

nearer, the older missionary relaxed the muscles around her lips just long enough to tighten them more firmly. The younger woman wondered dimly what emotion this relaxing and tightening of her companion's mouth muscles might mean. She felt the keen little eyes cutting their way through her for a quizzical second before they turned again to the native group. Then she saw the older missionary clamber from her mule, take her rain umbrella and place it over the young Turkish woman, who lay on her blanket beside the mule, moaning and in great agony.

"She heard a few words spoken in the language she must yet learn. The missionary and one of the men seemed in animated conversation, and the man wore a black frown and shook his head. The elder Turkish woman showed sinister eyes above her dirty veil as she eyed the tall missionary above her, the guard-police, the silent girl who watched.

"What was the matter?" asked the young missionary when travel was again resumed. "Did she faint, or was she unstruck?"

"She expected to be a mother," the other answered dryly.

"But why didn't they stay at home then? What could induce any one to make such a trip at such a time?"

"The man of the house decided upon the journey, I believe," said the tall missionary without a trace of passion—he and the mother-in-law. And it was convenient that the entire family should go, Allah willing.

"All in a flash the girl understood why the older woman's mouth muscles tightened when her eyes kept cold. Oh, the horror of a land of senseless creeds, a land where human life was dress!

"The young missionary knew, all of a sudden, that she, too, was to see pain and misery and death close in about her; suffering that any but her Saviour should be powerless to avert or help.

"Oh, dreadful! Is it not most pitious, the sight of woman sick?" asked the guard-police with an unsavory smile.

"The taller woman did not answer; the other could not.

"Many a mile they rode. Toward evening their journey ended. The guard-police turned back and took the road again. The tired women sought their quarters.

"It was almost dark when the young traveler, coming out upon the Mission steps, discovered her companion of the day in the road before the door talking with a group of travelers that had lately entered town. It happened to be the family they had found in the heat of the desert.

"The two men stood at the mule's head. Upon the mule sat the elder of the women. The younger, who had lain in such agony a few hours before, now walked at the mule's side, and a tiny bundle was at her breast.

"Where is the umbrella?" asked the tall missionary.

"Alas," said one of the men, "the guard-police, he took it when he yet returned."

"Took it?"

"Yes," answered the woman from the mule. "Your guard-police met us on the way but two hours since. He said the lady teacher repented of giving her rain umbrella unto pigs. He carried it away with him, and we—what could we do?"

"What does she say?" asked the young missionary.

"But this woman at your side, she is sick!" the elder missionary continued. "You must not let her walk. She must ride the mule."

"She?"

"The sinister eyes glanced at the missionary in amusement and then contemptuously down at the bowed head beside her.

"Bah! did she not hinder us four hours upon our travel? And is not her firstborn a girl? Besides—the mule—it is mine!"

"What does she say?" the young missionary begged again as the little company started forward. But the older teacher stared down the street unheeding as her eyes followed the pitiful sick figure dragging itself alongside the mule."

When the voice of the storyteller ceased, stillness settled down upon the little group. The worldly face of the matron had gone quite white, and for once the bride had forgotten the pink ruffles.

The missionary looked from the eyes of the two cold worldlings into those of the girl for a moment.

"I told you it would be sad," she said, "but it is all of it true."—Mission Studies.