

**THE ARAB
BRIDE, A TALE**

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The Arab Bride, a Tale by S. W. Barber

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BY

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THE ARAB BRIDE.

FAR o'er the troubled deep a lurid gleam
Bursts thro' yon cloud, from the sun's latest beam,
And lights for a moment, with warning ray,
A bark who still plougheth her onward way
Thro' the grey mass of waters:—why will she,—
So beautiful in all her tracery,
You could almost deem that each spar and shroud
Were wove by fond fairy from summer cloud,—
Venture upon that dreary scene alone,
To tempt that night, that storm which cometh on?
Nought now is heard, save the billow knocking
'Gainst the bark's hull, now diving, now rocking,
Or the seabird's wild and shuddering scream,
As she wingeth past like some thing of dream;

The wind, no longer a moan as before,
Runneth thro' each shroud with a hollow roar,
And driveth the prow thro' each madd'ning wave,
Which yawns for her prey like a hungry grave ;
Now round the mast the white spray is clinging,
Far overhead every spar is ringing,
Hark ! on the welkin that low, clanging boom,
The thunder, the thunder, hath burst from the womb ;
He comes on his hot and fiery steed,
He tears up the turf of heaven's inky mead,
And darts thro' the jagged rent that snaky flash,
Which runs thro' the mast with a hideous crash,
And drags the torn hull 'neath the hissing sea
Down, into the depths of immensity !
From the whirling eddy a fearful scream,
Is sent up for help to the pale moonbeam ;
But she smiles on each wretch struggling for breath,—
A torch to light them to the realms of death.
All, all are gone, save one athletic form,
Who buffets still against th' increasing storm,
With sinewy arm he strikes against each foe,
Yet faster, stronger, come they at each blow ;

Tho' the lightning scorches his very brow,
Tho' the shivering foam rides o'er it now,
Tho' the hail darts her arrows thro' his hair,
And wounds his brain, he fights in wild despair,
And crests each billow as she rusheth on,
Prepares for further war when her's is done;
But colder, and colder, his life-blood flows,
Feebler, and feebler, are his dizzy blows,
Higher, and higher yet, the waves' array,
Chilly, more chilly still, the cutting spray,
Yet still he struggles on—against his breast
A clammy thing for a moment is prest,
It gains his arm, his hand—shall it pass by?
Can it be some one in death's agony?
He darts at it, perchance in time to save,
Tho' for a time, a mortal from the grave;
'Tis caught, what is't? a jagged mass of wood:—
'Tis firmer grasped, and now from out the flood
He drags each weary limb upon its side,—
A heaven-sent home where he may safely ride.
Now deeper and longer each valley grows,
Higher and higher are each mountain's snows,

While the heaven above is a dome of fire,
Thro' which the thunder wanders in mad ire ;
Slowly, more slowly, each pulse is beating,
He feels the blood from each limb retreating,
And winding its snaky coil round his heart,
Till his breath from its grasp can scarcely part,
While, beat for beat, a hideous echo,
Comes the wave's crash, and then its icy flow,
And his eye has a dim lacklustre glare,
And quails not now beneath the lightning's flare ;
Once more 'tis lit again—along the skies
It darteth round for help, but none it spies ;
'Tis cast below, upon the glittering sand
What is that horrid gleam ? a wither'd hand,
Beckoning him down unto a watery home,
To sleep with it where the seamonsters roam ;
Still faster he boundeth, it lures him on,
The lightening points unto its visage wan,
A giddy sickness swimmeth o'er his brain
Sealing his eyes, oh wiles to wake again !
He feels the raft rutting along the stones,
He hears it fling o'er the dancing bones,