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"Sir,—I am pleased to testify to the efficacy of your Irish Moss. I have used it for myself and family for many years for coughs and colds, and we have all derived much benefit from taking the Irish Moss.  
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"ELIZABETH FRENCH,  
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2

**The Lady and the Conjuror**

A TALE OF INDIA, By H. A. Hering

MISS AMELIA LEATHER was a lady of many accomplishments, and of varied experience. She had graduated at London University with mathematical honours, had been an unsuccessful candidate at a School Board election, had published a novel at her own expense, and had been jilted in love. Satiated with the delights of civilization, she decided to travel in unknown regions. After spending many months in so doing, she returned, and published a book descriptive of her adventures. She also wrote articles on the subject, and lectured on it before literary societies and other learned bodies, thereby gaining much fame and many shakels.

Encouraged by her success, she determined to repeat the experiment, and to venture even further into the unknown, hoping among other things to acquire thereby the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society. On her journey she passed through the territory of the Sultan of Amaranth, who had treated her very well on her former visit, and whose peculiarities she had depicted with much humour, in print and on the lecture platform.

On her arrival at the capital of his dominions she was at once conducted to the royal palace, and into the Presence Chamber. The Sultan received her graciously, and bade her be seated. While refreshments were handed round she noted with some astonishment the change that had taken place in the apartment. Instead of being, as formerly, absolutely Eastern in its embellishments it was now peculiarly Western. The gigantic poster of a Drury Lane drama filled one wall, and the opposite side was covered with a miscellaneous collection of soap and porridge advertisements, while here and there, tacked on the other walls, were various coloured pictures which Miss Leather remembered to have last seen on Messrs W. H. Smith and Sons book-stalls at Christmas time.

On a cushion at the Sultan's side the lady noted with much astonishment, and even more regret, her book of travels; and oh, horror! in the potentate's hand was a magazine containing an article on the Sultan, written by herself. She knew the number in an instant for that month there happened to be on the cover the picture of a fly caught in a spider's web, and this the monarch held turned toward her with unnecessary ostentation.

"You don't seem well, Miss Leather," said the Sultan, sympathetically. "Perhaps your journey has fatigued you."  
"I find it very warm, your Majesty," faltered the lady.

"I am afraid the heat of the day is only commencing," continued the Sultan of Amaranth, with that perfect command of the English language which made him the envy of his neighbours. "Your visit is singularly opportune, for I am just reading your amusing article on myself. It is always interesting to hear what your friends have to say about you. I had no idea the hump on my back was as marked as this," he added, pointing to an illustration.

And it really wasn't. Miss Leather, being a facile artist, had allowed herself to be carried away by her enthusiasm. She now hastily explained that magazine illustrations are often caricatures of the original drawings.

"I knew I was lucky sometimes," the monarch went on, "but I never flayed my cook alive for sending up an overdone tiger chop. At least, I don't remember the occasion."

Miss Leather, with pallid face, was understood to say something about a printer's error.

"Nor did I know that my subjects detest me, and only allow me to step on the throne because they can't very well help it."

Miss Leather dared not reply. She knew that the terrible anger of the Sultan was raging behind his smiling face, and felt herself lost indeed. A gesture from him to the gigantic black at his side, and she would be garrotted. Too late she wished herself back in Chelsea, taking an intelligent interest in the University Extension movement.

Suddenly the wrath of the Sultan blazed forth.

"So, woman!" he thundered, "you come here, and accept my hospitality, and then hold me up to the scorn and laughter of the civilized world in your scoundrel magazine. Little do you think they would reach my eyes. Learn, then, that one of your own countrymen—a gentleman from Galashiel—sent them to me with other presents," here the Sultan indicated the mural decorations, "in return for the tiger shooting I gave him. 'Lads have I become acquainted with the perfidy for which your miserable life shall now pay the forfeit. To-morrow morning you shall be stretched. In the afternoon, Senner, here, will lash you into strips. The next day you will be impaled on poisoned spears; and then, should you still live, you will be hung up by your toes to dry in the mid-day sun. So perish all who dare cast ridicule on the Sultan of Amaranth. Take her away."

Before Miss Leather was able to make a reply to this heavy harangue, if indeed a reply had been possible, a couple of brawny villains had seized her. She was dragged from the Royal Presence, and, after an ignominious interval, was thrown into a cell in the underground portion of the palace.

