

these thousands of years, and all round it the soft yellowish desert, with a mirage quivering over it in the distance, a mirage of trees and water and green hills. A caravan lounged its way slowly into the waste. At the waterside, here and there devout Mahommedans were saying their prayers, now standing, now bowing towards the east, now kneeling and touching the ground with the forehead. Then, piercing and painfully musical, came the call of the Muezzin from the turret of the mosque a quarter of a mile away. Near by the fellah worked in his onion-field; and on the khiassas loaded with feddan at the shore, just out of the current, and tied up for the night, sat the riverine folk eating their dourha and drinking black coffee. Now Dimsdale noticed that, nearer still, just below the *Séfi*, on the shore, sat a singing-girl, an a'l'meh, with a dark-faced Arab beside her, a kemengeh in his lap. Looking down, Dimsdale caught their eyes, nodded to them, and the singing-girl and the kemengeh-player got to their feet and salaamed. The girl's face was in the light of evening. Her dark skin took on a curious reddish radiance, her eyes were lustrous and her figure beautiful. The kemengeh-player stood with his instrument ready, and he lifted it in a kind of appeal. Dimsdale beckoned them up on deck. Lighting a cigarette, he asked the a'l'meh to sing. Her voice had the curious vibrant note of the Arab, and the words were in singular sympathy with Dimsdale's thoughts:

"I have a journey to make, and perils are in hiding,
Many moons must I travel, many foes meet;
A morsel of bread my food, a goolah of water for drinking,
Desert sand for my bed, the moonlight my sheet. . . .
Come, my love, to the scented palms:
Behold, the hour of remembrance!"