

A Problem of the East

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John Sanford was in a state of felicity until the wind failed and his ship lay becalmed in the sea that rims the northern coast of Africa. The voyage out from Boston had been quick and full of good omens; the trading venture in Sicily had been attended by good luck and skillful conduct, and now he was on his way home with much gold and silver locked in the strong box in the cabin. But the brand new republic of which he was a brisk citizen had been somewhat lax lately in paying its allotted share of tribute money to his nearest neighbors, the pious Moslem corsairs. And his ship was too small and his crew too few to repel serious attack from a people who showed scant courtesy to the Declaration of

Independence and the rights of man, except as supported by a fine show of muskets and wide-mouthed cannon.

So he cursed the wind, or rather the lack of it, that held his ship in the center of a grilling world, like an apple roasting before the fire and waiting to be eaten, and tried vainly to extract comfort from the second mate. That worthy, one Old Tom of Nantucket, leathery of skin, stolid of face, and great in experience, dashed buckets of sea water on the deck, and between dashings shut one eye and gazed industriously toward the continent of Africa. He knew the place he was in, and he knew that no good would come out of that shore.

Two days and two nights the ship swayed on the ocean. In the early morning watch of the second night Sanford saw something over toward Africa that twinkled like a star; but, Old Tom, after watching it intently for about five minutes, said it was a signal fire. Then he hunted up the first mate and told how, if anything should happen to him, the money that was to his credit in the bank at Nantucket was to be disposed of.

The coming of the day brought a whiff of wind, and the blue sea water began to crumble away on either side of the ship's prow. As the currents of air filled the sails, from the southeast two ships appeared, which Tom at once named as „Barbary pirates out following their trade.“ Larger of hull and with much more spread of sail than Sanford's vessel, they gained upon her so fast as to leave them no resort but to try the strong arm. The ship carried a six-pounder, and there was a musket for each man. The crew had not shipped to fight; but neither had they shipped to be martyrs, and they took the muskets in willing hands. Sanford himself aimed the six-pounder at the decks thick with brown-faced and forbidding men and succeeded in sending a ball into the thickest huddle. But a moment later both the corsairs bumped against Sanford's ship, their crews sprang upon his deck, then as the captain tried to raise his pistol, a thrill as of death shot through his head, and he fell like one smitten by a bolt from God.

When Sanford was able to hear and to feel and to see again, he found himself lying with a very sore head at the bottom of a long boat. Some brown men in Eastern habit were pulling at the oars and other such men reposed in idleness and silence on the seats. Old Tom of Nantucket and all the companions of his own race and whiteness of skin were gone.

It was not for nothing that Sanford had sailed the seas and learned the ways of nations. At once he understood that life had been left in his body that it might serve the uses of another. There were slaves in Sanford's own country, despite its Declaration of Independence and its agreeable assertions about the rights of men, but they were black and stupid, and it never occurred to him that they cared. But he was a white man, one of the ruling race, a son of the new republic of freedom that had arisen in the West like a star shooting up to the zenith. The thought gave a wrench to Sanford's heart and he groaned with such agony that his Moslem captors looked curiously at him. Then they laughed, and he who laughed loudest kicked him in the side. Sanford's hands were unbound and his first impulse was to give a blow for the kick. But he reconsidered and remembered that one could be a slave and yet not want to die. So he merely crouched closer against the side of the boat.

In an hour or two they landed on that Africa of which Old Tom of Nantucket had spoken to him words evil in import. When he took the first step upon the soil of the unhappy continent he felt as if the fetters of his slavery had been bound upon his ankles, for, from one of his captors, an English-speaking Mohammedan, he learned that the few of his crew who had survived were taken to be slaves, and that he was reserved as a present to the Bashaw.

And as he plodded at the heels of a camel, in the center of the caravan, his own country seemed distant, dim, unattainable. The dust of the desert made a crust in his throat and spread a film over his eyes. A mortal weariness struck him in the limbs. Once when he lagged the leader reached down from a camel's height and lashed him across the back with the thong of a whip. Sanford did not cry out, but he felt then the bitterness of the life that is worse than death.

