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### PROTEUS.

He doesn't care for nature, but is zealous for technique.  
 He's a decadent, a visionary, of visions rather weak.  
 'Twas only yesterday he posed, a true impressionist.  
 While in the mythic period they called him "classical."  
 As realist, romanticist—they're two sides of the shield—  
 He gives the foe no quarter and was never known to yield.  
 A sensitivist delicate he sometimes strives to be,  
 And only the elect can tell what turns tomorrow'll see.  
 He's broken all the canons of the critics and their schools  
 And made for all his followers a brand new set of rules.  
 But when his "form" is perfect he is going to settle down  
 To write a mighty novel that will fairly storm the town.  
 —A Chamberlain in Boston Commonwealth.

### A NARROW ESCAPE.

I one day saw a copy of Hafiz on the table of a friend. Hafiz was a Persian poet of the fourteenth century, whose verse, like that of Anacreon's, was dedicated to love and wine. The book was in Persian manuscript, was superbly illuminated and was at least 200 years old.  
 "Fred, did you buy this book abroad?" I asked.  
 He looked at me in a queer way and then said:  
 "No, I didn't. I stole it."  
 I stared at him in surprise.  
 "Not intentionally," qualified he as he lit a fresh cigar and shoved the box toward me.  
 "It was an adventure," I said as I settled down in an easy chair. "I am ready to hear it."  
 He watched a wreath of smoke as it curled away to the ceiling and then told me the following story:  
 "I was haunted by a pair of superb black eyes while at Constantinople. They rested on me frequently in the various marts, and they seemed significant with meaning despite their steady gaze. Of course they belonged to a young woman. Her figure was not too obese to be graceful, and though her face was covered with the traditional veil I was sure that it was as handsome as the eyes.  
 "I first met her in the drug market, a place that looked like the archway to a covered bridge, dim and mysterious and odoriferous with spices, the venerable looking Turk scarcely visible through the smoke that curled from the bowl of his pipe, his eyes dreamy from the use of opium, and his trembling fingers counting his spiced wood beads. My unknown dark eyed beauty bought a package of henna, with which to dye her fingers, while I bought some incense wood for a pastil lamp.  
 "The next place I met her was in the slave market, and it struck me that was a queer place for her to be. She stared a little sadly at the Nubian damsels standing around like so many pieces of black statuary awaiting the pleasure of the auctioneer. When her eyes met mine, it was again with a prolonged, un-winking gaze, and I thought I saw signs of emotion.  
 "The third time I met her was in the bezzestain, that most oriental of bazaars, devoted to the sale of bric-a-brac, largely of a military kind, and only open in the forenoon. I was pricing some jewel hilted daggers, when who should I see by my side but the veiled unknown. She picked up each dagger as I laid it down, examined it and spoke to the gray bearded fatalist in attendance, a ripple of laughter stirring her thick veil. I could not understand what she said, but I supposed the conversation was about me. I was a good looking fellow and had plenty of money and a fancy for everything that was quaint. She took my hand, looked at it closely and gave it a slight, tender pressure. I had a friend, an attache to the American ambassador, and I told him about the mysterious houri. He just laughed at me.  
 "You can't designate them by their eyes," he said. "They all look alike."  
 "She wore turquoise rings," I said.  
 "It is a favorite gem with them," replied he.  
 "She took hold of my hand in the bazaar."  
 "That's nothing new. She was prompted by curiosity. Their idea of modesty includes the veiling of their faces, and that's about all. It may not have been the same woman every time."  
 "I am positive that it was," I rejoined. "I'll follow her the next time."  
 "You'll be fished up out of the Bosphorus the next morning," replied my friend, with a shrug. "I'll walk down to the morgue to see if I can recognize you."  
 "I saw a grave look cross his face, but that did not deter me from my purpose. The next day I met her within the religious gloom of one of the cemeteries. Was she following me, or was there a fatality in our meeting? The cities of the dead are numerous on the hillsides. They are not large, are shaded by close growing cypress, and each one has a small minaret pointing skyward in the center. There is a great deal of rural beauty about them, and they are never without visitors, for relatives hold their dead in great reverence.  
 "Again those fascinating eyes met mine and I felt my heart beat faster. She placed her finger upon her lips and then walked down one of the paths. What did the act mean but 'Follow me and be discreet'? I followed her, trembling somewhat with excitement. Outside stood an araba, drawn by horses and attended by an Abyssinian slave.  
 "He opened the door of the carriage, and the girl entered. She motioned to me to join her, and I complied. After a short drive we stopped at a small villa. She entered the house, and I followed her, the Abyssinian slave joining us a few minutes later. At a sign from her he brought in four small gilded saucers, two of them containing some sort of snow white delicacy and two filled with quince jelly almost done to a candy.  
 "The room was the most elegant boudoir eye ever rested upon, with rich rugs, ottomans, statues, vases and no end of oriental conceits, a sweet odor and a sensuous look pervading it all, leaving me alone for a few minutes,

