time, she had finished the recital of her meeting Namar. “I can't imagine what you were thinking of, Anise, to trust yourself with him, and as for letting him in to see the tapestry — ”

“But Monsieur and Madame surely trust him,” Anise defended him.

“Don't you think Dad ought to know, so that he can put the police on his trail,” Lucille interrupted. “If he gets by with this, who knows what he'll attempt next!”

Dick stared thoughtfully before him. “It might be better to wait a bit and see if we can't find out what he's up to. If we scare him off now, we may have him tagging us all over Europe. I'd like to finish with this bird, here and now. I'm certainly glad I've shaken off

that fever. It'll be a pleasure to get my hands on him, and shake the truth out of him."

He strode back and forth before the girls, head up and chest out, apparently the old Dick who gloried in combat. Anise eyed him anxiously when he paused before her.

"Now, Anise, the very first time you lay eyes on him, again, you're to come straight to me! And if you don't mind, I'll stick pretty close to you, in the future."

"But what about my pin?" Lucille interposed. "If we don't put the police on his trail at once, I'll never see it again. He'll have sold it or traded it. We must tell Madame and Monsieur at once!"

"It'll be lost in a good cause, then," Dick returned. "After all, it's more important that we find out just what he is up to. He didn't trail us all the way from America to swipe a little trinket like that. On the whole, I believe we'll not tell the Petots. I'll just do a little sleuthing on my own."

Discreet questioning of Madame Petot, however, revealed that Namar had not sought work there since the day of the tapestry incident. However, he might come at any time. She

would tell him that Mister Richard wanted to see him. Was it a valet he was needing? Or a guide? She could recommend several —

But Dick did not take her into his confidence. Her garrulity was a matter that had already caused them much amusement.

Anise was relieved that nothing was to be said, as yet, of the lost pin. Try as she might, she could not convince herself that Namar meant any of them harm, or that he was in any way connected with the disappearance of Lucille's pin. She tried to believe that the pin would be found. She believed in Cecile's innocence as she did her own.

The thought of Dick's intention forcibly to compel Namar to an explanation of his movements made her seriously unhappy. She had a feeling that should Namar refuse there would be battle, and most certainly he would refuse. She dreaded the thought of a clash between the two. They were too well matched in physique to guess with any certainty which might come out victor, though Dick's recent illness must have weakened him to a certain extent.

She went about all that day, silent and un-

happy, watching and listening in vain for some sign of his presence about the pension. She refused a pressing invitation of the Lafons' to be one of their party on a moonlight trip into the desert.

Dick, too, stayed behind. His father was expecting friends, and he'd rather listen to their discussion of local politics. But Anise knew that it was because of her that he remained behind.

She tried to interest herself in the conversation of her uncle and his friends, but she could not. Her thoughts were all mixed up in anxious speculations regarding Namar Harjad, and with the overpowering beauty of the night. The stars, clustered so closely overhead, seemed waiting to be reached for and plucked. Over the housetops, she could make out the gleam of the dome-shaped mosques with their tall minarets piercing the indigo sky. Sounds drifted up to them; the twang of musical instruments; snatches of song.

She wandered restlessly away from the others. This oasis city, with its luxuriant gardens and orchards, in the midst of surrounding deserts, its pearly white buildings with their

pink roofs, interspersed by their temples of worship — what did it mean to her? This city, founded so many centuries ago — one of the first on earth — was it to mean something more than just a loitering-place on their leisurely journey about the globe?

“There is no God.” She found herself saying it over and over to herself. They were Namar Harjad’s words. “There is no God.” She must not see him again, though she knew quite well, that she would never be satisfied, until she had solved the mystery of him and his movements. No, she must not see him again, for such a meeting would only end in disaster to him. She could not ignore Dick’s right to know more about him, especially since the episode of the missing pin.

“There is no God.” She *must* see him again. If he were being influenced by others of evil minds and hearts, he must be made to see his peril. If he were in need, or in trouble, he must know that there *is* a God. Yes, she must see him again.

The voices of her uncle and his guests broke in upon her thoughts. They were discussing something in eager, suppressed voices, but she

could not catch the drift of their talk, for frequently they lapsed into French, and her French was not what it should have been. She could tell, though, by the firm, forceful tones of her uncle, that he was being rather respectfully listened to.

When the men had departed, and they were alone, Dick said to his father, admiringly: " You rather put it over, didn't you, Dad? "

" Put what over? " Anise inquired, casually, her mind still dwelling on Namar Harjad.

" Why, it's only that Dad has sort of shown these Frenchmen something about how to handle the situation here. It takes an American to know how to do things," he added, complacently.

" Do what, Uncle Sidney? What's wrong with the situation here? " Anise was becoming interested.

" It's like this, Anise," her uncle said. " You know, of course, that France was given mandatory power over Syria at the close of the war. You know, too, what proud, sensitive beings these Syrians are. Well, there was a rather serious misunderstanding between some of them and the new officials. It's too involved to

go into details, but the main thing was that an important group of the Syrians rebelled against the new rule. There was quite an uprising; militia, cavalry, and machine-guns were called out, and arrests made by the wholesale. The leaders were sentenced to long terms of penal servitude and their property confiscated. I had had business relations some years ago with several of the men, so naturally their plight interested me. I've been trying to get the situation cleared up and the men released. In certain quarters there is still a lot of bitterness over the affair, and it's my belief that the release of these men is the only way to bring about a cessation of the discontent. I tried to make this clear to the men here to-night, and I've an idea that they mean to accept my suggestion.

“Didn't I tell you, Anise, there is a lot we can teach these Easterners?” Dick exclaimed, a note of triumph in his voice.

“I think I agreed to that, before,” she said, softly, “but perhaps —” Her words trailed off into a sigh.

She was too tired and unhappy to think about Syrian politics and America's part in them.

CHAPTER XVII

A CLUE

Although Mr. Lyman's business affairs in Damascus had practically been completed, they lingered on. They were having callers constantly, together with invitations to dine, to dance, and to join parties making excursions into the desert, or to view the remains of what had once been magnificent temples and palaces at Baalbek. And in the hills of Lebanon, they saw all that was left of the cedars of Biblical fame, from which Solomon had built his temple. The parts of the mountain sides that were not entirely bare were terraced vineyards, and orchards of almond, apricots, apples, olives, and figs, their luxuriant growth in the midst of the surrounding sands, and stone, made possible by the streams from the mountains.

Anise listened to long discussions of economic conditions, of the future possibilities of this land which was so rich in coal, oil, and other minerals, of irrigation schemes that would make pro-

ductive its vast plains, now nothing but great arid wastes.

They visited great groves of mulberry-trees, where enormous quantities of silkworms are raised, and later, one of the factories, and saw the cocoons spun into thread, and the thread woven into silk cloth.

They wandered at will through the bazaars, and lingered in delight over intricately wrought brassware and silverware and inlaid woodwork. They bought from the tempting arrays of Turkish sweets, candies and pastries, and hung in delight over the exquisite vials of rare Arabian perfumes.

They spent hours in watching the slow, painstaking weaving of beautiful rugs, made entirely by hand, from the carding and spinning of the wool, to the last carefully placed thread. Anise marveled at the patience and skill of the youthful weavers, spending months and months in perfecting one piece of work. The patterns interested her immensely. In the course of their travels they had seen many beautiful rugs, and she learned to distinguish between those of Persia, Turkey and India, and China.

There were excursions into the heart of the

oldest sections of the city, where voluminous-skirted dancing girls, their arms and ankles loaded with silver bracelets, whirled and dipped in a tinkling frenzy to the weird music of strange instruments.

It was a glamorous adventure to Anise, this delving into the heart of a civilization that was ancient long before the existence of her own country had been dreamed of.

In company of a Syrian friend of her uncle's, they visited the Grand Mosque, and were awed into silence by the grandeur and beauty of its incomparable arabesque decorations. The prayer niches, in mosaic, of marble and wood, inlaid with gold, silver, precious stones, and colored glass, held them enthralled.

Looking at this evidence of the love and reverence of the Moslems for their Allah, she wondered to what heights they might ascend were their energies directed toward the worship of the Christian God.

There is no God. Over and over, the words recurred to her. She tried to forget them by dwelling on the strange sights and sounds about them, by plunging into the whirl of gayety in which they had been caught.

After all, what could it mean to her that one of the faithful had rejected the God of his fathers?

She was considerably thrilled by the polite attention of the friends of her uncle who seemed so eager to forget their years and the vexations and trials of their lives here. It flattered her that they seemed to forget also that both she and Lucille were but schoolgirls, but she forgave them whole-heartedly their lack in this respect.

The uniforms of the French officers and the immaculate black and white evening attire of the Americans and English, added a glamour to the background of the miscellaneous garbed throng of the inhabitants. If only Aunt Della could vision the whirl of gayety in which she had been caught. Certainly, she would have little cause to worry over her niece's old-maidish propensities.

Her uncle reflected rather ruefully, on a number of occasions, that he had not been prepared to act as social secretary nor yet duenna. They should have brought Aunt Della with them.

But Dick relieved him considerably in this

respect. He clung closely to Anise, and no matter where they were, or what the time, she was conscious of his proximity and his roving eyes. He did not mention Harjad again, nor did Lucille, since Anise had promised to find a duplicate of her lost pin when they returned to America.

She saw with dismay that though the others were enjoying to the full, the constant stream of new experiences, Dick seemed to have but one thought in mind, and that was the apprehension of Namar Harjad, for Namar had not been seen by any of them at the pension since the disappearance of Lucille's pin. Further inquiries of Madame Petot elicited nothing but a shrug and a sigh. It was what one could expect. Good help was hard to find and still harder to keep. He had left that day and had not returned.

Although the new and varied experiences had opened up new avenues of thought and speculation, Anise was conscious that, beneath it all, she was living in dread of meeting Namar. Though she told herself over and over that she must see him again, she did not want that meeting to be shared with Dick. She must see him

alone. Embarrassing though it might be to them both, she meant to offer him help — whatever kind he needed, material or spiritual. That he had rejected the faith of his fathers, indicated that he must be under some great mental stress. But that he had rejected the chance for an education in America to return here to live the life of a Syrian beggar indicated still more strongly that something had occurred to unsettle the plans he must have formulated for himself in America. Resolutely she put away any of the suspicions she had entertained during her experience with him in the bazaars. She reflected, that it was more the foreign atmosphere of the place, the dim light simmering through the dirty skylights, and its motley patrons, coupled with the remembrance of Dick's and Lucille's suspicions, rather than any actual fear of him, that had made her so uneasy.

