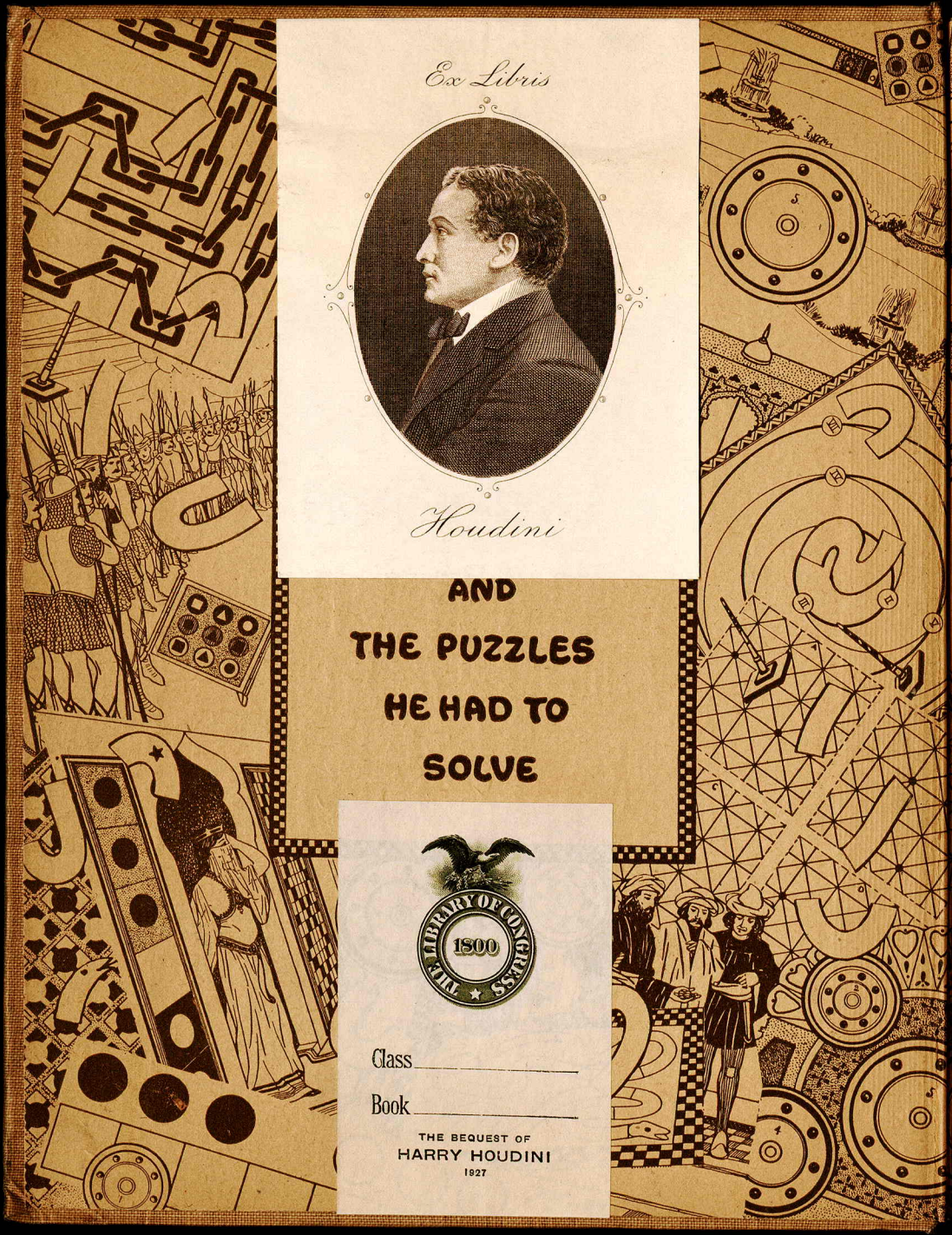
BRIGHT-WITS
PRINCE OF MOGADORE
BY
BURREN LOUGHLIN
AND
L.L.FLOOD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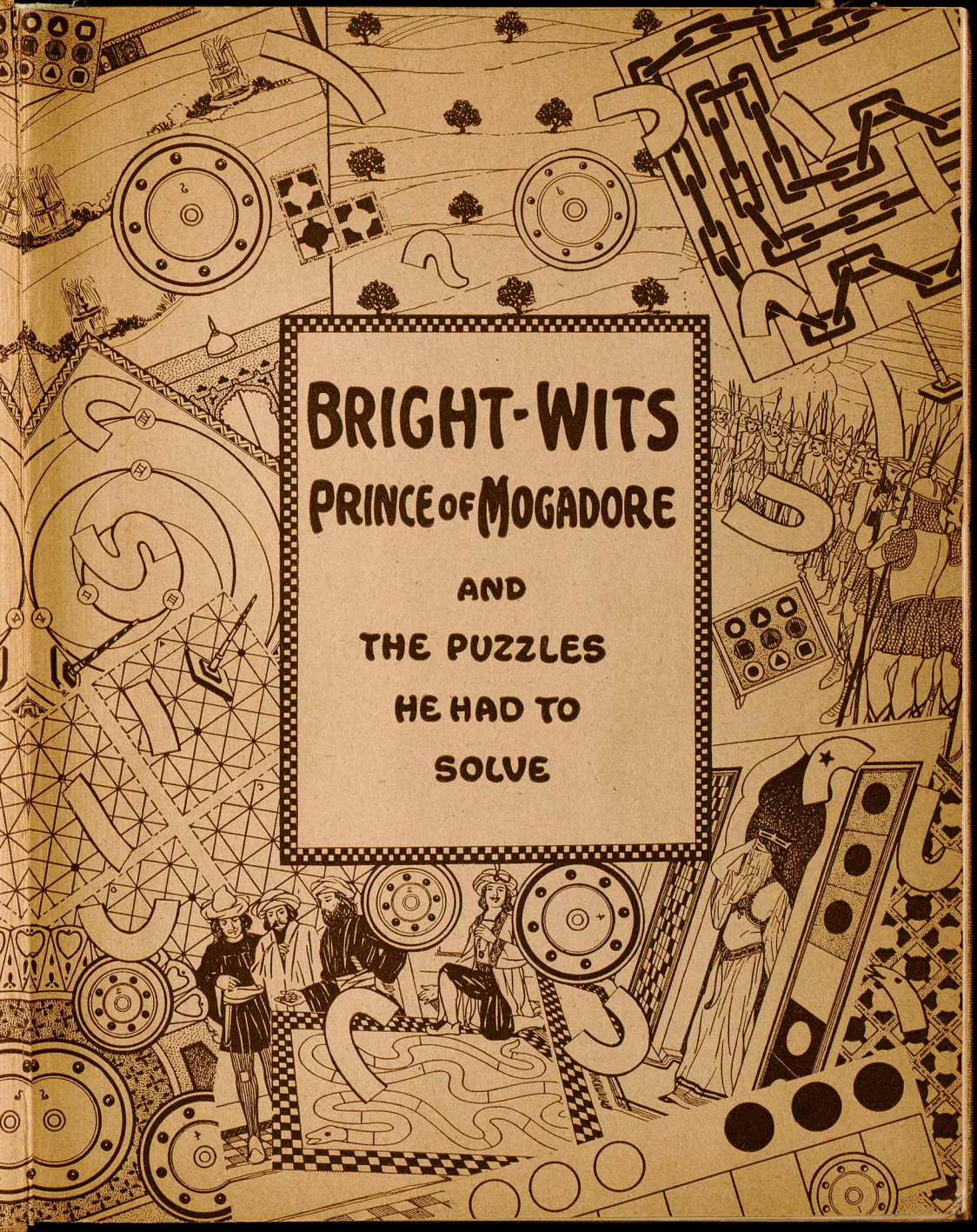

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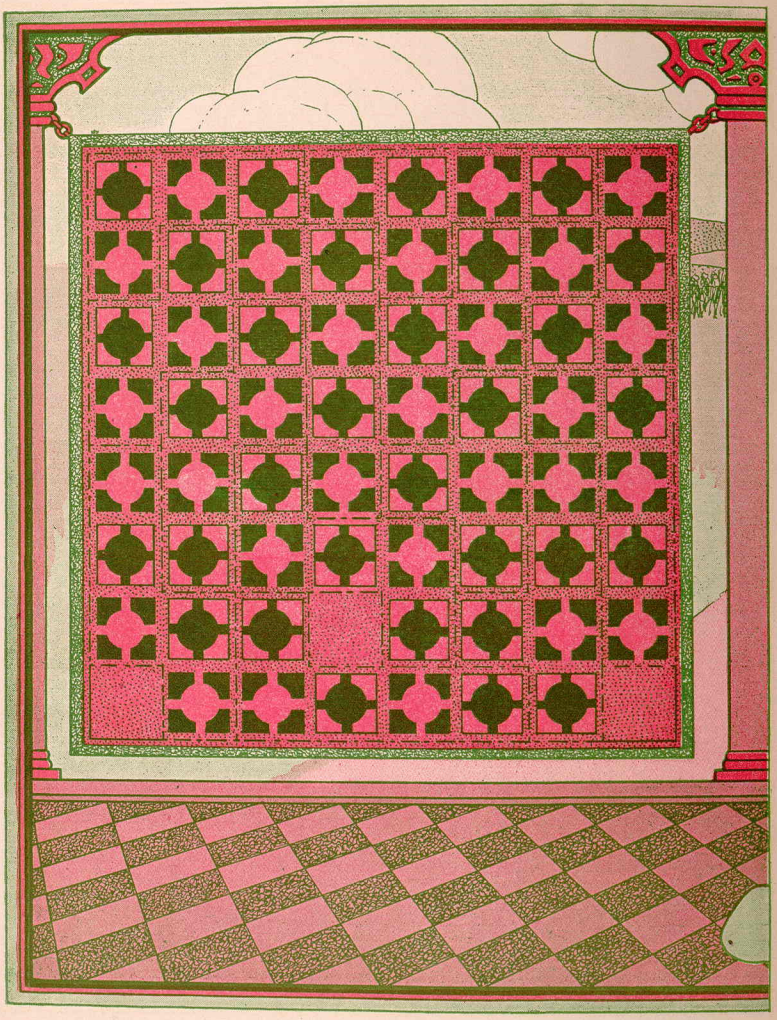

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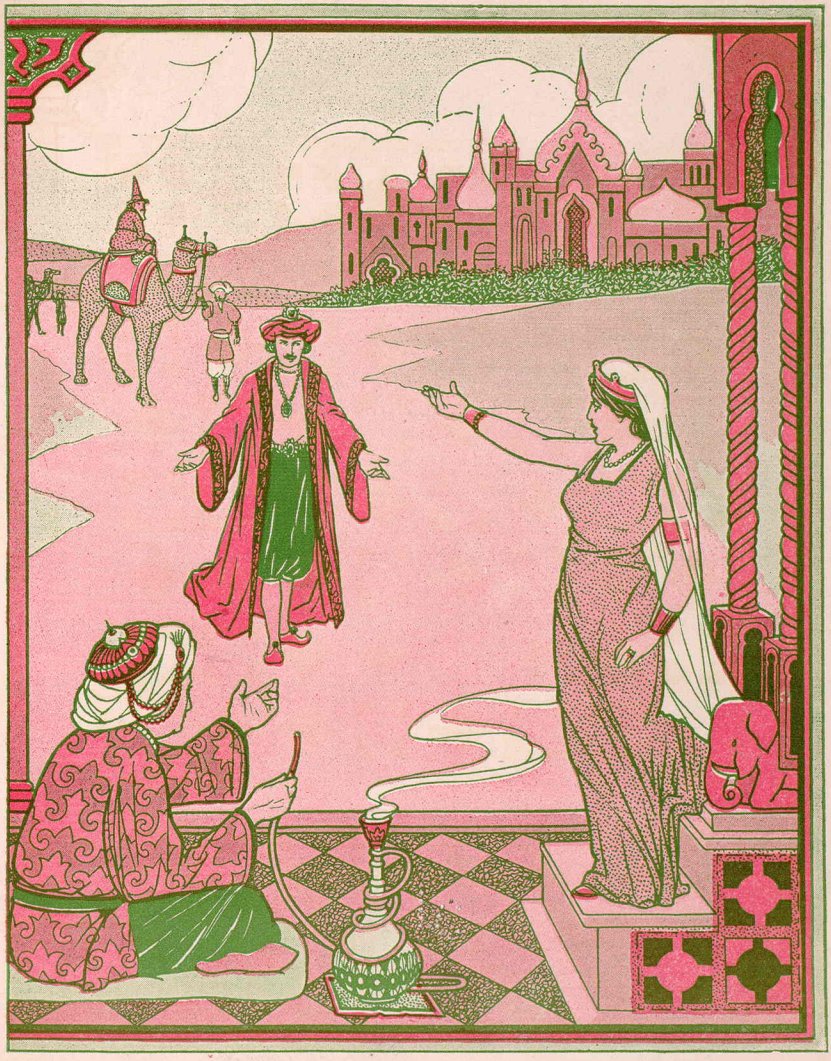

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Bright-Wits Arrives in Parrabang, Where He Meets the Beautiful Azalia and Begins His Extraordinary Tasks	1
II.	The Villainy of Garrofat and Doola. The Prince Solves the Riddle of the Rug, and Finds a New Task Awaiting Him	9
III.	Bright-Wits Learns That His Marriage with Azalia Depends on Three Fountains and Three Gates in the Palace Grounds	16
IV.	The Prince Solves the Game of Onalba, and Divides the Land of Zoltan, the Aga, to the Dismay of Garrofat	23
V.	Bright-Wits Grows Jealous. Ablano Counsels the Prince to be Patient	29
VI.	Bright-Wits Picks an Escort for a Journey and Foils the Wicked Design of Garrofat	35

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
VII.	The Prince Returns to Find That Ablano the Brahman Has Mysteriously Disappeared	40
VIII.	Return of Ablano. Garrofat and Doola Decide on Desperate Measures. The Final Test	46
IX.	The Last Decree of Onalba. Downfall of the Plotters. Bright-Wits Receives His Reward	54
	How Prince Bright-Wits Solved the Puzzles	59

THE PUZZLES PRINCE BRIGHT-WITS HAD TO SOLVE

	PAGE
The Rug	8
The Eight Provinces	14
The Three Fountains and the Three Gates	18
The Five Shields	21
The Zoltan's Orchard	25
The Nine Disks	30
The Soldiers and Guards	36
The Endless Chain	38
Doola's Game	42
The Eight Pieces of Money	47
The Serpent	52

BRIGHT-WITS
PRINCE OF MOGADORE

CHAPTER I

BRIGHT-WITS ARRIVES IN PARRABANG, WHERE HE MEETS THE BEAUTIFUL AZALIA AND BEGINS HIS EXTRAORDINARY TASKS

Long ago, before geographies were invented, so that it were useless to seek for the kingdom on any modern map, there lived a wise King who had but one son, of whom he was exceeding fond. Under the guidance of learned teachers the young prince had read the Koran according to the seven traditions, studied the writings of the poets and the science of the stars, and had become skilled in all the arts and manly exercises to a degree far surpassing the people of his age; so that his fame had spread and he was known far and near as "Bright-

Wits," Prince of Mogadore. In person, the prince was comely beyond the beauty of men; and he possessed the strength and courage of the lion, together with the gentleness of the dove.