In three days they reached the capital, where the ruins of old Rome, the broken bones of the past, which neither the drifting dust of the desert nor the tawdry town of the modern Moor could hide, gained solemnity and majesty from the meanness and bitterness of the things that surrounded them. But the mind of Sanford turned not to the past. His were the thoughts of a slave who wonders what kind of a master the future will give to him.

It had been a fruitful summer, and much Christian wealth and many Christian captives had been gathered in the capital by faithful captains when Sanford was presented to the Bashaw. The autocrat was in complacent mood, and he looked not unkindly upon his new slave. Sanford was tall, and straight, and sightly, and the Bashaw made him a servant in his palace instead of sending him to the galleys or to toil in the fields with the lash over him. There were many things that Sanford could do which would be of use to a potentate who knew not the civilization of the West, and in time Sanford, with a new-born wisdom—he had seen the bastinado in practise—was doing them. Sometimes the thought vaguely passed through his mind that principle is merely a matter of place and circumstance; but he did not stop to inspect the subject too closely.

The profits of such conduct accrued fast, and Sanford rose in Mohammedan grace. He could do special duty; when he learned the native tongue he was of great value in translating the tales of captives newly taken. As he smoothed his temper and bent his back the load of slavery became lighter and some of it slipped off.

Sanford had reached a position which in the West would be called secretary to a great man, when he saw the Bashaw's fourth and favorite wife, Zuleika. It was some trifling knowledge of medicine that he had picked up on his voyages that caused him to be sent into the harem to cure Zuleika's headache. When he saw her he did not wonder at the Bashaw's fondness, for she was Circassian, as fair of skin as his own countrywomen, and pleasant to the eye that loves beauty.

Sanford's success in the practise of medicine raised him a degree further in the esteem of his master, who was not without gratitude or an eye for merit. The Caucasian became a privileged man in the palace, and the face of the Bashaw's favorite wife was not hidden from him, though the black eunuch, Mukhtar, who was chief guard of the harem, was always present when he saw her. It was on one of his healing visits that she told her history, which was short and without romance. She had been reared for the market with the care that would be bestowed upon any other animal that may have a future and considerable value.

When she last saw her parents they were loudly and joyously counting the silver that was her price, and she left them feeling neither joy nor sorrow. Displayed for sale again in the slave market at Stamboul, she had been bought by an agent of the Bashaw and brought to his capital. The story of her life since then ended in the harem walls.

Apparently the Bashaw was but one of the incidents of a colorless life. Her face, though it had traces of the Greek profile, expressed neither joy nor sorrow, only the immemorial apathy of the East. How different, reflected Sanford, were the women in his own young country—the country which was growing dimmer to him every day. Were men and women merely the creatures of place and circumstance? The thought was not so vague now.

At one of these interviews it occurred to Sanford to tell Zuleika of his own country and the women of his race, for some shreds of the pride of the West still endured in him. And as the mind and imagination of Sanford had become supple and agile in the service of the Bashaw, he painted the picture of the West in intense colors. He told of a land in which there was to be neither master nor slave, and the one man was to be as good as the other. In all this the woman was to have a just part. She was not bought or sold, and she shared almost equally with man the glory and fulness of the world.

Zuleika listened at first without comprehension. The thing was too strange to be believed.

„And thou sayest the woman is the equal of the man in thy country?“ she said. „Nay, it cannot be. It is contrary to the will of Allah. One man is slave and another man is master, but the woman was made to be the servant of the man.“

But a tale that is often told gains strength with the telling and finds belief at last. Sanford watched with interest the first signs of intelligence in Zuleika's mind. It was the benevolent curiosity with which the gardener looks at the tender shrub that has grown from the new and strange seed that he has buried in the mold as an experiment.