Looking back now, she remembered only the stern profile, the hopeless quality of his voice, when he had said, "There is no God," and his unrestrained impatience with the merchant who was exploiting the rug which he knew to be a fake.

She must see him again. She became almost panic-stricken when her uncle spoke of leaving in a day or so. She made excuses to remain in her room so that she might watch the throng that passed and repassed the pension.

Though she watched for him, day after day, there was no sign of him. He seemed to her to have vanished completely.

She was idling over one of Lucille's magazines in Madame Petot's tiny parlor, and Lucille was writing letters at the escritoire, late one afternoon, when Dick hurried in, his eyes gleaming with excitement.

"Well, I've seen our friend Namar, again."

Both girls looked up, startled, and Anise's magazine fell to the floor.

"You didn't hurt him, Dick?" she questioned, bending to retrieve the fallen book.

"Hurt him? I didn't get the chance. He was too slick for me. I'm sure he saw me, for he edged off in the crowd before I could get to him."

Lucille gave vent to an exclamation of disgust. "I thought you could do better than that!" She turned, with a sigh, to her letter, and with her back to him, teased: "As a detec-

tive, Dick, I must say you're a good football player. I thought you knew something about tactics. You may know how to tackle, but you know absolutely nothing about finesse. If you could manage to disguise your height in some way, you might get a chance at this fellow, but since you tower miles over the heads of any crowd, he'll have a chance to spot you first, every time. You ought to get you one of those Bedouin outfits, and grow a beard and sideburns, and loaf around shadowy doorways. Catch him at his own game, *that's the idea.*"

"Is that so? You talk like a graduate of a correspondence school for the apprehension of international crooks."

"Well, I've got my own ideas on the subject. I've a notion to try to bag him, myself. And believe me, if I do, I'll get that pin!"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" Dick exploded. "You'll stay away from that bird, both of you!" He glared now upon his silent cousin. "If you'll give me a chance, maybe, I'll tell you what I came to tell."

Lucille half turned, but held her pen poised over her letter, as though it was vastly more interesting than Dick's recital.

“Well, let’s have it,” she prodded, impatiently.

“I was merely going to remark that our friend has a new disguise. He now assumes the part of an Eastern Prince. No doubt he became discouraged with the response from the other rôle, and thought he’d make better headway in a more appealing part.”

“Don’t be silly,” Lucille scorned. “He’s merely bought himself a new outfit with the proceeds from the sale of my pin. It’s gone for good now, I suppose.”

“If that’s all the confidence you have in my prowess, perhaps I’d best let it go at that.” He shrugged indifferently, and turned to Anise, lowering his voice so that Lucille could not hear.

“I’m rather up a tree, with this fellow, Anise. He’s got me where I just don’t know what to think. But I want to insist that under no circumstances must you have anything to do with him. Dad keeps his own counsel about the political situation here, because he has so many friends among the different races, but I hear things that make me uneasy. There’s been more trouble than he likes to admit. You can’t

tell how some of these people may regard him, for mixing up in their affairs, and there's no telling to what length they might go if they should have it in for him. 'Most any one would resent strangers mixing in their affairs, and since we're seeing so much of some of the French officers — well, it's too deep for a girl, but if this Namar should pull any ugly work, the chances are, he could get by with it."

"Oh, Dick," she protested, laying a conciliatory hand upon his arm, "you're letting yourself be carried away by your imagination. If he had intended any harm, surely he would not have waited all this time."

"You don't know anything about it, Anise." He rested one foot on the ottoman by Anise's chair and stared moodily out the window. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

She knew the uselessness of trying to persuade him to her way of thinking. She only hoped for one more chance to speak to Namar Harjad before they left Damascus.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, and nearly upset the ottoman in his haste to reach the door. "There he goes now! Just let me at him! He'll give an account of himself, or —"

Lucille had risen, and hurried to the window. Anise was clasping and unclasping her hands. "Couldn't we follow him, Lucille," she implored. "I can't bear to think — Oh, don't you see how impossible it all is — ? He might really hurt him!"

"Hurt him? Don't worry, dear. Dick hasn't played half-back on one of the best teams in the country for nothing. Dick'll knock him for a couple of goals before he's through with him."

"It's not Dick — It's Namar, I'm afraid for. Don't you understand, Lucille? He's so gentle, so — so — If Dick, who is an American, and — and — a Christian, treats him with so much injustice, how can — how can he ever be persuaded, that — that Christianity is the only right religion?"

"My soul, Anise, but you're going beyond your depth, aren't you? If Namar Harjad stole my pin, he deserves all he gets at Dick's hands. After all, I believe the big brother is more capable than I thought, and I hope he gives him good measure, pressed down and running over, as these Easterners say, for all the uneasiness he's caused us. At least, if he's en-

tertaining any further ideas of molesting us, or our possessions, Dick'll discourage him, there."

Without another word, Anise turned and hurried to her room. To her, Lucille seemed utterly heartless, just then. How could they think such horrid things of him. If only they had known him as she had, in America! Of course they had known him, but they had not appreciated him. Would the time ever come when she and Lucille and Dick would be able to agree, would be able to look upon things from a similar viewpoint? She flung herself across her bed, and for a time gave herself up to a whole-souled desire to be back again, with Aunt Letty in the farmhouse, among the Kentucky hills, for there had been no constant conflict of ideas or personalities in Aunt Letty's domain.

She shed a few lonely tears on the immaculate linen pillows without caring what Cecile might think of this evidence of her misery.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUSPENSE

She lay there for a while, grieving over the injustice of her cousins, of the seeming impossibility of ever being able to understand them or to have them understand her. But after a time, she stirred impatiently, ashamed that she had allowed her emotions to gain the upper hand. After all, why should she let Namar Harjad come between her and Lucille and Dick? She had nothing on which to base her own belief in him, though why Dick should persist in believing him such a scoundrel, was beyond her.

Over and over, she asked herself: "But why should *I* care? No doubt I'll never see him again."

Surely he was no more to be pitied than others of the vast horde of beggars that lined the streets of the cities of the East. He, at least, was strong and healthy. But was he a beggar? Did the new clothes in which Dick

had seen him, come from the sale of Lucille's sapphire pin?

"I don't believe it!" she asserted to the empty room, and sat up, staring defiantly at nothing in particular.

If there were only some way in which to prove them wrong! It came to her then, quite clearly, that unless she did prove her faith in him, there would be little chance of ever gaining the respect of either of her cousins. They looked upon her as something to be protected from an unscrupulous world, a being who lacked insight, who blindly trusted all who came her way. She must make them see that she had reason for her belief in him, though just what her reasons were, were rather vague just then. It was more a kind of intuition, born of her first meeting with him; his gentle bearing, his indifference, while in America, to the opinions of those who mocked him, coupled with the clear, direct gaze from eyes that seemed to hold in them, nothing but good-will toward the world. She must find a way. She must find definite reasons for her belief in him. But how? That was the question. If she could only go to her uncle for advice. Dick had been very insistent that his

father know nothing of their coming into contact with Namar. It was his own pet plan for glory, the bringing of a rogue to justice, that is, if he really were the rogue Dick believed him to be. If he were not, the less said about his suspicions, the better, for he had no desire to be the butt of any of his father's jests.

With new-born determination, she jumped from the bed, and hurried to her dresser. An idea had come at last; one that she could not afford to trifle with. She would confide in one of her uncle's friends, an Englishman who with his wife was staying at a hotel a short distance from the pension. She would persuade him to find out something of Namar Harjad. There must be many ways to obtain the information she desired. He had spoken of his father, and his father's house, though he had said nothing as to its whereabouts. She had a feeling that it was a rather underhanded move, on her part, this delving into the private affairs of one who had made no effort to reveal anything of himself; but surely, if she cleared him from the suspicions of her cousins, she was more than justified in such a move.

Hurriedly she searched for an attractive

frock. She must look her best. She smiled at the thought that such a desire indicated that she was surely growing up. She knew it was a part of woman's natural wisdom to beautify herself when seeking favors of the other sex.

What to wear! For the first time in her life, she was clothes conscious. Nothing suited. Her frocks seemed all too immature for a young miss about to interview a middle-aged Englishman. She thought of borrowing one of Lucille's more sophisticated frocks without the formality of permission, and then she remembered the Spanish shawl. Just the thing, if she could manage to swirl it about her in the graceful way in which Lucille had worn it. She dug down into her trunk and drew it forth. She tried it first one way, and then another, an impatient frown appearing between her brows, as it refused to assume the graceful lines Lucille had obtained.

She studied it anxiously for a few moments. After all, the blue crêpe with the coral trimmings was more becoming. She tossed the shawl toward the bed. Something clicked against the footboard and fell with a metallic tinkle on the polished floor. She turned and

stared, then with a little cry of joy, stooped and picked up Lucille's missing sapphire pin.

She stood with it in her hand, looking from it to the shawl lying in a heap on the floor. A few moments of serious thinking convinced her that the pin must have been caught in the shawl's fringe on the night when Lucille had returned from the Lafons' dinner party. The pin, no doubt, lay in the tray in an opened drawer, and the long, heavy fringe of the shawl, as Lucille had flung it from about her, must have lifted the pin from its resting-place. It had clung among the heavy silken threads, effectually hidden from sight.

She was laughing an excited little laugh as she laid it carefully on the dresser before her, and hurried into the blue crêpe frock.

She had proof now that Namar was not a thief. She plunged her amber comb through the thick waves of honey-colored hair, and gave herself a glowing smile in the tiny mirror.

“And I mean to get the other proof I need to convince them that he has not intended to harm us in any way!” she declared to her image.

Her smile vanished as she remembered that even now, Dick might have overtaken Namar

and accused him of the theft of the pin. With a hasty daub of powder to the tip of her nose, she snatched up the pin and hurried out. Her visit to her uncle's friend would have to wait. She would persuade Lucille to join her in search of Dick. He must know at once, that the pin had been recovered.

