

10 THE CARPET FROM BAGDAD

Whereupon the mother sat back dreamily. Now, where was the girl worthy her boy? Monumental question, besetting every mother, from Eve down, Eve, whose trials in this direction must have been heartrending!

George left the cellar in due time, and after that he went up the ladder in bounds, on his own merit, mind you, for his father never stirred a hand to boost him. He took the interest in rugs that turns a buyer into a collector; it became a fascinating pleasure rather than a business. He became invaluable to the house, and acquired some fame as a judge and an appraiser. When the chief-buyer retired George was given the position, with an itinerary that carried him half way round the planet once a year, to Greece, Turkey, Persia, Arabia, and India, the lands of the genii and the bottles, of arabesques, of temples and tombs, of many-colored turbans and flowing robes and distracting tongues. He walked always in a kind of mental enchantment.

The suave and elusive Oriental, with his sharp practices, found his match in this pleasant young man, who knew the history of the very wools and cottons and silks woven in a rug or carpet. So