Now when Bright-Wits had reached his eighteenth year, the king called him to his side and said, "My son, you have arrived at the age when it befits you to fare forth into the world that your education may be completed by a knowledge of the ways of men. That when the Great Yama shall gather me to His bosom you will be prepared to assume the government of this kingdom and to conduct its affairs wisely and well. And, lest your inexperience should lead you from the paths of wisdom, I have arranged that you be accompanied on your journey by Ablano, the Holy Brahman, who has lately come to our realm. On the morrow, then, you will be prepared to start in company with an escort of horsemen and a train of camels as befits your rank and station."

At dawn the caravan was drawn up outside the gates of the city, and Bright-Wits, after embracing his father, mounted a richly caparisoned horse, and rode away with Ablano, the Brahman, riding on a camel at his side. Now, although Bright-Wits was arrayed in the richest of garments, the Brahman was simply appareled in the white robes of his order; his only ornament being three great rings of gold encircling the cone above his turban. His face, which was dark as that of an African, his snowy beard, and his air of majestic dignity gave him a most noble and striking appearance.

For some days the caravan journeyed forward, Bright-Wits filled with constant wonder by the sight of strange cities and people. At last, after weeks of travel they came upon a defile in the mountains, and passing through, emerged on a wide plain. Far to the north they could discern the golden towers of an immense palace rising high

above a large and prosperous city. Thither they pursued their way, entering at last the great gate in the outer walls they proceeded through the city, Bright-Wits constantly pausing to exclaim at the size and magnificence of the buildings; which surpassed those of his father's capital as gold surpasses copper.

Arriving before the palace, Bright-Wits dismounted, and advanced, accompanied only by Ablano. As they neared the magnificent edifice they descried, seated upon a low porch, the figure of a fat and oily looking old man, wearing on his head a huge turban topped with a golden crown which was surmounted by a ruby large as a peacock's egg. The stranger was puffing at his hookah and listening with disdain to the words of a young maiden of marvellous beauty; who vainly essayed to call his attention to the approach of the prince and Ablano. To the right of the porch was suspended a great Mankalah rug made in the

pattern of a large checker board; but which on closer inspection appeared to be imperfectly put together, as several of the squares were missing.

Ablano, approaching the stranger, made obeisance and said, "Know, thou Illustrious One, that we are two travellers who, having heard of the glory of your kingdom, seek your permission to dwell therein for a brief space, that going hence to our own land, we may bring to our people the tale of your splendour and greatness."

The fat stranger, turning his beady black eyes on Ablano, made answer in surly fashion. "Think you that this palace is naught but a tavern for the entertainment of stray mendicants?"

He would have continued had not Bright-Wits interrupted him, angrily exclaiming, "Know, thou surly hind, that I am Bright-Wits, Prince of Mogadore, and that yonder holy man, who honours me in being my guide and father as I travel in search of knowledge and adventure, is Ablano the Brah-

man, whose virtues are as many as the sands in the great desert of Gobi, and the fame of whose wisdom reaches all men as the rays of the sun at noon."

Now the fat stranger, alarmed by the fierce outburst of the prince, scrambled hastily to his feet, and with profuse apologies welcomed the travellers and bade them recline upon the porch while he summoned attendants and refreshments. When their ungracious host had retired, the damsel turned upon Bright-Wits a face which outshone the sun in its splendour, and thus addressed him.

"Know, O prince, that I am the Princess Azalia, and that this great palace, and the city and country for ten days' journey in every direction, formed the kingdom of my father the Great Onalba, Rajah of Parrabang. Here my days passed as in Paradise, until one year ago, when my loved parent suddenly disappeared. At first no alarm was felt, for he was wondrous wise, and fond of secluding himself from

men that he might study in peace and quietness. When, however, a month passing saw not his return, the Vizier Garrofat, he who was but now upon the porch, nicknamed the 'Old Woman,' because of his beardless face, called the Council of Emirs together; whereupon it was solemnly decreed that my beloved father had departed from this life. Now, I being a maid, and moreover barely sixteen, could not govern in his stead, and Garrofat had himself declared Regent until I should have arrived at the age of eighteen years, by virtue of a decree which he claimed to have received from the Rajah, my father. Now, moreover, this decree gave Garrofat the right to accept as a husband for me any suitor who succeeded in performing certain tasks, first of which was the repairing of the great Mankalah rug hanging here beside you.

"You can see, O prince, that it is made up of separate pieces, each containing from three to five squares, fourteen pieces in all. They must be cut

apart and rearranged so as to form a perfect checker board."

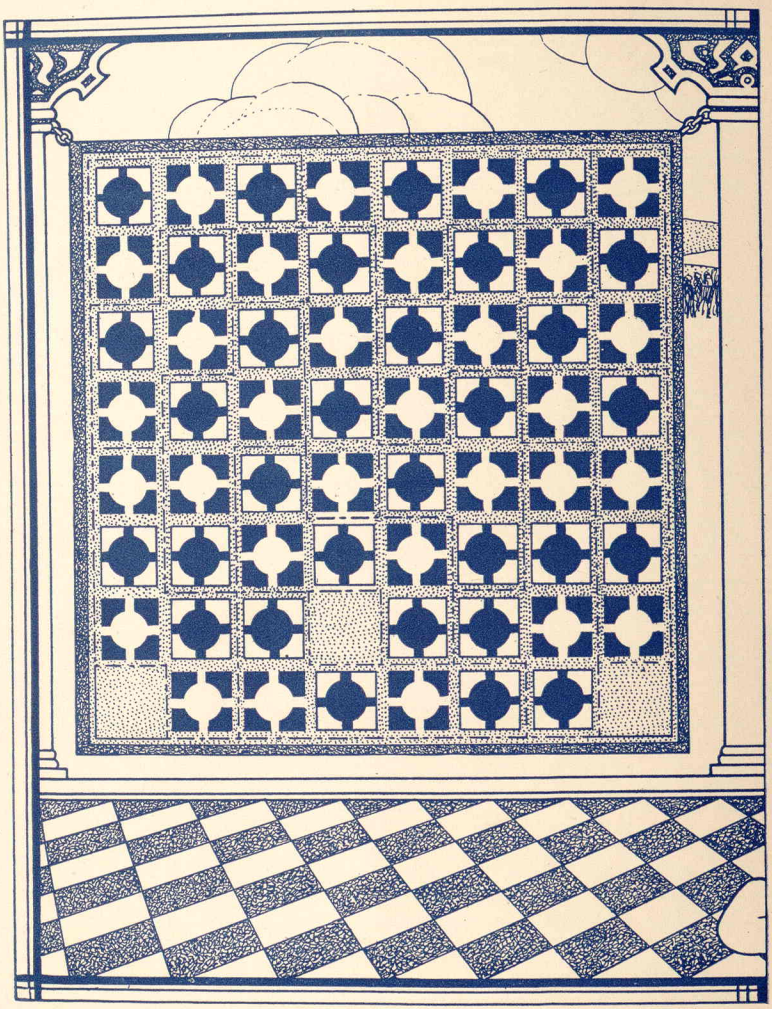
"But there are empty spaces, and I can see but thirteen pieces here," objected Bright-Wits.

"The missing piece hangs here at the side of the steps, and, as you see, contains three squares," explained Azalia.

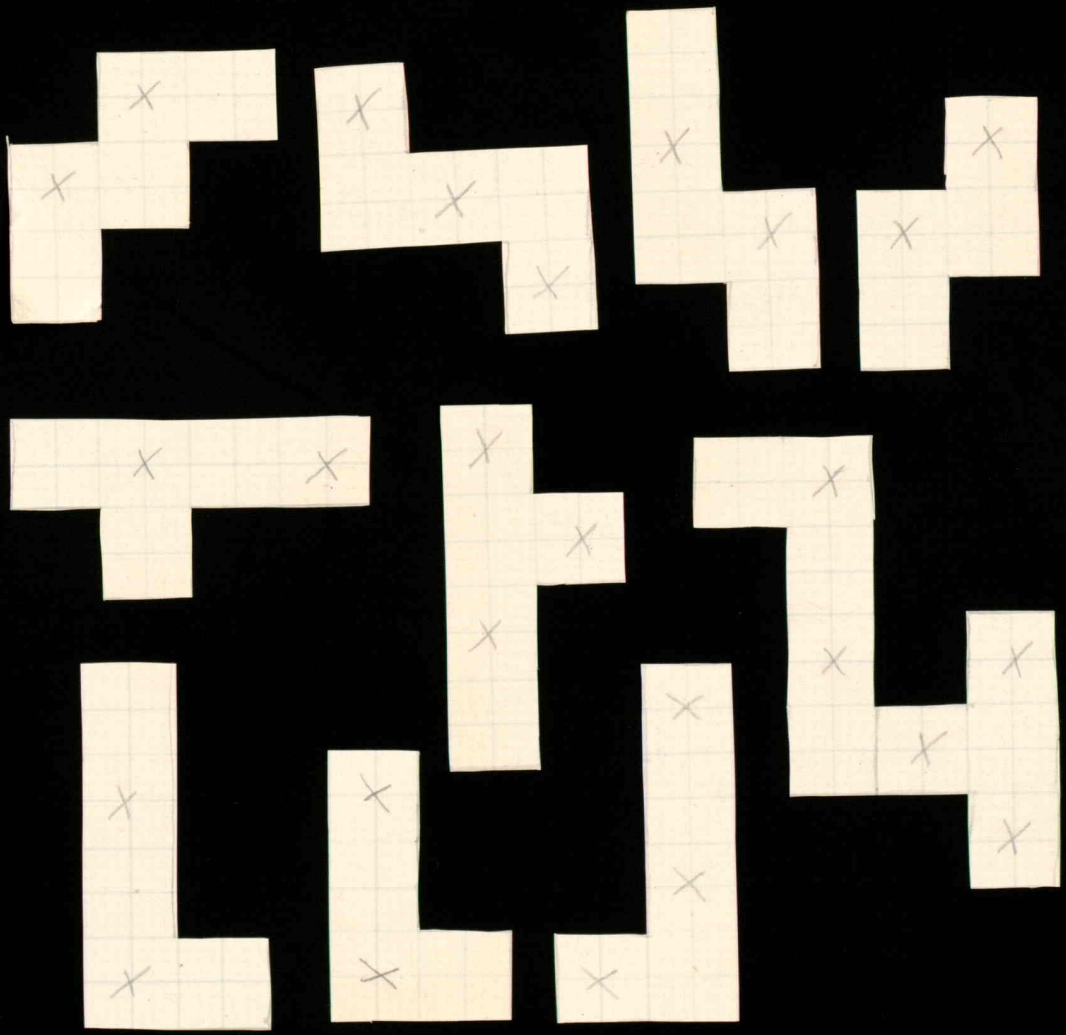
"This surely can be no difficult task to be so richly rewarded," cried Bright-Wits.

"Then accomplish it, thou Clever One," laughed Azalia.

The reader who wishes to learn what chance Bright-Wits has of winning the promised reward, should cut out the rug on page at the back of the book, and try the task himself. Cut with a scissors or sharp knife along the heavy lines.



THE RUG.



CHAPTER II

THE VILLAINY OF GARROFAT AND DOOLA. THE PRINCE SOLVES THE RIDDLE OF THE RUG, AND FINDS A NEW TASK AWAITING HIM

Now when the Vizier Garrofat returned he was angered to find the princess conversing with the strangers, and remarked sourly, "Much wisdom, my lords, may be found in the complaints of women. Azalia has doubtless been telling you of the riddle of the Mankalah rug, forgetting that it is unseemly in a maiden to point the way to the possession of her charms."

To which Bright-Wits quickly replied, "Learn then, O Garrofat, that I would fain solve the riddle of the rug, and do proclaim my willingness to be whipped forth from the gates of your city, if seven days hence I have not accomplished the task."

"Bright eyes stir dull wits," sneered Garrofat. "Let us pray to Allah that your skin is as thick as your vanity is great; for my slaves have stout arms and heavy whips. Know then that I accept your offer and warn thee against failure. Now enter with me into the palace, where you will find refreshment; and on the morrow I will have the rug conveyed to the apartment which you shall occupy while you dwell with us, that you may begin your task without delay."

During the week which followed, Bright-Wits, and Ablano the Brahman, made numerous excursions into the city and even out into the surrounding country. At every opportunity the prince sought the society of Azalia; and as the holy Brahman Ablano was ever present at their meetings, Garrofat could offer no objection, much as he frowned on their ripening friendship.

On these occasions Azalia told her new friends of many suspicious acts of the crafty vizier; which

clearly indicated that he was plotting to secure the hand of the princess for himself, and the entire control of the kingdom into the bargain. "He has assumed the royal red robes," said Azalia, "and he has issued orders that he be addressed only as rajah. He has elevated his cunning brother Doola to be head of the Council of Emirs with the rank of vizier; and has given him the richest province of my father's kingdom to govern." When relating these things the princess would give way to her grief.

But Ablano comforted her, saying, "Peace, my child. Be not disheartened. Always must thou remember that as happiness passeth away so passeth away anxiety and sorrow."

At last on the evening of the sixth day, Garrofat summoned the prince to his presence and warned him to be in attendance in the great hall of the palace on the morrow. Now when morning came, Bright-Wits was escorted by a strong guard of

slaves to the Hall of Audience from which he was to emerge victorious as the accepted suitor for the hand of Azalia, or with the whips of Garrofat's stout slaves singing in his ears and stinging his shoulders.

