

**VERNON'S AUNT; BEING
THE ORIENTAL
EXPERIENCES OF
MISS LAVINIA MOFFAT**

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Vernon's aunt; being the Oriental experiences of Miss Lavinia Moffat by Sara Jeannette
Duncan

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SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN

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KNOCKED HIM DOWN

VERNON'S AUNT

BEING THE

Oriental Experiences of Miss Lavinia Moffat

BY

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN

(MRS EVERARD COTES)



WITH 47 ILLUSTRATIONS BY HAL HURST

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VERNON'S AUNT

CHAPTER I

THE idea of making a visit to my nephew, Vernon Hugo Hawkins, who lives in the North-West Provinces, India, and has an appointment in the Forest Department, came to me in the night. It was the night, to be quite accurate, of the fifteenth of November, 1892. I am perfectly certain about the date because it is down in my diary, recording the birth of the vicar's wife's seventh daughter, with some observations. All the afternoon I had been dressing dolls in early Victorian styles for a Zenana mission at a work party, while Letitia Bray read aloud a book of travels in the East, and when I went to bed

I found my imagination so taken up with Oriental matters that I could not sleep I tossed about for hours wrestling, so to speak, with cocoanut palms, and the sacred Ganges, and little heathen with nothing on. My mind was a chaos of temples to Krishna and Rampore chudders, mosques and nose-rings, Hindoo widows and Brahminy bulls. Strangely enough, the only Oriental object with which I was acquainted, Vernon Hawkins, did not occur to me until nearly two o'clock in the morning. With him, however, came the inspiration to make the journey; and I found repose in the determination to go myself and see whether the monkeys did break open the cocoanuts by throwing them down from the trees, whether victims really allowed themselves to be crushed by the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, and to what extent the natives actually were adopting our civilisation, our clothes, and the Thirty-nine Articles.

Next day I hesitated a little, never having been out of England before, and