

THE DANCER OF SHAMAHKA

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The dancer of Shamahka by Armen Ohanian

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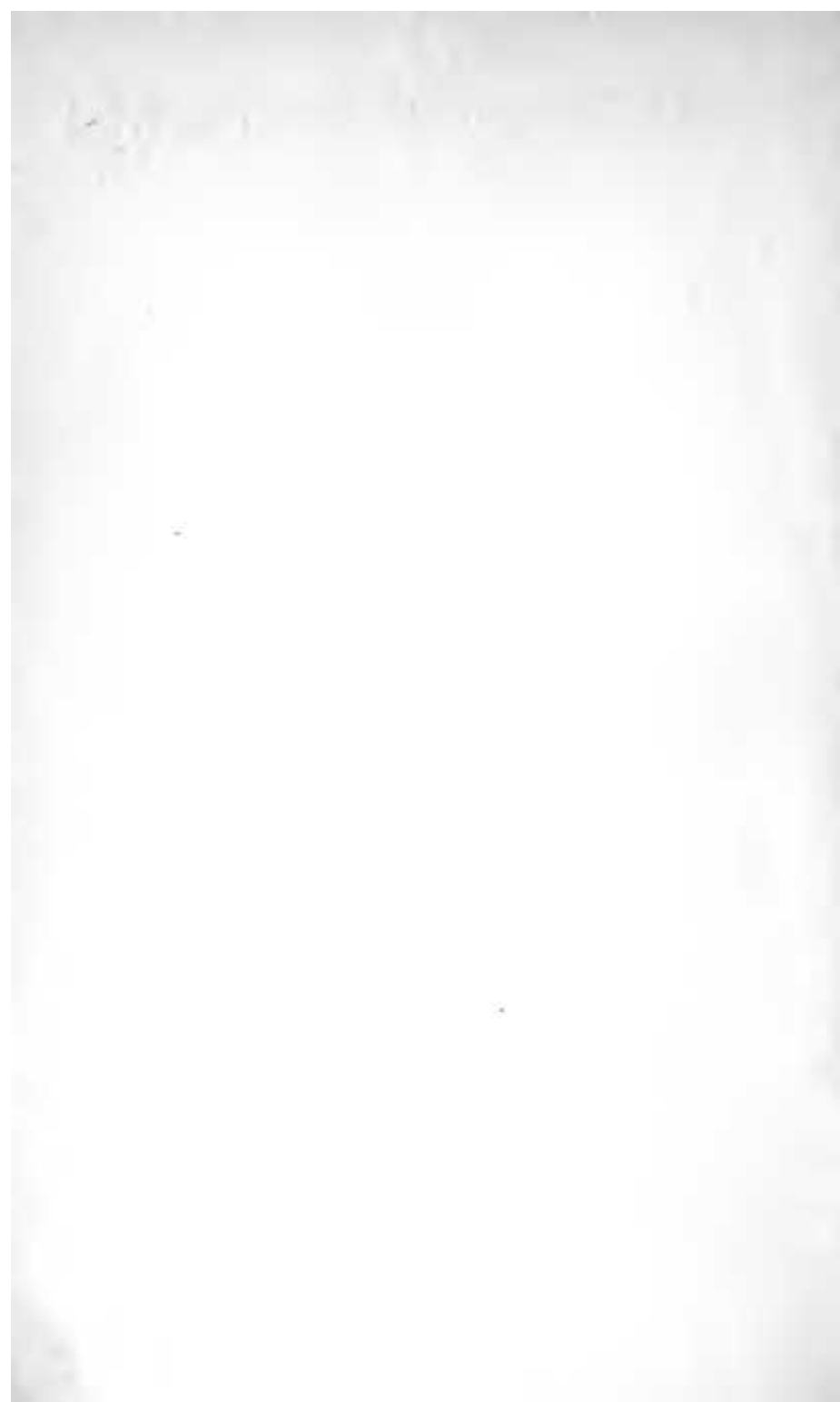
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ARMEN OHANIAN

**THE DANCER
OF SHAMAHKA**

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54768

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by Armen Ohanian



I danced in the fire—
Behold me, the Flamel
I danced in abysses—
Behold me, the Wind!

54768

Jonathan Cape
Eleven Gower Street, London

Letter to Armen Ohanian from Anatole France

PREFACE

DEAR MADEMOISELLE,—

I thank you very much for having allowed me to read these pages from your memories.

You have put into these descriptions and tales the same charm that exhales from your eyes and your gestures. I do not know what subtle art is hidden beneath your perfect simplicity, but you have known how to paint with a word the dawns and the sunsets of the Caucasus, and to reveal a thousand secrets of Nature and of life.