Entering boldly, Bright-Wits found Garrofat seated upon the royal throne, while at his right stood the eight governors of the provinces. The prince easily distinguished Doola from Azalia's description. Like his brother, he was beardless; while a golden crown surmounted by a red cone shaped hat was perched above his rust coloured hair.

As Bright-Wits advanced to the throne, Garrofat cried out with derision, "Comes the Prince of Boasters to receive his reward? My slaves are impatient to stretch their whips across your shoulders."

"My business is neither with slaves nor whips," answered the prince with scorn. "I come to an-

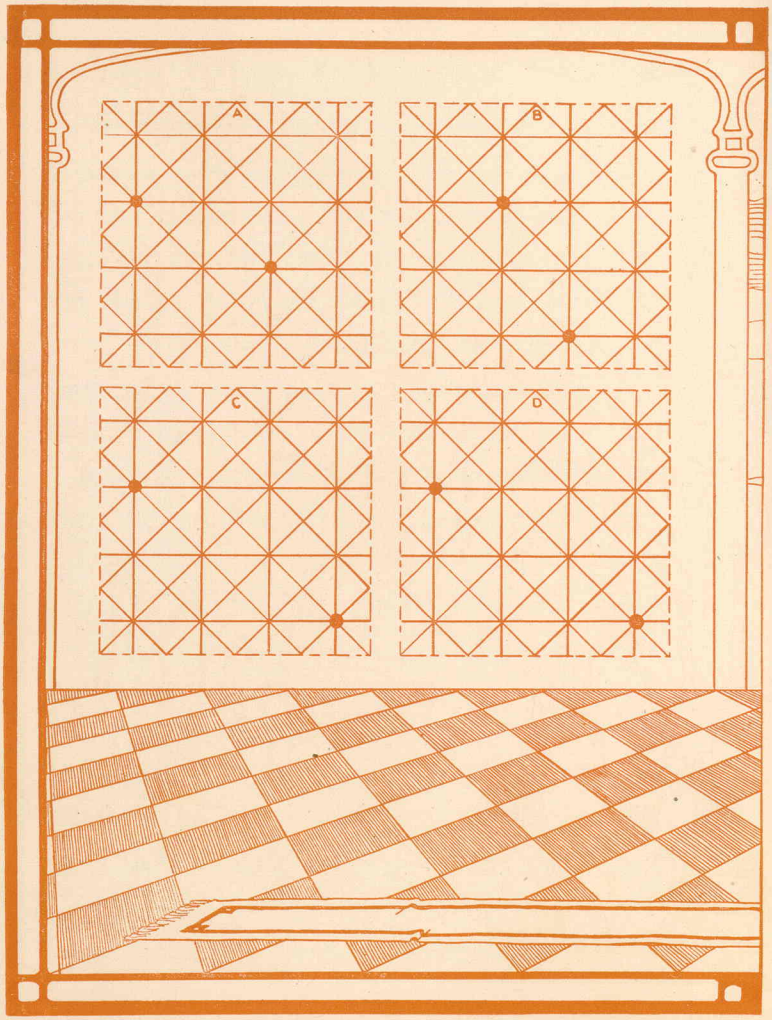
nounce that I have solved the riddle of the rug." Then salaaming deeply, he presented to Garrofat a small roll of parchment. "On this," he said, "you will find a plan of the rug, so that should it by any mischance come apart again it may be readily repaired."

Two slaves now entered bearing the rug; and when they had spread it upon the floor, it was found to be perfectly put together.

"By Allah!" gasped Garrofat, "he must be a genie."

Doola was the first to recover from the general surprise, and stepping quickly to his brother's side he whispered in his ear. Now the counsel must have been pleasing; for Garrofat chuckled and thus addressed the prince. "Let me congratulate you," he said with a grin, "but before I can consider you as a suitor for the hand of Azalia, I must have further proof that you are as wise as you pretend. Else, would I be false to my duty as her guardian.

"Now just before your entrance we were considering a question of grave importance to the welfare of the kingdom. You will observe that there hangs on the wall beside you what appear to be four charts, but which are really the parts of one chart. Know then that this kingdom consists of eight provinces; ruled over by the eight emirs you see here assembled. Now these eight emirs are so jealous of each other that fierce battles occur whenever two of them chance to meet upon the road. Only our presence now restrains them. Anxious to put an end to these disgraceful brawls within the kingdom, the great Rajah Onalba had drawn yonder plan of the eight provinces. On it as you see he laid down roads running north and south, and east and west. Other roads cross these in every direction, so that any one of the eight emirs might leave his castle and travel by any route across the kingdom without passing the castle of another emir on the way. Now by some misfortune the



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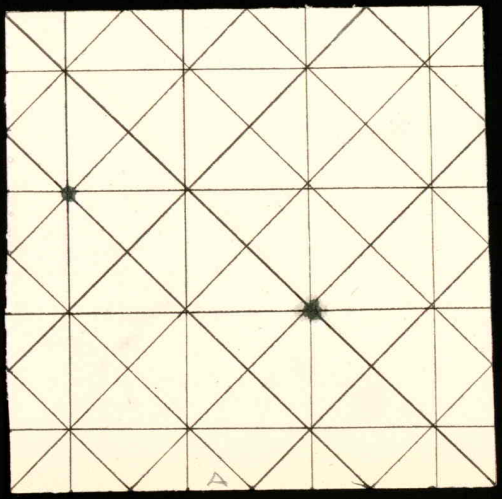
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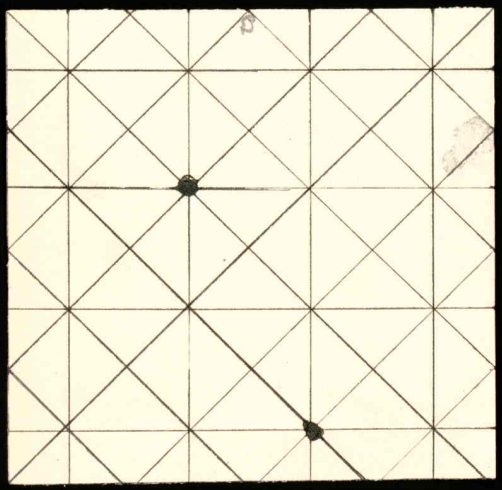
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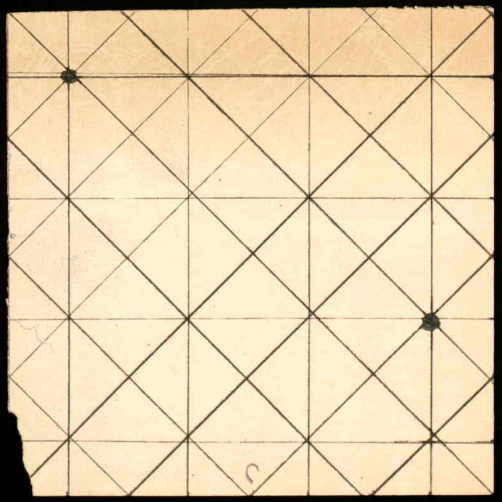
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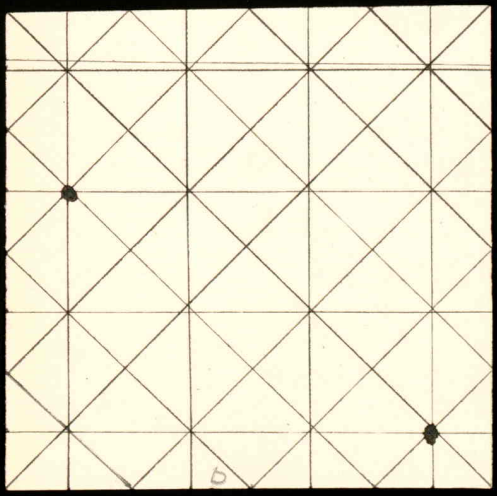
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chart was cut into four pieces before the roads were built, and we have never been able to arrange them in their original position. There on the wall are the four pieces. The lines represent the roads, and the eight spots the castles of the emirs. This matter must be adjusted at once, and as you are a suitor for the hand of Azalia I expect you to prove your claim to wisdom by solving the puzzle of the chart."

When Garrofat had concluded, Bright-Wits, in obedience to the counsel of Ablano, expressed his willingness to attempt the solution of this new riddle. Whipping from the gates to be the penalty of failure.

At a signal from the vizier, the audience was now dismissed; Bright-Wits bearing away to his apartments the pieces of the torn chart.

The reader may cut out the four pieces of the chart which he will find on a page at the back of the book. Cut along the dotted lines and endeavour to arrange the four parts so that no two castles will appear on any straight lines. He can thus learn Bright-Wits' chance of success.

CHAPTER III

BRIGHT-WITS LEARNS THAT HIS MARRIAGE WITH AZALIA DEPENDS ON THREE FOUNTAINS AND THREE GATES IN THE PALACE GROUNDS

The week passed much as the first; Bright-Wits and Ablano spending the time roaming over the palace grounds accompanied by the Princess Azalia. Garrofat sometimes made one of their little party; while Doola would occasionally thrust his long nose and ugly face into the circle.

On the seventh day Bright-Wits presented himself at the Audience Chamber in response to the summons of Garrofat, who greeted him with mocking inquiries as to the success of his map making.

Saluting him gravely Bright-Wits made reply, "Here you will find the map in proper shape. Scant must be the brains in Parrabang when so simple a task remained so long unaccomplished."

"All in good time," purred Garrofat, who, barely glancing at the map as the slaves spread it out before him, addressed some words in a low tone to his brother Doola. Then turning to Bright-Wits he drawled, "By the Prophet of Allah, my dear prince, your success delights me. Allah himself must have directed you to this kingdom, for never was visit more timely."

Thereupon Bright-Wits interrupted him angrily, "Cease, I pray you, these speeches, and answer at once my demand for the reward I have now earned."

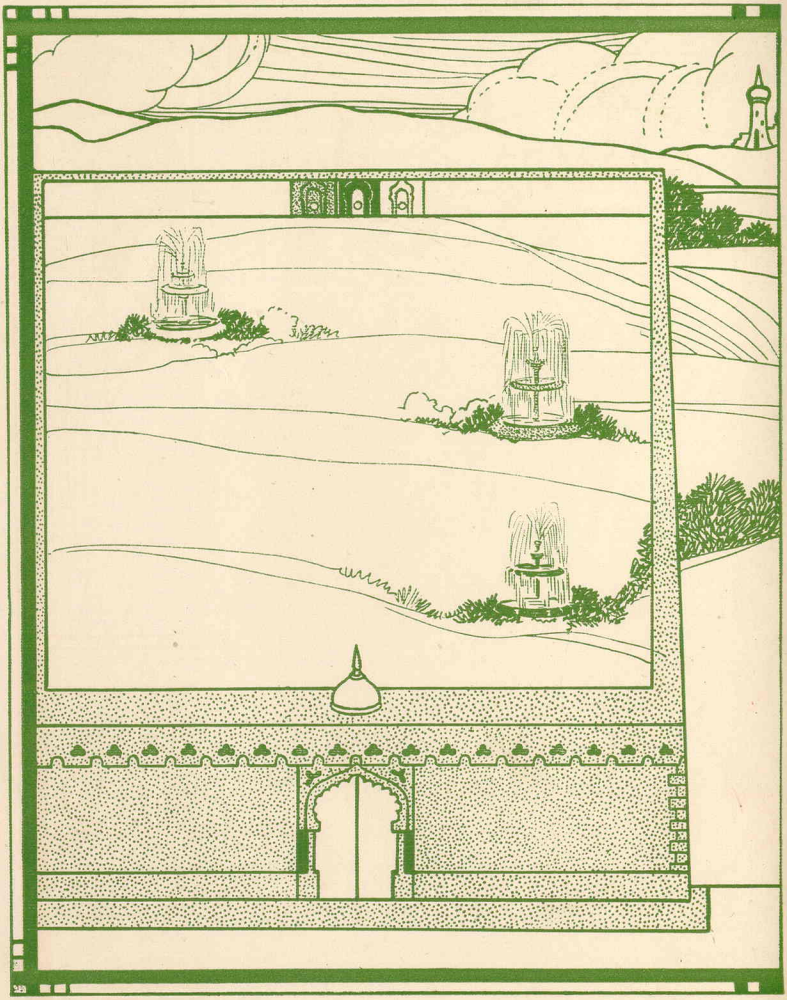
"Calm thyself, dear Bright-Wits," began Garrofat, "I am sorry to remind you that as your task is yet unfinished there is no reward due you. Your success, however, warrants me in demanding further proof of your boasted ability. I would not have Azalia wed to one who was but a lucky fool." Then, unheeding the prince's rage, he continued, "Now among other things perplexing the

kingdom is the completion of the palace gardens. If you will but accompany me to the top of the palace I can better explain."

Thither they went, and from this high point Bright-Wits could see a great walled garden in which were set three fountains, one of gold, one of silver, and one of bronze. Three gates of the same metals were placed in the farther wall.

With a wave of his hand, Garrofat began, "This great garden was built by order of Onalba the Rajah, but through carelessness of the workmen the gates were put in the wrong places. Hence the difficulty.

Now the water for the golden fountain must be brought by a pipe running from the golden gate; that for the silver fountain from the silver gate, and to the bronze fountain from the bronze gate. At no point must these pipes cross each other or go outside the walls. Know then, that as Azalia's wedding must be celebrated in that gar-



THE THREE FOUNTAINS AND THE THREE GATES.

den, it is very important to you that it be completed."

When Garrofat ceased, Bright-Wits was about to give way to his wrath, but a look from Azalia checked him, and he said, "So be it. I accept this new task."[1]

"And the old penalty," chuckled Doola.

"Yes, and the old penalty," cried Bright-Wits. "But look to it thyself, thou hungry hind, lest thou be nearer the whips than I."

Now although Bright-Wits made no secret of his contempt for Garrofat and Doola, his love for the Princess Azalia daily increased. In a shaded part of the palace grounds there stood a pretty little pavilion, and here, in company with Ablano, Bright-Wits and Azalia spent many happy hours.

