



THE GREAT WHITE DEEV

(Continued from Last Week)

THERE the sun never shone, neither the moon nor the stars. And here he paused, not knowing what to do. He solemnly lifted his eyes to heaven, to the All Merciful One, in prayer, and finally emerged into a most beautiful country, where the sun shone brightly and the earth was covered with waving grain. He unsaddled faithful Rakush, and, patting his faithful steed, bade him go over in the field and feast on the corn.

Rustem went sound asleep in the deep grass, and oh! how dear old Rakush did enjoy that corn after his long, hard journey. It tasted so good that he did not hear the servant of this field come up to drive him out. The hungry horse paid no attention to him. So, hunting for the master, the servant stumbled upon Rustem lying peacefully asleep. He beat the soles of his feet and roared at him like a maniac.

In great surprise Rustem quickly sat up and looked at the man. Jumping to his feet he caught the servant by both ears and with one vicious jerk twisted them from his head.

The furious servant ran madly to his master, crying that a big black demon out in the cornfield was destroying the corn and feeding it to his dragon of a steed, and that when he was reproved he twisted off his ears. At once the master, Aulad, called together his one hundred warriors. Across the corn field they rushed and Aulad, seeing Rustem, did not know whether he was man or demon.

Rustem was ready, girt about with his armor strong, and as if by magic swooped upon Aulad and his warriors with sickening force, until all were laid low except Aulad. Binding him securely with his lasso, Rustem shouted:

"Come. Point out to me the caves of the Great White Deev and guide me to the prison in Mazinderan where my men are held as blind prisoners, and thy reward shall be the kingdom of Mazinderan. But, beware not to deceive me or thy worthless blood shall dye the earth!"

Aulad was happy to get off with his life and faithfully promised, asking Rustem: "O, valorous chief, can thou, alone and unaided, hope to overcome these fearful sons of Santan, with so many obstacles to block your path?"

And Rustem only laughed and said: "Timorous one, show me the way and thou shalt see what a single man who puts his trust in God can do, though pitted against the powers of darkness!"

Aulad ran ahead as guide, and all the next day they

traveled. About midnight they heard the beating of drums and saw fires blazing in the distance, and Rustem asked the meaning of all this.

The guide, explaining it, said it was the arrival of the Great White Deev's chief warrior.

Rustem, knowing he was near enough the Deev's own land to reach him in the morning, lay down and slept till dawn. Then, binding Aulad to a stone, Rustem put on his magic tiger skin to protect his huge chest, and with his grandfather's club hanging from his saddle and his mace in his hand, he rode boldly forward to the camp of the Deevs.

As he came near the camp he gave one of his fierce battle cries that rent the clouds and struck terror to every man's heart.

The leader of these Deevs, Arsang, hearing Rustem's challenge, darted forth to meet him in combat. The hero child, setting his spurs to Rakush, galloped forward, seized Arsang in his strong grip and, dangling him in the air like a rabbit, twisted off his head and cast it among his terror stricken foes. All the Deevs, taking Rustem to be some horrible demon, broke into confusion, trampling one another like mad horses, and rushed away for their lives.

Rustem returned to Aulad, unbound him and, commanding him to direct him to the prison, they hurriedly galloped on.

The prisoners and Kalkous, lying in the dungeon, heard faithful Rakush neighing and Kalkous cried out for joy: "Rejoice, oh, my men. Don't you hear Rakush. Dance! Dance for joy! He has brought Rustem to deliver us!"

And as Rustem broke open the prison doors and saw his countrymen, blind, sick and wretched, he, too, shed scalding tears.

But, alas! To his sorrow he learned their sight could only be regained by putting some drops of blood from the Great White Deev upon their poor, blind eyes.

When Rustem heard this he wasted not a minute, but, taking as a guide Aulad, he started again on a perilous journey to find the Great White Deev.

Never had Rustem expected to see such vile, gloomy caves as those inhabited by this monster and his warriors! The air of the cavern was mucky and heavy with evil odors and as he entered he was unable to see the path.

Suddenly he came upon a huge, monstrous, horrible shape that was roaring and snoring enough to deafen one. Bold as a lion, Rustem shouted his piercing battle cry at the sleeping White Deev.

Angry at being aroused from his slumber, the White Deev gave a hideous shriek that made Rustem's blood run cold, and there in that dark and noisome cave the two strong giants met in a deadly conflict.

The Deev hurled a monstrous stone at Rustem, as big as a small mountain, but our hero dodged it and slashing at him with his sword, cut off one of his feet.

Fuming with pain and wrath the monster wrestled hot and sore tearing out great pieces of flesh from Rustem's arms.

Rustem, as he fought, breathed and hissed through his teeth, saying to himself: "Verily, if I escape I shall live forever!" They had struggled on and on through the cave out to the edge of the cliff and there with one great, mighty last effort, Rustem caught the bloody Deev in his arms and swishing his mighty sword, cut off the Deev's head and dropped his body into the sea.

After resting and washing away the ugly stains, Rustem hung the Deev's hideous head on his saddle and slowly led Aulad and Rakush back to Mazinderan.

There the blindness of the warriors and of foolish Kalkous was washed away by the Deev's blood.

Rustem remembered his promise to Aulad that he should be king of Mazinderan. Therefore his next and last duty was to dethrone the present ruler of Mazinderan, who was a wicked magician.

It would take hours to tell of all the magic wonders wrought against Rustem and Rakush in trying to conquer this follower of the Genii.

Trick after trick he indulged in before he surrendered to Rustem, changing himself into the shapes of hideous beasts.

But finally Rustem conquered and the wicked king of Mazinderan gave himself up and was cut to pieces.

Precious, priceless gifts were presented to Rustem by the grateful, ashamed Kalkous. Among them a letter written upon pages of silk, in ink made of wine, naming Rustem the champion of the world. But all the gorgeous gifts were as nothing to this bold young hero as the praises and welcome showered upon him by his father Zal and his own people. Sweeter than all was the wonderful love and pride which beamed upon him from the eyes of silver haired Zal as Rustem related the amazing adventures of that marvelous march to Mazinderan.