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Dedicated to the Soldiers' Children.

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For the Soldiers' Journal.
A TALE OF THE EAST.

BY MAY MORRIS.

In the orient city of Ispahan
 There lived a stern caliph, Abdallah Khan,
 Arrayed in great splendor with costly things
 As was worthy the heir of a hundred kings.
 There was naught but was done in this place of
 rest
 To render it pleasant, the home of the blessed.
 There were palaces wrought in most exquisite
 style,
 With domes, gates of silver his thoughts to be-
 guile,
 And gardens where oft in seclusion might roam,
 Amongst flowers whose fragrance filled the air
 with perfume.
 There bright sparkling fountains so glad in their
 mirth
 Played with the sun's rays as they fell to the
 earth.
 Then the tall graceful palm tree its lofty boughs
 spread,
 And with the sweet cypress overshadowed the
 head.
 And the Tamarick shedding its large, bitter
 tears—
 But the gentle anemone calmed all its fears—
 The acacia and hyacinth their wild beauty lend-
 ing,
 In miniature seemed with the castle contending.
 The large spacious divans were gorgeously deck-
 ed,
 And the pavements with costliest gems were all
 flecked.
 Then couches of purple wrought with fine threads
 of amber
 With large polished mirrors, shed their light in
 his chamber.
 At a glance from his eye every slave bowed the
 knee,
 But far was this caliph from being happy.
 Rich music unheeded would fall on his ear,
 There was naught in its tones his dark bosom to
 cheer.
 Once, there, was the lovely Namouna, his bride;
 No beauty with hers, in the land ever vied;

But sudden his brother and wife disappeared;
 None knew where they were, there were many
 that feared.
 Dark, dark were the thoughts of the wise in the
 land:
 They imagined their blood had been shed by his
 hand,
 And that now secret grief was corroding his mind,
 Tho' surrounded with comforts, no peace could
 he find,
 With the graceful Selima, his daughter, e'er near,
 Nor riches, nor grandeur, nor Selima could cheer.
 Her eyes were most beautiful, her forehead was
 fair,
 And o'er her white neck waved dark clustering
 hair.
 But with sadness her features were plainly im-
 pressed
 By the loss of her mother, that being loved best.
 Full many there were who her confidence sought;
 The most favored was Hafid, who loved every
 thought
 Of this beautiful maiden,—this jewel so bright,
 Whose presence brought ever a sunshiny light.
 Tho' the casket was lovely, it surely was dim
 Compared with the mind, that bright jewel with-
 in,
 For her own precious mother had early imbued
 That mind with right principles of doing good.
 "My child," she would say, "thou'rt exceeding-
 ly fair,
 But with goodness of heart, beauty cannot com-
 pare.
 The one soon will vanish, it soon will decay,
 But the other e'er liveth in regions away.
 Then thy voice raise to Allah, the good God
 above,
 And seek to be worthy the great Allah's love."
 And Hafid was noble, his heart it was pure;
 Well fitted the trials of earth to endure.
 They often would ramble the meadows along
 And, gathering wild flowers would sing some old
 song;
 Or, seated beneath some dark shadowy tree,
 Whisper fond tales of love and prosperity.
 She would shrink from her father's stern, pallid
 face,
 For naught but grim avarice could she there
 trace;
 No love, save for money, was felt in his soul;
 This held his base spirit in complete control;
 And goaded by this he called two of his slaves:
 Said he, "Now, my own brother's life I must
 have;
 Therefore you must in secret convey him away
 To yonder old castle, and there you must slay,
 Then leave him for worms and for reptiles, a
 prey!"
 His love for Namouna had long since grown
 cold,
 For now his dear idol was silver and gold.
 So again he called Hassan and the dark, sable
 slave,
 And bade them to take her far, far o'er the wave,

And there place in a dungeon which seemed like
 a grave!
 Meanwhile to conceal from his friends his foul
 deed,
 He feigned that his heart for Namouna did bleed.
 He caused strict search through the land to be
 made,
 But she could not be found!
 Then his heart did rebound
 To think that his secret to none was betrayed.
 * * * * *
 Erelong Namouna was forgot
 Inquiry died away;
 'T was then he mounted his black steed.
 Long ere the break of day,
 And traveled far, nor heeded he
 The roughness of the road,
 Till night approached and found him near
 A gloomy, dark abode.
 No sound was heard of creaking gate,
 No welcome from the wall;
 He knocked, the sound re-echoed far
 From tower, from hall to hall;
 But soon the door was opened wide,
 A slave before him stood;
 Where's Hassan? then he did inquire,
 In a stern, sullen mood.
 The slave by signs did make reply,
 For he no tongue had got,
 For years before the caliph's sire
 Had ordered it cut out,
 That he no deeds of crime might tell,
 That he might do no harm;
 A warning too, to others who
 Might dare to sound alarm.
 A half hour—unto him an age—
 At length did disappear,
 And Hassan stood before that man,
 And heard, but not with fear;
 Then straightway left with torch in hand—
 A dagger gleaming high—
 And sought Namouna's gloomy cell,
 And spake, "Prepare to die!"
 She had just knelt, a prayer to say
 To Him who dwells above;
 A tear is sparkling in her eye,
 To pity may it move
 The villian who approaches her!
 Hark, hear her voice in prayer:
 May Hassan, in thy kingdom find
 A home, forgiveness there!"
 Look! see, the awful deed is done!
 There lays her lifeless form!
 The murd'rer stands aghast, alone!
 Then flies; yes, he is gone!
 And now before the caliph stands,
 His promise to abide;
 "Take it," he cried, then turned and thrust
 His scimeter in his side!
 With one deep groan—one horrid yell,
 He sank upon the floor!