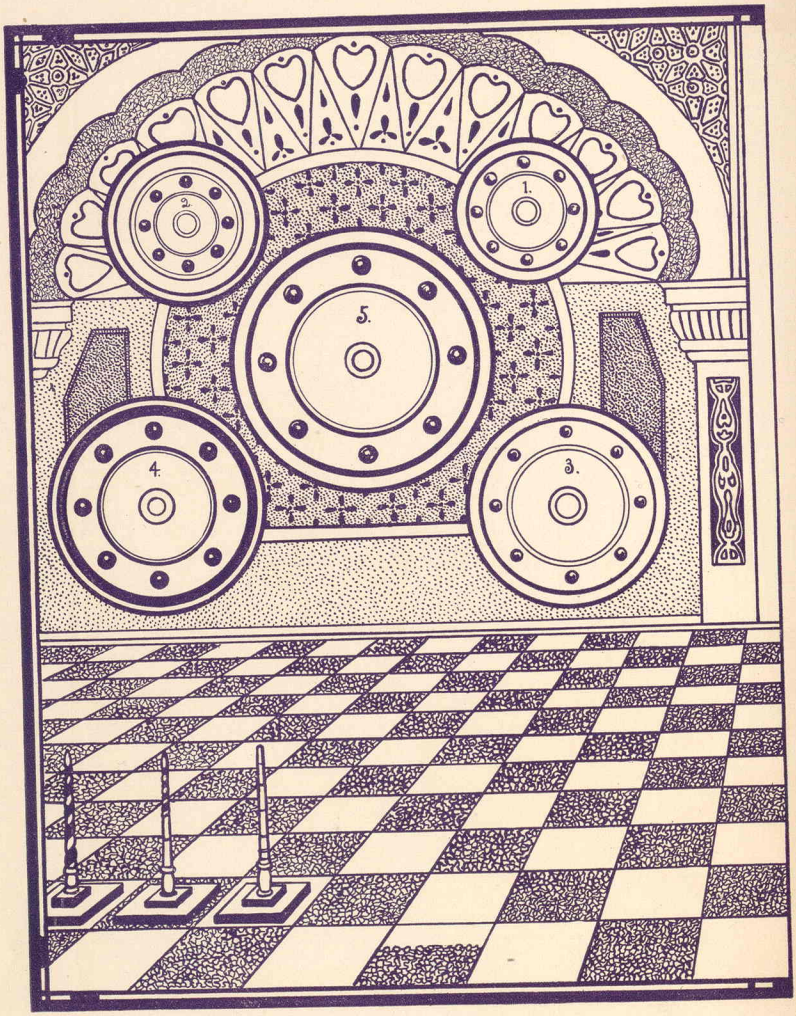
The week finally slipped by, and on the seventh

[1] *The reader may observe that the fountains and gates are coloured the same in pairs: gray for gold, white for silver, and black for bronze. He may with his pencil endeavour to connect each fountain with the gate of its own colour.*

day, Bright-Wits was led, as before, to the Audience Chamber surrounded by a strong guard of slaves. Entering the apartment, the prince advanced, and saluting Garrofat with mock courtesy, he handed him a parchment on which had been drawn a plan showing the solution of the problem of the fountains and gates.

Garrofat received the parchment, and after a glance at it, passed it to Doola with a wink. "Verily," said he, "thou art indeed a bright youth. Now be not impatient, I pray you," he added hastily, on seeing the face of the prince grow dark. "Think not that I have any desire to cheat you of the reward you have won, or almost won, I should say; for I have a further little test for you."

It was with difficulty that Bright-Wits controlled his rage; while Garrofat continued in oily tones, "You have no doubt heard, among other things, that the Great Rajah Onalba was very fond of play-



THE FIVE SHIELDS.

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ing at games of skill. Now it is only just that you should prove your title to be his successor by performing some of them. On the wall beside you hang five shields, each smaller than the other. Through the centre of each there is a hole. You will see that they are numbered from one to five. Behind you stand three spindles. Now you must first place all the shields on one of the spindles, the largest, number five, on the bottom, and the smallest, number one, on the top. Next you must transfer all five shields to the second spindle, moving but one shield at a time, and placing it either on a vacant spindle or on top of a larger shield. You may use all three spindles in the task, which I assure you will test your bright wits to the full."

Calming himself with an effort, the prince asked, "Do you mean that I am to do this task here and now?"

"Oh, no," grinned Garrofat, "you may take the

shields and spindles to your apartment, where you can work it out at your leisure."

"Only don't work on it at night, my dear Prince," put in Doola, with a leer. "The clattering of the shields would keep us all awake."

"Some day, with the help of Allah, I will put you into a sleep that nothing will ever disturb," cried Bright-Wits as he strode wrathfully from the hall.

If the reader would try this new task, he may cut out the shields at the back of the book. For spindles he may use three square pieces of cardboard with a pin stuck through the centre of each. After placing the shields on the first spindle the first move will be shield No. 1 to a vacant spindle. Then shield No. 2 to another vacant spindle. Then shield No. 1 on top of shield No. 2, and the rest as he may.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCE SOLVES THE GAME OF ONALBA, AND DIVIDES THE LAND OF ZOLTAN, THE AGA, TO THE DISMAY OF GARROFAT

Now followed another week of happiness spent with the princess and Ablano. When the seventh day arrived at last, Bright-Wits presented himself in the Great Hall accompanied by slaves bearing the shields and spindles.

Now Garrofat observed the prince's confident air with displeasure. Concealing his feelings, however, he chirped, "Well, Prince, have your wits proven as bright as of yore? Or do you but come to return the shields and to ask forgiveness for your rash boasting?"

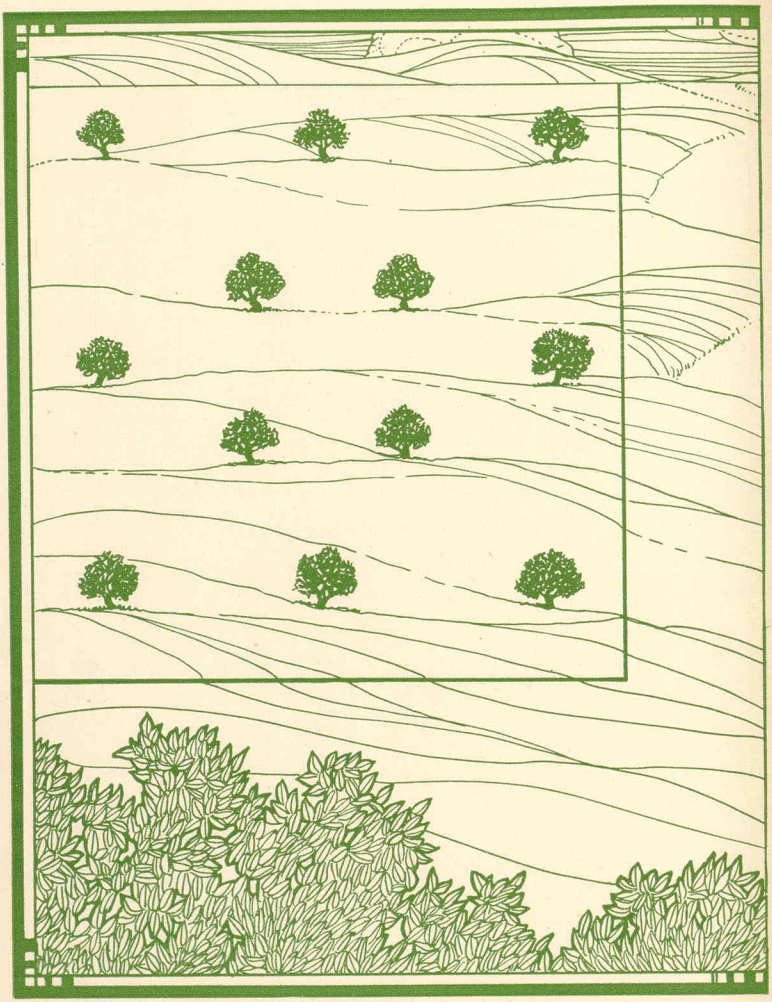
"Cease such drivel," cried Bright-Wits, interrupting him, "I have come to announce the com-

pletion of a task so simple that it should not have puzzled a child."

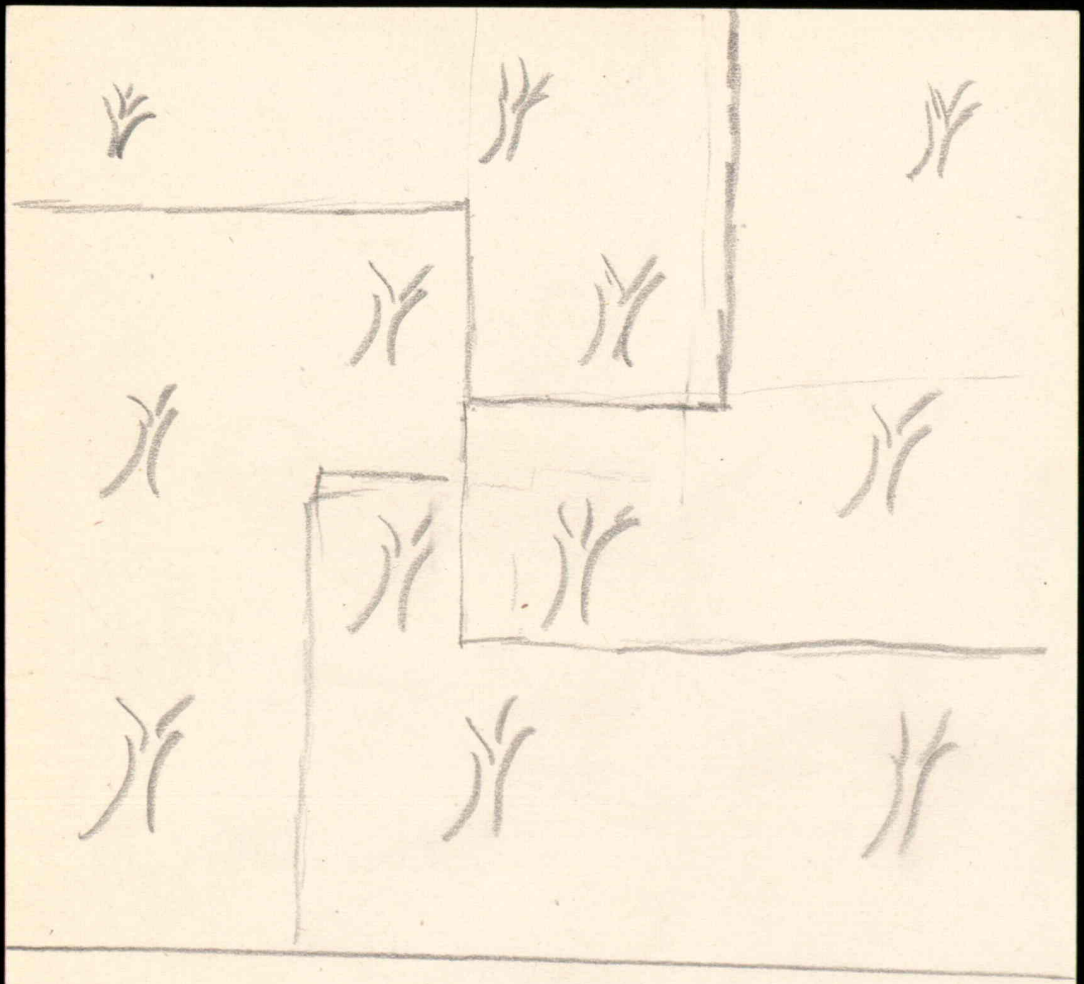
"Ah, what a fine thing it is to be clever," exclaimed Doola, with a look of mock admiration. But a glance from Bright-Wits caused him to shrink back in alarm.

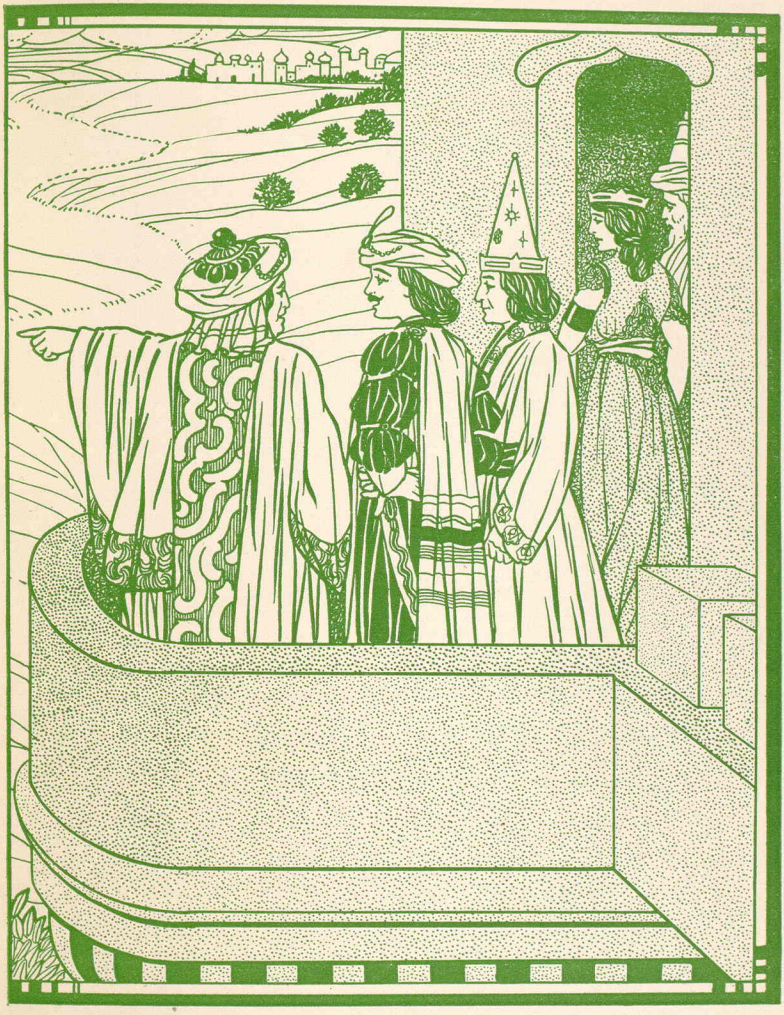
Now Bright-Wits ordered the slaves to set the spindles and shields before him; and with a smile to Azalia, he proceeded to repeat his task before their astonished eyes.

When the last move was made, Garrofat gasped with amazement. None had ever accomplished that feat save the Rajah Onalba himself. A hurried consultation with Doola, however, restored his courage, and, rising, he said, "Praise be to Allah, but thou art a youth of wondrous wisdom, and I would be false to my trust as the Regent of this kingdom if I failed to submit to you a question which has for the space of a whole year puzzled the wisest wits in the realm." Then bidding



THE ZOLTAN'S ORCHARD.





