

HELD UP

having returned to the lengthened shadow of my tent. "You remember that with the elders of his tribe he drank coffee with you in your encampment at the Well of Mazaar. You remember that you rode through the salt-swamp and ate dates and drank coffee with him and his elders in his tent? You remember that you were served with one cup—with two cups—with the third cup? You have not forgotten the meaning of the third cup—that it signifies not only the friendship of the sheik, for mutual defence and offence, but the loyal devotion of his tribe? You remember that, departing, you indulged Sheik Mirza with a gift, and that he received it, vowing his devotion and the loyalty of his tribesmen to endure forever? Well," the dragoman concluded, with a knowing little wink and grin, "these offending Bedouins, of whom this man was the chief, are of the Tribe of Them That Had Heard, returning from Cairo."

"What punishment was inflicted?" I asked.

"When I informed the man of these exchanges of hospitality," Aboosh replied, "he hung his head and wept, crying out that he had shamed his tribe; and in pity I persuaded the magistrate to reduce the sentence to one week in the jail at Kantara."

The poor Bedouin had engaged my sympathies.

Night came, after a flaring sunset—of those great clouds, flung mightily forth and wide-lying in the west, terrible with heaviness and silence and lurid