At the top of the stairs she met Cecile hurrying up. Cecile informed her that some one was waiting in the parlor to see her and that Lucille had left word for her that she was going for a little stroll with Jerry Lafon. They would be away but a few moments.

She returned to her room and placed the pin in a drawer of Lucille's trunk, and turned the key on it, with a sigh. It was a relief to know that it was safe. She had felt more than once that both her cousins had blamed her, in a way, for its loss, though they had not said so. It had been an unconventional thing to do, her letting Namar enter their room. She could imagine her Aunt Della's horror when she heard of it. "Such a risqué situation!" she would exclaim. At the time, it had seemed the only thing to do.

She moved slowly toward the door, through the hall and down the stairs, a bit provoked at

the caller whose visit was preventing her from going in search of Dick.

She gave a little gasp of astonishment as she saw Namar Harjad turn from the window toward her, and bow.

Dick had been right. He looked a prince indeed in his rich new clothing. The long coat and trousers, the usual dress of dignified Syrians, was set off by a silken girdle of Persian design, and about his head was the white turban of the East. His attire, so different from the miscellaneous rags that had covered him the last time she had seen him, held her attention for a time, but it was upon his changed countenance that her eyes lingered. His old air of pride was there, but there was something more, an expression that puzzled her, as though he were trying to suppress some great emotion that threatened to overflow the calm in which he had wrapped himself.

“If Dora could only see him now,” thought Anise with an inward smile, the remembrance of that first conversation about him, fresh in her mind, “she’d surely agree he’s ‘some sheik’.”

“I came,” he said, in his formal manner, “to

conduct you to the house of my father. Your uncle, Mr. Lyman, is there now, and gave me permission to escort you and your cousins, thence. My father is pleased to have you as his guests at our evening meal."

Anise floundered in a sea of uncertainty, and could only say, in puzzled bewilderment: "Your father? Uncle Sidney? I — we — ?"

Her uncle in the house of Namar's father! What did it mean? What *would* Lucille and Dick say? And they were invited to be the guests of Namar's father!

"Perhaps it would be best if I explained a few matters," he went on. He looked down upon her with eyes that glowed as from a light within, and she saw that in spite of his gravity, a tiny smile played about the corners of his mouth, revealing at times, a flash of pearly teeth.

"Mr. Lyman, your uncle, has brought much happiness to my father and me. He has done for us what no one else could do. It is a long story, one which I would rather tell later, since my father is awaiting impatiently your arrival. Will you tell the others, Lucille and Dick, so that we may depart at once?"

Anise, listening in wonder, seemed unable to take her eyes from his face. It seemed almost too good to be true, that at last the mystery of Namar Harjad was to be revealed. She was impatient to learn more, eager to be assured that she had not been wrong in her estimate of the youth before her.

“Neither Dick nor Lucille is here, just now,” she told him, and wondered just what either would do or say, should they walk in and find him there.

“Then could not you and I leave word that we’ll send the car back for them? Since it is to you especially that my father wishes to express his great appreciation. He is most eager to see you.”

“To see me?” She regarded him in amazement. “But how could he wish to see me, when I — there is no reason — ”

“But it was you, who — ”

She did not notice that he had not finished his sentence. She heard Lucille’s voice outside, intermingled with Jerry Lafon’s deep bass, and knew that she must manage in some way to explain to Lucille about the pin and Namar’s presence here, before Lucille entered the room.

“Will you excuse me, for just a moment, please?” She did not wait for permission but sped across the room and out the door.

Lucille must know at once that her pin had been found, and the reason for Namar's presence here. She was rather adept at making hurtful remarks, and considering that his mission was one of such unusual good-will, and that he was overlooking entirely, Lucille's and Dick's treatment of him, in America, there must be no possibility of repeating their first offense against him.

Jerry Lafon had lifted his hat and turned from the wide, arched doorway of the courtyard, when Anise called softly to Lucille, who still stood, slapping absently with the tip of her pink parasol at the leaves of a scrawny vine that clung half-heartedly to the stone wall.

“Well, Anise,” Lucille greeted her, “you look as if you'd had a real thrill of some sort. Let me in on it.”

“It has been a thrill, Lucille, a real one! I found your sapphire pin. It was caught in the fringe of my Spanish shawl. You must have swung it about, maybe across the drawer, and in some manner, the pin clung.”

“Honest? That’s great! I did hate to lose that pin, or rather to feel that I was gypped out of it by one of these slick Eastern thieves. We rather did your beggar friend an injustice, didn’t we, blaming it on him?” poking now with her parasol’s tip between the cobbled stones of the courtyard. “Oh, well, he’ll never know the difference.”

“I hope not,” Anise returned, “that’s why I hurried out. I wanted you to know about it, before you came in, because he’s in there now. It seems that Uncle Sidney befriended them in some way, and Namar’s father sent him here to bring us to their house to dine.”

“To his house — to dine!” Lucille voice rose in shrill disbelief.

Anise nodded.

“To Namar’s house?” Lucille demanded, with sudden intensity, her eyes widening as she gazed earnestly at her cousin.

Again Anise nodded.

“Where’s Dad?” Lucille demanded, tersely.

“He’s there, now. At the house of Namar’s father,” Anise explained.

“Who said so?”

“Why Namar, of course!”

“ Oh, he did? ”

“ Yes, and his father wants us to come, too. And he's in a hurry, Lucille. Oh, I do wish Dick would come! ” She peered impatiently through the arched gateway into the street, and looked first in one direction and then the other. “ He says his father's impatient. He wants to see me about something. Namar wanted me to go on with him. He was going to send the car back for you and Dick, but I think it'll be better if we all go together. And Dick ought to know about the pin, before he — ”

“ And his father especially wants to see you, does he? ” Lucille interrupted.

“ Yes. For some reason, but I can't imagine why. He started to tell me, but I heard you talking, and I came out — ”

“ And you were going to be simpleton enough to fall into their trap! ”

“ Trap? Why Lucille! What on earth do you mean? ”

“ Mean? I mean what I say. Don't you see, that this is his *coup d' état*? He discovered that Dad was out. You know he was hanging around here, for Dick saw him pass. Later, he saw me go out and thought the coast was clear,

so he made up this cock-and-bull story to get you to leave with him. It's just as Dick said!"

"But, Lucille," Anise protested, in a helpless voice. "Don't you understand? Your father is there now!"

"Have you any proof?" Lucille demanded. "You're merely taking this rogue's word for it. I won't say that he isn't. It may be that they've got Dad, too."

"Oh, Lucille!" Anise threw out both hands in a helpless gesture.

When would this dreadful farce come to an end!

She turned with a sigh of relief toward the gateway where Dick had appeared. Perhaps, after all, she could make him understand. But when she saw that he was followed by two formidable-looking policemen, her heart sank.

CHAPTER XIX

NEW COMPLICATIONS

Both girls hurried toward him, but Anise had no chance to speak. She could merely stand by in a helpless silence, while Lucille poured forth, in an incoherent jumble of words, the story of the finding of the pin, and of Namar's presence in the pension. Dick motioned to the policemen to remain outside the courtyard, but Anise noted with relief that his eyes kept traveling from Lucille's excited countenance toward the men outside, as though he pondered the wisdom of detaining them longer.

“And so, our friend, Namar, didn't get it, after all?” Dick mused thoughtfully, then burst out, “I don't see why you girls couldn't have searched better! You've put me in a pretty fix!” He cast a sheepish eye toward the men outside. “Now, I've got to tell them it's all a mistake, and that our thief is really no thief at all.”

“ Well, he may not have taken the pin, but I’m sure he’s up to some mischief. Can’t you see, Dick, that his coming here, and trying to persuade Anise to go with him — ”

“ His coming *here*? You mean, he’s here, now? ” Dick stared from one to the other.

“ That’s what I tried to tell you, ” she pouted. “ He’s in there now! ” with a nod toward the house.

“ But can’t you understand, Dick? ” Anise put in, quickly. “ He says that Uncle Sidney has helped them in some way, and that Uncle Sidney is at their house, now, and that Namar’s father sent him to bring us there to dine! ”

“ Say, what kind of a mess is this, anyway? You say, Namar’s here now, and wants us to go to his father’s house to dine! ”

“ Yes! And he’s in a hurry. He said his father was impatient — that he has a special reason — ”

“ You surely don’t mean to swallow that, do you, Dick? ” Lucille demanded. “ Can’t you see, it’s just a trap? He tried to get Anise to leave with him, and said he’d send the car back for us. Who knows what he — ”

Dick’s face was a picture of puzzled distress.

He stood, nervously jingling together the coins in his trousers pockets.

“ I can't see that there's anything to do,” he said, “ but go in and get some more light on the situation.” He nodded toward the house.

“ But how are you going to know that he's telling the truth? ” questioned Lucille.

“ Well, you know, Sis, that Dad *did* help some of these Syrians out of an awful mess with the French officials here. It sounds pretty straight to me — and yet — how are you going to account for this bird peddling stuff around New York, and waiting on tables, and crossing over on our boat, and following us to Marseilles, and turning up here like a beggar? If they were wealthy, as all those Syrians were whom Dad was so interested in, he wouldn't have needed to work his way through school. It looks decidedly fishy, to me.”

Anise laid a pleading hand on his arm. “ Come in, and see him, Dick,” she begged. “ You can't look into his face without feeling that he's all he claims to be.”

Lucille laughed. “ You and your faith in humanity, Anise! ” she jeered.

“ But, Anise,” Dick protested, “ we can't af-

ford to take any chances of anything happening to you. It's a well-known fact that the Mohammedans hate Christians. Look at all the massacres that have taken place, right in this town. Of course, I don't mean he'd hurt you bodily, but, as Dora said, he might hold you for a ransom. This fellow's actions have been far too suspicious for me to put much trust in what he says. He may know of what Dad has done for some of these Syrians and be using his knowledge to play his own little game. As Lucille says, it may be a trap. I've heard too many tales about these lovers of Allah to put much faith in his kindly feelings toward a party of Christians." His eyes wandered again to the policemen pacing up and down before the house.