Bright-Wits to follow, he led the way to a balcony from which the surrounding country could be overlooked.

"There," said Garrofat, pointing in the direction of a large orchard, "is a plot of land which Zoltan, the Aga, willed to his four sons. As you can see, twelve trees grow upon it, and the whole is surrounded by a deep ditch. Now, according to the will of Zoltan, that plot of land is to be divided equally into four parts, each to be of the same size and shape, and each to contain three of the twelve trees; the trees to be located in the same position in each piece."

Now Bright-Wits had been warned by Ablano against the folly of losing his temper when fresh tasks were imposed upon him. "It suits my purpose," Ablano had said, "that we test their villainy to the bottom." Remembering this warning, Bright-Wits replied with a smile, "Let the sons of Zoltan cease from quarrelling. I will divide

the land between them according to the will of their father."

"Do this," said Doola, with a bow and smirk, "and I could die from admiration of your cleverness."

Whereon, Bright-Wits, casting on him a look of scorn, made answer, "On the occasion of your death the only one present to merit admiration will be the public executioner who will officiate." So saying, he turned and descended to the palace accompanied by Azalia and the Holy Brahman, Ablano.[1]

When, seven days later, Bright-Wits appeared before Garrofat, he found him in an ugly mood. Nor did the cheerful air of the prince as he entered his presence tend to help matters. Fortunate was it for Bright-Wits that he was under the protec-

[1] *If the reader would learn whether Bright-Wits is apt to succeed in his latest task, he may try to divide the orchard himself.*

tion of Ablano, the Brahman, otherwise his instant execution might have been ordered. But to anger or offend a Brahman was considered the unpardonable sin; so Bright Wits was spared to continue his adventures.

Subduing his rage, Garrofat asked in harsh tones, "How now? Thou meddling busybody! Hast thou solved the will of Zoltan?"

"Calm thyself, O Garrofat," begged the prince with pretended concern. "Know you not that he who submits to anger but shortens his own life? Be happy then, for I have solved the will of Zoltan. Here is a plan of the orchard properly divided. Are you now satisfied, or have you been able to concoct new schemes to postpone my marriage with Azalia?"

"Speak not to me of schemes, thou possessed of the Djinns," roared Garrofat. "It is but for the good of the kingdom that I act. Your task

will be as long as I wish to make it. You have succeeded so far, by sorcery; but beware of your failure on this next test of your vaunted brightness."

CHAPTER V

BRIGHT WITS GROWS JEALOUS. ABLANO COUNSELS THE PRINCE TO BE PATIENT

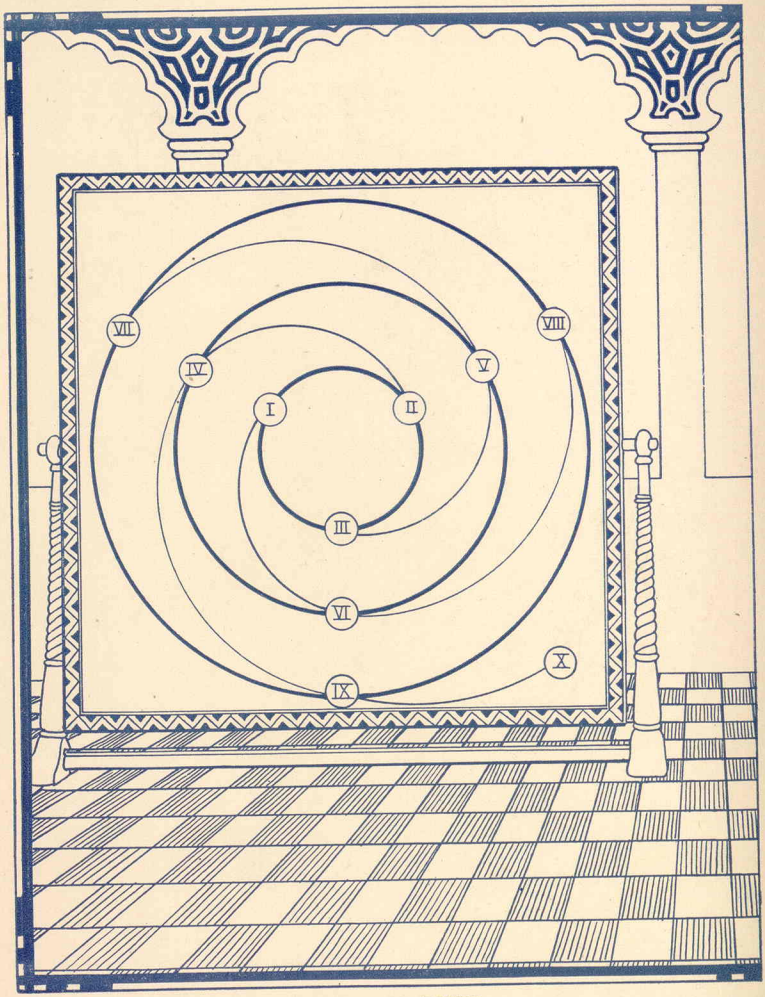
Now, on a signal, four slaves rolled into the Audience Chamber what appeared to be a huge table set up endwise between two posts. On it were inscribed three circles in heavy lines, one within the other. Connecting the circles were thinner lines; and at the points where they met there were round spots numbered from one to nine. Another spot, numbered ten, stood outside the circle, but was connected thereto by a thin curved line.

"Behold, thou bright-witted one, another of the games with which the great Onalba was wont to amuse himself. Here in the frame at the steps of the throne you will see nine disks, three gray, three white, and three black. On the face of each you

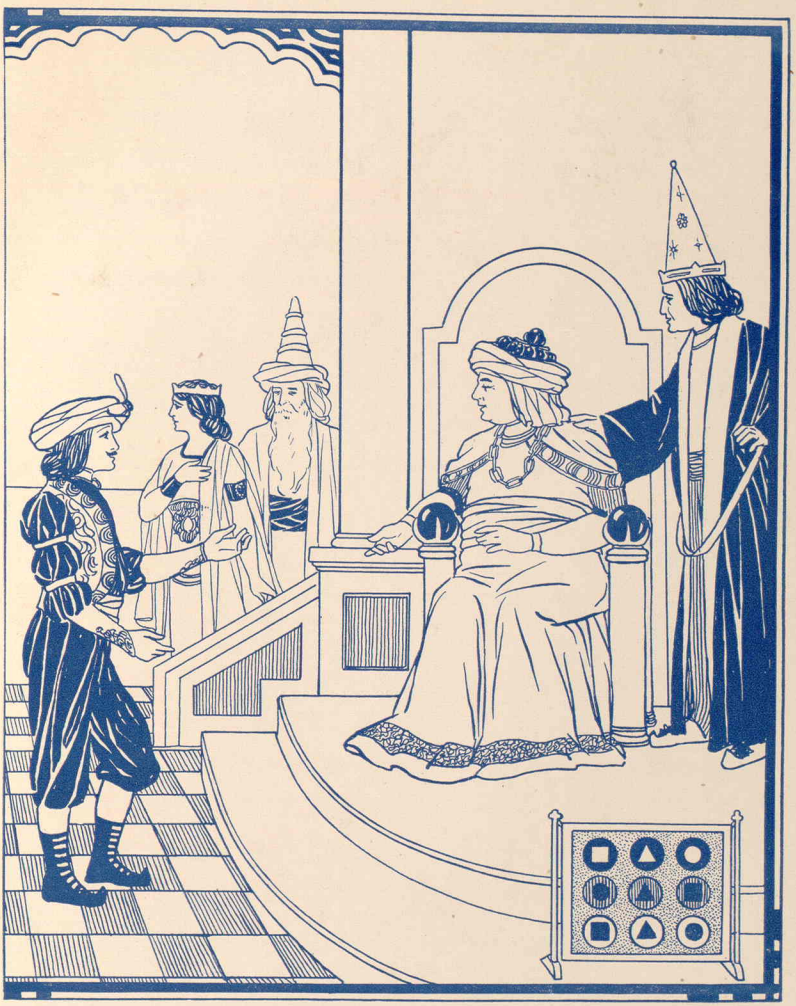
can see a square, a triangle, or a circle. You are to take these disks and place them on the numbered spots on the table beside you — number ten to be left vacant. The disks must then be moved along thick or thin lines into vacant spots, until all three colours, and a square, a triangle, and a circle can be found in each heavy lined circle and in each row of spots. Seven days you may have to accomplish this task for which your life may be the forfeit."

"But what do you mean by rows of spots, and how about the tenth spot?" demanded Bright-Wits, showing no concern over this new test.

"Well wert thou named Bright-Wits," sneered Garrofat. "But I will explain. The rows of spots are the three lines of spots numbered as follows, II - V - VIII, I - IV - VII, and III - VI - IX. The tenth spot is left vacant for the first move. And further, you must cross no spot already occupied by a disk."



THE NINE DISKS.



"If I succeed in solving this puzzle, have you any more tests before giving me the reward which I have already won?" asked the prince.

"That is for me to decide," replied Garrofat with a scowl. "As I have already told you, my love for Azalia, and respect for the wishes of her dead parent, the wise Rajah Onalba, compel me to use every possible resource to insure her future happiness. How better could I do this than by proving to the world that I have bestowed her upon the wisest of princes? The table will be carried to your apartment, and I wish again to remind you that failure now means more than a whipping. Though you shall have that too, for good measure."

"Give yourself no concern on that head," replied Bright-Wits boldly. "For, by Allah, the whips are not yet braided which shall sting my shoulders through any device of thine."

"Bravely said, my dear Bright-Wits," cackled Doola. "But be careful not to swallow any of the

disks; your stomach might find them hard to digest."

"Thrust not thy ugly nose into my affairs," cried the prince, turning savagely upon Doola. "And look to it that you find not in your own stomach two hands' breadth of my dagger without your being put to the trouble of swallowing it or of digesting it thereafter." Then at a sign from Ablano he retired from the room.[1]

During the next week, Bright Wits spent much of his time on the solution of this latest problem. While the prince was thus engaged, Ablano and Azalia held many consultations in the little pavilion under the trees. More like father and child they seemed. A secret understanding appeared to exist between them; which caused Bright-Wits many pangs of jealousy; despite the respect and

[1] *If the reader will cut out the little circular disks which he will find at the back of the book, and place them at random on the numbered spots, leaving number ten vacant for his first move, he may find Bright-Wits' task to be less difficult than it looks.*

affection in which he held his master the Holy Brahman. He was certain that they were concealing something from him. Yet when he tried to discover the mystery in their actions Azalia would but laugh at him; while Ablano gently chided his impatience, saying unto him, "All things are as Allah hath ordered. It is but for us to await his meaning without impatience. Yet be thou not cast down, for the end draweth nigh." Put off, but far from satisfied, Bright-Wits must needs be content.

Now all this time Garrofat and Doola were busy with a little scheme of their own that promised to remove one, and perhaps both, of these meddlesome strangers from the kingdom.

When the seventh day again came round, Bright-Wits repaired to the Audience Chamber and was considerably puzzled to find several hundred soldiers drawn up in the court. Among them he discerned some of his own guards, distinguishable by their high crowned turbans. His wonder was still

further increased by the excessive good humour of Garrofat and his wily brother Doola. Smilingly they waited while slaves bore in the great table; and with exclamations of delight greeted Bright-Wits as he demonstrated his success in mastering the great game of Onalba.

CHAPTER VI

BRIGHT-WITS PICKS AN ESCORT FOR A JOURNEY AND FOILS THE WICKED DESIGN OF GARROFAT

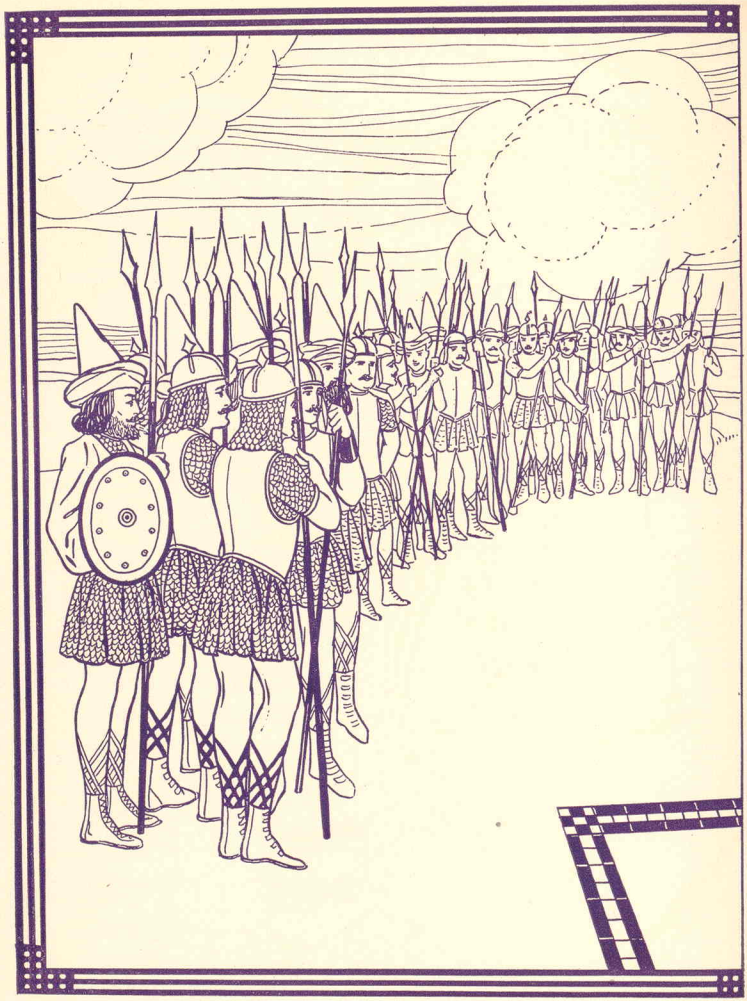
"Verily dost thou deserve success, my dear Prince," smirked Garrofat. "Your probation is almost over. Now before I demand any further proof of your wisdom, it is my desire that you travel over the kingdom for a brief time that you may acquaint yourself with the country and people over whom it appears you are destined to rule, by the grace of Allah, and the help of your own bright wits. With you will go a guard of fifteen soldiers, as befits your rank and station."

