

the Consul drawled. "However, I kept thinkin' about it, and the next day began investigatin' on my own hook and when I was all alone. I'd about given it up, when I came to that tree of ivy which had grown up before the stone door, and I found it. Of course there wasn't no key and I had to get a locksmith to make one, and then my troubles began. That's why the old man, that fierce old chap we had workin' in the garden, quit. He wouldn't go inside after I'd got the gate open, but dropped on his knees, made marks in the sand, and commenced to put some kind of a curse on the Kaid. You can bet I got his resignation mighty quick!

"I tried to hire others to work, and finally got a bunch that didn't seem to know nothin' about the curse. That was more than a week ago. I had an army of 'em in here so's I could give you girls a surprise when I got everything fixed up. It's goin' to be your garden, where you can be your own bosses and have things anyway you want to. That's all I know about it."

He dismissed the whole affair without further remark; but the three sitting beside him and watching

fell on the group. The officer turned his head and watched the pathway up which the visitor must come and observed a pale figure halt in the doorway of the garden and stand for several moments before entering. It came slowly on under the dim light thrown from the lanterns and proved to be Buham-

of whose existence I suppose not more than a hundred living people at most are aware, and possibly not more than ten. There was a time when it was forbidden even to mention it, and to have done so in some places would have cost one's life. Its gate once bore the Sultan's seal, to break which would be cause for death. It was called the Garden of Fate—and earned its name."

He stopped abruptly, looked over his shoulder into the darkened room and back at the fountain as if he had said all there was to say; but his hearers, intensely interested and leaning forward, wanted him to resume.

"Well, for goodness sake, Mr. Buhammei, don't keep us waiting if you know the story!" Charlotte called.

He shook his head slowly. "I don't believe I can tell it to you," he said; but she insisted, and even the English girl evinced unusual curiosity. He laughed and again was about to refuse, when the Hon. Bob added the weight of his voice.

"Go on," he said. "I haven't heard anything about it and ain't likely to if there's no more than ten men who know the story. We're rather anxious, because we've got this layout on our hands for two years more. It'll be good to know what we're up against."

Buhammei, smiling, leaned back and looked from one face to the other.

"Is it a ghost story?" Charlotte asked, stooping down toward him.

"Ye-e-s," quite slowly; "but not exactly. Rather a story of the dead." His voice had dropped, as if the superstitions of the East were commanding him to silence.

"Then we'll have the lights out!" the girl retorted merrily, and clapped her hands.

He did not look toward her.

The Arab servant appeared and, following her instructions, extinguished all those in the veranda so that no illumination was left. The stars, which glittered overhead, hung low in the tropical night, and the weird shifting lights which came through the sheets of leaping water into the basin before them, were enough. Buhammei sat for several minutes, as if sorry that he had said anything and quite reluctant to tell the story of the Garden of Fate. When he spoke it was in a voice so low that it sounded as if it came from the weary throat of some aged storyteller of the bazaars.

#### CHAPTER VII.

I SUPPOSE you will wonder," the Moor began, "how I heard all this, having lived away from Morocco so long; but I shall assure you before I start that once many knew of it, although now it has become a legend." He stopped for a moment and when he resumed spoke with something of tenderness. "It was told to me by one who has gone to the bosom of the Prophet these many, many years. It is a story that one does not forget easily, because it is of primitive passions, absorbing hates, and sorrowful tragedies; nights when the moon shone into this Garden of Fate, when slaves came and went at a strong man's command, and love whispered in as liquid tones as the waters that are gurgling out there before us. Love, hatred, death, and—Kismet!"

He turned and gave a sweeping glance at the group behind him, seeming to observe them all, from the erect form of the American officer and the English girl who sat near him with her dark head resting against the back of her chair, to the fair haired American girl

who was leaning elbow and chin on the arm of the seat in which the sturdy old Consul, white haired and immovable, sprawled in luxurious repose. His look passed beyond them to the black depths of the doorway, and then back out to the still trees, the brooding night, and folds of silvered water which fell ceaselessly into the stone basin beneath and sounded a faint accompaniment to his voice when he went on.

