

THE SECRET OF THE SIBYL.

The mighty train of the great King Solomon halted upon the edge of the oasis. The luxuriously expansioned camels knelt, and the warriors who harnessed them, glittering in brass illiad with costly metals, descended and stretched their stiffened limbs beneath the grateful shade of the palm trees, while the hurrying slaves hastily erected the gorgeous tents dyed with saffron and Tyrian purple. All around them spread the level waste of the red sand, over which the burning simoom poured forth its fiery breath. Far in the distance a rugged mountain chain raised huge heaps of rock against the glowing horizon.

It was upon this mountain spur, and upon this alone that the eyes of the aged monarch were bent. Feeble and trembling with the weakness of extreme old age, yet with an eager and almost passionate interest depicted in his speaking countenance, he stood apart from his followers, searching with yet undimmed eye the mystery of the distance.

"Let my people stay here," he said, addressing the High Priest, who stood

rocks, where sat the object of his long and arduous search.

This was an old woman, old with an unpeepable age. Shriveled in every limb, wrinkled in every feature, her hair bleached to an almost transparent whiteness, there was little left about her to suggest kinship to the living world, save the mystic and awful gleam of the dark eyes sunk deep within their cavernous sockets. Gazing into those half-hidden orbs, even the most wise of mortals felt his mighty intellect relaxed with the apprehension of a knowledge deeper than the profoundest conceptions of imagination.

"Mother of Wisdom," he said feebly; "behold the appointed hour! I come to hear from thy lips the secret of the utmost, highest and most perfect knowledge of womanhood. Speak therefore and tell it unto me, that that may come to pass which was written, so that, knowing all that the most that may be known unto woman."

Slowly the withered lips opened, and in a voice deep, yet distant and musical, like the sound of waters within the inmost hollows of the earth, the Sibyl spake, saying:

"Oh, my son, if thou wouldst learn the

head. And then, pointing to where, on the northern horizon, the apex of Cheops, flanked by the lesser pyramids, stood sharply outlined against the sky, he added with a sigh, "nor in theirs."

AN HISTORICAL SCENE.

There was supreme rejoicing in the camp of the French Army, which had but that day been led to victory by their great chieftain, Joan of Arc, and which was now encamped upon ground won at overwhelming odds from a heretofore successful opponent. The celebration of their victory was carried on with delirious ardor. Patriotism, greed and wine, all contributed to arouse the wild enthusiasm of their exhaustion. Forgetful which the soldiers exhibited. Forgetful of camp-fire to camp-fire, and again and again drained bumpers to Joan, the great captain — the Savior of France!

There was one group of huge fighting men, each of whom bore one or more of blood-stained bandages, among whom the rejoicing was of the highest. Yet in this group was one who sat silent.

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WHEREIN HE DIFFERED.

"Here, don't be a hog," protested Everett West, who thought his companion was holding on to the can a little too long.

"I ain't no hog," explained Dismal Dawson. "A hog do know when he has enough, all reports to the contrary notwithstanding; but when I've got enough I don't know nothing at all."

And He Flew.



There's no use in calling a stove man, I'll



Fix the flue myself.



Any child can do it, and—



Just then a log broke.

near him with bowed hands; "but thou and I must cross yonder sands ere night-fall, that the desire of my heart may be fulfilled. Yet will I also take with me the child, my grandchild, even the son of my son's wife, that if what I am to hear be for mortal cares, peradventure it may be for him to hand the saying down unto the sons of men. For lo! within this hour shall I not see the Wise Woman, the wisest of all women, even she that hath learned the secret of the Whole Wisdom of Womanhood! And unto me, who have all the wisdom of man and am the wisest of all men, it shall now be given to know the utmost wisdom wherunto woman may attain."

With the sturdy frame of the High Priest supporting his faltering steps, the aged sage set out, leading by the hand his little grandson, a bright boy of seven. Long and hard was the way, and even under the declining sun the shifting sands burned their feet. To surmount the foothills of the rocky range was a task requiring almost incredible exertion; and it was almost in a fainting condition that the wisest of kings and men at length found himself in front of the bleak and wide-swept niche, in a projection of the

utmost wisdom to which a woman may attain, listen and incline thine ear."

And Solomon said, "I listen."

Then said the Sibyl, "Lo! this is the beginning of the end."

"The woman who naggett a man when his stomach is empty shall get emptions for her pains; and she who asketh her wish of him when his stomach is full shall have even unto her the learned of womankind, then shall the rule and dominion of the earth pass from the man to the woman, and he shall be her bond-slave and shall execute her will."

And Solomon bowed himself unto the earth and worshipped at his feet, saying:

"Verily thou art the Mother of Wisdom and knowledge is thy handmaiden."

And so saying they went forth of the place, for the pilgrimage of Solomon by that child, Ben Hin, the grandson of Solomon by his ninety-seventh wife, said softly to his grandire:

"And when O My Grandfather! will women learn this mighty secret!"

"Not in anytime nor in thine, my son," said the venerable monarch, laying his hand tenderly upon the boy's golden

Presently his abstraction (for he seemed deep in thought) was noticed.

One of his fellows fetched him a mighty stroke on his broad shoulder, and cried, "Ho! thou dreamer! Art so soon befuddled with a drop of wine?"

Another cried, "He fan would dream of the sheep he once did tend. Perchance, he wished many times this day that he was still amongst them."

"Not so, thou prattler!" interrupted a third; "my soul would be burning now had he not been in the fight. Come, Comrades, he wished many times this day to silent one." "Drink a toast with me to our great leader. Didst not see how she fought, man?"

"Aye, marry, I did!" slowly answered the other. "I saw her fight. Aye, I saw her fight! And when she was a shepherd maid, I strove to wed her. Aye, I marked me well how she did fight!" And he arose and strolled away, that he might be alone with his thoughts.

"I understand that Willoughby was half seas over at the Snerwell dinner."

"Oh, no. He was sailing into port when I left."

A GREAT SOCIAL EVENT.

The Bavarian peasants are in many respects very much like the Irish. To drink a great deal, are quite witty, and are never so happy as when they are fighting. A story is told of two Bavarian peasants meeting in the road and holding the following conversation:

"Were you at the wedding last night?"

"Indeed I was. It was the nicest wedding we have had this season. My even the bride took a hand in the fight."

OUT OF DANGER.

Rev. Dr. Primrose (visiting poor-house).—"This is a dreadful place for an embodied man like you to be spending Christmas."

Weary Wrangler—"Tain't no bad hustlin' on dis road. I'd be dead by week if I had to live on de money what's floating round dis time 'o' year."

Florida man—"We had a term confinement in Swamp City last week. Only seventeen houses left standing. British tourist—"My goodness! many were there before the fire!"

Florida man—"Eighteen."