Tears stood in Anise's eyes, and the corners of her mouth twitched pathetically. "I'd rather run the risk, Dick," she said, softly, "than to hurt his feelings again. If he is all that he should be, which I firmly believe, you couldn't expect him to forgive another insult. It was bad enough, the way you and Lucille treated him in America. And what will Uncle Sidney think? If he has really helped Namar's father, he may have the best of reasons for want-

ing to keep their friendship, especially since he is a Moslem. It may mean an understanding that might lead to undreamed-of results. Don't do anything, Dick," she begged, "that you might be sorry for if you do find out he is all that he claims to be."

"That's just it, Anise, if he's telling the truth, and there is a possibility that he is, we've already let ourselves in for eating a lot of humble pie after the way we treated him back home, and we can't take any further chances of getting in Dutch with him again. On the other hand, as Lucille says, it looks pretty much like it's nothing but a trap to catch a bunch of suckers, and hold them for a big ransom. It's a dickens of a fix we're in, and that's all there is to it. I wish Dad were here!" He turned quickly to Lucille. "Run in and ask Papa Petot if Dad left any word about where he was going."

Lucille was gone like a flash, leaving Anise and Dick in an uncomfortable silence. She was back again in a moment. "Cecile says that he was going to the military governor's, and from there to the house of Hussein Kanaan, whoever he is. That lets our friend, Mr. Harjad, out!"

she exclaimed, with a triumphant glance at her cousin.

Dick's brooding eyes rested on Anise uneasily. "Now, what do you make of that, Anise?"

"There must be some mistake. Perhaps he changed his mind."

"Well, I don't see any way out of the situation, but to pretend that we believe him," Dick mused, thoughtfully, "but I'll speak to the men about following us in their Ford. If he does anything to arouse our suspicions, I'll give them the signal to do their duty. And before I go in, and beg his pardon for our rudeness in America, I'm going to slip upstairs for my automatic. It might come in handy. Safety first is a pretty good motto in a burg like this. I'll have to have mighty good proof, before I'm convinced that this Moslem Namar is really the friendly emissary he professes to be."

"Well," remarked Lucille, "at any rate, I expect we'll get a thrill out of it, if nothing else, and it'll be something to write home about, if we come out alive. But be sure those police stick close behind us, Dick. I'm glad Dad stands in so well with the military governor. At least,

we'll have a chance of being rescued, if he should pull something crooked on us."

"Don't worry, I'll —" His sentence was not finished.

Namar Harjad was coming toward them from the house. He was looking at a jeweled timepiece which he closed with a sharp snap, and replaced in his pocket.

"I'm sorry, if I seem to be in too much of a hurry, but — Could we not depart at once?" His eyes rested now on Dick. "Miss Decard has told you of my father's request that you dine with us?"

Dick's and Lucille's eyes met in a look of uncertainty, then both returned the mild gaze of the Syrian youth.

"It is an honor we had scarcely expected," Dick murmured, attempting to match the other's formal manner. "Considering that —"

"Life often has unexpected surprises in store for one," Namar returned, politely.

To Anise, his words proved his willingness to ignore their unhappy first meeting, but as they moved uncertainly toward the gateway, she heard Dick mutter to Lucille, "Now what the dickens did he mean by that?" And then he

stopped short. "Look here, Namar," he said, "I understood Anise to say that Dad was at your father's house?"

"Yes." Namar turned, and Anise saw a little flash of impatience appear in his eyes.

"But they say here, that Dad left word he was going to the military governor's, and from there to the house of Hussein Kanaan," Dick countered.

"The house of Hussein Kanaan, is the house of my father," Namar replied, and moved toward the gate.

"But I thought your name was Harjad?"

Anise saw that Dick's eyes were alert with new suspicions.

"Harjad is the name that I used while in America. Will you not please come," he urged, "it will take so long to explain, and there is need to hurry. My father's car is around the corner, in the next street. It is a bit hard to get through these narrow ways." He led the way, seemingly unconscious of Dick's reluctance to follow.

Anise heard Lucille whisper to Dick. "Of course he's lying. You might have known he'd say that! Why didn't you ask him his father's

name first? Oh, Dick, you're so dumb!" Then she hurried ahead, to Namar's side.

"Is it far to your home?" she questioned, in her politest tone.

"At the edge of the city. My father loves a spacious setting."

"Then I'll take the front seat beside you, if no one objects, and let Anise and Dick enjoy the bumps." She hurried toward the Rolls-Royce, around which a group of street urchins were clustered.

A little thrill of pleasure shot through Anise, at Lucille's daring. She saw through her cousin's move, a determination to shield her, so far as possible. She meant that if anything should happen, Dick should be close to her, so as to protect her so far as lay in his power. It was one of Lucille's most lovable traits. Though she seemed always ready to mock at any show of affection, Anise knew that underneath her lightness lay a depth of feeling that few who knew her guessed at. Now, Anise was having full proof of the strength of Lucille's feelings toward her.

It was a shrill-voiced crowd of youths who clustered about the big car that awaited Namar

and his party. Under cover of their chatter and shrill protests at being urged off the running-boards, Dick whispered to Anise:

“It’s worse than I thought. I bet he heard everything we said there in the courtyard. He came out just so I couldn’t have a chance to get my automatic or to give any orders to those policemen. He surely must have seen them from the window. Did you notice how they melted away when they saw us come out? And he said their house was on the edge of town. That’s so they’ll have a chance to make a clean getaway across the desert.”

“Please, Dick —” she begged, “try to believe that we’re perfectly safe. I’m sure things will come out right.”

Dick’s gloom did not lift. It was a silent party in the luxurious big car, that threaded in and out the maze of narrow streets. In spite of her preoccupation with conjectures as to what lay before them, Anise could not help but note the anxious glances of Dick as he scanned the crowds on either side of them as they moved along. If the car slowed for a moment, in the thickest of the throng, he sat tense, every nerve alert for the slightest indication of

danger. She became conscious of the unnatural tension that existed between them. Were Dick and Lucille right, after all? If so, and harm should come to them, then she would be responsible. The thought was like a dash of cold water.

She realized now, more fully than at any time since Namar had come into her life, that she had been influenced in her attitude toward him, more because of her determination to win the respect of her cousins, than through any special desire for his friendship. True, both the mystery of his birth as well as his actions, did hold a certain appeal for her to say nothing of the sympathy he aroused in her because of his apparently destitute condition.

But it was principally her desire to prove herself right, that had led to their present predicament, and what if harm came to them now, through her stubborn determination to set them in the wrong? It was a dreadful thought, and she tried to put it from her, but she realized now with a sinking heart, that it was more probable that they were right than that she was. Certainly they had plenty of foundation for their mistrust of him, for she had learned since com-

ing here of the great gulf that lay between the minds of the Orientals and the Occidentals. She had heard, too, many tales of barbaric cruelty among the races that congested this part of the globe, and she knew that their mild exteriors and gallant bearing often masked a hardness that is rarely found among the people of her own land. She had learned, too, of their fanatical devotion to their own religious creeds, and the intensity of their hatred of those of opposing beliefs.

Perhaps it was this knowledge that was in a way responsible for the feeling which now filled her, that, somehow, she was not entirely responsible for what was to come; that in some way this adventure was to involve certain great forces which would reflect their mingled power on each member of their party. What these forces were, she did not know. She could not have put her vague thoughts into words, had she tried. It was merely a sensing of some coming dramatic climax in the life of each of them.

Now, especially, did the air seem charged with portent. Looking backward, over the events that had led to their journey to this heretofore unknown land, it seemed to her that

some unknown force had directed matters to this as yet unknown climax; as though an invisible hand had drawn the strings to make each of them perform his will in the drama he had chosen for them.

So busy was she with her thoughts that she did not notice Dick's increasing gloom. She sat up with a little start of surprise when the car slowed down before a great iron-studded door, set in a long, white, stone wall. She knew that, like most of the walls and buildings in the East, there was no judging from the exterior what the interior held; whether it might be the home of poverty or wealth.

Her eyes traveled anxiously along the white wall and lingered apprehensively over the formidable iron-studded door. A hasty glance at the faces of Lucille and Dick in no way reassured her. In a sudden panic, she stood up in the car, scarcely knowing what she meant to do, determined though, in some way, to protect her cousins from the results of her stubborn belief in one whom she now realized was utterly different from any one she had ever known and therefore as utterly unfathomable. She tried to call out, but somehow her voice failed her,

but as Dick caught her arm and pulled her down into the seat, muttering: "You can't see over that wall," she caught a glimpse of a row of tall silver poplars which grew on the other side of the long, white wall.

Silver poplars!

The sight of them was like a breath of home. Silver poplars! It must surely be a good omen. Always the sight of silver poplars brought back the memory of those that grew along the roadside before Aunt Letty's farmhouse. They represented security. Their fluttering leaves, she had been wont to liken to the fluttering fans of geisha girls. Now, they seemed to have taken on a new quality. Like the minarets of the many mosques of the city, they seemed to point with a purpose into the serene blue of the heavens.

Determinedly suppressing the hysteria that for a moment had taken possession of her, she followed Dick from the car. She saw that his scowl had deepened, and that Lucille was pretending a nonchalant air that was difficult to retain. She sensed acutely their uneasiness, though her own had in a measure disappeared. She knew that both were wondering what ex-

periences awaited them beyond that white wall and heavy door.

She saw, too, that Namar seemed anxious and ill at ease, as he came around the front of the car toward them. He looked from one to the other, with a swift, inquiring look, as though trying in that brief second, to read the thoughts of each. Then he moved toward the heavy door.

CHAPTER XX

IN A SYRIAN GARDEN

Before he could reach it, however, it was flung open, and with a laugh, tremulous with excitement, a girl of about twelve, flung herself upon him.

“And now, my brother, that you have made me miss my train for Beirut, I suppose you are very happy!” She half pouted and half laughed up at him.

“Ah, Haidee!” His laugh was one of noticeable relief. “I might have known you were only teasing, when you said you meant to return to the school to-day! And I have hurried our guests in the most unseemly manner for fear you might be gone before we got here!” His air of anxiety had fallen completely from him, and again and again his flashing smile broke forth.

She laughed delightedly. “You speak as though they would sorrow much, were I not here! Now, if it were you, my brother, who had

departed, they might grieve!" She gazed roguishly up at him.