„I should like to see this country of thine of which thou tellest such marvelous tales,“ said Zuleika one day when black Mukhtar stood frowning at the length of her interview with Sanford. „Then I should know whether the things thou tellest are true or are but words of thine own making, like the tales of the Arab jugglers who come to the palace. Shall I ever go there?“

And when Sanford told her he did not think it had been decreed by Allah—

„Then why dost thou talk to me so much of thy country?“ asked Zuleika. „I can never know whether thy words are the words of truth, or are said but to deceive or to amuse me.“

But Sanford was now too supple to be daunted by mild reproofs. He called heaven to witness that he told the thing that was and not the thing that was not. And the woman, though she doubted, was willing to hear more.

It was about this time that Sanford did a great service for the Bashaw. The Bashaw was a just man according to his race and creed. As became a devout follower of the Prophet he was zealous in fitting out ships to prey upon the commerce of the infidel. He remitted his set share of tribute to Constantinople with promptness and fulness of measure. He never used the lash and the bastinado on his white slaves more than was necessary. He said his prayers four

times a day, and drank no wine in the sight of other good Moslems. There was no reason why the Bashaw, when he left this world, should not dwell in the seventh heaven with Mahomet, and bask in the smiles of the houris that make the delight of paradise.

But all these meritorious qualities did not prevent a palace plot from being formed against the Bashaw. One evening about dusk, when Sanford lingered near a rose tree that grew beside the fountain in the palace yard, he heard the conspirators planning their blow. The Albanian, Stavoros, whose valor had won him the command of the Bashaw's body guard, was the leader. Hassan, the Bashaw's nephew, who, the plot succeeding, was to mount the throne in his uncle's place, seemed no less eager. Most of the eunuchs and the officers of the body guard had been corrupted, and the next evening, when the Bashaw walked in the garden under the palm trees, he was to be sent into the presence of the Prophet by the saber of Stavoros.

When the conspirators left the garden, Sanford, brushing from his face the sweat of apprehension, entered the palace. He deliberated some time. To be concerned in Mohammedan intrigue was a matter of unrest and danger. But then it was apparent that he could gain nothing by an exchange of masters. On the contrary, he might lose. This reflection was decisive. He prayed an audience with his master and then told him all that he had heard by the fountain.

The Bashaw acted with more than Eastern promptness. The conspirators were seized as they slept. „I have lost a nephew,“ said the Bashaw to Sanford the next day at the decapitation of the plotters, when the head of Hassan fell on the marble floor, „but thou shalt take his place.“

Being now a man of high trust, Sanford was able to meet Zuleika oftener, which was much to his satisfaction, as he wished to see his experiment put to a thorough test. Mukhtar still watched him suspiciously; but if it came to a contest between them, it was probable that the eunuch and not Sanford would lose his head. Such knowledge as this made Sanford bold and Mukhtar cautious.

About this time Zuleika, who before had merely listened in an apathetic silence while Sanford talked, began to ask questions. These questions were about woman, the woman of the West, her liberty, her power, and her place in the world. These were the questions that Sanford wished her to ask, and he answered them all with the dexterity and pliancy of an Eastern courtier.

Sanford thought, too, that he noticed a gradual change in her appearance. There was some light in her eyes at last. They expressed emotions. She seemed to have curiosity about life and the world. This was, naturally, gratifying to a man of enterprising temper. There are few who do not like to see the success of their efforts.

There were further evidences of progress. One day, when the watchful Mukhtar was away, she handed to him a pink rose.

„I am learning the customs of thy world,“ she said. „There, so thou sayest, if a woman like any one she may show it. She is not a slave, thou sayest. I know not that what thou tellest me is true, but thy tales have pleased me, and I would hear more.“

Sanford was too wise to show what the favorite wife of the Bashaw had given to him. For such, he knew, if caught, the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He became

more cautious, but he did not refrain from seeing Zuleika. These interviews were pleasant, and he was loth to give them up. He could see that they were pleasing to Zuleika also, for there was a glint in her eyes when he came.