Now on hearing this strange announcement, Ablano pierced Garrofat with his eyes. Then staying Bright-Wits, who was about to make reply, he

asked, "What men are to be selected for this escort, and who is to select them?"

Now Garrofat winced at this question, but instantly recovering himself replied, "Has thy stay in Parrabang, O Brahman, made thee so lost to politeness as to cast suspicion on thy host? Has this been the teaching of Brahma? But fear not. Bright-Wits may do his own selecting; only as he is so very clever I would insist that he do it by rule. Fifteen of these soldiers are his own people; with an equal number of my guards he will have thirty to select from. This he must do by arranging the thirty men in a circle, and counting out every tenth man. Now if he is but as clever as usual it should not be difficult for Bright-Wits to take with him none but his own soldiers."

Again Bright-Wits essayed to speak; but again Ablano checked him, and directed that the thirty men should step forth. Now calling Bright-Wits to his side, the Brahman whispered, "If but one



THE SOLDIERS AND GUARDS.

of Garrofat's guards be among your escort you will be assassinated at the first opportunity." For a few moments Ablano whispered thus to the prince, and finished his instructions by telling him not to fear.

Now this whispered conference was but little to the liking of the two plotters, and Garrofat demanded that the selection be made at once.

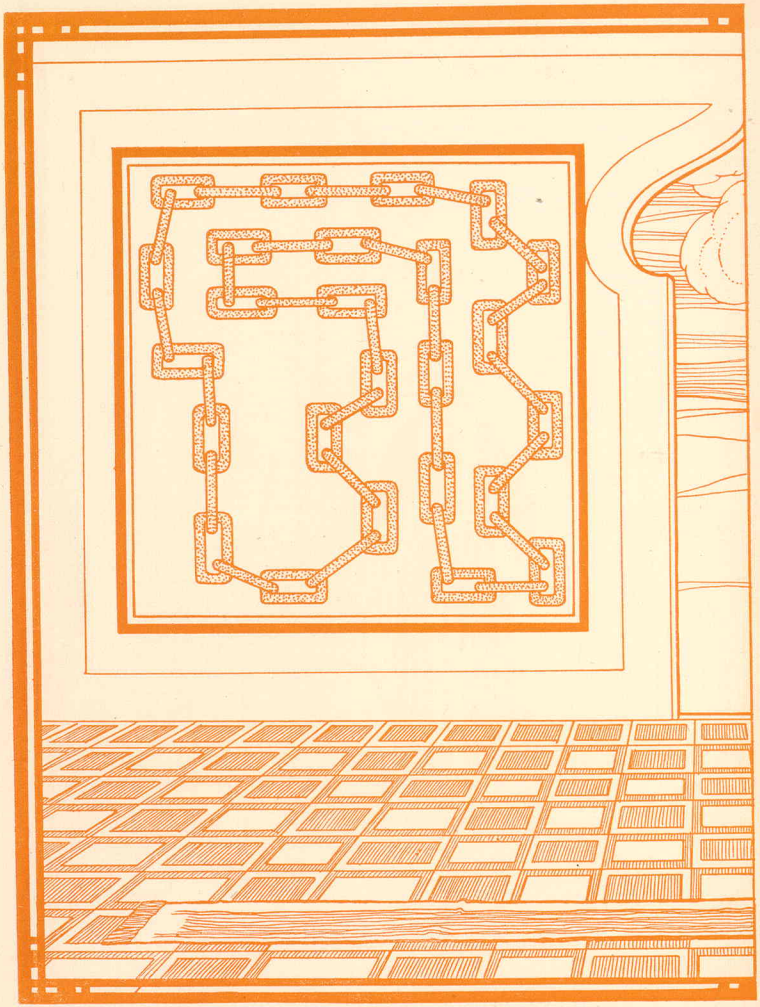
With secret misgivings, but outwardly brave, Bright-Wits descended to the court; where he quickly arranged the thirty soldiers in a circle and began to count. Ablano now crossed over to the princess and, taking her trembling little hands in his, gently chided her for her fears. Bright-Wits, meanwhile, continued to count and select; and to the amazement of Garrofat and Doola none were chosen but the prince's own men.[1]

As the last man stepped out the plotters ex-

[1] *With fifteen pieces of white and fifteen pieces of coloured paper, or any other counters, the reader may learn the way Bright-Wits counted out his own men so successfully.*

changed glances of terror. Quickly recovering themselves, however, they applauded rapturously; while Garrofat pulled a sour smile and said, "Djinn or Genie, by Allah, thou art wonderful. Now that you have shown such amazing skill I have a little problem which as a favour to me I would ask that you work out at your leisure while going forward on your journey." This said, he gave whispered instructions to Doola, who retired, to return almost instantly followed by a slave bearing eighteen oblong shaped pieces of silver, on some of which the links of a chain embossed in gold might be seen.

Bidding the prince to draw near, Garrofat began, "These eighteen pieces which you see here were originally a complete pattern filling the blank square space above the throne. The design in gold is an endless chain representing life. Loosened by time they fell from their place and up to the present no one has been found skilful enough to rear-



THE ENDLESS CHAIN.

range the pieces so that they will fit the space and show the endless chain perfectly joined. Here you may see a counterpart of it in this marble decoration. You would find that no guide in your task, however, except as showing the pattern of the chain when complete. Do me this little service, my dear Prince, and I will for ever be your most devoted admirer."

"I scorn your admiration," broke out Bright-Wits angrily; then catching a warning look from Ablano, he salaamed deeply to Garrofat, and said mockingly, "I am ready to become even a chair mender, if by so doing I can favour a friend or discomfit a rogue."[1]

Now Garrofat refused to show anger at this insolence; but smilingly gave the prince his permission to withdraw that he make ready for his journey through the kingdom which was to begin on the morrow.

[1] *If he is anxious to try to repair the endless chain he has only to cut out the pieces at the back of the book.*

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCE RETURNS TO FIND THAT ABLANO THE BRAHMAN HAS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED

For the next seven days Bright-Wits was in a constant maze of wonder at the magnificence and extent of the kingdom of Parrabang. His fame had spread abroad through the land, so that wherever he went he was welcomed by the people with all the honour and affection that would have been bestowed on a royal prince of the country. Laden with rich gifts, and with the praises of the people still ringing in his ears, he returned to the palace at last. Here he found Garrofat awaiting him with a smile that was far from sweet. The Vizier's sour looks, however, were quickly forgotten when Bright-Wits, casting his eyes up to the windows of the zenana, caught a glance from the starry orbs

of Azalia that set his heart beating to a merry tune.

Ignoring Garrofat's questions as to his travels, Bright-Wits summoned two of his guards, who bore between them a closely wrapped square packet; which upon being opened proved to contain the silver disk, of the eighteen pieces now perfectly restored, its golden chain showing no break in all its length.

It was with difficulty that Garrofat choked down his rage at this latest failure of his plans to discomfit or destroy the prince. Doola, however, pressed forward to welcome Bright-Wits. Bowing and salaaming like a manikin he pranced across the court; and, as he drew near, Bright-Wits noticed that he carried in his hand a narrow strip of teak wood marked off into squares. Calling upon Allah and all the prophets to bear witness to his joy at seeing his dear friend Prince Bright-Wits returned safely from his journey, he would

have clasped the prince in his arms had not our hero thrust him off.

Disregarding the prince's scorn, he endeavoured to call his attention to the little teak wood board which the prince had already observed. "My dear Bright-Wits," he chattered, "I have come to crave a boon at your hands. I want the assistance of your clever wits in solving a little puzzle over which I have spent hours without arriving at a solution. This puzzle is in reality another of the games with which the Great Onalba was fond of amusing himself. So fond indeed was he of this particular amusement that he had an immense representation of the board on which it is played reproduced in stone here in the palace wall. As you can see, my dear Prince, the board is marked off into seven squares, three gray, and three black, while the centre square was left white. In playing the game six counters were used, three black and three white. In starting play, the three black counters

DOOLA'S GAME.

are placed on the black squares, and the three white counters on the gray squares. The centre square is left vacant. The game consists in making the two sets of counters change places; moving one at a time. You can jump as in checkers: that is, you can go over a counter if there is a blank space behind it. You must always move forward, however, and a move once made cannot be withdrawn. Few have ever even seen this one of the games of Onalba, and none but he have ever succeeded in mastering it. Do you think you could solve this little puzzle, my dear Bright-Wits? I am dying to find out just how it is done."

With an angry gesture, Bright-Wits was about to consign Doola and his game to oblivion; but at a nod from Ablano he signed for a slave to take the board from Doola.[1]

Azalia appearing at this moment all else was

[1] *The reader may use six of the counters from the other game in working out this one of Bright-Wits' problems.*

forgotten by Bright-Wits, who rushed to her side and was soon deeply engaged in telling her of his wonder at the greatness and splendour of her kingdom.

Short-lived, however, was to be their joy. With the coming of the next day consternation reigned throughout the palace. Ablano, the Brahman, had disappeared. How or when, none knew.

Couriers and soldiers were hurried abroad throughout the kingdom. The entire country was shrouded in deepest grief. Nothing availed. Not a trace of the Holy Brahman could be found. In the caravansaries about the city, and within the palace naught else was talked of. Everywhere there was evidence of a great sorrow. Short as had been the residence of Ablano in Parrabang, the fame of his wisdom and virtue had spread afar, and he had already a kingdom in the hearts of all the people.

At the first alarm, Bright-Wits instantly sus-

pected treachery on the part of the two conspirators. But investigation proved that they were no less mystified by the strange disappearance than he himself. Six days passed without any tidings, and Bright-Wits, frantic with fear and suspense, was almost in despair. The most puzzling feature of the whole affair was the fact that Azalia apparently evinced no concern. This was surprising in view of the affection which Bright-Wits knew her to cherish for the missing Brahman. When he chided her for this seeming heartlessness, she but smiled at him; nor would tell him what she knew.

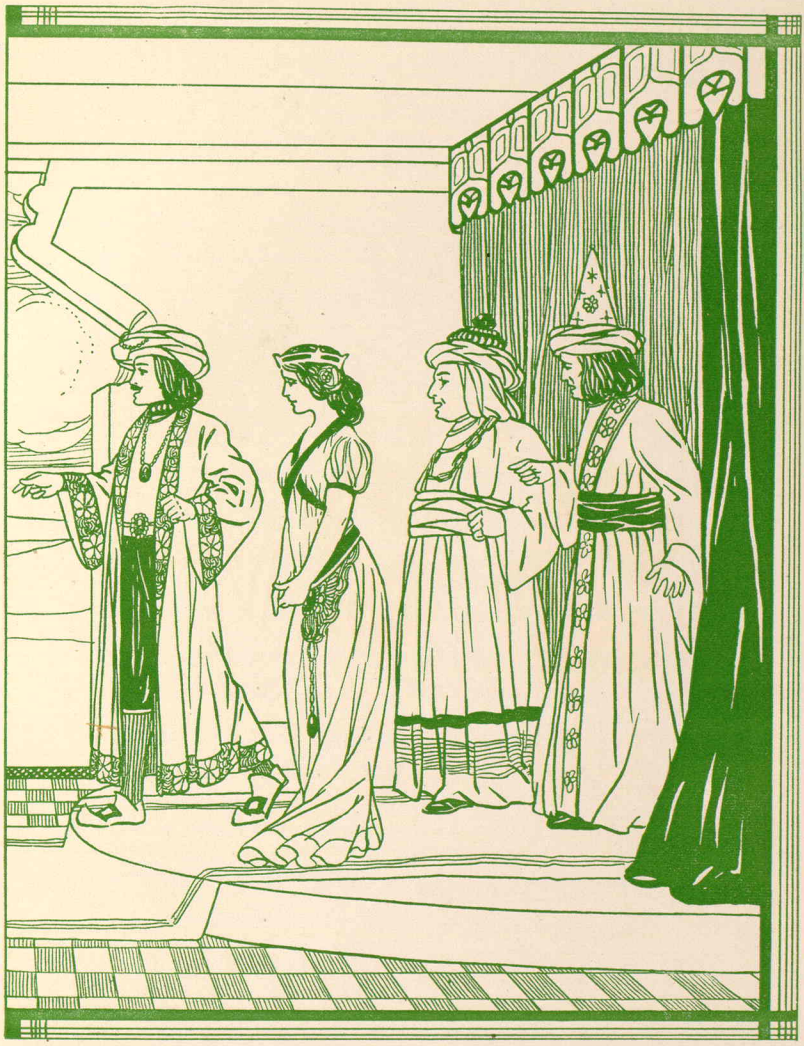
CHAPTER VIII

RETURN OF ABLANO. GARROFAT AND DOOLA DECIDE ON DESPERATE MEASURES. THE FINAL TEST

So matters stood; even the successful solution of Doola's puzzle, which the prince had easily accomplished, passed almost unnoticed. Imagine, then, the general surprise when, on the seventh day, Ablano returned as mysteriously as he had vanished. To all inquiries as to his absence Ablano remained deaf. With him there had come three strangers, who from their dress and appearance were inhabitants of the great desert to the north of Parrabang.

When the excitement had in some measure subsided, and the wanderer had embraced Bright-Wits and Azalia, Ablano turned to Garrofat and thus addressed him, "Know, thou who art called Gar-

THE EIGHT PIECES OF MONEY.



rofat, that with pride I have watched the success of my dearly beloved pupil in the performance of the various tasks which you have seen fit to impose upon him. Now I, myself, would fain submit to him a question; that I may put to the test his wisdom and justice and learn if all my teachings have borne good fruit. Now two of these dwellers in the desert whom you see here with me halted to-day by the wayside and prepared to break their fast. The food between them consisted of eight small loaves; one possessing five, and the other, three. Now as they seated themselves this third man arrived and they offered unto him a share of their food. During the meal all ate of the loaves in equal portion. The repast over, their guest threw down eight pieces of money in payment for his share. Dissension now began. He who had the five loaves claimed five coins; but the other objected, and insisted that as all had partaken equally of the food that the money should be divided equally; each

taking four coins. They were still disputing when I overtook them, and they begged me to settle the matter. Now Bright-Wits, I put the question to you. What would be a proper division of the money, so that each may have justice?"

Sorely puzzled, the prince knit his brows in thought; while Garrofat and Doola grinned broadly at the prospect of his failure. Their joy was short-lived, however, as, with a smile to Ablano, Bright-Wits announced that both of the strangers were in the wrong. Then he pointed out the proper distribution of the coins. Now when the prince had answered Ablano embraced him; saying, "verily am I proud of thee, my son and pupil. Be of good heart. Your reward is near."