He laid a gentle hand over her full red lips. "Your tongue is too pert; at times, Haidee. Come, we forget our guests. Surely you wish to thank Miss Anise —"

"Then you are pleased with Haidee, Namar, for remaining until to-morrow?" Her heavy lashes lifted, and adoring, velvety eyes scanned his face.

"Yes, my sister." His arm about her, he turned now to Anise. "You remember, I presume, your meeting with her in the Mission School at Beirut? It is to you, especially, that my father and I wish to extend our thanks, for through you we were able to find our little Haidee. But come, let us go into the garden."

Through the opened gateway, Anise had caught a vista of beauty that left her speechless. As the heavy garden door closed behind them, it seemed to her to have shut out all of the world she had known. Before her lay a scene of enchantment, such as must have existed in the days of the Arabian Nights, and she seemed in some mysterious fashion to have become one of the characters out of those fascinating legends

of her childhood. Little Haidee, at the Mission School, the sister of Namar! Namar, the friendless youth of her few college days, a beggar on the streets of Damascus, turning into an Eastern grandee before her eyes! She sought among her thoughts for the connecting link, but it evaded her. Her senses were lulled to inaction, by the enchanting environment in which she found herself.

Lucille and Dick, too, seemed to have fallen completely under the spell of the beauty that lay about them, for they followed Anise and Namar in a sort of breathless silence.

The farther reaches of the white expanse of garden walls were broken by varying shades of green; tall sunlit palms merged their brilliance into the silvery green of olives, while the dull green of eucalyptus and cypress overshadowed the duller shades of mulberry and chestnut. Heavy purple blossoms of bougainvillæa hung from the vines that clung to the pillars of the loggia of the house, that enclosed a marble-paved courtyard, in the midst of which a fountain flung upward thin sprays of silvery water that caught the last of the sun's rays and turned it into a rainbow-hued cascade. Over all, hung

the mingled perfume of jasmine, gardenias, and the many roses that grew about.

Anise would have been content to stand in silence and luxuriate in the beauty about her, but she longed for the explanations that would ease the situation for Lucille and Dick. Both wore a strained, unhappy expression, as they stared about, as though they were reluctant to credit the seeming safety that was so apparent to Anise.

Haidee had flashed ahead of them and disappeared beyond the columns of the loggia. Now, with the swiftness of a gazelle, she was flying toward them, her long, dark hair, and her short, pink skirt, flaring out in the little breeze she created. She stopped before Anise, breathless.

“It is the blue beads!” she exclaimed, as she held them out to her. “I give them to you, again. Now, I do not need them, for no longer do I fear the evil-eye. I am now Christian!” She laid in Anise’s hands the string of lapis lazuli beads which had been her Aunt Della’s parting gift.

“But I gave them to you!” protested Anise. “I wanted you to have them.”

“ Yes, but I could not wear them again, for others would think that I still feared the evil-eye! ”

“ Then if you will not keep my gift, I must return to you your piece of tapestry. ”

“ No — No! ” insisted Haidee. “ It was the tapestry that led Namar to the school. The tapestry and your kindness to my brother. You see, I have been most wicked. Malka died, and Namar was gone, and my father in the prison, I would not tell them at the school about me, for I did not want to grow up to be like the women of our country. Me, I do not want to wear the veil — to cover up my mouth and my nose. I want to be like the women of the American school. They are different. ” She looked down at her very American dress, and smoothed it lovingly. “ I do not want to look like two black bags, tied with a piece of string about my middle! I begged them to keep me, and I learned to work. I can cook — and lay the plates — and — ”

“ I fear, Haidee, that your explanations are not very clear, ” Namar interposed. “ Run now, and tell our father that his guests have arrived, and I will tell them of the wonderful

things that have come to pass for us, the last few days.”

Again she lifted velvety, adoring eyes to her brother. “ Yes, I know, you can explain much better. I will run and tell our father — ” and she sped away, across the path of golden sand, up the marble steps, and down the length of the mosaic-paved loggia.

Namar's eyes followed her until she had disappeared, then he said, softly. “ She loves so much the Mission School. She was glad, of course, to come home, when she knew that our father was safe, but she had begged to be allowed to return to-day to the school, and my father had consented.”

He turned now, toward Dick. “ It was but a little while ago that we learned through a friend, that it was your father who had interceded with the authorities to have my father's possessions restored to him, and his sentence cancelled. My father sent me to the governor's mansion, where the friend said your father was in conference. I learned that he was already on the way to my father's house, and so I went then to your hotel for you, as my father had directed me to do. I fear you thought my haste a

bit strange, but I was anxious that we return before Haidee left. I did not know that she meant to tease. I believed that she intended to leave this evening, since she insisted that she would not stay another day away from the school. You can see that even Syrian children like to have their own way, though Haidee has been humored more than most. It is because our mother died at her birth and she has never had a mother's love that we feel so tenderly toward her."

There was a flash of his gleaming teeth, and his eyes twinkled with sudden amusement.

"I fear my explanations are almost as *inscrutable*, would you say, as Haidee's. I had better begin at the beginning."

Anise and Lucille had seated themselves on a low marble bench, but Dick leaned against the rim of the fountain, trailing one forefinger absently along the water's edge.

"As you see," Namar lifted a hand in the direction of the white stone buildings, about them, "this is our home; has been ever since I can remember. My father, however, has always held the English in very high esteem, and so, after I had mastered the Koran, and a bit of

law and philosophy, I was sent to England to complete my education. I did not like it there. America was to me the land of attainment. I had heard so much of the American school in Beirut, but my father had no faith in it. He had heard many things of America which did not please him. Many times, on my visits home did we converse on the subject. I tried to persuade him to send me there, but never would he consent. Back to England I was sent each time. But the lure was too strong. I had heard so much that I must know more. My father was very generous. He supplied me lavishly with funds. And so, I ran away, without telling him of my intention. I borrowed the name, Harjad, of a friend who had been most kind to me in New York. Contrary to the general belief, you can see that even in Syria, youth sometimes revolts against the authority of honored parents. I meant to take no chances of his finding me. I wanted to study America, to learn — but that has little to do with my narrative. I of course, knew nothing of what was taking place here, since it had been several years since I had had any news from home. It was at the time of your own departure, that a letter came to me

from my Syrian friend in New York, telling of the political situation here, how my father had refused to be ruled by the new officials who had been put in charge after France had been given mandatory power over Syria. When I learned of my father's arrest, and the confiscation of his property, I knew not what to do. I had no money for passage home, and could not borrow, since I had no assurance that I could return a loan. And so I decided to *bum* my way home, as you Americans would say."

He paused for breath, and stood silently for a moment with his eyes fixed on the bit of blue sky that showed between two tall cypresses at one end of the garden.

Anise and Lucille sat, with their eyes on him. Neither stirred, though on both lay an expression of eager anticipation. Dick was the only one who appeared restless. His forefinger splashed backward and forward through the rainbow-hued cascade, but he did not look at Namar, though Namar was watching him.

"There is little more to tell. As you know, I came across on the ship which brought you to England. From there I worked my way to France, and on toward home, tarrying just

long enough at each place to earn a bit of food. One way and another, I managed to get here."

He smiled now, at Anise. "A pretty figure you must have thought me! In Beirut I was knocked in the head and my clothes were stolen while I slept, but my assailant very kindly left me his own apparel. It was not very becoming, but at least it was something." Again his smile flashed forth, but gave way immediately to his former gravity.

"You can imagine my feelings when I discovered that the friends who I had been hoping would assist in releasing my father were all in the same predicament. I was not permitted to see my father, and so I had no way of knowing what had become of Haidee. I met one of our former servants who said that old Malka had taken Haidee to relatives in Teheran. You can imagine my distress — a child of Haidee's years and an old woman making the long dangerous journey to Teheran. Allah, you know, takes no thought of women, nor does any one in this country of mine."

He turned now, to Anise, and his voice, quivering with emotion, had sunk to a whisper. "Is it any wonder, that I lost my faith in Allah?"

With a little catch of his breath, he went on. "My early years in England and my later ones in America had taught me many things about the women of other lands. It made me realize that our own ought to be guarded as carefully, loved as much, yet given the same freedom — the freedom that makes for greater good. For have not the women of other lands, especially the American women, contributed their share to the growth of their country? One cannot read of those early women who fought the hardships of a wild, new country, who helped to plant and plow, to fight off savages, disease, and death, single-handed, without a feeling of great reverence and awe. Our own have been but chattels, hampered by the restrictions placed upon them by Mohammed and the men of their family."

He smiled again, upon the two girls, regarding him so earnestly. "Like Haidee, I wander from the course of my narrative. As I said before, it was you, Miss Decard, who led me to find Haidee. When you lingered over that rug in the bazaar that day, and said that its pattern was like a piece of tapestry given to you by a child in the Mission school, it set me to

thinking, for I knew that that pattern was a very rare one, and that only a few copies had been made from the original. In our home, the women had woven a tapestry in the pattern of the prayer rug. It was considered something of a treasure, because of its perfect workmanship. No doubt, old Malka had snatched it up, when they left. It was the first hint I had had, that Haidee might be alive. I did not believe that either she or Malka could have reached Teheran. As you know, I found her at the Mission School. Malka had given them the money my father had given to her for their journey to Teheran, but she died of fever without telling them anything of Haidee. I know not why Malka took her there, unless she, too, had turned Christian."

He looked away, again, toward the cypresses, but Anise noted that as in the pension, his face seemed suffused as from a light within.

"Do you mean, Namar," she said softly, "that you, too — have turned — Christian?"

"Yes," he returned, in the same soft voice, "my father and I have learned that there is but one God — the God of the Christians. He has kept our little Haidee safe, and brought us

together again. He has given to us a better understanding of each other and of many things. He has given to us friends, who for centuries we have thought were our enemies. There is only one God."

Anise sat with tightly clasped hands, unable to take her eyes off the glowing countenance of the Syrian youth.

Silence descended over the little group, broken only by the tinkle of bells, and the calls of vendors in the street beyond.

Anise had noted during Namar's recital that Dick's face was suffused with color, and that he cast furtive glances at the youth as though unwilling to credit what he heard.

Now, he strode forward, with extended hand, his eyes bright with an emotion Anise had never seen there before.