It is delicious to see you as a little child with your sisters, Anahide, the mathematician; Huguine, who knows in history only the adventures of the djinns, the peris, the houris, and the little Katarine, destined to die without having sinned. You enrapture us, dear Armen, with your revelations of your "minds like those of little wild animals."

And what a miracle of *naïveté*, your disputes with old Nani as to the superiority of Christian faith over the religion of Mohammed!

You lead us into scenes which can never be forgotten: the drowsy school of Toutouse, the services of Holy Week, the festival of Easter, when one eats kebab of mutton, the meeting with the handsome peasant, and that solemn night of watching when, as

P R E F A C E

you have said, it seemed that the moon was broken to fill the assembly with its light. How much that contains of poetry and of truth! How beautiful it is!

Do not refuse, dear mademoiselle, the felicitations and the thanks of your old friend,

ANATOLE FRANCE.

CONTENTS

ARMENIA

	PAGE
ZERGUERAN	9
Dawns of the Caucasus—The seven souls of a cat—The visit of the dandansaze—The Evil Eye and little Katarine—The sacred month of Mouharem—Easter in Armenia—Mingula dances on the tombs of the saints—Evening—Night at the miraculous springs—The bride of the sculptor of amber—The dance of the Mongolian dervishes—An evening with the priest Ter-Barsegh—The tale of the fakir and his Onyx—The death of Katarine—Ter-Barsegh describes the creation of man.	
SHAMAHKA	51
The love of King Dandonk for the Queen of Shamahka—Ker-Galassi, Mountain of the Virgin—Mary of Magdala—Alikh speaks of love and Zoroaster—My father's library—Sunday teaches the meaning of eternity—The wrath of the mountains destroys Shamahka.	
BAKU	68
The shores of the Caspian Sea—We enter Baku—The nightmare of Russian schools—Prince Galitzine, the Archangel—The masseur's bombs—Rahim, the Tartar lover—The Cossack terror—Massacre—Rahim risks his life—The disguised Armenians—I watch in the night—New massacre—The Cossacks charge—The Tsar gives his people a constitution.	

PERSIA

RESHT	95
My unknown husband—A bridal journey to Resht—The house of Assatour-Khan—I study the duties of an Armenian wife—The Evil Spirits seize me—The civilized uncle takes me to the bazaars—The dervish reads the stars—The nuptial bath—I meet my husband.	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TEHERAN	120
<p>The little palace of the vizir—My husband goes to save the world—Death—General Sasso-Tates is generous—The little eunuch describes Europe—The love of Queen-of-the-Crowns—The house of Envar-ed-Doule—Persian nights—Prince Sword-of-the-Empire calls—The strange birth of Prince Sword-of-the-Empire—The wise man Scied-ed-Dine consults the omen—The omens do not deceive—The Queen makes me beautiful—The love of Bahman—The real life of Persian women—Djende and the saintly fakir—The marriage of little Subun, the leper—The merchant of brocades—The French Princess and the Palace of Forty Mirrors—The Shah gives audience in the palace of Dar-Bar—A summer's night with the courtesans of Teheran—Shah-Abdul-Azim celebrates Moularein—A Christian in the mosque—The Queen amuses herself—A comet comes out of the west—Prince M . . . es-Saltaneh sings his last song—The little Shah is unhappy—The daughter of a djinn—I dance for the Shah—Scandal in Persia—The story of Mougdoussi-Khanoum—I go on pilgrimage.</p>	
TOWARDS JERUSALEM	
ACROSS THE CAUCASUS	205
<p>A night in the desert—Rahim's last gift—Kaarik dies for love—The career of Eyes of Fire—The strange history of Georgia—The Dance of the Swords for the Viceroy—The merchant of swords gives a banquet—The jeweller's dream—Schiller in Akoulis—A train to the Black Sea.</p>	
CONSTANTINOPLE AND GREECE	222
<p>I speak of the rope in the house of the hangman—Nasle Khanoum outwits me—Annette knocks at my door—A night of the Bosphorus—Greece.</p>	
EGYPT	237
<p>The catacombs—How Semiramis loved the King of Armenia—The bestiality of civilization—I see the Sphinx by moonlight—The heart of Pharaoh—Our dream of the civilized countries—The sacred dance of maternity—I dance for the two Khedivas—A civilized Armenian patriarch—The wager between Pasha and Bey—My Neopolitan count—The Englishmen tell me of music-halls—Farewell to Asia.</p>	