

**IN THE DESERT
OF WAITING**

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In the desert of waiting by Annie F. Johnston

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ANNIE F. JOHNSTON

**IN THE DESERT
OF WAITING**



IN
THE DESERT
OF WAITING

THE LEGEND OF
CAMEL-BACK MOUNTAIN

BY

Annie Fellows Johnston

Author of "The Little Colonel Series," "Big
Brother," "Joel; A Boy of Galilee," etc.

"Thy alchemist Contentment be"

—SADI

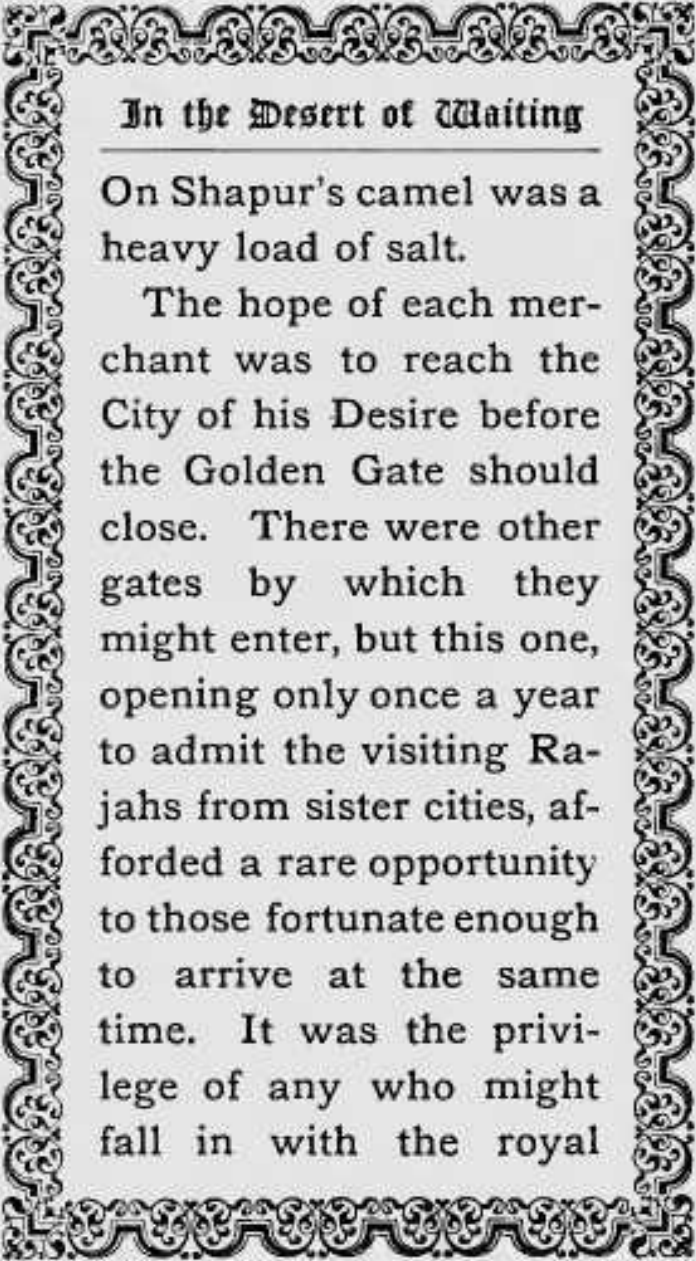
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BOSTON
L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

952.
177.
IN
1705
Edition
1870

O ye, who vainly question
Why there must ever lie twixt
 man
And the far City of his Desire
Some desert waste of disap-
 pointment,
Where he must watch the
 Caravan
Pass on and leave him with
 his baffled hopes,
Here is the reason.
By the grace of Allah,
 Read !