The sloth of the life in the palace was disturbed by the fate of the Bashaw's third wife. The lady's charms were fading, and the Bashaw had long been neglecting her for his favorite, Zuleika. Left much alone, she had looked with favor upon an officer of the Iwdy guard. The wise and faithful Mukhtar had observed all, and by and by he reported to his master. After that the lady and the officer were seen no more by man. It was whispered in the harem and among the slaves of the palace that they had been sewed up in sacks and dropped into the sea. Such was the practise on the Bosphorus, and it became the Sultan's viceregents to do likewise. Mukhtar, who received his due meed of praise from his master, said nothing. But there seemed to be more significance in his glance when he looked at Sanford.

Upon Zuleika this tragedy had a surprising effect. Sanford did not see her until two weeks after its occurrence, when it had become to the others in the palace as one of the things of the ancient time, but she had not forgotten it.

„Would this have been the fate of a woman in thy country?“ she asked. „Ah, it is as I told thee. In our land the woman is but the slave of the man. She pleases him to-day, and to-morrow she is cast away like a ragged garment. Perhaps I will be cast away also when I lose the beauty that my master values.“

Sanford knew that she saw the truth. Doubtless she had seen it already, for this fact is obvious to the woman of Islam, but she had never comprehended it before, as keen and cruel in its nakedness as a bare sword. He told her again that in his country the husband could have but the one wife, and the wife was the equal in the law with her husband. He said, moreover, that the man who had grown up in the Western belief and had been molded by it, never could become aught else. He cited himself. He said that though now of the East, it would be possible for but one woman to hold his heart. She should be his sole sultana, the one star in the heavens that shone for him. He rather prided himself upon this Eastern metaphor, and thought that it would impress Zuleika.

„If all the men of thy country are as thou sayest thou art,“ said Zuleika, „then indeed the Western women are fortunate.“

The Bashaw was sunk in luxury and sloth. His triumph over the conspirators made his power secure for a time at least. The terror of it and the recollection of those headless bodies would not pass away for another half year. So he took his ease with Oriental dignity, and the new Western ideas that were turning about in the unaccustomed brain of his fourth wife came not within his notice.

Sanford was growing fairly content with his slavery. His backbone acquired a flexibility which he would have deemed impossible when he was a free American captain on his own ship. The Declaration of Independence, the rights of man, and all the other noble ideas and aspirations that had filled the minds of the men he knew at home were gone like a feeble glimmer of summer lightning. He accepted his present life as the order of things destined for him.

There was another American slave in the city. Sanford had heard of him for his name had been spoken in the palace, but he had never seen him. This man had not the adjustable or judicious temperament of Sanford. He had not bent himself into the Eastern ways and he had paid the price in toil and pain. He was not a

stranger to either the lash or the bastinado. Once or twice Sanford had thought of trying to see him, but then he concluded it could not do any good to either. The man was perverse and foolish and it was his own fault that he made for himself such a rough bed to lie in.

But one day Sanford heard interesting news about the other captive. It seemed that he had friends at home who had gathered together all the money they had to spare, and after long searching, through the friendly agency of one of the European consuls, had succeeded in finding him and buying him out of slavery.

The man was to be sent in a Spanish vessel to Barcelona. Thence he would sail for America and home. The day before his departure he was brought to the palace and Sanford saw him. His name was Phineas Peden, and his native place was Salem, Massachusetts. He was a tall, thin man of fifty, with sharp, uncompromising features. Without much education, and born and bred in poverty, he was full of religious fervor and despised the heathen and the infidel and everything that appertained to them. Out of the influences of the East the stern, unyielding spirit of the West had come as cold and keen as a bayonet point.

Peden welcomed Sanford with joy and pity. It had been long since Peden had looked upon the face of his own kind and he hung over his countryman like a father over a recovered son.

„And how long hast thou been a captive in the hands of the infidel?“ he asked, speaking in the style of one who had often preached at the revival meetings in his own country and who was noted for his fervor.

Sanford told him.