"It's hardly to be expected, Namar, that you can forgive my treatment of you — in America — but I *am* sorry. I'll admit I had you all wrong."

Namar took the proffered hand, and bent over it with one of his quick, flashing smiles.

"I'm not so sure of that," he returned. "I think you *had* me — all right!"

Both broke into a laugh, that eased the tenseness of the situation somewhat.

“ You see, I could not blame you for your treatment of me, though in a way, I did think it unusual for Americans. The people of my land have always been very particular in their choice of guests. To us, the home is very sacred. Only those whom we especially love, do we invite to share with us its sacredness. I knew that, to you, I meant nothing.”

“ Oh, not exactly that,” Dick protested. “ You see, Lucille and I had rather a good opinion of our own importance. The truth is, we were positively rude. I hope you won't judge the rest of Americans by the sample you see before you.” He looked ruefully toward Lucille, who had turned her back upon them and was bending over a half-blown rose.

“ I have just been thinking,” Namar interposed, “ that somehow, to me, you three, seem very typical of your country.”

“ Typical? Then you couldn't have a very high opinion of America? ”

“ On the contrary, yes. To me, you seem like America's great strength.” His eyes traveled over Dick's splendid figure. “ But like Amer-

ica, you, too, seem to understand that great strength alone is not the prime factor in life.”

“ I’m afraid I’ve come mighty close to thinking just that,” Dick returned. “ If you could have heard me boasting, a while back — But I have learned that physical strength is not everything.”

Namar’s understanding smile, moved from Dick to Lucille, who still hung over the roses.

“ Your sister — ”

At his words, Lucille whirled about, and Anise saw that she had been battling, not very successfully, with tears, for her lashes showed a gleam of moisture on their curling ends.

“ — is like America’s great vitality. Her joy in living — her eagerness to experiment with the newest in every line of action, is one of America’s most appealing characteristics.”

With a swift movement Lucille was before him, with both hands outstretched. “ I do not deserve your compliments, Namar! But I mean to, in the future. At least, I’ll never be rude again to any one, and as for experimenting in new fields — if it hadn’t been for Anise, here, and Dad, I’d have missed the most impressive — and delightful experience that any one

could have." Her shamed eyes wandered beyond Namar and about the exotic garden. She turned away then, and leaned beside Dick against the fountain's rim.

"I am glad if you find pleasure in knowing us, and I assure you that it is mutual," Namar murmured, and then turned to Anise. "Miss Decard, I think, is like the soul of America. She sees beneath the many misleading traits of her neighbors, and divines the good that often lies buried too deep for the observation of most. Like the heart and soul of her country, she is, extending to the most unfortunate the gift of her friendliness and interest."

"Oh, no!" Anise protested, very much embarrassed at his earnestness, "I'm not like that. What I have done has been very indirect service." She must not let him think — but how could she explain the real reason for her interest in him? She stammered miserably, "I *did* believe — I would have liked to help you — but — but — You seemed so proud — and — and —"

He seemed to sense the cause of her embarrassment and said hastily, "Your friendliness to me was of more value than any material help,



“MISS DECARD, I THINK, IS LIKE THE SOUL OF AMERICA.”

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especially as I knew I had no right to it. But surely you understand how impossible it was for me to tell you anything of myself while in America. I could take no chances of my father locating me. But your friendliness led — ”

There was the sound of running feet, a flash of pink, and Haidee was again in their midst. “ I could not interrupt our father, while he was talking with his guests,” she panted. “ Such lovely big words, they spoke! I stayed to listen, and almost forgot that you were waiting. Come, quick, now! It is time, almost, for our evening meal! ”

CHAPTER XXI

A DREAMER OF DREAMS

If the garden of Namar's home had seemed to Anise a copy of one out of the Arabian Nights, the interior of the white stone building added even more to the impression. The dome-shaped, high-ceilinged rooms, with their arabesque decorations; the beautifully carved woodwork; the hangings of rich tapestries and silk; the rare Persian rugs, so luxurious in appearance that it seemed a desecration to step upon them, even though they had left their shoes outside, — the custom in the East; the long, low divans, heaped high with an exotic array of cushions and drapes, all seemed but part of the fantastic pattern of a dream — a dream that took her back to the days of Aladdin and the wonderful lamp.

And like characters in a dream, the silent-footed servants in their garments of purest white, embroidered in gold, moved about, bearing great bowls and trays of carved brass and

copper, agate and crystal ware, inlaid with silver. And over all, lay the glamour of various shades of color, from the light which shone through the colored glass windows and was reflected in the low-hung lamps of ruby crystal and brass.

There was little opportunity for conversation, once the formalities of introductions were over, for there were other guests beside Mr. Lyman, and themselves — grave-faced, gentle-voiced men in the long coats and trousers of the Syrian.

In a voice of exceeding gentleness, Namar's father acknowledged the introductions, his faint smile lingering longest on Anise, who stood a little behind Lucille.

“ My Namar has spoken to me of your kindness to him. It is my wish that you know, that I, too, appreciate what you have done for him and our little Haidee.”

She murmured a protest, as she had done to Namar, that the little she had done had been indirect service.

He smiled again upon her, then turned to those about him and began conversing in a voice too low for Anise to hear.

She was content to sit among her cushions

and marvel at the beauty about her, at the strange customs of these people who had accepted them among their dearest friends, and at the endless succession of tempting courses: of fowl, meats, fruits, vegetables, sweets and pastries of all kinds.

She saw that Dick and Lucille, too, were reveling in this unusual experience, and that quite frequently their gaze traveled toward the very dignified Namar, as though even now they found it hard to reconcile their former opinion of him with the proof that now lay before them.

Later, she noted that Lucille had edged nearer to Namar, and that they were conversing in low tones. She had no intention of listening, but when their voices rose to a slightly higher pitch, it was impossible to avoid hearing what they said.

“It’s all very well for you to make excuses for us, but really, Namar, I’ll never be able to live down that experience. When I think of how we treated you that night, I can’t understand how you can be so forgiving. You’ve surely heaped coals of fire upon our heads.”

“It was but a misunderstanding. As I said before, I could not really blame you, though I

knew that customs in America were far different from those of my own country. I understood, too, that though there are no class distinctions in America, in some ways, they are far more particular in others than in many countries. One must, as you say, 'speak the same language'; that is, there must be a sort of invisible something that makes certain cliques desire the friendship of others who have that peculiar quality. It is not always wealth, neither is it learning, neither is it birth, though all those things have some bearing upon it."

There was admiration in Lucille's voice as she said: "You've hit it pretty clearly, Namar, but still your reasoning doesn't excuse us. Of course we all know what utterly idiotic things college boys and girls will do, but — We were just what Anise said we were, the night we railroaded you out of the house. We were snobs, though we didn't know it, then."

"Not at all, not at all," he objected. "You were certainly within your rights."

Lucille continued. "We didn't know quite a number of things then that we've learned of late. I suppose Anise has influenced us some.

She has such a different way of looking at things.”

“ She has, indeed,” he murmured.

“ After all,” Lucille went on, “ it’s more the fault of the way we were raised, I suppose. Living in hotels and summer resorts, we’ve met only the superficial kind of people — the kind who see only what lies before their eyes. Anise seems to have learned to look *into* people, rather than *upon* them. I don’t believe any of our crowd realized how dreadfully we were behaving. We didn’t even stop to consider how you might be hurt. And Dick and I were merely peeved because Anise had chosen a friend who we thought did not fit in with our own crowds.”

“ I can see that, quite clearly,” he said, “ but let us think no more about it. My father and I shall always feel indebted to you all. Had it not been for your actions that night, Anise would not have been called upon to defend me so valiantly, and things might have turned out quite differently.”

“ It’s generous of you to say that, Namar, but we don’t deserve it.”

“ Then let us put it from us, as we might a bad dream, since now we mean to be friends.”

When the meal had ended, and they moved toward one of the rooms, whence came the seductive sounds of a native orchestra, Namar murmured to Anise. "Let us go into the garden. There are things I would say to you, alone."

She saw that Dick, beside his father, was listening interestedly to the conversation of the men about them, and through the great carved doorway of the room beyond, Lucille was down among the cushions on the floor before a basket of Persian kittens Haidee had brought in.

And so she walked beside him, out into the garden. The shrubbery along the walls was now wrapped in a misty darkness. The courtyard with its marble paving and sparkling fountain threw off a gleam that blended with the radiance of the crescent moon and myriad stars overhead. It was a night such as dreams are made of, an illusive, intangible beauty that penetrates the heart, yet leaves nothing but a memory. Anise, under its spell, could find no words, but she knew that always would she remember the aching loveliness of this Syrian garden.

Namar motioned her to a low seat near a rose-covered trellis. He sat beside her and

though his features were indistinguishable against the dark background of the vines, she seemed to feel his gentle gaze upon her, and see his quiet smile, as he turned toward her and said: "When I said that, to me, you are like the soul of America, I did not say all that was in my thoughts. Much as I admire your cousins, it is you who will forever hold my lasting esteem and gratitude. In the muddle of conflicting experiences to which I was subjected in America, you seemed like a beacon — a guiding star that led me out of the maze of strange ways and strange beliefs, to a clear vision — a vision that meant the renunciation of the faith of my people. When I said that I had become Christian, when I knew that Haidee was safe, I did not mean it was that, alone, which had changed me. It was, as you might say, the culminating factor."

She sat quiet, her eyes upon him. His voice seemed to blend into the soft strains of the music that came to them from the house. She had a feeling that this was after all, a dream, for she was certain that she had done nothing to deserve such confidences as he was pouring out to her. If he knew the real motive back of her in-

terest in him, would he think as he did, of her? But she couldn't shatter this beautiful dream. It was too perfect. She was reveling in each moment she lived in this enchanting place, storing in her mind each detail of the evening's events, so that she might remember it always.

It was with difficulty that she focused her attention on what he was saying.

“ In my country, as you must know, a boy is considered mature, much younger than in yours. I have listened much to those who were older and wiser, and seeing the difference in your country and mine, has opened my eyes to many things.

