

## HELD UP

whom he received; and I observed that Elias set stools and a table near by, and fetched coffee, and that Aboosh and the stranger got their heads together and laughed a great deal, and in all seemed to have an excellent time. But I was presently enlightened. Aboosh came to me woebegone, his brows drawn with trouble, his hand pulling in an agitated way at the unoccupied strand of his mustache. "You know," said he, "that one of our horses is worn and has for three days carried no burden? Well," he continued, "this man is a quarantine officer, and the thing has been reported to him. The horse is in good health, as I know, having observed him carefully; but this man says that he has a running at the nose and will communicate a plague to all the horses and camels of Egypt if he is permitted to return over the desert to Jerusalem to-morrow, as I had planned!"

"His greed is the doctor," said I.

"Truly," cried Aboosh, distressed to the point of tears; "but he has me at his mercy. I must either waste the profits of this long journey in maintaining my animals and men in a quarantine of three weeks at Kantara or hand the last piastre of them to this greedy official."

"I would not pay one penny!" said I.

"That is not the way," he replied; "the man is entitled to some small bribe from every traveller who can afford to pay. I do not wish to be ungenerous; but he seems like a hard man, and I think he