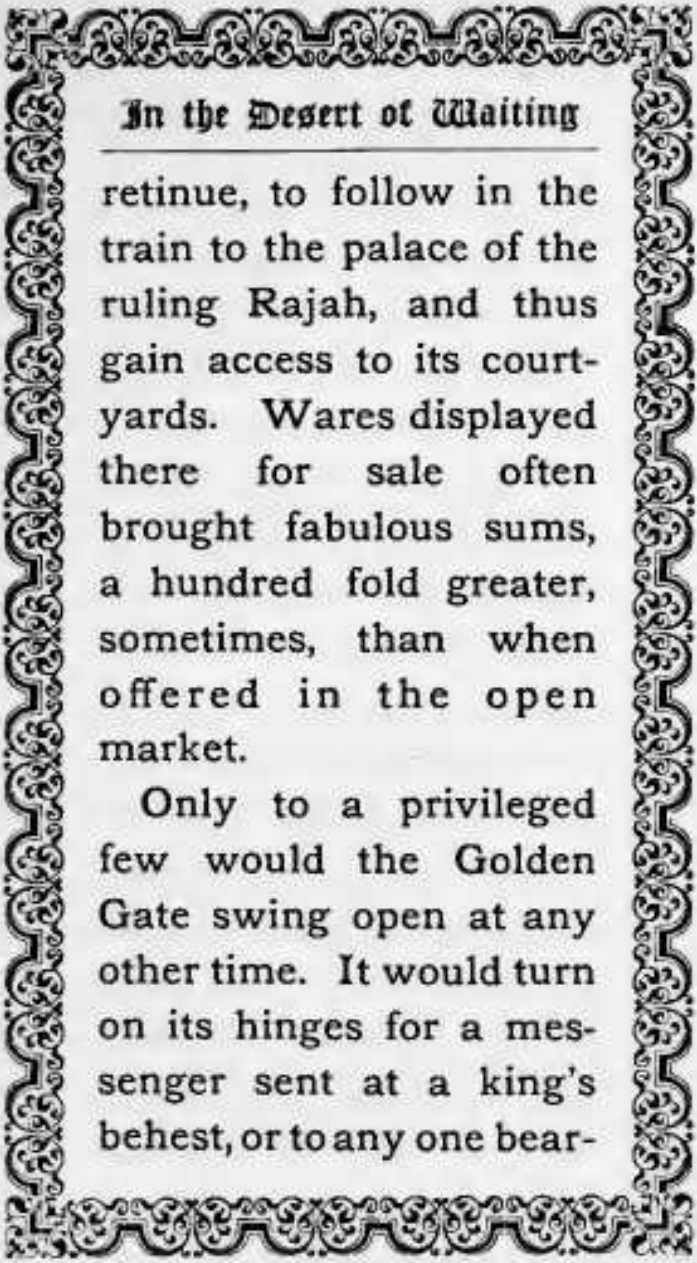
ONCE upon a time,
a caravan set out
across the desert,
laden with merchandise
for a far distant market.
Some of the camels bore
in their packs wine-skins
that held the richest vin-
tage of the Orient. Some
bore tapestries and some
carried dyestuffs and the
silken fruits of the loom.



In the Desert of Waiting

On Shapur's camel was a heavy load of salt.

The hope of each merchant was to reach the City of his Desire before the Golden Gate should close. There were other gates by which they might enter, but this one, opening only once a year to admit the visiting Rajahs from sister cities, afforded a rare opportunity to those fortunate enough to arrive at the same time. It was the privilege of any who might fall in with the royal



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retinue, to follow in the train to the palace of the ruling Rajah, and thus gain access to its courtyards. Wares displayed there for sale often brought fabulous sums, a hundred fold greater, sometimes, than when offered in the open market.

Only to a privileged few would the Golden Gate swing open at any other time. It would turn on its hinges for a messenger sent at a king's behest, or to any one bear-



In the Desert of Waiting

ing wares so rare and precious that only princes could purchase, but no common vendor could hope to pass its shining portal, save in the rear of the train that yearly followed the Rajahs.

So they urged their beasts with all diligence. Foremost in the caravan and most zealous of all was Shapur. In his heart burned the desire to be the first one to enter the Golden Gate, and the first one at the palace with his wares. But half way