“ Syria, as you know, is a great highway of civilization. It is composed of various tribes who have never united. Unlike your country, these tribes have not learned that, ‘ in unity there is strength ’. For centuries, it has lain between rival powers, subject to first one empire, and then another, and as you know, it is now under mandate of France. As I have said, I have listened much, read much, and pondered more. I have talked with people of many different nations. I have looked into the homes of the humblest and the wealthiest, seeking there the remedy for my people. So many conflicting im-

pressions, for a time, muddled my perceptions, but now, thanks to my stay in your country, and to such people as you, and your uncle, I have come to the conclusion, that the only hope of my country lies — in Christianity.”

His voice was deep with emotion. “Does it not seem sad, even to you, that we, one of the oldest races on earth, belonging to this land that was the cradle of knowledge — that we should have to travel west, to have that knowledge re-interpreted for us?”

“Yes,” murmured Anise, profoundly stirred now by the seriousness of his words, “but you must remember that even though we do this for you, it is to you — your land, and your people, that we owe our most sacred traditions. Who knows but that it may be God’s plan, for welding the nations into a common bond, bringing us nearer, into closer —” Her voice trembled with earnestness, and she broke off abruptly.

“I had not thought of that,” a little note of joy in his voice. “But I shall remember your words. I have thought only of the stupidity of my own people, and their leaders, and of how I might be of help in making them realize

wherein lies their deliverance. Yet even now, they have come to accept many of the Western ideas. And thanks to men like your uncle, a way is being opened for their economic deliverance. With the new irrigation schemes, and the development of our mineral lands, many changes will take place."

He arose with a sigh. "But I do not mean to burden you with the woes of my country. I want only to let you know how near my heart lies its future, and how very much I long to help my people, to teach them the futility of their age-old superstitions — such things as blue beads and charms to ward off the 'evil-eye'. Yet especially do I want to assure you of how much I appreciate your belief in me. I know that many of your land would not trust — a Moslem."

Now, of course, was the moment for her to disillusion him. She could not let him continue to believe that she deserved his praise. She was not the very ideal person he believed her to be. But the words would not come, and it was with a great sense of relief that she saw Dick, Lucille, and Haidee strolling toward them. Lucille's arm was about the little Syrian girl and Anise

could see in the moonlight, that again and again, Haidee lifted an eager admiring countenance to the older girl.

Dick must have overheard part of Namar's words, for he said, as he stopped before them, "You tell the truth, Namar, when you say that many of our land would not trust a Moslem. There's something more that you ought to know about us, but after the way you've forgiven us, so generously, I hesitate to say it, but I feel that Anise deserves especial credit for the way she has stood up for you."

And he told in detail of Dora's letter, of his and Lucille's suspicions when they discovered he was on their ship, of how their suspicions seemed confirmed when they met him in Paris and again in Marseilles, and of the apparent proof that he was up to something, when they learned he had been working about the pension.

Namar had listened in silence, to Dick's long story.

"It was because I was so desperate. I was penniless — it was hard to ask favors —"

"I can understand that, now," returned Dick, "but then —"

He told of the missing pin and how they

were certain he had taken it, the day Anise had showed him the tapestry, and of how, until the moment when they had stopped before his house, and Haidee had appeared, they still held to their early suspicions.

Namar's laugh was good to hear. "You had me painted even blacker than I thought! Yet, one could hardly blame you. And so, Miss Decard held out for me, in spite of such overwhelming evidence?"

"I'll say she did!" Dick returned.

"I had no idea that I could have been causing such discord among you. I am exceedingly sorry. But now, I'm sure there will no longer be such serious differences of opinion among you."

Anise moved uneasily. Now she must speak! She must tell him, but instead, she said, "Why did you not tell me about your father that day, in the bazaars? It would have cleared the mystery concerning you."

He looked down upon her a moment in silence. "Why should I think that you would care about the troubles of one who was not even of your own faith? You had been kind, I know — but that was no reason for burdening you

with my own afflictions.” All the haughty pride of an old, old race was in his bearing, only his words reflected the new softness that had of late come to dwell within him. “ I had been taught so many unjust things regarding Christians. Why should I go to them for help? But they have done for me things that my own people could never do! They have taught me the way of salvation for myself, and others.”

Lucille was staring thoughtfully, at her cousin.

“ Yes, and Anise has done for us something no one else has ever done. She has taught us to look for good in other people. It's the way she does, and somehow, *she* always seems to find it — in every one! ”

“ Oh, Lucille! ” Anise protested, but Dick spoke up quickly: “ Well, it *is* there, you know. Every one has some good in him — if — if you just try to find it. Anise's way — is the way to happiness — I guess.”

“ No, Dick, ” Anise begged, “ I'm not — ”

Haidee's piping treble confirmed Dick's words. “ It's the way to eternal life, the missionary lady at the school, would say! ”

“ Oh, no, no, please — ! ” Anise begged, ris-

ing hastily. "I'm not like that — I mean — Oh, don't you see," she pleaded, throwing out her hands in a pathetic gesture. "I'm not at all like that!"

She had hoped that, after all, there might be no need for her own confession, especially before Namar, but now there seemed nothing else to do. She couldn't let them praise her when she knew she didn't deserve it.

"Don't you see — ?" she pleaded, to the surprised little group, "that I've really been selfish, all along!" She turned to Lucille and Dick. "You can't either of you imagine how much I resented the fact that you thought I didn't know how to choose my friends, and — and I was determined to show you that I did. I was so certain I was right!"

"But you were right, Anise," Dick spoke up. "Hasn't it just been proven?"

"But don't you see, Dick, that I couldn't possibly have dreamed — how things would turn out? I simply wanted to be right, when I had nothing on which to base my beliefs!"

She turned apologetically to Namar. "Don't you understand," she begged, "I was just taking you — on faith. You might have been —"

well — things might have been just as Dick and Lucille feared. My own stubbornness might have led them into danger — You might have been —” She faced him determinedly, wondering at the back of her mind, if now she was to wreck all his beautiful thoughts of her.

But it was Dick and Lucille who counted most. It was their love and respect she had been working for. She would not masquerade before them, even to retain Namar's regard.

“If you knew,” she hurried on, “what I lived through during that ride here! If anything had happened to either of you — it would have been my fault. I could — never — have — forgiven — myself.”

She looked anxiously from one pale face to the other. Was it the moonlight which lent that radiant glow to each countenance?

Namar spoke softly. “Even now, I must say again, you are like the soul of America, for though you offer your friendliness and interest to outsiders, it is your own whom you would protect first. Has not America even now, had to protect herself from those who would enter her threshold for selfish purposes only? Has she not had to make certain laws restricting the

entrance of those who are unfit to share her benefits with those she loves most. Until their worth is proved, why should she accept them with possible harm to her own loved ones? And in resenting my presence among you, your cousins were like those wise Americans who insist on deporting obnoxious characters." His laugh rang out delightedly, and Anise was sure he was visualizing again that scene in the Lyman hallway when he had been so rudely ejected.

"And you," he continued, his eyes still resting on her, "cannot be blamed for wanting to retain the regard of those nearest you. I am glad, however, that I have been able to convince you all of my worthiness to share in the great benefits of your country, since I have dedicated my life to the task of patterning my own country on its lines. But I fear it will take more years than I —"

Haidee's words shattered the solemnity that wrapped them about. "Soon now, they will be going, my brother. Couldn't we have a game of the American football, here, now, that Lucille was telling me about? I have many balls. I want so badly to see Mr. Dick playing the one-half back!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE END OF THE ROAD

It must have been the gentle flapping of the latticed shade that awoke Anise, for there was no one stirring in the room when she opened her eyes. With surprise, she saw that Lucille's bed was empty. Usually, it was she who awakened first, but the previous night's adventure had been one of such unusual and stirring experiences that she had found it almost impossible to close her eyes. She knew that it must have been near daybreak before she had finally drifted into slumber.

She would have liked to lie there and relive the events of the previous night, but she knew that even now, she might be delaying the others, since this was the day of their departure from Damascus. Damascus! — a name that would always hold the power to thrill and awe her — the final scene in that little drama, begun in faraway America, that was to change so com-

pletely the tenor of the lives of each of its actors. And who could say what far reaching consequences might still result from it?

Against her will, the panorama of events paraded themselves before her mind, from the time when Namar had come unbidden to the home of her cousins, to the thrilling climax of last night's happenings. And looking backward, she marveled at the change in her two cousins. It didn't seem possible that those two imperious, self-satisfied young people could be the same as those who had so humbly and gratefully partaken of the hospitality of the House of Kanaan.

And herself? Into her mind flashed a phrase she had written many times in a slow, painstaking hand in her copy-book in a certain little Kentucky schoolhouse: "Know thyself." The words had been meaningless then, for she was certain that she knew herself quite well — much better than any one else possibly could know her. Now, she was not so sure. She was seeing herself in a new light. In her endeavor to improve her cousins, she had missed entirely the fact that she, too, might need improvement. She saw quite plainly now, how trying her own

actions must have been to them. Even though she had been ideally right in many ways, she realized that they, too, had been right to a certain extent. She knew now that she had been far too sure of herself.

Half ashamed, she recalled the confession she had made the night before. How had they taken it? Namar was the only one who had spoken, and he had put a very flattering interpretation on her words, for which she was humbly grateful, for in confessing her own weaknesses, she had not wanted to hurt him. But Lucille had made no comment, nor had Dick, except to change the subject.

The ride home had been a silent one, and each of the little party seemed too engrossed with his own thoughts to talk. But surely, now that they knew how she felt toward them, now that she had shown them that they were even more to her than her desire to be right, surely they must look upon her with a little more affection. Was their silence, the silence of disapproval or of commendation? Surely they were both big-hearted enough to overlook and forgive those superior ways and ideas she had tried to thrust upon them at the beginning. Could it be

that, now, they might really love her, almost as much as they did each other? Could it be that she had at last come to the end of the long, hard road she had been traveling — the road that led to understanding and a lasting peace between them all?

Her eyes wandered to the little altar with its symbols of faith that were held in such reverence by Madame Petot. She had puzzled considerably as to why such objects were so necessary to the belief of some. Now, it came to her quite clearly. The objects themselves were of no particular concern. It was what they represented — like the piece of tapestry there above the altar. Always it would be to her, the tangible evidence of the gratitude of Haidee; of the painstaking labor of those who had so lovingly woven into it the intricate designs of the sacred prayer rug, held in such reverent awe by the members of the Kanaan household.

