

For the moment Dimsdale ceased to be the practical scientist—he was all sentimentalist. He gave himself the luxury of retrospection, he enjoyed the languorous moment; the music, the voice, the tinkle of the tambourine, the girl herself, sinuous, sensuous. It struck him that he had never seen an a'l'meh so cleanly and so finely dressed, so graceful, so delicate in manner. It struck him also that the kemengeh-player was a better-class Arab than he had ever met. The man's face attracted him, fascinated him. As he looked it seemed familiar. He studied it, he racked his brain to recall it. Suddenly he remembered that it was like the face of a servant of Imshi Pasha—a kind of mouffetish of his household. Now he studied the girl. He had never seen her before; of that he was sure. He ordered them coffee, and handed the girl a gold-piece. As he did so, he noticed that among several paste rings she wore one of value. All at once the suspicion struck him: Imshi Pasha had sent the girl—to try him perhaps, to gain power over him maybe, as women had gained power over strong men before. But why should Imshi Pasha send the girl and his mouffetish on this miserable mission? Was not Imshi Pasha his friend?

Quietly smoking his cigarette, he said to the man: "You may go, Mahommed Melik; I have had enough. Take your harem with you," he added quickly.

The man scarcely stirred a muscle, the woman flushed deeply.

"So be it, effendi," answered the man, rising unmoved, for his sort know not shame. He beckoned to the girl. For an instant she stood hesitating, then with sudden fury she threw on the table beside him the gold-piece Dimsdale had given her.