„Evidently thou hast fared somewhat better in body than I have,“ said Peden, „but to the soul it is the same. In all their doings and all their ways these people savor of evil and are evil. Islam is wicked in the sight of the Almighty and is festering in its decay and corruption. Have no part in this life, my son, for it can only defile and ruin thee.“

After some further talk about this debasing Oriental life, Peden passed to the joyful anticipations with which his heart was filled.

„I thank the Almighty every day that He will permit me to see that land again,“ said Peden, „and I would die content and thanking Him if He had no other blessing in store for me. Thou, too, my son, must look forward night and day to a like deliverance, for how otherwise couldst thou endure this captivity in the hands of the Philistines?“

With such exhortations and encouragement he filled the ears and mind of Sanford. The last words of the zealot to him as he left the place were:

„I go before thee, my son, but I will await thee there.“

He pointed exultingly to the West.

Though he was gone his figure remained in the imagination of Sanford as vivid as reality. He was strangely and deeply stirred. The Puritan's words had cut to the marrow. All his old life, his happy childhood, the freedom and ease of his young manhood, the noble impulses that he had seen in the people around him, returned to him. How pure that old life seemed to him now that he was in the midst of the garish colors of the East and breathed its poison-tainted atmosphere! He felt superior to place and circumstance. Fate had tricked him strangely, but he

would stand firm again and prove himself worthy of his birthright and better than those whom chance had made his masters.

The old man had touched some spring in his nature which set the rusty machinery to work, and now that it was started he could not stop it. Stirred anew by the breezes from the West much of the Eastern suppleness that he had acquired with such facile skill slipped away from him. Twice he offended his master, and when at the second offense the Bashaw cursed him for an infidel dog, black Mukhtar who heard it bent his head and muttered that to all who wait Allah brings opportunity.

The rebuke of the Bashaw showed Sanford by how uncertain a tenure favor was held in the East. He was forced at last to think of the future and what the end would be.

John Sanford had acquired wisdom and, since life had changed its tints for him again, he determined to alter his position to fit the new color of that life, or rather the old color come back again. He would escape. He, too, would see again the land of his birth, and would become once more a free man, with his face to the stars.

But escape was not such an easy matter even for a preferred slave. He might walk almost as he pleased in the palace yard and the palace garden, but beyond these limits he had not passed in months, save in the train of his master. Moreover, he knew that the watchful eye of Mukhtar was always on him. He planned with restless mind for days but could see no way. At last he decided to tell Zuleika. Her influence might help him, and confident in his knowledge of women he believed that, at least, she would not betray him.

Zuleika heard him through with patience.

„Thou wouldst return to that country of which thou tellest me so much?“ she said. „I do not wonder at thy wish if it is all as thou sayest. If thou goest, who then will be left to tell me of these wonders?“

That was a phase of the matter which had not occurred to Sanford. Some other Christian slave, he suggested, might take his place.

„Others may come,“ she said, „but there will be none whose stories will please me like thine. But I will help thee to return to thine own land and thine own people. I give my promise.“

This pledge brought much joy to Sanford, for the Eastern woman is full of cunning and he believed that Zuleika would use it for him. Two days later when he saw her again she told him that everything was prepared for his flight.

„There is a guard,“ she said, „an Arab who watches at the gate in the southeast corner of the garden wall. Him I have befriended, and on the second night after to-day at an hour before midnight he will leave his post and flee to the desert which he longs for as thou longest for thy home. Then the gate will be unguarded and thou mayest pass out. Go through the city to the westward and stop by the ruined mosque that overlooks the sea. There thou wilt find a boat with a sail and provisions. Set the sail for the Christian coasts and trust the rest to Allah.“

On the second night, a half hour before the appointed time, Sanford was in the garden armed with a dagger in case of sudden attack. He had prayed, not to Allah, but to his own Christian God for a dark night; and the clouds that hid the stars showed that his wish would be granted. He started across the garden, keeping in the shadow of the palm trees. The water splashed in the fountain and a song bird

raised a lone note. It was the same fountain beside which he had heard the conspirators talking, and when some stray rays of light seeping through the palm trees disclosed a dark figure standing near it, Sanford was chilled to bone and heart, for he thought it was the ghostly figure of one of the dead conspirators.