With a little start of recollection, she sat up. The prayer rug that matched the tapestry! Perhaps it would not be too late to find it, if they searched well. To own even an imitation of the treasured rug of the Kanaans would be

the source of more pleasure than an authentic one which lacked any intimate associations. She moved quickly to the closet which held her apparel for the morning, but half-way across the room, she stopped and stared in wonder at the foot of Madame's altar. There on the floor was the very rug for which she longed! She rubbed her eyes, then stared again.

With a little cry of pleasure, she gathered it up in her arms, then spread it out on the bed to gloat over its beautiful colors, and ponder as to the meanings of its intricate designs. She remembered the day she had first seen it in the bazaar, when Namar's strange emotions had bewildered and frightened her, and her disappointment at finding the merchant gone when they went back for it.

But how came it here? Dick, of course, was the solution. It was his way of showing his approval of her. No doubt he had come across it early that morning in the bazaar, and knowing it was the one thing she wanted, had purchased it for her. Yes, she knew it was Dick that she would have to thank.

She heard voices from the direction of the little arbor at the far end of the courtyard.

Perhaps they meant to breakfast there, as they did on occasions, and were awaiting her. Quickly she dressed and hurried down, but at the doorway, she paused uncertainly. She must not keep them waiting too long.

Her uncle, looking singularly youthful, in a soft white shirt, open at the throat, and white linen knickers, was lounging in a wicker chair, and smiling happily down into the eyes of Dick, who squatted on the yellow sand at his feet. Lucille, also in riding-clothes, perched on one arm of her father's chair, was caressing his cheek with one hand, while the other dangled a spray of bougainvillæa that she had broken from the vine overhead, in Dick's direction.

It was a scene of such complete contentment, such perfect accord, that to Anise, gazing wistfully upon them, it seemed that there couldn't possibly be room in their hearts or thoughts for any one else.

Had they, in finding each other, shut her out? After all, she was not one of them, and never would be, no matter how kind they were. Again that old wave of loneliness swept over her, and the sick desire to be back again in Aunt Letty's farmhouse. There could never be any doubt

in her mind as to Aunt Letty's love for her. There, life had been so sweet, so simple, so free from the complex situations of this world of her cousins.

But her unhappy thoughts took sudden flight when she saw Dick and Lucille jump to their feet and hurry toward her.

"You were sleeping so soundly, I hated to disturb you," Lucille exclaimed. "Did you see the rug? I thought surely you'd waken when I took it in!"

"Did I?" Anise gave Dick a glowing smile. "It was so lovely of you, Dick. I'm afraid I'd have felt cheated if we'd left Damascus without it. I can't tell you how much I thank you!"

"Thank me?" exclaimed Dick. "What did I have to do with it?"

"Oh, then —" She turned to her uncle whose smile held a hint of mystery. "Then it was you, Uncle Sidney! After all, I'd rather have an imitation of the Kanaan's rug, than a dozen others that are real."

"Imitation? Say —!" Dick gave her a reproachful glance. "After all those books you've been reading on the subject since we left America, do you mean to say you can't tell

an imitation from the *real* thing!" Dick's pretense of scorn was lost on her.

"The *real* thing — ?" She stared from one to the other of the smiling faces about her. "I didn't even consider — Why, it couldn't be *that*, you know, since there is only one —"

"But it is, Anise," her uncle remarked, tossing back a lock of hair that had tumbled over his forehead, somewhat in the manner of the brown lock Lucille was always tossing back from her eyes. "Hussein Kanaan sent it early this morning. It is a parting gift, and signifies the regard which the Kanaan household feel for you."

"Oh, Uncle Sidney!" her voice trembling with awe. "But I couldn't keep it. We must return it. I don't deserve it."

Her uncle shook his head. "They would be hurt beyond measure!"

"Perhaps it is as Haidee would say," Lucille remarked. "Since they have turned Christian, they do not need prayer rugs on which to pray."

"Talk about gratitude," Dick observed, thoughtfully. "Wasn't it Dr. Johnson who said, 'Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation; you do not find it among gross people'? We

surely did do these folks a lot of injustice. After all, I wouldn't doubt but that there's quite a lot we might learn from them."

"I only hope," Lucille remarked, "that when Namar comes to America again, we'll have a chance to make up to him for —"

"So he's returning, then?" her father mused thoughtfully. "I hadn't thought to ask him, last night."

"Yes," Lucille returned, "though not soon. He feels he is needed here, now, but later, he may bring Haidee. She has made him promise —" She broke off abruptly and stared thoughtfully over Dick's head. "You see," she went on, after a pause, "Haidee is just at the impressionable age. I think he's rather wise to wait until she is older. To tell the truth, he's much wiser than I gave him credit for being. He knows that the only thing for the different races to do is to stick to their own kinds."

She shot a swift appraising glance at Anise, who looked up with a disarming smile. And as Lucille seemed reluctant to say more, Anise continued the explanation. "You see, Uncle Sidney, the traditions of each race are so different. Oh, I wish you could have heard him!

He explained it all so beautifully. He said that he thought God wanted the races to be different, or he would not have made them so, and that each must love his own the most." She smiled brightly upon them. "I believe he is just a little afraid that Haidee might come to love America better than her own land. You could hardly blame him, could you, for wanting — ?"

"No. He is a very wise young man," her uncle said. "I am glad that you all have discovered the fact — among other things." His eyes twinkled humorously upon them, but in them was also a look of great relief.

Lucille was regarding him with an affectation of outraged dignity. "Why don't you come right out, and say, 'I told you so!' No, we haven't forgotten how you sided with Anise and predicted that, some day — I believe that you knew about him, all along, and thought it would be a good lesson to us, if we found out for ourselves!"

"Indeed I did not!" he defended himself, laughingly. "It did not occur to me to think that he was the son of Hussein Kanaan! Years ago, when I was in Syria, I understood that

Kanaan had a son at school in England, but I had never seen him. The name, 'Harjad', was new to me. I merely judged him by his manner and his appearance. He seemed to me, as he did to Anise, rather superior to most college youths."

"Well, I must say that Dick and I have suffered our share for our suspicions of him! You can't imagine how worried we've been, expecting Anise to be kidnapped at any moment."

Mr. Lyman threw back his head in a hearty laugh. "I must admit that you worked up a rather convincing case against him. I'd almost have believed in his duplicity myself, if you had confided in me." His face sobered. "It goes to show just how prejudices and misunderstandings are often built up out of little. The different races know so little of each other, and in their ignorance often entertain the most unjust suspicions of each other. To be sure, there are many customs and practices in other countries that we can't reconcile ourselves to, but when you come down to rock bottom, you'll find that each is striving to do the thing that he considers right, and that which will help his country most."

“ But Uncle Sidney — ” Anise broke in, a slow flush mounting to her eyes. “ Lucille and Dick — ” she glanced quickly from one to the other, then down at the yellow sand into which she dug the toe of one boot, “ they were right, you know, in a way. Namar *might* have been all they thought. I’ve learned so many things since we left America. I know now, that one must not trust too blindly. You see, I’ve always been so sure of my own opinions.”

“ Aw, Anise — ” Dick protested, plainly embarrassed as were the others, at her earnestness, “ that’s all over now. You said enough last night.”

“ But I want Uncle Sidney to know,” her flush deepening. “ You see, I had confided my opinions to him, and I want him to know that I wasn’t so nearly right as I thought I was.”

She turned again to her uncle. “ I’ve always been so sure of myself.” She gazed reminiscently beyond the little group toward the arched gateway of the courtyard. “ Once when I was very small, Aunt Letty pointed out a very beautiful vine growing around a big tree in the woods. She said I mustn’t touch it as it was poison. I thought to myself that

surely God wouldn't make a beautiful vine like that, and spoil it by making it poison. And so I went back and touched it, in fact I gathered several of the leaves to show Aunt Letty she was mistaken."

She stopped and looked ruefully down at her hands. "I'm sure you all know what poison ivy does to one."

There was an amused laugh at her expense.

"But even that didn't teach me. I've been just that way all my life. Once I found a strange chicken in the road. I was so pleased because it didn't run from me. I took it home and put it in the henhouse. I didn't know it was sick. Aunt Letty lost nearly all her hens."

"Why, Anise —" Lucille broke in. "You don't need to tell us all those things! We've all done things we shouldn't have!"

"But don't you see — I must tell you! Namar might have been like the sick chicken, and you — and — and Dick —" The lump in her throat wouldn't go down. She turned away from them quickly lest they see the mist that had come into her eyes.

Dick spoke up thoughtfully. "But Namar was hardly like your sick chicken, Anise, even

though Lucille and I did think so. In my opinion, it's fellows like him, that this country needs. Who knows but that he may do for it as much as Washington or Lincoln did for ours. He's got vision, that fellow has, as well as brains."

The silence that followed this, was broken by Mr. Lyman who informed Cecile who had been hovering near, that they were ready for their breakfast. Then he drew from his pocket a letter.

"Letty has written, begging us to shorten our trip by two months, so that she may have Anise again before school starts next fall."

His eyes traveled about the little group, and Anise wondered at the sudden silence that fell upon them.

It was broken by Lucille. "Oh, Dad, you're not going to let her take Anise from us, *now*, are you?"

And Dick murmured, with a scowl at the toes of his boots: "Aw, Dad! She's *had* Anise, so long, but *we* —"

Anise's heart was beating a staccato tattoo against her ribs. She stooped to refasten the buckle of one boot, glad of the opportunity of

hiding her eyes, and when she raised her head, she was looking into a pair of the most understanding gray eyes she had met in the whole course of her seventeen years.

“ I think,” her uncle said, to whom the gray eyes belonged, “ we’ll have to leave it to Anise to decide.”

She looked from one to the other, and knew at last that she had reached the haven she had longed for — a lasting place in the hearts of her cousins.

“ I think,” she said, softly, “ that now, I’ll always stay with you, but — couldn’t we *all* go to Aunt Letty’s for a visit? She’s always wanted to know Lucille and Dick.”

“ Just exactly what I was going to suggest,” exclaimed Dick. “ I think Sis and I have missed a lot by not knowing Aunt Letty!” he added, with a fond look into Anise’s shining eyes.

THE END

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