Garrofat and Doola, who for the moment were forgotten, now claimed attention. Ordering Bright-Wits to draw near, the crafty Vizier Garrofat thus addressed him, "Know thou, most wise and fortunate of princes, that I have one other task to

put to you. Now as this one may be the last, I would give much thought to it to the end that it prove the supreme test of the boasted brightness of your wits. To-night, therefore, I will endeavour to devise such a task that your successful accomplishment of it will prove to all the world that you are in truth wise enough to sit upon the throne of the Great Onalba." So saying he dismissed the assembled people, and beckoning Doola, sought the seclusion of his own apartment.

In obedience to the command of Garrofat, Bright-Wits presented himself in the great council hall of the palace at noon of the next day. His entrance was the signal for a demonstration of joy from the guards who already looked on him as their future leader. The presence of the Emirs of the eight provinces of the kingdom perplexed him, nor could he understand the meaning of the double row of guards placed near the throne.

When Bright-Wits had made obeisance, Garrofat

arose and ordered a slave to remove the rug which lay upon the floor before the throne. This done, there was revealed a square, slightly sunk into the marble, at one corner of which could be seen the head of a silver serpent set in the stone; while at the opposite corner the tail of the serpent was visible. But for these two pieces the square was blank. Doola now entered, followed by a slave who bore a number of pieces of metal which proved to be the missing parts of the serpent's body. These were placed beside the square.

Now when all these things had been done, Garrofat again addressed the prince, "Know, O Bright-Wits, that this is to be your last task. To fail now means death. Not Allah, himself, could save you. To win, however, means life, and the hand of Azalia, than whom the Houris in Paradise are not more fair. Long I pondered the selection of this final task; and it is to your master, Ablano, that I am indebted for my choice. He in fact suggested

this very test. Know then, that somewhere in that square at your feet is concealed a secret spring which opens a receptacle containing the last instructions of the Great Onalba. The silver serpent is the key. You will see that one of the pieces is marked with a star. Now when the whole is properly fitted together it will set inside that square and the star will rest directly above the hidden spring. As you have most at stake, it is for you to give to the world the last words of the Rajah. Is your wit keen enough, and your courage high enough to essay and conquer for the last time?"

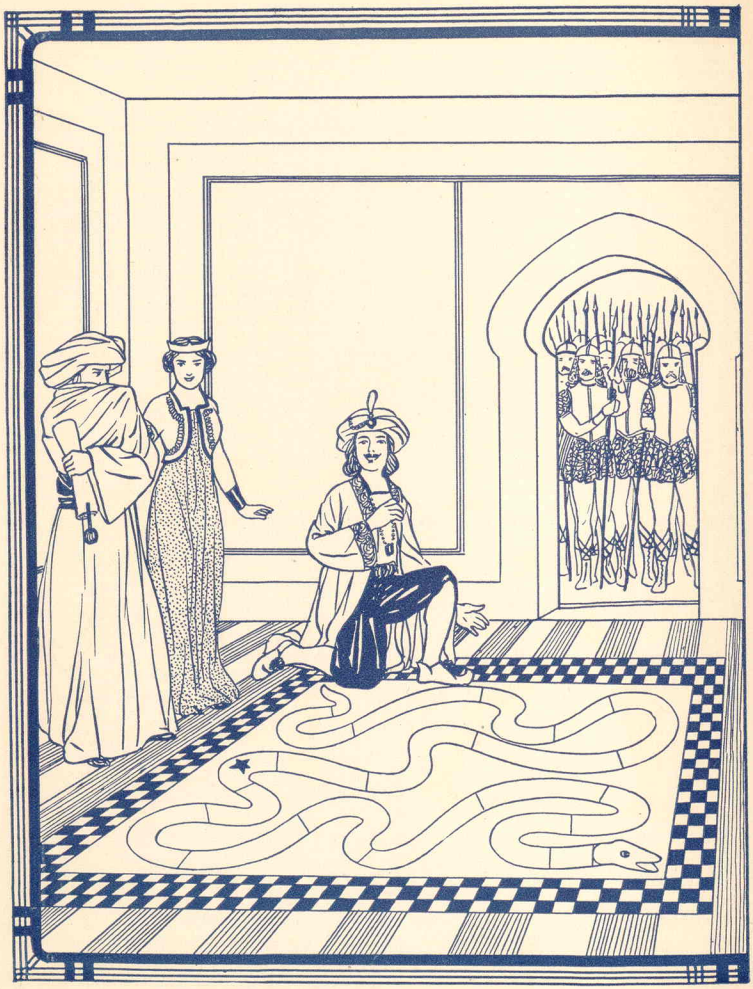
As Garrofat ceased speaking, Bright-Wits glanced quickly at Azalia, and the light he saw shining in her eyes would have spurred him to tempt any fate at that moment. Trembling, but not from fear, the prince gravely saluted Garrofat and accepted the task and all its conditions. Then, in a voice that was calm and clear he asked, "Must I do this now?"

"Now. At once," hissed Garrofat. "Now, while thy guardian spirit is gone."

Then for the first time Bright-Wits noticed the absence of Ablano, the Brahman. Nor could he recognize the tall stranger standing beside Azalia; his face muffled in a fold of his robe. Then too, he vaguely wondered at the presence of the many dignitaries and officers of the kingdom, and at the strange air of mystery which seemed to pervade the entire audience chamber.

Fear for an instant seized his heart; but a glance from Azalia reassured while it still further mystified him. The savage command of Garrofat that he waste no more time brought him to his senses; and dropping on his knees, he began his task. A breathless stillness reigned as the prince adjusted and readjusted the pieces. Garrofat and the wily Doola watching, meanwhile, with looks now filled with cunning, now with fear.

Time after time, Bright-Wits arranged the pieces



THE SERPENT.

of silver whose proper placing meant so much to him. The minutes passed until he seemed to be spending hours on this last and fatal test. Glancing up from time to time, he could see the tall stranger moving about the hall; now whispering to this one, now to another of the Emirs. Garrofat and Doola following his movements with looks of puzzled concern.

At last, in moving one of the pieces, Bright-Wits detected a slight click. Carefully, now, he proceeded, a dozen more moves, and lo! the serpent is complete in its position. Tremblingly he presses above the star. Again the click. The piece slips round to one side and there is revealed a small square opening in which rests a sealed parchment. Quickly drawing forth the packet, the prince was about to break the seal, when to his astonishment the parchment was snatched from his hand by the stranger.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DECREE OF ONALBA. DOWNFALL OF THE PLOTTERS. BRIGHT-WITS RECEIVES HIS REWARD

In a voice that rang through the great hall the stranger commanded silence. Then tearing the parchment open he read the amazing decree which Onalba had written thereon. "This decree, I, Onalba, Rajah of Parrabang, give to my people. Let all hearken, and obey these my instructions. Knowing that my days are soon to cease, and that my well beloved daughter Azalia will come to rule in my place, I, filled with a desire that my kingdom be governed wisely and my beloved child wed worthily, decided to absent myself from the affairs of my realm and to journey out into the world that I might seek among the princes of the earth one who would be full of the promise of wisdom and

of high courage. One fitted to be the consort of the matchless Azalia and in whom I could see my fondest desires bear fruit. Now that none might know me, I permitted my beard to grow to my girdle, and stained it with a white pigment. Then I had only to reverse my name, Onalba, to become Ablano; and in the Holy Brahman none knew the Rajah of Parrabang. Hearing tidings of the fame of Prince Bright-Wits, I journeyed hence to Mogadore. There I tarried studying the heart and instructing the mind of this jewel among sons and star among princes. Nor has he failed me. In him I have found one who will be a fitting lord for my child Azalia and a worthy successor to the great Rajahs who have sat upon the throne of Parrabang.

"His wisdom has been tested by the plotting of those whom I had trusted as mine own sons. Yet naught has availed against him. Here before the Council of Emirs, and all my people, I now decree

Bright-Wits to be my chosen successor, and bestow upon him the hand of the Princess Azalia. Seven weeks from this day, on the Feast of Yama, shall their wedding be celebrated."

Loud cries now came from all parts of the great hall, while Garrofat roared, "Up guards. Cut down these rascally impostors." But with a wave of his hand, the stranger stayed the tumult. "Peace," he cried, "I have not yet ended." Then, still concealing his face he continued to read from the decree.

"Now because of my absence there has risen envy and treachery in the hearts of those who beforetime I have heaped with honours and riches. Know you, Garrofat, and thee, Doola, that because of your villainy your lives are forfeit. All your plotting has come to naught. Many times has my rage almost betrayed my secret; which none knew but my dear child Azalia. Her I could not long deceive. Let the guards drag from our sight these

wretches whose fat carcasses are to make a banquet for the royal beasts in the pits beneath the palace."

Terror now blanched the faces of the fallen conspirators. "It is a lie," they screamed in concert. "Onalba is dead."

"Look then, and believe," cried the stranger. Throwing the robe from before his face, Onalba, the Rajah, stood before them. In an instant he was gathering Azalia and Bright-Wits to his bosom, while the villainous Garrofat and his cowardly brother fell stricken into the arms of the guards.

Loud cheers now rent the air. Into the great square before the palace thousands of the people had gathered to greet their beloved Rajah, and to lay rich gifts at the feet of Prince Bright-Wits and the happy princess. The next day the Rajah ordered a great feast in honour of the espousals. Swift couriers were despatched to Mogadore to

inform the father of Bright-Wits of the great good fortune that had befallen his son.

The seven weeks flew by on wings of love; and as Onalba had decreed, Bright-Wits and Azalia were married in the famous garden of the fountains.

Now if you have worked out all the tasks which were set to the prince during his wonderful adventures in Parrabang, you can tell whether his happiness was easily won.

HOW PRINCE BRIGHT-WITS SOLVED THE PUZZLES

The Five Shields

To simplify explanation, set the spindles in a row. We will then refer to them as L. for left, C. centre, and R. for the right hand spindle. Move as follows, numbers refer to the shields.

Place No. 1 on C.
" " 2 " R.
" " 1 " R.
" " 3 " C.
" " 1 " L.
" " 2 " C.
" " 1 " C.
" " 4 " R.
" " 1 " R.
" " 2 " L.
" " 1 " L.
" " 3 " R.
" " 1 " C.
" " 2 " R.
" " 1 " R.

Four are now transferred.

Place No. 5 on C.
Place No. 1 on L.
" " 2 " C.
" " 1 " C.
" " 3 " L.
" " 1 " R.
" " 2 " L.
" " 1 " L.
" " 4 " C.
" " 1 " C.
" " 2 " R.
" " 1 " R.
" " 3 " C.
" " 1 " L.
" " 2 " C.
" " 1 " C.

And the riddle is solved. 31 moves.

The Nine Disks

No absolute rule would apply to all positions, which makes this game more fascinating. The following solution of one random placing of the disks will illustrate the general process. To simplify explanation we will designate the counters as follows.

The gray counter with the square we will call G. s., the one with a triangle G. t., and the one with the circle G. c. W. s., etc., for the white disks, and B. s., etc., for the black, placed at random on the following spots.

On	spot	No.	1	place	B. c.	On	spot	No.	6 place W. t.
"	"	"	2	"	B. t.	"	"	"	7 " B. s.
"	"	"	3	"	W. c.	"	"	"	8 " G. t.
"	"	"	4	"	G. s.	"	"	"	9 " G. c.
"	"	"	5	"	W. s.				

With the above arrangement of the disks the solution is as below:

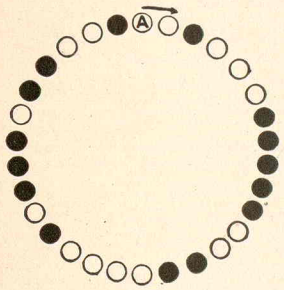
Move	G. c.	from	9	to	10.	Move	G. s.	from	4	to	2.
"	G. t.	"	8	"	9.	"	B. c.	"	6	"	4.
"	W. t.	"	6	"	8.	"	W. s.	"	5	"	6.
"	B. c.	"	1	"	6.	"	B. c.	"	4	"	5.
"	W. c.	"	3	"	1.	"	G. t.	"	9	"	4.
"	B. t.	"	2	"	3.	"	G. c.	"	10	"	9.

BRIGHT-WITS, PRINCE OF MOGADORE

The Soldiers and Guards

Before beginning to select the men for his escort, Bright-Wits arranged the thirty men in a circle, the black spots representing his own men.

Then he began to count with the man marked A.



Doola's Game

The key to this puzzle lies in following these two rules:

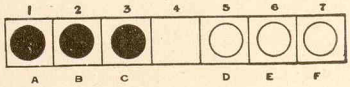
1. After moving a counter, one of the *opposite colour* must invariably be passed over it.

2. After having passed one counter over another,

the next move will be with a counter of the colour of the first one moved.

After the ninth move, the next will be with one of the same colour.

Beginning with the white counters the moves are:



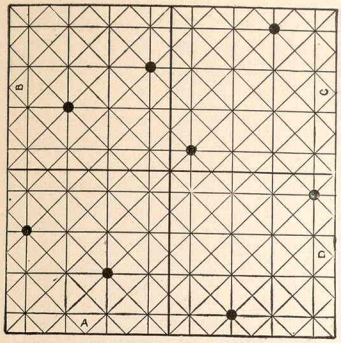
1. D. moves into space 4.
2. C. passes over D. into space 5.
3. B. moves into space 3.
4. D. passes over B. into space 2.
5. E. passes over C. into space 4.
6. F. moves into space 6.
7. C. passes over F. into space 7.
8. B. passes over E. into space 5.
9. A. passes over D. into space 3.
10. D. moves into space 1.
11. E. passes over A. into space 2.
12. F. passes over B. into space 4.
13. B. moves into space 6.
14. A. passes over F. into space 5.
15. F. moves into space 3, and the trick is done.

Every move must be in a forward direction, white going one way, black the other.