Nor did the warmth return to his heart when he looked more closely and saw that it was the black eunuch, Mukhtar. Mukhtar seemed to be listening, and he held his drawn sword in his hand. It was the weapon that Stavoros had loved, presented after his execution by the Bashaw to his faithful Mukhtar.

Sanford doubted not that Mukhtar was watching for him. Nor did he doubt what the result would be should Mukhtar find him. A strange weakness in the backbone, which he had not known before he was captured on the ship, seized him. His mind sought to master his nerves. He told himself what he was, where he was born, and of his birthright of freedom, but the flesh was too weak. He could not look upon Mukhtar's sword and say that he knew not fear. He cowered under the palm trees and trembled as a child that is frightened of the night. He put his hands upon his face to shut out the sight of the naked sword, and when he took them away again they were wet. The song bird had hushed his note, and there was no sound but the murmur of the fountain and the soft rustling of a western breeze among the palm trees.

Mukhtar stood with raised face and listening ears at the fountain. The sword was held outstretched with rigid wrist, as if ready for a blow. Presently the black plunged it to the hilt in the water. Then he drew it slowly out and held it up in the faint light, while the bubbles flowed down from hilt to point and dropped on the ground. Then he wiped the blade on his tunic and walked away from the fountain.

Sanford thought Mukhtar was coming towards him, and he sank almost prone upon the ground. He shook with a chill, as if the blood in his veins had frozen, and burrowed in the grass like a crawling beast. He was not then of the West that he boasted, straight, free, and with upraised face.

Mukhtar stopped again near the palm trees and listened. He did not see the abject figure that lay in the dusk, and was striving to thrust itself into the earth. Soon he replaced the sword in his girdle and, walking with heavy step, went into the palace.

It was the sound of the eunuch's departing footsteps that roused Sanford from his stupor. The garden was empty, save for himself. He rose, wiped the bitter mucus from his lips and ran toward the Southeastern gate. He put his hand upon the gate, and it swung wide. Zuleika had been true to her promise, and the guard was gone. Sanford gasped with joy, but a hand was placed lightly upon his arm, and he shriveled up again, falling weakly against the wall.

„Fear not,“ said a gentle voice. „Thou art not betrayed. It is I, Zuleika.“

„Zuleika!“ exclaimed Sanford, „why have you come here? You risk both our lives.“

She retained her hand upon his arm and lifting her veil looked him in the eyes with eyes that were luminous.

„What do I fear?“ she said. „I am going with thee. In the country of which thou hast told me so much there is the one husband and the one wife, and thy law seems to me to be right. Once a bird came to a maiden in a garden and sang to her sweet songs every day. And when she grew to love the bird it turned into a

beautiful youth. Even so with me. I have listened to all thy tales. I love them and him who has told them. Come, we will fly together to thine own land.“

This was beyond the reckoning of Sanford. In a breath he realized how unfit she was for the life she proposed to find.

„It is impossible for us to go together, Zuleika.“ he said. „Everything to which I return will be strange to you.“

„It is nothing,“ she said. „Thou hast my love, and I will follow thee across the seas.“

Pity dwelt for a moment in Sanford's breast. But it was no time for delay. The gate was open, and if he would find freedom he must seek it.

„Come,“ he said to Zuleika, „We will try the future together.“

They passed through the gate and met Mukhtar on the other side. The strength of a man deserted Sanford. He could bear neither the sight of the naked sword nor the malice triumphant in Mukhtar's eyes. But not so Zuleika. Her hand went to her bosom, and whipping out a dagger, she leaped with the agility of a cat within Mukhtar's guard before he could raise his sword. She thrust the dagger three times in his breast, and the eunuch fell still holding the great sword in his stiff fingers.

Sanford shrank back. A horror and a dread of this fierce and reckless woman possessed him. He shuddered at the ghastly heap in the dusk, that was once Mukhtar.