she returned and handed me a very rare and richly illuminated Hafiz. I saw at once its value to a bookworm.  
 "Pekke! I said, which is the Persian word for admiration. 'What do you want!'  
 "She looked at the Abyssinian and said something in Persian.  
 "Sell," he said, looking at me. "Frank?"  
 "That is the name applied in the east to the people from western Europe.  
 "American," I said.  
 "I found he was familiar with English, and we kept up a running conversation. She was on the alert and was watching me when she was not watching the Abyssinian. We spoke to each other through the interpreter. She wanted money for the book and evidently had some idea of its value.  
 "Tell her that if she unveils I'll buy," I boldly said. He hesitated, then told her what I had said. I saw her tremble for a moment; then she threw aside her veil. I stood spellbound, her face was so strikingly handsome, tinged with the healthy hues of youth and sparkling with vivacity. She saw the admiration in my eyes, and a like expression filled her own. There was a tender, yearning look back of them which gave me to understand that she had conceived a violent affection for me. At least that was the construction which I placed upon it. I felt my pulse throb. Whither would it all lead? Suddenly there was a noise in the corridor outside. She swiftly replaced the veil, and a low exclamation of alarm broke from her lips. She closed her hands tightly to keep them from trembling.  
 "Go!" said the Abyssinian slave, a palor in his dusky face.  
 "He pointed to the heavy hangings beyond. I parted them, passed through several dim, magnificently furnished rooms and found my way at last into a secluded corner. I was foolish enough to continue to run, and thereby attracted the attention of some attendants, who, seeing I was a foreigner, started in pursuit of me. I leaped the wall, alluded them in the wild shrubbery outside and reached the bank of the river.  
 "I found there a small caïque or barge, which I shoved out into the current and then hid myself behind the boathouse. Two fierce looking Turks suddenly appeared. They thought that I was in the boat under the canopy, too exhausted to use the oars. They plunged into the water and swam toward the caïque. That was just what I thought they would do. I crept back into the shrubbery and safely reached my quarters in the heart of the city. Whether an irate father or a jealous husband had unexpectedly returned I never knew. I was sure, though, that both of our lives would have been forfeited. I'll never forget that fascinating face and the alarm which urged me away."  
 "What construction did you place upon the occurrence?" I asked.  
 "None that ever satisfied me," replied my friend. "Time and again have I been astonished at my foolhardiness, though impetuous youth never counts the risks. The powerful Abyssinian slave could have killed me at any time. The woman may have meant me well—may have been ready to die under a suddenly conceived passion for me—or she may have been cruelly leading me on to destruction. Perhaps she wanted to sell me the Hafiz, and that was all. The footsteps in the corridor may have been my salvation."  
 "You never saw her afterward?" I asked.  
 "No. I was afraid to look for her. I was afraid of her and of myself. I was cured of my folly and left for Smyrna the next day."  
 "And the Hafiz?"  
 "I had it in my hand when I ran away. That is it. It is worth \$3,000 to an antiquarian. I would not take \$10,000 for it."—New York Mercury.

**The Lament of a Gamekeeper.**  
 Dean Hole in his "Memories" mentions an old gamekeeper who sorrowfully surveyed a model farm as if it had been some fair city overthrown by an earthquake and remarked dolefully, "I've known the time when that farm was as pretty a spot for game as could be found in the county, and now—why, there ain't a place where a partridge can make a nest, or a hare or rabbit can hide!"  
 "What's the good o' the place now?" he went on. "You see that grass field yonder. Well, you'll scarcely believe it, but it was once the beautiful bog for a jack snipe as ever you'd wish to see. I've killed three couple of a morning among the tussocks and rushes afore they spoilt it with them drains!"  
 "Ah," said the dean, "but you must not forget that there is more wheat and more food than before the land was reclaimed."  
 "Ya, and what's the use of it?" the gamekeeper said. "What's the good of wheat which it do not pay to raise when them foreigners are a-sending more'n we want? And more's the shame, the farmers never leave no stubble. No, the place is no good now."

**How a Snake Swallows a Frog.**  
 The method of swallowing is a very simple one, although if the frog be large more than half an hour may be consumed in the process. The two bones of the lower jaw are separate and capable of independent movement; so the reptile loosens its hold upon one side of its jaw, and pushing that side forward as far as possible it drives the teeth in again and then draws the jaw back to its original position.  
 The result is that the prey is drawn down by the movement. The process is then repeated by the other half of the jaw, thus inevitably forcing the victim inward. The snake's skin stretches enormously, and the jaw is of course distended, but the extensible ligaments hold the bones together.—A. G. Mayer in Popular Science Monthly.

**Bound to Get Even.**  
 "Well, little boy, what's your name?" asked the Sunday school teacher, opening her catechism. "Shadrach Nebuchadnezzar Jones." "Who gave you that name?" "I don't know, but yer betcher life if I find out whin I gets me growth they'll be sorry fur it!"—Exchange.

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