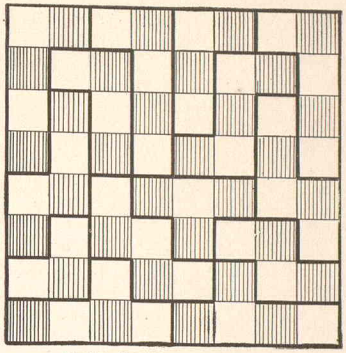
The Eight Pieces of Money

He who had 5 loaves was entitled to 7 pieces and he who had 3 loaves to but 1. Divide the loaves into thirds and one had 15 thirds, the other but 9 thirds, or 24 thirds in all. Now as all three ate alike they had 8 thirds each. Therefore he of the 5 loaves contributed 7 parts of the stranger's meal, while the other, who had only 3 loaves or 9 thirds in all, gave but one part.

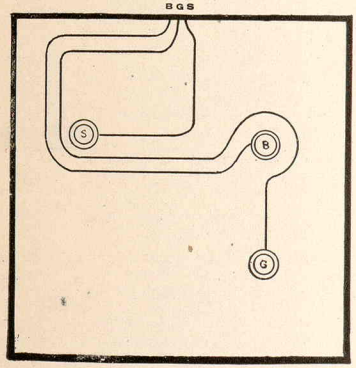
The serpent puzzle can be worked out in a number of ways by placing the head and tail at random and then endeavouring to connect them with the remaining pieces.



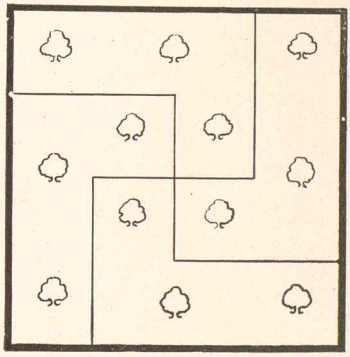
THE EIGHT PROVINCES SOLUTION.



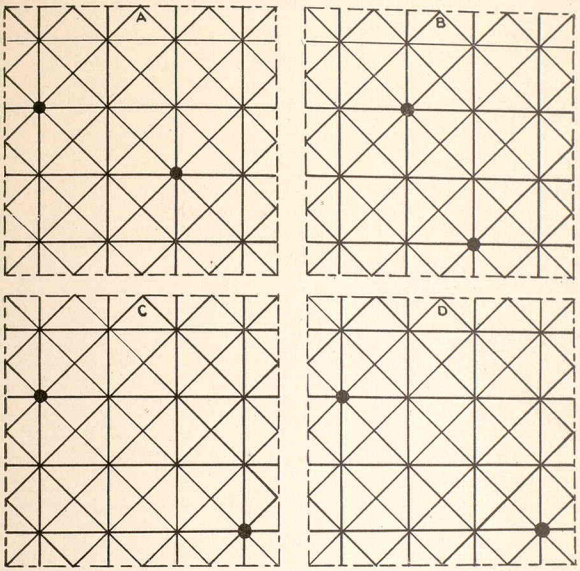
THE RUG SOLUTION.

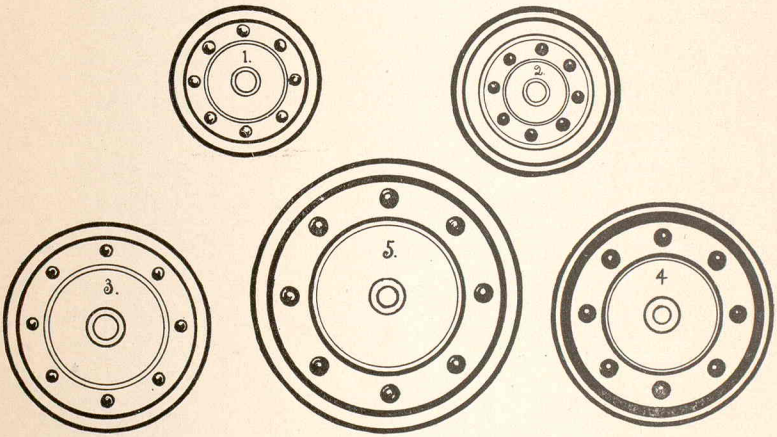


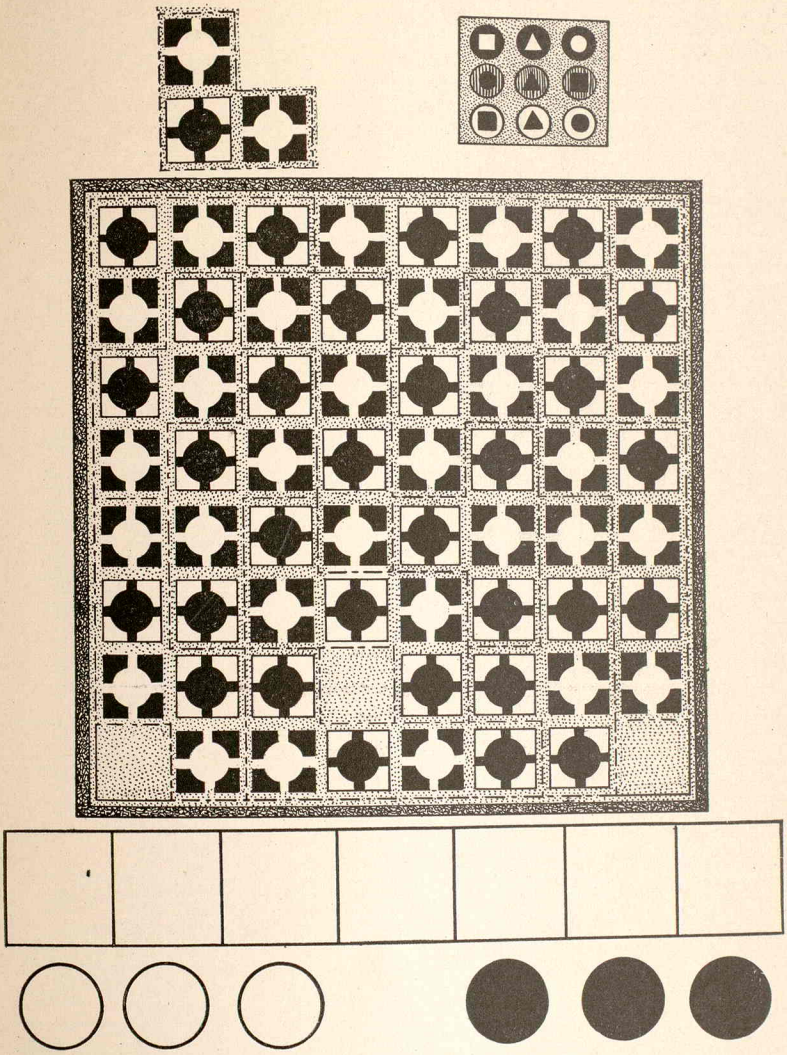
THE THREE FOUNTAINS AND THE THREE GATES SOLUTION.

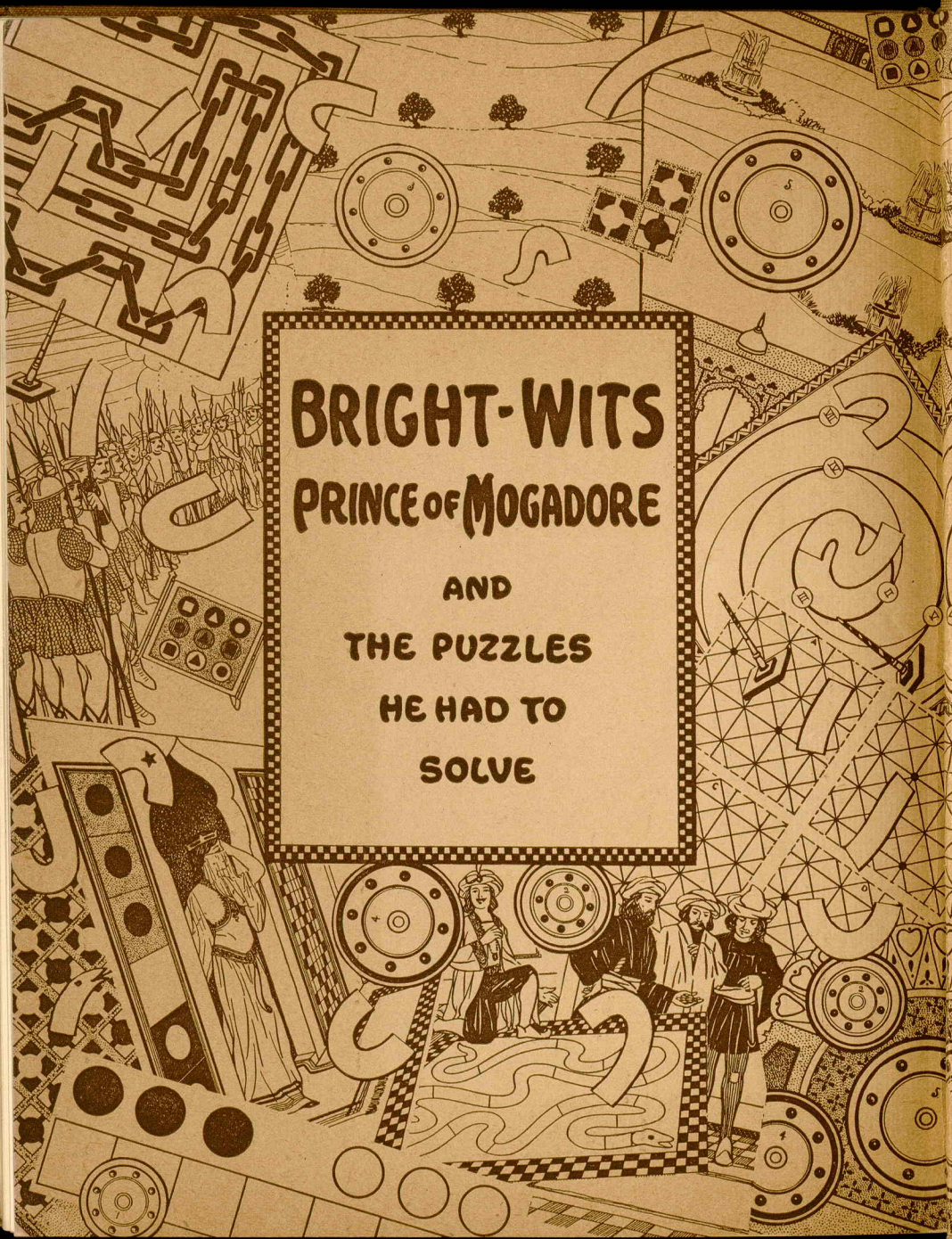


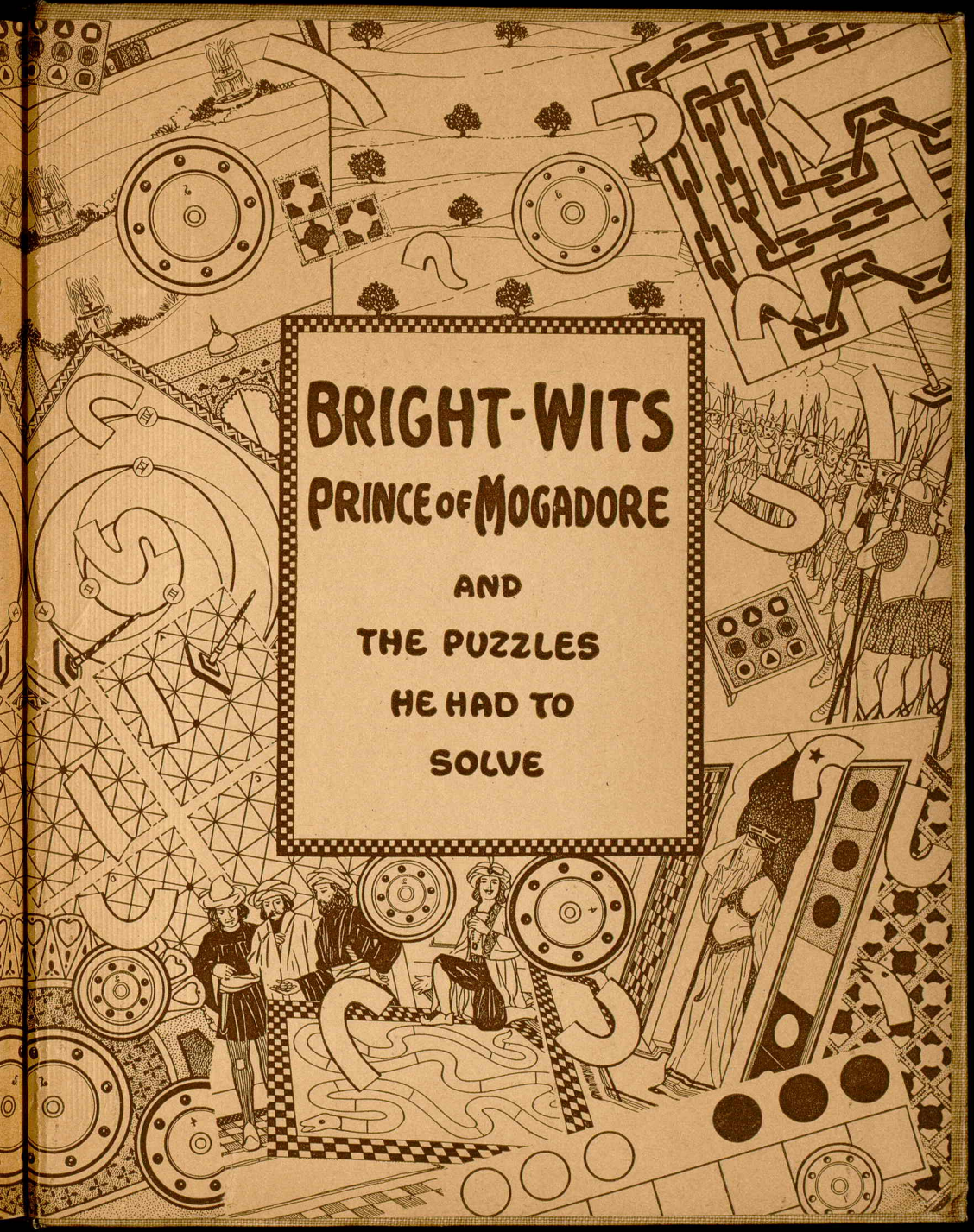
THE ZOLTAN'S ORCHARD SOLUTION.


A
B
C
D


1.
2.
3.
5.
4.




BRIGHT-WITS
PRINCE OF MOGADORE
AND
THE PUZZLES
HE HAD TO
SOLVE



BRIGHT-WITS
PRINCE OF MOGADORE

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