The feelings of the unhappy lady were at first really too awful to describe, for she well knew that the justly incensed monarch had not exaggerated the events of the morning. Help in the interval was impossible. The nearest British authority lived miles away, and at that moment was busy laying out some golf links at a still further distance. Therefore, having summed up the situation, Miss Leather, with the sound common sense which generally distinguished her, at last resolved to meet her end bravely. She would show the Sultan of Amaranth how an English spinster could die.

Instead of anticipating the horrors of the immediate future, she forced her mind to dwell on some happy memories of the past—on her mathematical honours, on the interest her novel had excited among her friends, on her fame as a traveller, on her success as a lecturer, nay, in strict confidence be it told, on a very decided love affair she once had with a school inspector in a boarding-house at Ilkley.

She was stretched on her hard couch, lingering fondly on this particular memory, when she suddenly became aware that she was not alone. She sat up with a start, and stared at the figure that confronted her. It was a native—a fat, pudgy man, with great eyes and whiskers. Her first thought was that he was the official in charge of the ceremonies of the morning, come perhaps to arrange some detail of the programme. She was about to speak, when he raised his forefinger to his lips, enjoining silence.

"Good evening, miss," he said in a low voice. "Behold benevolent friend desirous to assist."

Such a strange and unexpected words from Miss Leather's breath away for the moment. She felt her heart beat, and the blood tingle in her veins. All was not yet lost. Here was a friend, but who was he? She looked inquiringly at him.

"Behold Sultan's Head Conjuror," he said with pride. "I saw miss condemned. Sorry, awfully sorry," and he shook his head in a manner expressive of the keenest grief. "My honourable name is Nuffer Chandra—once in Calcutta University. Thus my ascent. Unable to

pass exams, I returned to parental roof to carry on ancestral profession. I have lived among the English. I love the English. I love you."

The lady started. She had heard the last words before—at Ilkley, some years ago. It was strange to hear them again in Amaranth.

The ex-varity man had his eyes keenly fixed upon her.

"You wish to be free?" he asked gently.

"Of course I do."  
"Then you shall!"

Joy filled Miss Leather's face. She sprang up, and held out her hand thankfully. Her gratitude was too profound for words.

Nuffer Chandra waved her away. "Listen," he said. "When you are free I shall demand recompensation."

"You shall have it. I am not rich, but—"

"No," he interrupted with dignity. "I allude not to money. I desire not Shakespeare trash. I have plenty, with high position here. When you are free you must marry me."

The lady retreated—she could not help it. She shrank back—appalled at the idea.

Nuffer Chandra did not evince any resentment. "You will marry me?" he asked.

Miss Leather covered her face with her hands. Life was dear to her, but was it worth purchasing at such a price? How could she marry a native—an Amaranthine conjurer? Yet there he was, waiting for her answer. She must gain time.

"Sir," she said, "your proposal is so sudden that it upsets me, as you see. How do I know that you can do what you say? How can you release me? Have you the power. I know something of the Sultan's might."

Nuffer Chandra drew himself up proudly. "I have the power," he said. "I can make miracles. Look!"

He held out his right arm at full length and bared it. Miss Leather stared at it, and, while she did so, a little white bead appeared on the top of his clenched fist. It grew and r her very eyes, larger and still larger, until at last an egg was there, a fine speckled egg—a chicken's egg.

"Examine it," said the conjurer. She took it, and looked at it. "Yes, it is an egg," she admitted.

He replaced it on his fist, and extended his arm. The egg grew smaller and smaller, till it vanished. Nuffer Chandra opened his fist, and extended his fingers. There was no trace of an egg among them.

The conjurer bowed, and Miss Leather felt it almost incumbent upon her to clap her hands. "There," said he triumphantly. "Besides another gentleman in Amaranth who could accomplish that?"

"It was very clever indeed," said Miss Leather, who had naturally been impressed by the demonstration. "but I do not quite see how that sort of thing is to liberate me?"

The Amaranthine looked hurt. "You wish for larger proof," he said. "Right-ward." For a moment he seemed to consider; then he raised his right foot and drew out a cotton bag. This he turned inside out. It was empty. He held it at arm's length with one hand, and with slow roll of back placed the other hand inside. "Now, perceive," he said, and to Miss Leather's astonishment gazed, first the bag, then the lady, and finally the head and crest of a great cock were produced. The bird, evidently suffering from severe determination of blood to the head, looked indignantly around. Then it raised its head, and prepared for a mighty cry. This the alert Amaranthine nipped in the gullet, and held the bird's head directly in front of his own, eye to eye. For some minutes the two stared intently at each other. The man's held gradually