

CONGRESS IS UNKISSED

An Allegory by George B. Bringmann

Illustrations by Robert Clancy

Mohamed Ali, king of the Nile,
King of the Fellahs and dunes,
King of Oases and King of the Wells,
Loved but the brightest of tunes.

Yet dawned there a day,
So historians say,
When Mohamed the King felt a chill,
For the attar of roses a harem disposes,
Was vanished, was absent, was nil.

The eunuchs were restive,
The evenings unfestive,
The women unpleasing and bold.
They danced unseductive, no pulse
was productive,
Mohamed the King was kept cold.

For collectors were slow,
The King's purse stayed low
And the absence of attar was vile;
E'en the absence of soap was the
death knell of hope
For the amorous King of the Nile.

So by royal decree
He taxed each date tree
And hope waxed again in his breast;
But his blood pressure dived, and
his hope was short lived
For the tax that he set failed the test.

For the royal decree
That taxed each date tree
Was greeted by saws and the ax;
The fellahs rebelled and quietly felled
Each tree, and avoided the tax.

The harem got colder,
The women looked older,
And the eunuchs grew thin—or a
beard.
From falsetto rotundas sprang basso
profundos
And luminous eyes never teared.

Old Ali grew frantic
(As they grew romantic)
And wracked his soft brain for a
cure.

As if sent from heaven, he hit on the
leaven—
A tax on the land was more sure!

Came return to the normal,
And habits quite formal
Were brought back by Ali the King,
And the attar of roses that a harem
disposes
Hangs sweet in the air as they sing.

The basso profundos
Regrew their rotundas
And their hitherto pip-squeak is
back;
And the fellahs they sing, as does
Ali the king.
Now each keeps his "dates," and
don't lack.

The moral's terrific—
Like Ali, prolific;
So simple it cannot be missed:
Land tax is persuasive and none is
evasive,
While Ali the King is well kissed.

Oh, Mohamed Ali was king of the
Nile,
And King of the Fellahs and Dunes,
King of Oases and King of the Wells,
But never a King over loons.

No tax that discouraged
But one that encouraged
Was Mohamed Ali's new "bite;"
And those that rebelled he quietly
quelled,
And date trees sprang up overnight.

For fellahs are willing
To garner a shilling
To pay for that which they need.
And garner means toil on fruitful
soil
Which no man can hold out for
greed.