„You have killed him!“ he said between his dry lips. „This is murder, and you, you, a woman!“

„A woman! Yes,“ she said, still holding the bloody dagger in her hand, and confronting him with exulting face. „A woman who dares to strike for the man she loves. I said I loved thee, and I have proved it. I am no longer a toy of the harem, but a woman, bold like a man, such as those of thine own country. I have a right to boast of what I have done. Come, it is time to flee.“

She spoke in fearless tones, and seizing his hand drew him away. Sanford followed as obediently as a little child, not daring to look back at the man she had struck down.

Only when they had gained the shadow of the ruined mosque that overlooks the sea, and found the boat tied to a rock on the shore, did he feel himself a man once more. At that sight all the old and familiar instincts of the sailor returned to him. The sea, so long his home, beckoned again to him with friendly greeting.

The doing of a once familiar task restored confidence to Sanford. He trimmed the sail with a practised hand, and the boat bore away to the Northwest.

When the sun rose out of the ocean, and the gray veil of the heavens turned to blue, Zuleika, for the first time in her life, was beyond the sight of land, and the knowledge of it made her shiver, like one whose hold on the edge of a precipice is slipping.

„It seems wider than the desert,“ she said to Sanford.

„So it is,“ said Sanford cheerfully; „but don't be afraid, like the desert it ends somewhere. Europe is not so very far away. This stiff breeze ought to carry us there in good time.“

Africa and slavery having gone down behind the convex curve of the sea, Sanford became sanguine of mood and voluble of speech. He talked rapidly of

America and the things that he would do there. He wondered what the people who used to know him would say when they saw him coming back like one newly risen and with the mold of the grave upon him. He jested and laughed at their surprise, and finally sang an old lilting song of the fishermen who go up to the Grand Banks. Then he began to tell of the West again, and the picture had the deepest rose tinta that could be drawn from his imagination.

Zuleika was silent. She sat as if trying to span the mystery of the great new world toward which she was going. The blood of Mukhtar was not on her soul. She had forgotten him, as she would the insect crushed beneath her feet.

Toward noon they saw a sail and Sanford was divided betwixt a great hope and a great fear. It might be European or it might be Mohammedan. In time it passed on without seeing them and slipped under the rim of the horizon, and Sanford did not know whether to mourn or to rejoice. At night a calm came and their boat lopped gently in the swell of the sea. Neither slept. They were surrounded by the splendors of a southern night, and Sanford pointed out the stars of the sailors and told the names by which they were called in his hard Western tongue.

The calm continued the next day, and when the sun had reached the zenith a dry, burning heat enveloped them, the sail blistered at the touch. For the first time Sanford looked anxiously at the water jar. Enough for four days. But a wind or a friendly ship might come before then. In the afternoon there was a wind that brought hope, but it did not last long and left them anchored on the breathless ocean.

Two more days passed with slight whiffs of wind, and no sail either of friend or enemy. The bottom of the water jar was dry now, and their tongues cracked. That night they prayed, Sanford to the Christian God, Zuleika to the Moslem Allah.

The next day they began to sink into a stupor. The light of the sun was so intense that red atoms seemed to float in the air.

„Which way is thy country?“ asked Zuleika.

Sanford pointed to the West. „But it is far off now,“ he said.

„We have trusted in Allah,“ said Zuleika. „We are in his hands.“

„So be it,“ said Sanford, unconsciously adopting the manner of the old Puritan.

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The Captain of the schooner, RED WING, returning from Palermo to New York, saw afar a black splotch on the sea, which he knew to be a boat. The course of the ship was turned toward it. A boat was lowered under the charge of the first mate, and the crew pulled with strong stroke to the derelict. The Captain saw them take out two figures and then return to his ship. To his hail the mate replied:

„There are two, a woman and a man. The breath has gone from one of them. The other will come through, I think.“

The figures were lifted on board, and the ship, bearing the two, sailed on into the red blaze of the setting sun, the better one living and the other dead.