"A sand diviner once stopped the caravan of the present Sultan's father as it was coming from Mekinez to Fez, and the then Sultan, being tired, listened to the man's talk. It is said that the man was a worthy seer and gave his Majesty sage advice which protected him to the time when he forgot. But in that divination the seer repeatedly saw, as the sands shifted and curled before him, a garden, in which was to be decided—twice—the fate of the nation itself. He reiterated the phrase 'The Garden of Fate! The Garden of Fate!' but before he could see farther into the future he was overcome by the finger of Allah and fell dead over his heaps of sand.

"The Sultan's eldest son, the elder brother of Muley-Mohammed, named El Hasan, was a man of remarkable promise and a much loved Prince. In his youth he became the idol of the warlike Berbers by living with them for some years, and won the fealty of even the untamed and unconquered tribes of the Rif. He was a man broad minded and just, who strove to learn all that might be of value to him when he came to the throne, an event for which many tribes were eagerly waiting. He was venturesome, and once made a trip through Europe alone, traveling incognito and studying European habits. Either because he absorbed some of the European

Continued on page 16



"You Are as One Disgraced, Dead, and Forgotten!"

the huge fountain shimmer and glow realized the work and money that had been expended to give a little more happiness to those around him and understood that homely simplicity of his character which had led him to keep it a profound secret that he might have the pleasure of surprising them. Charlotte slipped gently up to the arm of his chair and put her arm around his neck and kissed him, and he patted her back clumsily.

"But this garden must have been a tangle," Miss Clarke commented.

"Yes, a regular forest. That's what made it take so long. Had to have things cut out and trimmed, and lawns planted, and new lanterns put in, and—oh, a heap of things attended to."

"What about the curse, though?" the officer asked. "Haven't you found out what it is?"

"No, didn't bother none about that," the Consul answered. "They're too cheap in this country to worry over and ask questions about. Morocco's made up of just three things: lies, dirt, and curses, none of which a good American cares for."

THROUGH the shrubbery came the stately moving figure of a house Arab, clad all in white and appearing ghostlike as he approached the front of the veranda. He made a stately bow and tendered a card, which the Consul took, held higher to get a stronger light for its reading, and then straightened up with a growl.

"It's that man Buhammei," he said. "Come to pay his respects and hopes the ladies were not unduly fatigued by their day's excursion. What shall I tell him?"

The girls looked at each other and at Dick, whose face was turned toward the fountain and was as calm as though graven.

"I suppose we shall have to invite him in, sha'n't we, Margy?" the Consul's daughter asked her friend.

Miss Clarke appeared troubled for a moment and gave a slow yes. The Hon. Bob muttered something which sounded like an objurgation and then spoke to the waiting Arab.

"Bring Mr. Buhammei out here," he said and then, as the man bowed and walked away, concluded, "I'm not goin' to have my evenin' in the garden spoiled by goin' into the house. He can see us here just as well as not, and I hope it'll be the first and the last time! I don't like him!"

He sat frowning at the nearest column, and silence

mei, clad in a linen suit of snowy whiteness. He was looking to right and left and carrying his hat in his hand. He paused beside a column and stared up at it, and then came onward to where the light of the fountain illumined his features, and it seemed to the officer that his eyes were frowning fiercely at everything and taking inventory of all that he saw. He threw off his somberness as he caught sight of the group on the veranda and walked less deliberately, until he stood on the lowest step gazing up at them and in a quiet voice spoke to each in turn with a graceful compliment. He seated himself on the topmost step, leaning his back against a pillar, saying that he would be more comfortable there than in a chair, and for an instant was quiet and thoughtful.

"I did not know you used a rear garden," he said, looking up at the Consul, who sat almost behind him.

"We didn't until I discovered it and had it opened and fixed up," the Westerner replied with scant cordiality.

"Ah! You discovered it?"

"Wouldn't you like to come inside the house?" Charlotte asked. "Father has left it just as it was. It's very picturesque."

With something approaching haste, Buhammei declined, giving as he did so a peculiar twitch with his shoulders and extending his hand in the odd gesture the officer so frequently noticed.

"No," he said after an interval, "I don't believe I should dare."

Everyone save the Consul looked at him questioningly; but his face, which was strongly lighted from the reflection of the fountain, was impassive.

"It is indeed singular," he went on, "that an American should discover and rehabilitate a garden